

Kick-off meeting for the workstream on “Increasing awareness, ownership, use and usefulness of CFS policy outcomes”

18 December 2023 (14.00-17.00), Hybrid meeting (FAO Lebanon Room and Zoom Platform)

RAPPORTEUR’S SUMMARY

Agenda

1. Introduction by the Rapporteur
2. Overview of the Draft Workplan
3. Promoting the Use of CFS policy outcomes: Presentations of Concrete Examples
4. Open discussion

The kick-off meeting for the workstream on “*In-depth debate on enhanced efforts to increase awareness, ownership, use and usefulness of CFS policy outcomes at all levels*” was opened by the CFS Chairperson, Amb. Nosipho Jezile, Permanent Representative of South Africa to UN Rome-based Agencies, who underlined the relevance of this exercise and called for support from all CFS stakeholders for the development of an ambitious Action Plan. The CFS Chairperson congratulated the Rapporteur, Dr Josyline Javelosa, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Philippines to UN Rome-based Agencies, on her nomination.

1. Introduction by the Rapporteur

The Rapporteur welcomed all CFS stakeholders that joined the meeting and gave an overview of the agenda for the meeting, which found agreement among the participants.

2. Overview of the Draft Workplan

An overview of the Draft Workplan for the workstream was provided, noting that it would be submitted to the Bureau and Advisory Group for approval on 19 December 2023. The document was well-received, while two issues on individual dates were raised for consideration. Based on these, the Rapporteur agreed to:

- extend the deadline for written inputs from 15 January until 19 January 2024; and
- find an alternative date for the OEWG currently scheduled for 23 February 2024, which coincides with the Asia and Pacific Regional Conference.

3. Promoting the Use of CFS policy outcomes: Presentations of Concrete Examples

To spark a general debate on areas where action is specifically needed to improve the use of CFS policy agreements, five short presentations by various representatives, which have specific experience on promoting the use of CFS policy outcomes, were given.

The first presentation was delivered by Mr Adriano Campolina from FAO's team implementing the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* (VGGT). Mr Campolina summarized the key lessons learned from his team's work with the VGGT, which included:

- The importance of prolonged political commitment to enable transformation;
- The need for sufficient resources over prolonged time periods;
- Lack of data on assessing progress and uptake of the VGGT as a key challenge;
- Lack of regular convening fora on land tenure issues as a challenge. In this regard, it was proposed to consider the possibility to dedicate a CFS plenary session every three years to the discussion of a specific policy agreement.

The second presentation was held by Dr Jessica Fanzo, Professor of Climate and Director of the Food for Humanity Initiative at Columbia Climate School, who was involved with Johns Hopkins University in a project on the promotion of people-centred food systems. Dr Fanzo gave a comprehensive overview of the project, which focused on building capacities and accountability for human rights-based approaches, based on the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, in food policy dialogues in four pilot countries. She furthermore informed that an implementation report with lessons learned from this project is being prepared and suggested that this is presented to CFS.

The third presentation was given by Ms. Christina Blank from the Representation of Switzerland to the UN Rome-based Agencies, providing the perspective of a stakeholder which supported the development and use of different CFS policy outcomes. The presentation covered various topics and underlined several key learnings, including:

- Implementation of CFS policy products at country level takes a long time and it requires the preparation of practical tools that facilitate their use by national and local stakeholders;
- Political commitment and buy-in from all key stakeholders, including implementing agencies, are important success factors;
- A space to discuss, report back on progress and share ideas as well as to identify synergies and complementarities between activities is required;
- Opportunities for enhanced uptake should be taken up whenever they appear.

The fourth presentation was jointly delivered by Ms Emma McGhie, FAO Programme Officer, and Mr Octavius Quarbo, Assistant FAO Representative in Liberia, who spoke about the implementation of the CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems. Some of the key lessons learned, which were shared in their presentation, included:

- Linking the implementation activities to what is already done at country and regional level is important;
- Projects and interventions should be adapted to the country's local context and its stakeholders;
- Capacity development on CFS policy products is needed at all levels of government;
- Implementation processes need to be truly inclusive and multi-stakeholder based.

The last presentation was delivered by Mr Brian Baldwin from the Secretariat of the Private Sector Mechanism, who elaborated on the role that the private sector has played thus far in implementing the CFS policy products. Some of the key take-aways from the private sector's experience included:

- The need for CFS products to be understandable and actionable for private sector actors;
- Linkages with already existing initiatives such as the SDGs can speed up implementation;
- The FAO Regional Conferences represent an important venue for raising awareness about CFS policy products.

4. Open discussion

Following the five presentations, CFS Members and participants engaged in an open discussion which covered a broad range of different topics and issues. Some of the mentioned aspects included the following:

- Close collaboration between all relevant stakeholders at all levels is needed before, during and after the negotiation of policy agreements.
- The translation of CFS policy agreements into relevant languages was identified as a key element to engage a wider local audience.
- The visibility and awareness of CFS in general and especially at country level should be increased as a first step for improving the uptake of CFS policy products. In this context, particular attention should be devoted to strengthening linkages with key partners at national level (e.g., Parliamentarians).
- Making use of existing multistakeholder structures at the local level can facilitate the uptake and implementation of CFS policy products which should also be used to promote cross-sectoral dialogues at country level.

- The possibility to work with, or to promote the implementation of, CFS-like structures at country level could be further explored, including consideration of potentially designating CFS National Focal Points.
- The development and formulation of CFS policy guidance should be focused on the potential users and their needs, insuring usefulness and actionability.
- Improved use of CFS policy agreement may require action in the planning, product development and outreach phases. The action plan shall therefore cover also aspects that relate to the development of policy agreements itself.
- Actionable language of the policy agreements is essential for them to be useful to stakeholders and promote uptake.
- Targeted capacity development is needed at all levels, including multiple levels of government, but also in civil society, including potentially through the education system.
- Regular reviews and monitoring of uptake activities and their impacts are useful to increase their effectiveness and create an actionable data basis.
- The relationship of CFS with the National Pathways and the Food Systems Summit should be further explored as an entry point for enhanced uptake of CFS policy products.
- Replicate or amplify efforts guided by further assessment on what has worked to promote uptake of CFS policy products (e.g. IFAD's offer)
- The need to prioritize CFS efforts to be able to further promote increased awareness, ownership, use and usefulness of CFS policy products.

OEWG members were reminded of the importance of providing written inputs on objectives and potential areas of work to be addressed in the Action Plan by answering the following guiding questions:

1. Could you share your expectations in terms of desired outcomes and areas of work of this CFS workstream?
2. Could you indicate the main elements that would be important to include in the Action Plan?
3. Could you present concrete examples of uptake activities carried out by your constituency, including indications on their impact, challenges encountered as well as areas for improvement?

Written contributions should be sent to cfs@fao.org by Friday 19 January 2024. All relevant information and background documents are available on the [Uptake Section of the CFS Working Space](#).