



CFS Bulletin

A Briefing Note of the 1st 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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FIRST MEETING OF THE OEWG ON SDGS OF CFS: 21 JANUARY 2016

The first meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was held on 21 January 2016, at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), in Rome, Italy. Member countries and multi-stakeholder participants heard presentations on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and addressed: the OEWG workplan for the year, including its objectives, expected outcomes and activities; possible CFS work in support of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of the SDGs; and next steps.

The OEWG on SDGs was established by CFS at its 42nd Plenary session. Its objective is to agree on a proposal on how CFS as a global, multi-stakeholder committee, will support progress reaching the SDGs related to sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition, and in advancing the parts of the 2030 Agenda which fall within its mandate. Discussions are expected to 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 43rd Plenary session of CFS (October 2016).

REPORT OF THE MEETING

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – SETTING THE STAGE

OEWG Chair Willem Olthof, Senior Development Adviser, EU Delegation, opened the meeting, outlining the OEWG's scheduled activities and highlighting that the OEWG's objective is to submit a proposal to CFS 43 in October 2016 on possible CFS work in relation to the SDGs. The Secretariat drew attention to background documents, including the proposed workplan, possible guiding questions to discuss CFS work on SDGs, a note on the process leading to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in New York, an update on ongoing discussions around the follow-up and review architecture at global level, and a mapping of SDG targets in relation to CFS scope and work.

Erika Joergensen, Director of the World Food Programme (WFP) Office in New York, on behalf of the Rome-based Agencies (WFP, FAO and International Fund for Agricultural Development) in New York, provided an update on the SDG process and events of relevance for CFS, via video connection. She stressed: the universality of the 2030 Agenda and integrated nature of the SDGs; the need to engage all stakeholders in SDG implementation, a feature which speaks directly to the multi-stakeholder nature of CFS; and ongoing developments regarding the architecture for financing, monitoring and reporting, including a global framework of indicators. She underlined the

process and key principles of follow-up and review, noting that CFS is well-placed to contribute to the thematic review process in particular.

Gabriel Ferrero, Senior Policy Advisor, delivered a message from David Navarro, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Food Security and Nutrition and Special Adviser on the 2030 Agenda. Drawing attention to the upcoming report of the Secretary-General in preparation for the 2016 meeting of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), which will outline a vision for the review mechanism, he highlighted three characteristics of CFS as essential for SDG implementation: participation of all actors on an equal footing; negotiation and agreement of normative frameworks; and coordination and exchange of evidence-based reflection, enhancing accountability for all actors.

John McHarris, Chief, WFP Vulnerability Analysis Unit, on behalf of the Rome-based Agencies in Rome, presented examples of ongoing cooperation between the agencies in support of SDG implementation, including: reassessment of each agency's strategic objectives in light of the 2030 Agenda; focus on country-level implementation through their country or decentralized offices; internal capacity building on the SDGs; and joint involvement in UN-coordinated work on SDG implementation, including on financing.

Pietro Gennari, Director, FAO Statistics Division, provided an overview of collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies in the selection of indicators to monitor SDG implementation, in particular: release of a proposed common set of indicators, gradually refined through joint workshops; and strong collaboration in the Inter-agency Expert Group of the UN Statistical Commission, including submission of a joint proposal for indicators for SDG 2 (ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture), many of which have been accepted. He presented the process for developing a global indicator framework for the SDGs by the Inter-agency Expert Group. Noting that "green" indicators are those that have been broadly accepted while "grey" indicators require further discussion, he said the list of indicators is expected to be endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2016.

Responding to a question by the Netherlands on whether CFS could serve as the thematic platform for review of progress on SDG 2, Erika Joergensen shared her understanding that all SDGs will be addressed in an integrated manner under the HLPF, which she explained is expected to rely on existing platforms.

The World Health Organization (WHO) shared its experience on addressing the SDGs and targets related to nutrition, work on monitoring and indicators for health-related targets, and collaboration with other organizations.

Responding to a question from Brazil, Pietro Gennari clarified that work in the Inter-agency Expert Group of the UN Statistical Commission is undertaken by technical

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experts of national statistical agencies, while international organizations serve as observers. He said CFS could take stock of the conclusions of this technical process and support implementation at the country level.

OEWG WORKPLAN

Chair Olthof drew attention to OEWG's workplan, as amended by the Bureau and the Advisory Group (Excerpt from BurAG/2015/11/24/04), including overall objectives, expected outcomes and activities.

The Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) suggested focus on one concise objective rather than a list of four objectives, namely agreement on a proposal for submission to, and endorsement by CFS 43, on how CFS will support progress reaching the SDGs related to sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition and in advancing the parts of the 2030 Agenda which fall within its mandate. In terms of process, CSM requested the establishment of a task team to support the Secretariat, and organization of workshops to achieve common understanding of the SDGs.

