



CFS Bulletin

A Briefing Note of the 3rd Meeting of the Committee on Food Security Open Ended Working Group on Nutrition
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THIRD SESSION OF THE CFS OEWG ON NUTRITION: 29 APRIL 2016

The third meeting of the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) on nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was held on 29 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 draft proposal on CFS engagement in advancing nutrition. They also heard and discussed a presentation on the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025 and a draft Decision Box.

The OEWG on nutrition was established by CFS at its 42nd Plenary session (October 2015) to agree on a proposal for a CFS workstream on nutrition which should result in a clear vision for CFS role on nutrition, with a workplan leading to concrete outcomes for 2017 and beyond. The proposal will be submitted to the CFS 43rd Plenary session (October 2016).

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.

At its first meeting, the OEWG discussed: the overview of the role of the OEWG on nutrition as per the multi-year programme of work (MYPoW); a proposal prepared by the Technical Task Team (TTT) on the area of focus of the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) report on Nutrition and Food Systems and another on potential areas for CFS further involvement in nutrition; and the workplan of the OEWG on nutrition. After the first meeting a request for a report on Nutrition and Food Systems was submitted by the CFS Bureau to the HLPE.

At its second meeting, the OEWG addressed a revised proposal for CFS engagement in advancing nutrition. This draft proposal includes electronic comments from OEWG participants and inputs from the TTT.

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

REPORT OF THE MEETING

OPENING

OEWG Chair Khaled El-Taweel, Egypt, opened the meeting and discussion on the UN General Assembly Resolution on a Decade of Action on Nutrition. Anna Lartey, Director, FAO Nutrition and Food Systems, introduced the resolution on the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, encouraging stakeholders to actively support its implementation.

Michel Mordasini, Chair UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) and Vice President of IFAD noted the recent reinvigoration of the UNSCN including: its newly

adopted strategic plan 2016-2020 which maximizes UN coherence; its intention to reach out to other actors such as the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement (SUN) and to collaborate with CFS; and that on 10 June 2016, UNSCN will host an event on trade and nutrition as a contribution to the CFS workstream on nutrition.

Chair El-Taweel then opened discussion on the draft proposal on CFS Engagement in Advancing Nutrition (OEWG/Nutrition/2016/04/29/02), highlighting recent amendments, including: reference to the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition and a proposal for CFS to contribute to its roadmap; that CFS work go beyond an early focus on food systems; emphasis on CFS role in policy convergence; and the addition of new activities. He proposed participants focus discussion in three parts: vision, function, and the Decision Box.

CFS Secretariat further noted that the notion of access to, and adequate food, including in a culturally acceptable manner to the consumer, as well as the diversification of diets, had been included in the vision for CFS work.

CFS ENGAGEMENT IN ADVANCING NUTRITION: VISION

In the ensuing discussion, Afghanistan expressed support for the draft proposal. Germany proposed that CFS contribution to the Decade of Action on Nutrition be approved by CFS43.

Norway, supported by UK, said the draft lacked a grounding in the right to food, and does not review the global nutrition landscape in order to understand CFS role within that landscape. Ecuador, supported by Brazil, emphasized the importance of referencing adequate food, as stressed in the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2). Bangladesh proposed adding reference to adequate and safe food. Switzerland said the reference to the right to food is sufficient, and supported adding reference to adequate food.

Kenya questioned the singling out of the private sector as an entity that influences food systems.

Italy, supported by Argentina, highlighted the importance of establishing agreements between the private sector and governments on improving nutrition.

South Africa said the draft proposal should take an inclusive approach, as opposed to focusing on the private sector. Argentina pointed to the private sector's importance as justification that the private sector be singled out.

Brazil suggested the section on the private sector also include reference to smallholders.

Civil Society Mechanism (CSM): requested inserting reference to the right to food in place of "access to food," and supported Ecuador and Norway, noting that small scale producers don't consider themselves part of the private sector; and supported limiting reference to the private sector.

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Australia appreciated the balance of the proposal in reflecting the collective view, and echoed Argentina, on the importance of the private sector. Australia, with the Russian Federation and Bangladesh, suggested deleting reference to the “major role” of the private sector.

Cuba pointed to text on CFS function regarding the role of women and proposed instead inserting a “family approach” saying it is more suitable for gender equality. She also proposed that the draft proposal “propose” rather than “agree” on CFS contribution to the roadmap for the Decade of Action on Nutrition.

Private Sector Mechanism (PSM), said singling out the private sector is fundamental to the PSM. The US supported retaining reference to the private sector.

