
CONSOLIDATED FAO INPUTS

Group of Friends of the CFS Chair– Implications of UNFSS on CFS Open Guiding Questions

Question 1. How can we increase the impact of CFS policy products? How can the CFS membership better disseminate and make use of the existing and future policy products in a way that they better inspire our governments' policies and strategies, and empower all stakeholders, including as key reference frameworks for the FSS National Pathways and Coalitions?

Question 2. How can CFS better support countries' efforts to articulate and implement national food security, food systems and nutrition strategies, including the emerging National Pathways?

- The questions 1 and 2 are very closely connected and could be read as one in the following sense: How can the CFS membership contribute to promoting the use and impact of CFS policy products in support to formulation and implementation of national food security, food systems and nutrition strategies, including the emerging National Pathways?

Linking dissemination and use with ongoing work and debate on specific food and agriculture topics at country level

- CFS policy products are most useful when considered in relation to a given food and agriculture problems. When involved in policy discussions and consultations related to specific food and agriculture issues, the CFS membership should inform about and advocate the use of pertinent CFS products. For example, the Member States representatives could connect with competent agencies that have led Food Systems National Dialogues, and engage in identification of pertinent CFS products for the implementation of the Agreed Pathways.
- FAO/WFP/IFAD could further the presentation of CFS work and products to their respective country offices, and mapping of CFS products against country priorities and country programming frameworks;
- Related to the above, FAO-IFAD-WFP country offices should strengthen their support to assist countries in engaging with HLPE and CFS and the GF on FSN.
- Strengthen linkages between FAO's operations and CFS policy guidance, for instance mapping or linking CFS policy products to relevant PPAs.
- A mapping of the existing national pathways and coalitions against the CFS policy products could help identifying which policy products might be more relevant in each case.
- It would be important to analyze the reasons why uptake and impact have been limited, in order to address them accordingly (e.g. is it due to the process through which they are developed, to a lack of awareness, or other reasons);
- At the request of FAO's Director General, FAO Regional Conferences were invited to take note of the CFS outcomes and consider the CFS MYPoW to actively engage in using CFS products in national policy-making. CFS could do a mapping of the feedback and inputs received from the Regional Conferences.
- CFS may consider encouraging UN entities to set joint programmes in support to national application of CFS policy products, as to strengthen their use in support to nationally led process.

Rome, 31 January 2022

- Dedicated side events or specific sessions could focus on the use of specific CFS policy products in the National Pathways implementation. For instance, in the September 2021 Synthesis Report of Independent Dialogues, youth engagement was among the top 25 topics in the dialogues. This links nicely to the ongoing *CFS policy convergence process on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems started at the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)* and dedicated session or side event on how National Pathways could/will integrate the policy recommendations could be very helpful.
- CFS needs strong support from member states, especially at national level including through increased financial resources

Rethinking ways of communication

- It would be useful to understand why a huge library of technical and advocacy documents developed to support the VGGTs for example, has not led to a massive uptake at country level. This example points to the importance of Member States, as well as other CFS members doing communication and dissemination campaign, linking it to a given country policy priorities;
- Also, there could be a role for the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, which is composed of the RBAs and other relevant UN agencies (some also being CFS Participants), in making available/sensitizing countries to the CFS policy products and building capacity in their use, in relation to the national pathways implementation; To this extent it is extremely important to “popularize” science messages in short and comprehensive outputs tailored to policy makers.
- CFS and RBA posts on social networks should be more engaging sharing stories where there have been changes and beneficial use of CFS products. This can inspire countries and thus give much more visibility to the people and actors on the ground.