The EU, the Gates Foundation and Pakistan supported focusing on one objective, noting the other elements such as an analysis of the extent to which the use of existing and upcoming CFS products can support country-led achievement of the SDGs, and discussion on possible evolution of CFS processes to offer an effective platform for coordination and policy discussion supporting thematic review of progress, to be intermediary objectives towards achieving the overall objective. France cautioned against limiting the scope of discussions. Argentina stressed the need to agree on a proposal on how CFS can support country-led achievement of the SDGs, highlighting CFS' inclusive model and products. Switzerland questioned whether support to country-led implementation fits into CFS' mandate. Iceland called for reflecting on the potential need to change the CFS model in view of the SDGs.

The Private Sector Mechanism (PSM) highlighted the importance of agriculture and food for all aspects of development; called for sufficient time for discussion and knowledge-sharing; and stressed the importance of partnerships.

The UN Standing Committee on Nutrition emphasized the policy convergence role of CFS and urged exploring how each SDG is related to food security and nutrition. Venezuela highlighted challenges for the statistical systems of developing countries.

Chair Olthof noted emerging agreement on starting with one general objective; said a task team could support the Secretariat after the OEWG's second meeting in February; and proposed that the Secretariat prepare and circulate a revised workplan. CFS Secretary Deborah Fulton said a revised document will be circulated following the meeting and will be open for comments for three days, before discussion in the Bureau meeting. She added the revised workplan can include an opening for workshops, to allow for taking advantage of any opportunity that may arise.

CFS AND SDGS: ADDRESSING THE GUIDING QUESTIONS

Chair Olthof drew attention to the document on possible guiding questions (CFS OEWG-SDGs/2016/01/21/02), noting it should be used for inspiration.

Afghanistan suggested adding functions to CFS to maintain alignment with relevant SDGs, and contribute to policy convergence on food security and nutrition, food systems and value chain. He supported focus on selected targets of SDG 2, 5 (achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls), 12 (ensuring sustainable consumption and production

patterns), 13 (taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts) and 17 (strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development), identifying ten targets of direct relevance to CFS work.

Finland stressed increasing CFS' visibility in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and exploring how the Rome-based Agencies can cooperate to support country-level implementation of the SDGs. Egypt noted the objective should be to contribute to implementation, not to improve CFS' visibility, calling for focus on areas where CFS can add value, namely to achieving SDG 2. Argentina called for focusing on CFS' comparative advantages to avoid duplication. The US suggested focusing on SDGs 2 and 3 (ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages), and qualified CFS' involvement in the formal reporting process. The PSM called for focus on SDG 2 and said CFS could have a key role in reporting to the HLPF.

The CSM highlighted their work on: an initial assessment of the 2030 Agenda, including positive elements and elements of concern, such as a weak human rights approach, a mismatch between ambition and resource allocation and an overemphasis on data for monitoring; identification of driving principles for CFS engagement, including centrality of human rights and direct engagement of those primarily affected in the monitoring mechanism; and focus on the normative, the coordination and the monitoring domains.

Brazil highlighted two streams of work: how CFS can incorporate the SDGs to assist countries in implementation, through its Global Strategic Framework; and how CFS can position itself in the SDG monitoring and review architecture. Highlighting interlinkages between goals and targets, Switzerland said CFS should focus on all SDGs related to food security and nutrition, and said national delegations can also raise awareness about CFS experiences in SDG-related processes in New York. WHO called for a holistic approach in addressing malnutrition and food systems and stressed the need for partnerships.

New Zealand suggested describing how CFS' work links to SDG achievement. Pakistan proposed specifically linking CFS products to different targets in the mapping document. Costa Rica stressed the need to identify the SDGs closely related to CFS' mandate.

Chair Olthof commended the rich discussion, which he said addressed general points but also resulted in emerging concrete suggestions.

NEXT STEPS

Calling for consistency with CFS OEWGs on nutrition, monitoring and the Multi-Year Programme of Work, Chair Olthof suggested: identifying how CFS can position itself in the New York processes; reflecting on the CFS mandate and whether it needs to be amended; and identifying CFS' role vis-à-vis monitoring and reporting. He said many called for focus on a limited number of goals and targets, while others stressed the interlinkages in the 2030 Agenda, noting further discussion is needed on this item.

Chair Olthof called for written submissions by 5 February on CFS' role in relation to the SDGs. The Secretariat will then draft an annotated outline reflecting the inputs received (collated in an annex), to serve as a basis for the proposal to be submitted to CFS 43, and start working on establishing the task team. The OEWG is scheduled to reconvene on 24 February, 3 May and 22 June, before presenting its results at CFS 43, to be held from 17-22 October 2016.

The meeting closed at 5:29 pm.