

CFS Workgroup II - Global coordination and policy convergence

Overall purpose/objective and scope: Propose and develop CFS plenary agenda items and intended outcomes dealing with global coordination and policy convergence.

Method of work: original draft, followed by e-mail exchange and a physical meeting (with teleconference if needed).

Main issues to be discussed:

I. Format of the meeting: there will be two 3-hour sessions for Pillar II (or possibly three if we take into account the SOFI-discussion on the first day).

We need to discuss in the working group:

- whether it is appropriate to work in parallel break-out working groups, followed by plenary, or go for plenary sessions all along;
- how to avoid country statements: panel discussion, facilitated discussion..., but at the same time look at what the role of ministers could be during the meeting;
- what the role of the HLPE will be at the first October session (since the HLPE will only be operational in May).

II. Content

a) Global coordination

Need for a food security stock taking, both analytical and prospective, including an analysis of the state of food insecurity in the world and an inventory of the various initiatives going on at global and regional level to identify gaps and overlaps, create synergies between the various initiatives and establish links with CFS. A particular question here is also how CFS can ensure a concrete follow-up of the decisions that will be taken at the MDG-summit in September.

Note: to be looked at in conjunction with WGIII that will discuss global coordination procedures in the context of the CFS Reform process.

b) Policy convergence

Substantive discussion of the topics should result in a broad consensus in policy direction.

Suggested topics to be discussed (and relative added value of the CFS)

Below is a list of topics to be considered that have been suggested by various stakeholders. In line with the guiding principles above, it is recommended that the 36th session focuses on a few – those themes which are most urgent and 'ripe' to deal with and CFS could offer the biggest added value - in order not to crowd the agenda (preferably not more than two). For some topics, we might decide to task the HLPE to develop the topic to make it ready for discussion at a later CFS plenary session.

- **Food security in protracted crises (the theme of SOFI 2010)**

There is broad consensus that there are strong links between emergencies and food insecurity but there is limited analytical work focussing on the actual impact of emergencies on the number of food insecure and on people's livelihoods. This analytical work is particularly important because, for many countries, emergencies are not a transitory phenomenon but are recurrent and appear to be a structural factor hindering development and poverty reduction efforts. Existing statistics indicate that countries with the highest rate of undernourishment are also countries affected by recurrent emergencies and protracted crises.

Suggestion: The SOFI 2010 will look specifically at this issue and will present a series of forward looking policy options to tackle food insecurity in the context of protracted crises. Therefore, this topic will be readily available for inclusion in the 36th agenda.

- **Appropriate tools for food markets: combating volatile food prices**

The volatile food commodity prices of recent years have resulted in calls for improved international mechanisms to prevent sudden food price rises and to manage market instability more generally. To minimize the impact of volatile food commodity prices requires a clearer understanding of the forces that determine market instability and price spikes and the associated behaviours of those participating in these markets. This understanding should lead to better policies, policy instruments and institutions that are more effective and economical in managing commodity market instability and avoiding price spikes.

Suggestion: the CFS could assist governments in identifying more effective ways and develop appropriate tools at international, regional, national or household-level to manage the volatility of prices and mitigate the impact of it on the poor. This is a very timely and urgent topic, given the price fluctuations and crisis over the last two years. Preparatory research work has been initiated by different instances and organisations; CFS can have a role to coordinate and consolidate the research done in order to achieve policy convergence on this issue at the October session. HLPE might still be able to play a role.

- **Responsible investment in land**

In a context where economic interests weigh heavily on the decisions taken by investors and countries concerned, how can a political and legal environment that is conducive to responsible investment in land be promoted and developed?

Suggestion: On the follow-up to ICCARD and initiatives relating to land, there could be an update at the CFS plenary session of the progress made regarding the preparation of the voluntary guidelines on land tenure and code of conduct for responsible investment.

- **Food security and climate change**

This topic would analyze the dual challenges of changing food and climate systems. A more holistic vision of food security, agricultural mitigation, adaptation and development is needed to realize the synergies and minimize the trade-offs between agricultural mitigation and food security. The questions to be raised are: what is the role of agriculture in combating/mitigating the negative effects of climate change and what strategies should be followed, and actions be taken, for the best possible adaptation to climate change in agriculture, with particular attention to small holder farmers including women in developing countries? How will food security in developing countries be affected by climate change?

Suggestion: Soil for Food Security and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation is already on the COAG Agenda; consider for future session and/or task the HLPE to look into this topic.

- **Food security and rural development**

Agriculture lies at the heart of the development process and smallholders have often been seen as a driving force of growth and poverty reduction. However, globalisation and the evolution of supply chains present a new range of conditions and challenges that will require a change in contemporary development policy thinking which tends to be based on observations of the role of smallholder agriculture during the Green Revolution in Asia. This topic would examine the weaknesses and strengths of small-scale agriculture in the context of modern food markets and identify the conditions that shape smallholder behaviour, their transition and their contribution to food security and wider economic

growth. The work will develop policy approaches to facilitate the participation of smallholders in markets, including the development of value chains and modern organizational structures that are supportive of small-scale agriculture's role in enhancing food security and in contributing to rural development. It will also look at what measures need to be taken to sustain the livelihood of the rural population particularly focusing on the most vulnerable and women.

Suggestion: Policies and Institutions to Support Smallholder Agriculture is on the COAG Agenda; suggest for future session and/or task the HLPE to develop this topic.

- **The accountability and governance dimensions of food security**

Five years after the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, it would be particularly appropriate to take stock of the efforts to implement these guidelines and to draw the lessons from what has been achieved. An initiative of the CFS collecting information from all governments about the implementation of the Guidelines, particularly as regards the adoption of national strategies, would be welcome in order to accelerate collective learning in this regard.

Suggestion: for future session; suggest that the HLPE be asked to prepare a review of some of these national strategies aimed at realizing the right to food, examining the reasons why certain efforts have failed, where other countries have achieved successes.

- **The directions of efforts to re-launch agriculture**

The CFS has a unique role in guiding governments in order to allow them to make well-informed choices about the different models of agricultural development they may wish to pursue. Each of these models may be suitable to different environments and to different categories of farmers, depending on the agro-ecological zone concerned, and on the income and employment effects of each model. This is an area in which comparisons between countries, but especially a structured dialogue between governments and farmers' organisations, as well as expert contributions from the HLPE and beyond, may ensure that the choices made by private and public donors and in country-led strategies for agricultural development will be based on the best available evidence, and on a clear understanding of the impacts of each path towards innovation, both in the short term and in the longer term.

Suggestion: future session and topic for HLPE.

- **Gender and nutrition**

Rural women make up the majority of the world's poor. They have the world's lowest levels of schooling and the highest rates of illiteracy. In all developing regions, female-headed rural households are among the poorest of the poor. Numerous studies underscore the social costs of rural women's lack of education and assets, linking it directly to high rates of undernutrition, infant mortality and – in some countries – HIV/AIDS infection. There are also high economic costs: wasted human capital and low labour productivity that stifle rural development and progress in agriculture, and ultimately threaten food security – both for women and men

Suggestion: this is the topic of the forthcoming SOFA, but will not be available in time for 36th session; consider for 37th.