Facilitating exchange of experiences and lessons learned among CFS membership

- It is important to stress that CFS does not have a mandate for supporting individual countries in the consolidation and implementation of strategies/programmes, but rather to promote exchange and collecting as well as disseminating experiences, lessons learned and good practices.
- In this spirit, and as done in the past for SDGs and FSN related targets implementation, CFS sessions may consider the organization of special events to present country experiences related to the consolidation of food security, food systems and nutrition strategies. Events should be organized to allow countries and other stakeholders to exchange their experience, to map challenges and encourage collaboration across governments, including South South and Triangular cooperation, and intra regional cooperation.
- The new FAO Evidence Platform for Agri-food Systems and Nutrition provides countries with an “evidence toolbox” to monitor uptake of the recommendations of the Voluntary Guidelines on Food systems and Nutrition. Similar platforms could be put in place to document experiences and initiatives across countries in implementing the CFS Voluntary Guidelines and other products, and monitoring their uptake.
- CFS could also consider a Group of Friends of the Chair or an OEWG, that discusses every year the work taken forward of a different set of VG recommendations, with the aim to share successes and obstacles encountered with implementing these recommendations.
- The role of CFS Chair remains critical in engaging with relevant global, regional and sub-regional actors on the work of CFS; CFS may thus consider mobilizing more resources for information and promotion of the its pertinent policy products in the relevant global, regional and sub-regional key events and fora, including the SD forums, political gatherings and other relevant events.

Rome, 31 January 2022

Strengthening dialogue and coordination with relevant global, regional and sub-regional fora

- CFS may explore ways to strengthen its presence at regional level, including mapping of resources needed to allow exchanges and knowledge consolidation and dissemination.
- CFS could suggest government representatives both in Rome and in New York and their capitals to optimize their communication and information sharing about CFS-related issues and strengthen their collaboration in a structured way.
- CFS may consider organization of events at regional levels, to reach out to regional and national coalitions as well, including SD forums, FAO regional conferences and other relevant regional events.
- Where possible and relevant, there could be stronger interaction between CFS and FAO technical committees that provide policy guidance on issues relating to food security and nutrition. For example, the Committee on Agriculture (COAG), Committee on Fisheries (COFI), Committee on Forestry (COFO), and Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP).
- CFS could focus on a smaller number of themes directly linked to its core mandate, and invest more efforts to ensure that the themes do not overlap with the themes that are already being worked on by other groups, such as the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems (GLOPAN), the Global Nutrition Report (GNR), International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food), and others.
- CFS could consider preparation of joint reports/events with other pertinent global or regional bodies

3. How can the CFS provide its platform to multi-stakeholder alliances, coalitions and initiatives to share progress, connect with each other, in a strategic way (including those that emerged from the FSS and already existing ones)? How shall the CFS consider the five action areas (plenary, special events, side events...)?

- CFS should continue to be the multistakeholder platform to discuss food security and nutrition-related issues. Sessions on peer-to-peer learning and sharing of experiences with implementing policy measures to improve nutrition and enhance food security should become a fixed element of the plenary session. Such sessions could also include exchanges related to the UN Food Systems coordination hub work.
- CFS could include in its program of work (as a permanent feature) a Side Event (longer than 1 and ½ hour) during the annual CFS sessions that can be used as platform for stakeholders to come together and present/discuss issues in relation to the use of CFS products.
- CFS might wish to consider the design of side events or special session, more oriented towards the development of joint initiatives between different actors under the CFS label, a sort of CFS labeled special initiative, to be reported at the following session;
- Strengthen support to the CFS Secretariat, including through the RBA's contribution
- Consider how to attract more public interest. Look for space within the public to hold CFS supporting events.
- Related to the above, consider organizing extraordinary sessions on sudden and pressing challenges related to food and agriculture;
- Hold special events in New York, Geneva, London, Paris, Beijing, Delhi, Addis, in order to gather high level political and media interest.
- Hold events linked to other major events, including G22, G7, G77, COPs

Rome, 31 January 2022

- Strengthen the development of regional preparatory events for the CFS where discussions and consultations are grounded in the reality of the countries in order to strengthen the sharing of experiences towards strategic alliances for implementation.
- CFS could also consider introducing innovative and long-term formats of knowledge sharing and learning (e.g. co-creation workshops, innovative virtual platforms, e-learning courses) to share progress, connect with each other in a strategic way.
- A limited number of coalitions/initiatives with direct focus on FSN, and with direct links to existing and future CFS policy products and to topics included in the MYPOW, could be identified along the [FSS] five action areas. CFS could then potentially play a role in generating/increasing momentum behind the coalitions, creating awareness of their work, helping to build connections between them, etc.
- A CFS structure allows for the participation of a very broad range of actors of the *agrifood* sector. HLPE may be mandated to map existing platforms and coalitions with the complementary objectives to CFS, and suggest modalities for establishing more continuous relations and dialogues with such platforms. It is however important to ensure that CFS constituencies are thoroughly consulted and engaged in such dialogues, and that modalities respect CFS principles and procedures recognized as the most inclusive and participatory of the UN system.
- Special and side events organized at CFS sessions and intersessional period could include participation of platforms and coalitions emerged in UNFSS and other key processes relevant to CFS mandate as to allow them to establish continuous dialogue with CFS stakeholders.
- The multi-stakeholder character of the CFS could provide an opportunity to systematize the representation of constituencies related to agrifood systems work and currently being involved in various intergovernmental platforms.

