



CFS Bulletin

A Briefing Note of the 3rd Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

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THIRD MEETING OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS OF THE COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY: 27 APRIL 2016

The third meeting of the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was held on 27 April 2016, at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), in Rome, Italy. Member countries and multi-stakeholder participants focused on a zero-draft proposal on CFS engagement in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). They also discussed: a letter from Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) President Oh Joon to CFS Chair Amira Gornass (Sudan), inviting CFS to provide input to the 2016 session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF); a mapping document of CFS scope and products in relation to SDG targets; and next steps.

The OEWG on SDGs was established by CFS at its 42nd Plenary session held in October 2015. The purpose of the OEWG is to agree on a proposal on how CFS, as a global, multi-stakeholder committee, will support progress in: reaching the SDGs related to sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition; and in advancing the parts of the 2030 Agenda that fall within its mandate. CFS OEWGs are informal groups open to all CFS members, participants and observers. They review, discuss and make proposals related to the intersessional work of CFS but have no decision-making mandate. The outcomes of their work are conveyed to CFS plenary, which is the decision-making body.

Discussions of the OEWG on SDGs focus on CFS' role to: provide a platform for identifying and sharing achievements and challenges related to SDG implementation; address policy gaps that may impede SDG implementation; and identify opportunities for accelerating progress on particular themes. A proposal will be submitted to the CFS 43rd Plenary session, scheduled to take place in October 2016.

At its first meeting, the OEWG addressed the OEWG workplan for the year, including its objectives, expected outcomes and activities; and started discussion on possible CFS work in support of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of the SDGs. The second meeting heard a presentation on the UN Secretary-General's report on critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at global level (UN Doc A/70/684); and discussed an outline of a proposal on CFS engagement to advance the 2030 Agenda.

This report summarizes the proceedings of the third meeting of the OEWG.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

OPENING

OEWG Chair Willem Olthof, Senior Development Adviser, EU Delegation, welcomed participants and noted that discussions will focus mainly on the zero-draft proposal on CFS engagement in advancing the 2030 Agenda.

In a video message, David Nabarro, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the 2030 Agenda, highlighted that CFS is an empowering space that facilitates inclusive policy deliberations, which result in policy outcomes that make a difference. He said the zero-draft proposal will help identify CFS' core contributions, noting that CFS' experience is relevant across the SDGs. He urged considering how CFS can contribute to the SDG follow-up and review processes and full realization of the right to food.

Zak Bleicher, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) New York Office, provided, via video connection, an update on the SDG process and the roadmap for informal consultations on the follow-up and review at the global level. He drew attention to the continued momentum in New York, highlighting the recently-held signing ceremony of the Paris Agreement on climate change, the UN General Assembly High-level Thematic Debate on Achieving the SDGs and the inaugural ECOSOC forum on Financing for Development follow-up.

On follow-up and review, he said the roadmap shared by the co-facilitators from Belize and Denmark will be followed by an elements paper aiming to support dialogue with member states. He noted that several aspects of relevance to CFS deliberations remain undecided, including the themes for future HLPF sessions and inputs by other bodies. He said the Global Sustainable Development Report, to be produced every four years by an independent group of scientists under the UN General Assembly, is envisioned as one element of the follow-up and review process, aiming to strengthen the science-policy interface.

In the ensuing discussion, Bleicher said there is an expectation that CFS will contribute to HLPF deliberations, drawing attention to the ECOSOC President's letter sent to 80 intergovernmental bodies, including the CFS Chair.

ZERO-DRAFT ON CFS ENGAGEMENT TO ADVANCE THE 2030 AGENDA

INTRODUCTION: Chair Olthof called for comments on the general direction and introduction of the zero-draft proposal (CFS OEWG-SDGs/2016/04/27/02), which was developed by the CFS Secretariat with the support of the technical task team, on the basis of previous discussions and written contributions. Many expressed their general appreciation. Switzerland and Italy welcomed the proposal as presenting a balanced engagement strategy, and Germany appreciated the draft's clarity on CFS' role and concrete proposals. The Netherlands said the draft is good at proposing a process ahead but needs more thought on content and substance. The EU Delegation, Argentina and Iceland preferred a short and concise document.

Afghanistan urged highlighting the direct relevance of CFS work to SDG 2 (Ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture), with Egypt stressing the need to differentiate between CFS' main role on SDG 2 and the potential impact of its work on other SDGs.

Norway called for increased attention to sustainable agriculture, including on how CFS can contribute to identifying good practices on sustainable food production systems and, with the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM), Argentina, Iceland, the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) and

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Finland, urged integrating references to the centrality of human rights, gender equality and vulnerable groups throughout the draft.

France, with Egypt, Brazil, the Private Sector Mechanism (PSM), the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNSCN suggested using the exact wording of the UN General Assembly resolution when referring to the Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025. UNSCN called for reference to the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2).

The US, with Afghanistan, Argentina, Brazil and PSM, urged highlighting that implementation of the 2030 Agenda will be country-driven. New Zealand called for actions to help countries implement the SDGs. Italy suggested reference to CFS country-level platforms. China stressed implementation should take into account countries' capabilities and conditions.

