
**STRENGTHENING THE UPTAKE OF CFS POLICY AGREEMENTS
ZERO DRAFT ACTION PLAN**

FAO INPUTS

FAO appreciates the work of the CFS Secretariat facilitating the consolidation of the draft Action Plan for the workstream “In-depth debate on enhanced efforts to increase awareness, ownership, use and usefulness of CFS policy outcomes at all levels”.

FAO supports the point underlined in the Introduction to the draft Action Plan reminding that while Member States have the primary responsibility for promoting the use and application of the CFS policy products, this needs to be the result of a collaboration with and strong engagement by the different CFS stakeholders. Indeed, as pointed out in FAO’s consolidated inputs to this workstream, submitted on 12 January 2024, the process underpinning the workstream should be inclusive and ensure that all perspectives are heard and represented throughout, ensuring that the outcomes are accepted by all stakeholders.

FAO also supports the structuring of the draft Action Plan into three main sections (1. Actions to strengthen the usefulness and ownership of CFS policy agreements; 2. Actions to promote awareness and use of CFS policy agreements and 3. Cross-cutting actions in support of strengthened uptake of CFS processes and policy agreements). In this regard, FAO believes that it would be important to give priority to sections 2 and 3.

Dimension of prioritization and timeline of planned activities will be very important for an effective and successful workstream and contribution to better uptake of CFS policy products at all levels.

With regard to specific activities proposed, CFS may wish to take the following into account:

Terminology

The title of the draft Action Plan and its three sections use the term “CFS policy agreements”. FAO suggests using the term “CFS policy outcomes” as per the title of the workstream and as it covers different types of policy products.

When referring to “the CFS”, please specify if the reference is to the CFS Secretariat.

Part 1 - Actions to strengthen the usefulness and ownership of CFS policy agreements

The indicated activities, in particular 1.B.1. (ensuring that CFS products are concrete, concise, understandable, user-friendly and actionable) could already apply during the planned workstream on SF 2 (Policy) in the current MYPoW 2024-2027). In particular, the CFS could consider the future users and how to better identify and characterize them.

Part 2 – Actions to promote awareness and use of CFS policy agreements

2.A.1. *The CFS, in collaboration with the RBAs, will develop a toolkit to promote awareness and use and to enhance the understanding of CFS policy agreements.*

As indicated in its written inputs submitted in January 2024, FAO considers that review and analysis of reasons why uptake and impact of specific CFS policy products have been limited among different CFS constituencies to be a useful practical basis around which to anchor the in-depth debate on this workstream and the suggested toolkit to promote awareness and use of CFS policy products.

FAO thus suggests planning such an analysis ensuring engagement of all stakeholders. The purpose of the analysis would be to identify factors, determinants and challenges related to the uptake of CFS policy products by different constituencies (e.g. for different typologies of CFS products). A mapping exercise could be envisaged, sending a questionnaire to all CFS Members, and the results could be discussed at an intersessional event. As a way of demonstrating relevance and advertising uptake of the policy documents, CFS could analyse documents in the FAOLEX database, for instance with the assistance of AI.

2.A.2. *Communication strategy*

FAO suggests considering tailoring information messages also specifically to the audience of parliament and parliamentary advisors, whose role can help putting in higher position the issues related to food security and nutrition and their key functions in adopting public budget and overseeing public policies could facilitate the use and application of CFS policy guidelines and recommendations at country level.

2.A.3 - CFS Members should use and apply CFS policy agreements in national strategies, policies and programmes, adapting their implementation to national priorities and realities and targeting activities to relevant groups and stakeholders.

This activity could be more explicit in terms of its recommended actions and include the need for national legislation to implement CFS policy products particularly its Voluntary Guidelines.

2.A.5. The RBAs, other UN bodies and international organizations should use the content of CFS policy agreements as a reference for the preparation of their projects.

FAO suggests including in this activity CFS Member countries. It would also like to underline that FAO provides policy and technical support to Member countries *on demand*, and is already making reference to specific CFS policy products, when and where relevant and appropriate.

2.A.6. The RBAs should identify countries from various regions where the application of specific policy agreements can be promoted, based on national priorities and contexts.

Similarly as under 2.A.5. above, FAO recalls that it provides support to countries *on demand*, and thus suggests inviting Member countries to ask support from RBAs in promoting awareness and use of CFS policy products.

2.C.3 - The RBAs, other UN bodies and international organizations should strengthen the presence and include regular agenda items on CFS in the context of global and regional meetings of their governing bodies and strengthen linkages between CFS and their technical committees in order to raise awareness about CFS policy agreements, generate discussions on how they could inform the development of their programmes of work and identify potential synergies and ways of collaboration.

With regard to strengthening linkages between CFS and global and regional initiatives relevant to food security and nutrition, FAO suggests inviting Member countries' 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. It could also consider preparation of joint reports/events with other pertinent global or regional bodies, joining forces with RBAs and other relevant actors, and seek to increase its presence at such event, making use of its Bureau and its HLPE.

Part 3 – Cross-cutting actions in support of strengthened uptake of CFS processes and policy agreements

3.1. The CFS will strengthen its strategy for monitoring and evaluating the use of its policy agreements. In particular, a consolidated overview of uptake activities should be provided by adding to the CFS webpage a digital repository that includes information on the use of CFS policy agreements at global, regional, national and local levels.

FAO supports the proposal of adding to the CFS webpage a digital repository. Such repository could also include examples of good practices and experiences of the use of CFS policy products by different CFS constituencies. Also, the repository could highlight the role of legislation in transforming agrifood systems, and how it links to the implementation of national pathways for such transformation.

3.2 – The CFS will dedicate regular agenda items during CFS plenaries to discuss progress, challenges and ways to improve the use of CFS policy agreements at all levels.

FAO suggests convening one plenary session to assess progress, collect best practices and create a network of 'champions' on select policy products during this MYPoW term.

3.3 – The CFS will establish an Open-Ended Working Group that is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the present Action Plan, for providing a space for CFS stakeholders to report on the activities carried out in response to the Action Plan, and to prepare the regular agenda items that will take place in the context of future CFS plenaries.

As indicated in its written inputs submitted in January 2024, FAO supports the idea of developing strategy for monitoring and evaluation of the uptake of CFS policy products. In this regard, FAO suggests taking particular attention to the linkages between different policy products and monitoring and reporting processes. The uptake progress assessment could also use information from country reporting on SDG indicators, Rio Conventions, and sharing of good practices.

It may be also useful to link the monitoring process to Member States' reporting under the international human rights system, and use this information to support the structure and functioning of the CFS policy process.

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CFS could consider inviting to the Open-Ended Working Group Meetings select reporting mechanisms existing at country level (e.g. cross-sectoral platforms for FSN, SDG coordination bodies, Food Systems Conveners) to share results, experiences and challenges they are facing.