4. How can the CFS global science-policy interface represented by the HLPE be strengthened and well connected to other science-policy interface UN mechanisms, in view of the proposals in this area that emerged in the context of the FSS?

Increasing engagement with partners

- UN CFS partners could be more systematically engaged with the HLPE, in order to ensure their expertise is available to HLPE members, without HLPE losing any of its independence.
- HLPE could conduct panel discussions where recognized experts can publicly debate the issues and have those discussions open to the public and publicly disseminated on the basis of evidence. This would increase the interest of the general public in the process of producing the HLPE reports, as electronic consultation, while useful, can be quite anonymous.
- Furthermore, HLPE could invest more efforts to consider different sources of knowledge including grey literature and traditional knowledge of small-scale men and women farmers, local communities and indigenous peoples;
- CFS and HLPE need more presence in the liaison offices of the RBAs, particularly with UN NY and UN Geneva.
- The CFS and HLPE could consider to organize in collaboration with other relevant Agencies and the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub side events in the HLPF and other major Intergovernmental meeting (e.g. Climate and Biodiversity COPs)
- CFS Secretariat could map the relevant global initiatives and platforms or global panels of experts that are already in place aiming to enhance dissemination of knowledge and scientific evidence in

Rome, 31 January 2022

the area of food security and nutrition (e.g. GLOPAN, GNR, IPES-Food, etc.) and increase interactions between them and HLPE. This could broaden the capacity as well as the spectrum of activities, evidence based recommendations, as well as research and analytical capacity of HLPE.

- The above may include also UN hosted evidence based initiatives, such as the Hand In Hand Initiative geospatial platform.

Improving communication and outreach

- HLPE need strengthened communication support, and RBA's need to use their outreach to provide real stories that validate the reports and the recommendations. The policy recommendations could be communicated directly, before CFS has negotiated word for word
- HLPE reports should consider how the Climate Change Panel manages to get massive attention and coverage every time.

Reviewing the governance and structure of the HLPE

- HLPE structure should ensure independence from policy processes and broaden and anchor its connection to other mechanisms and contributors, for example looking at the IPCC structure and modalities.
- Exploring possibilities to broaden the scope of membership of the HLPE, for example including policy practitioners to facilitate implementation of the products and recommendations on the ground.

Clarifying HLPE thematic scope

- CFS and HLPE could reflect on the connection between food systems and food security and nutrition, which would also strengthen the position and connections of the current CFS global science-policy interface. This might be in line with the food systems approach to food security and nutrition, as reflected in the HLPE report #15, by integrating the dimensions of agency and sustainability to the existing four dimensions of FSN, which would allow to further focusing on sustainable and inclusive food systems, which are the objective of the FSS.

5. What is possible to strengthen accountability within and among all stake-holders?

- A more open and transparent process for building HLPE reports may increase accountability as governments are more likely to feel the need to show positive results.
- Accountability would be strengthened through a reporting mechanism on implementation/use of CFS products, to be discussed by CFS (e.g. type of monitoring, the frequency, and the modality), to at least, assess the use/awareness of the products
- CFS could consider inviting similar mechanisms existing at country level (e.g. cross-sectoral platforms for FSN, SDG coordination bodies, Food Systems Dialogues Leads) to share experience and challenges they are facing
- Progress on the FSS follow-up could potentially be reviewed and discussed within CFS sessions and mechanisms. CFS multi-stakeholder setting might play a role in strengthening accountability within and among stakeholders. Such accountability should in any case focus on desired outcomes rather than activities

Rome, 31 January 2022

-
- The CFS agenda could include the issue of monitoring of implementation/use of CFS products by its membership, including through creation of 'friends of the CFS product' working groups, as multi actor, acting as ambassadors of the CFS products.