CFS CONTRIBUTION TO THE HLPF: Participants addressed paragraphs on CFS functions on policy convergence, lesson sharing, and monitoring and review. IFAD noted that the section on policy convergence does not adequately look at how planned work can be leveraged to support countries in implementation. France said the main focus of CFS work should be on policy convergence, noting that policy convergence activities are not limited to reports of the High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) and related recommendations. PSM, Argentina, Switzerland and the US agreed that HLPE reports are not the only way of triggering policy convergence. CSM pointed to the need for policy products that are actually put to use, and for links to the CFS monitoring process.

France called for better distinction between lesson sharing, and monitoring and review. CSM called for an additional function on coordination and for merging the lesson-sharing and monitoring functions. Norway suggested reference to CFS' unique involvement with food producers and people suffering from hunger and malnutrition, and use of valid and reliable data.

On lesson sharing, the EU Delegation suggested CFS identify gaps in advancing progress on food security and nutrition. FAO requested more clarity on collaboration with regional peer-review mechanisms, and suggested reference to transboundary issues in particular regions. Egypt said the proposal should include reference to South-South cooperation. Noting the lesson-sharing section is usually "not the most vibrant discussion in plenary," CSM called for discussing collaborative action and partnerships as a harmonized push for implementation.

France, with Finland, noted the need to identify which products will be reported to the HLPF and who will take the final decision. Afghanistan and Argentina stressed the need for clarity on HLPF expectations before reaching any final decision. IFAD said the proposal should demonstrate how current CFS work can be a resource for countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda. PSM suggested promoting negotiated outcomes. CSM further drew attention to the dozens of reports to be made available to HLPF, calling for engaging with HLPF through a "living contribution."

France noted that scheduling of sessions should allow the CFS plenary to prepare input. The Netherlands and Iceland said CFS contribution needs to be endorsed by plenary, pointing to the time gap between the CFS plenary in October and the HLPF session in July. CSM suggested establishment of an intersessional mechanism on SDGs to contribute to HLPF on an ongoing basis.

Afghanistan underscored the importance of the State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI) report. IFAD said SOFI needs to be complemented by other reports for CFS to review progress on food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture. FAO said the new SOFI report will monitor specific targets and key nutrition indicators, focusing on how these targets will be backed up by achieving other targets under SDG 2 and other Goals.

France said the Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) should maintain a degree of flexibility, called for assessing the implications of developing a four-year MYPoW and, with Switzerland, Iceland and the US, suggested a joint meeting with the OEWG on the MYPoW.

France and the US questioned the impact that the high-level plenary sessions proposed in the draft may have on regular sessions. Switzerland said plenary sessions should include a specific agenda item on CFS' relationship with Agenda 2030.

ROLE OF THE HLPE: Calling for focus on country-level implementation, Afghanistan questioned the contribution of HLPE reports to country-level implementation. The Netherlands said HLPE reports will be useful if they focus on problem solving. The EU Delegation stressed the usefulness of HLPE reports and suggested a future one explore multi-stakeholder partnerships to address food security and nutrition and its financing in the context of the 2030 Agenda. PSM called for reports on safe, nutritious and sufficient food, and disaster resilience of food production systems.

Italy noted an HLPE report may take more than two years while HLPF reviews will be held annually, pointing to the possibility of producing shorter reports. France cautioned against compromising on quality. CSM said the HLPE note on critical and emerging issues can ensure the CFS agenda remains contextualized, and suggested the HLPE contributes to the thematic review by looking at the nexus between food security and sustainable agriculture and other Goals.

The CFS Secretariat clarified that HLPE modalities are shaped for addressing global issues, rather than supporting bottom-up work. The OEWG Chair will make a proposal on the way forward that respects the process and calendar of the OEWG on the MYPoW.

CFS CONTRIBUTION TO 2016 HLPF MEETING

Participants discussed a letter from the ECOSOC President to the CFS Chair inviting CFS input to the 2016 HLPF session by 16 May 2016, following an indicative template and around the annual theme "ensuring that no one is left behind."

PSM, with Afghanistan, called for a brief response, pointing to the central role of food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture in leaving no one behind and prioritizing the key CFS products. Switzerland highlighted CFS' specificity in terms of stakeholder inclusiveness and targeting vulnerable groups. The Netherlands and Brazil asked about potentially engaging with the OEWG on the Global Strategic Framework for inputs into future HLPF meetings.

The Secretariat highlighted the conflicting priorities of submitting something that is short, sharp and easily digestible but is also respectful of the complexities of CFS debates and of the primacy of negotiated outcomes. She noted that the 2016 annual theme represents a privileged opportunity for a CFS contribution, which will be primarily based on negotiated policy instruments and decisions, including major products and other recommendations. She added that the reform document, introducing a modification of the CFS participation rules in order to include all important stakeholders in CFS discussions, in particular the most marginalized and vulnerable, is a fundamental input.

MAPPING OF CFS SCOPE AND PRODUCTS IN RELATION TO SDG TARGETS

Chair Olthof drew attention to the revised mapping document (CFS OEWG-SDGs/2016/02/24/05.rev). Following a suggestion by Afghanistan, participants agreed to request drafting of an additional, shorter document, which starts from CFS products and then lists the targets corresponding to each product, to be used for communication purposes.

NEXT STEPS

Chair Olthof invited written submissions on the zero-draft proposal by 6 May 2016, for a revised draft to be considered at the fourth meeting of the OEWG, to be held on 22 June. He thanked participants for their inputs and closed the meeting at 6:00 pm.