World Food Programme (WFP) stressed the importance of linking to other platforms, and proposed adding a new paragraph on partnerships. The EU supported an inclusive document and joined WFP in stressing partnerships and SUN. The Russian Federation said partnerships should be inclusive. Costa Rica requested strengthening reference to the SUN Movement. Brazil said food systems are shaped by a wide variety of actors, and the proposal should not qualify which actor plays a major or a minor role.

Chair El-Taweel then summarized the discussion on vision, including: the need to include adequate food; emphasis on reducing food losses and waste; general support for the role of the private sector while being inclusive of other actors; and highlighting the role of smallholders. He then invited further discussion on references to the role of the private sector.

Afghanistan suggested the private sector play an “important” rather than a “major” role. After discussion, Chair El-Taweel asked participants to endorse Afghanistan’s proposal. Supported by CSM, Kenya proposed defining a full list of actors, as opposed to only the private sector. The Russian Federation, with Bangladesh and PSM, proposed that the private sector “plays an important role among others.”

After further discussion on the role of various actors, CSM proposed referencing a wide variety of actors, with private sector playing an important role among others from small holders to private companies. PSM agreed to this, noting that small holders are members of both CSM and PSM. Participants agreed on the CSM proposal.

CFS ENGAGEMENT IN ADVANCING NUTRITION: FUNCTIONS

In the discussion on functions, the Russian Federation said: reporting is a responsibility of the governing bodies of World Health Organization (WHO), FAO and UN General Assembly; it is not the role or mandate of the CFS to promote women’s rights; and cautioned against outlining policy products in advance of CFS45.

Supported by Canada, South Africa, the UK, the Netherlands, Argentina, PSM, and CSM, the EU proposed referring to “gender equality and women’s empowerment.” The Russian Federation urged the CFS Secretariat be context specific in regards to gender. Kenya supported Cuba in referencing the family approach, recognizing the central role of women.

CSM requested reference be made to the CFS mandate as a “platform for discussion and coordination to strengthen collaborated actions.”

Germany proposed specifying that activities not under CFS mandate should be covered by other agencies, and suggested that an interactive format should be considered for

lessons learned. Argentina called for focus on lessons sharing methodology, and supported that CFS take stock rather than review. UNSCN suggested it could assist lessons sharing.

On review, Brazil stressed monitoring only include activities within CFS mandate. Norway underscored that CFS should monitor determinants of malnutrition and actions that change those determinants. The US, supported by France, noted the CFS High Level Panel of Experts did not have an exclusive role in guiding policy convergence and suggested that CFS “monitor and track progress” rather than “review” it. The Netherlands favoured not prescribing the CFS review process format.

On the SUN Movement, discussion focused on the WFP proposal to add a paragraph on partnerships, country-level experiences and the work of SUN. Bangladesh, the EU and PSM supported this proposal, with PSM noting the private sector’s support of SUN.

India, with Brazil, noted that SUN is not supported by all countries, nor does CFS have a role in supporting it, suggested deleting the footnote highlighting it. Brazil proposed adding mention of WFP Center of Excellence Against Hunger to the footnote. Ecuador, the UK and CSM preferred broadening reference to initiatives, with CSM proposing text on the robust safeguards against conflict of interest. The Russian Federation said reference to SUN should not be further emphasized. UNSCN stressed the importance of SUN in global rollout of strategies.

Chair El-Taweel summarized discussions, noting: the need to avoid overburdening CFS; concerns on the review role of CFS; that coordination function of CFS be based on the CFS reform document (CFS 2009/2 Rev.2); that priorities and policy convergence build on, but not be limited to the HLPE report; the strong support for gender equality; and reservations to highlighting SUN movement without mention of other initiatives.

Chair El-Taweel noted participants were divided on reference to SUN, and suggested retaining a shorter footnote on SUN. WFP, supported by the Netherlands and EU underscored the need to further highlight SUN and its country-led experience, citing the need for CFS to link to it. The Russian Federation, Argentina and Brazil supported the Chair’s proposal. Ultimately Participants agreed to the Chair’s proposal.

CFS ENGAGEMENT IN ADVANCING NUTRITION: DECISION BOX

Chair El-Taweel invited comments on the draft Decision Box (OEWG/Nutrition/2016/04/29/03). Participants then made suggestions to further organize and clarify the draft. Germany, with FAO and CSM, stressed qualifying malnutrition “in all its forms,” and that discussion on the roadmap for the Decade on Nutrition be within the CFS mandate. WHO called for reference of the Second International Conference on Nutrition outcomes. CSM stressed intersessional work include policy convergence and coordination. Kenya proposed including a CFS deliverable activity. The Russian Federation proposed adding the decision is subject to available resources.

Chair El-Taweel informed participants that the draft proposal on CFS engagement and the Decision Box would be submitted to the Bureau with comments. He closed the meeting at 12:23pm.