

High-Level Forum “Tackling climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation through the Right to Food”

1. Background and Objective

a) CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work 2024-2027

The MYPoW 2024-2027 foresees this HLF in order “to **take stock** of the progress made, **reflect on the challenges** posed to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security by climate change and biodiversity loss, with a focus on **promoting policies** that support climate change adaptation and mitigation and biodiversity loss mitigation to lessen their impacts on the people’s livelihoods and right to food. It will also consider policies to make **smallholder and family farmers** beneficiaries of climate mitigation measures. The aim is for this Forum to increase **awareness on the linkages** between climate change and biodiversity and the human right to food. To this end, the Forum could be **co-convened** with the COP presidencies and conventions and held in the context of the Conferences of the Parties of the Rio Conventions (COPs). A short **HLPE-FSN** background note will inform the intersessional High-Level Forum.”

A table about tentative timelines in the MYPoW indicates that the HLF is organized **early 2025**. The MYPoW also points to the creation of a **Technical Task Team**.

b) Topic

Climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation all pose significant threats to the realization of the right to adequate food, impacting its accessibility, adequacy, availability, and sustainability core elements.

They form a **feedback loop**, where climate change drives biodiversity loss and both contribute to land degradation. In turn, land degradation weakens the land’s ability to withstand climate impacts, making ecosystems less resilient to climate change while contributing to biodiversity loss. This cycle affects particularly persons and groups in **vulnerable situations**, especially those whose livelihood depends directly on agriculture and natural resources. As agrifood systems are weakened, communities experience greater food insecurity, malnutrition, and poverty.

Addressing the **interconnected challenges** of climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation is crucial for realizing the right to adequate food for all.

In doing so, the right to food framework provides a **comprehensive, human rights-based approach** focused on the structural causes and systemic factors of those interconnected challenges.

It fosters policy coherence through transparent, inclusive and participatory processes and provides a foundation for monitoring and accountability, helping guide global efforts towards sustainable, resilient and equitable agrifood systems.

The right to food is mainstreamed as the overarching framework of all the CFS's activities, reinforcing the uptake of the right to food as the framework to achieve SDG 2 and food systems transformation. **The CFS would therefore use its convening power to streamline the right to food framework in Rio Conventions processes, strengthening existing declarations and frameworks:**

In its Preamble, the **COP 28** UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action underscores the “need to progressively realize the right to adequate food in the context of national food security as well as the need to ensure access to safe, sufficient, affordable, and nutritious food for all”.

In a significant move towards bridging the gap between nature, climate change, and human rights, **COP 15 on Biodiversity** adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework whose implementation should follow a human rights-based approach according to its 14th paragraph. The agreement also acknowledges the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, interrelated and interdependent with the right to adequate food.

At **UNCCD COP 16**, States committed to prioritize land restoration and drought resilience in national policies and international cooperation as essential strategy for food security and climate action.

2. Date and Venue

In 2025, two Conferences of the Parties of the Rio Conventions (COPs) will take place:

- the resumed COP of the CBD (25-27 February in Rome, Italy)
- the UNFCCC COP (November 2025 in Belém, Brazil).

The HLF should take place in **spring 2025** aiming to feed into the latter COP.

As to the **venue**, the Secretariat has initiated consultations with COP Presidencies. If the HLF is not hosted by a COP Presidency, it could be organized at FAO HQ. The Secretariat has hence tentatively secured meeting facilities at FAO HQ for April 2025.

3. Outcome

While the MYPoW does not specify how to technically capture the substance of the reflections, a **summary report** under the responsibility of the CFS Chairperson could be envisaged, with the option of

its presentation at CFS Plenary. A similar approach was taken for the HLF for Connecting Smallholders to Markets in 2015.¹

On a broader note, the impact of the HLF should go beyond and **foster interlinkages** between CFS and the Rio Conventions for a closer cooperation in the long run. This could generate further activities in the future, e. g. the organization of side events at Rio COPs and/or CFS Plenary Sessions respectively or a closer alignment of work programmes.

4. Agenda

The meeting should reflect the **structure** included in the MYPoW, highlighting the interlinkages between the Right to Food on the one hand and climate change, biodiversity and land degradation on the other hand.

Expert contributions, inter alia by the CFS High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition and other relevant UN institutions should provide a basis and inform the discussions among **high-level participants** of the various constituencies of both CFS and the Rio Conventions.

The **Technical Task Team** will prepare a detailed run-of-show, to be shared with the Bureau and Advisory Group in due course.

5. Technical Task Team

As per the MYPoW, a Technical Task Team will be established comprising representatives of the three Rome-based Agencies. Representatives from Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism, the Private Sector Mechanism, the Philanthropic Foundations Mechanism, the Presidencies and/or Secretariats of the Rio Conventions, and the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights will be invited as well.

6. Communication Plan

The CFS Secretariat will prepare a communication plan focused on highlighting the interlinkages between the CFS and the Rio Conventions. This communication plan will aim at fostering engagement, ownership and visibility among all the involved stakeholders, leading to new, renewed and lasting relationships with the CFS as the foremost inclusive platform for food security and nutrition.

¹ [CFS_HLF_Smallholders_Chairs_Summary.pdf](#)