

CFS 36 in Review: Outcomes and Next Steps for Civil Society

I. Background

During 2009, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was reformed in order that it could become “the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform dealing with food security and nutrition”¹. Civil society organisations played an influential role in the reform process and were invited to autonomously establish a global mechanism for food security and nutrition, which will function as a facilitating body for CSO consultation and participation in the CFS. The right of civil society to be autonomous and self-organised in the development and functioning of the Civil Society Mechanism was recognised by Member States.

During 2010, four members of civil society² were identified as *ad interim* members of the CFS Advisory Group, with the role of facilitating the participation of CSOs in the on-going work of the CFS. They established a webspace to share information amongst civil society on the CFS and the development of the Civil Society Mechanism: see <http://cso4cfs.org>. Action Aid, the IPC for Food Sovereignty and Oxfam (active civil society participants in the CFS reform process) worked together to coordinate the process of producing a proposal for the Civil Society Mechanism. Three drafts of the proposal were developed building upon a wide process of consultation with other CSOs. Draft 2, the final version, was presented at the Civil Society Consultation for discussion and endorsement (see below).

II. Outcomes of the Civil Society Consultation, 8-10 October 2010

The 2010 Civil Society Consultation³ was held in Rome just prior to the 36th session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). A full report of the Consultation is available on the above webspace. Participating in the meeting were 47 delegates from a wide range of constituencies and sub-regions who had voting rights and approximately 70 observers who were able to participate in discussions but did not have any formal decision making rights. The purposes of the Consultation were: to seek endorsement of the CSM; develop the process for putting it into operation and selecting Coordination Committee members; and preparing civil society inputs into the CFS. The outcomes of the Consultation are as follows:

¹http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs0910/ReformDoc/CFS_2009_2_Rev_2_E_K7197.pdf

² Beatriz Gasco Verdier -International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty; Chris Leather – OXFAM; George Fernandez - MIJARC, the International Movement for Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth; Mamadou Cissokho - ROPPA, Réseau des Organisations Paysannes & de Producteurs de l’Afrique de l’Ouest.

³ Hosted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and financially supported by the governments of UK, Norway, France, Germany, Switzerland and by FAO, ICCO and Oxfam.

1) Endorsement of the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM):

The Civil Society Mechanism proposal was presented during plenary by the *interim* Advisory Group Members. The CSM was endorsed with the acknowledgment that there will be an evaluation after one year of operation, and adjustments made as necessary. Up to the establishment of the new Coordinating Committee, the current civil society members of the Advisory Group will continue to act as interim members of the Advisory Group.

For a copy of the CSM, please visit: <http://cso4cfs.files.wordpress.com/2010/04/csm-draft-2-en.pdf>

2) Discussing process for selection of the CSM Coordinating Committee members:

During the Consultation most of the constituencies and sub-regions of the CSM discussed the process by which they would select their Coordination Committee members by the end of the year 2010. They also identified a focal point who will facilitate the process.

For a list of focal points, please visit: <http://cso4cfs.org/cso-consultation/>

3) Preparation of common positions on key CFS 36 agenda items:

During the Consultation participants developed common positions on the key issues on the agenda of the 36th Session of the CFS: Land Tenure and International Investment, Managing Risk and Vulnerability, Food Insecurity in Protracted Crisis, the Global Strategic Framework & Mapping of Food Security Actions at Country Level. The written conclusions were circulated amongst participants in the CFS and civil society spokespersons communicated the positions during plenary and panel discussions during the CFS meeting.

For conclusions on these issues, please visit: <http://cso4cfs.org/cso-consultation/>

III. Outcomes of the 36th Session of the Committee on World Food Security, 11-14 & 16 October 2010

Civil society played an extremely vital role in influencing the outcomes of the CFS meeting. Several member governments acknowledged civil society's effort to ensure that outcomes were action oriented and the overall added value of their participation in the discussions. Examples of where civil society directly influenced the wording of CFS outcomes are highlighted in bold font below.

Key outcomes of the CFS were:

Acknowledgement of the Civil Society Mechanism

- After civil society made an official presentation to Member Governments, the Committee acknowledged the “Proposal for an International Food Security and Nutrition Civil Society Mechanism for Relations with the CFS” and encouraged other stakeholders to proceed along the same lines. The proposed budget of the CSM was included in the overall CFS Programme Work and Budget for 2010-2011, which was endorsed during the 36th Session.

Land Tenure and International Investment:

- By the 37th session of the CFS it was agreed to “...**establish an open-ended working group of the CFS to review the first draft of the voluntary guidelines.**”
- Requested the HLPE to undertake studies, to be presented at the 37 Session of the CFS, on the following important issues: **the respective roles of large-scale plantations and of small-scale farming, including economic, social, gender and environmental impacts...**

Managing Risk and Vulnerability:

- The final text delegated most responsibility to the HLPE, which is consistent with civil society’s view that the HLPE should be focusing on the most controversial issues, where there is lack of policy coherence. By the 37th session, the HLPE will have undertaken studies on price volatility, social protection and climate change.

Protracted Crisis:

- “The UN system **promotes better coordinated, multi-stakeholder participation in the development and implementation of country-led, comprehensive plans of action in a small number of countries affected by protracted crisis**”

Global Strategic Framework and the tool for Mapping Food Security Initiatives:

- Launch a consultative and inclusive process to be conducted by the CFS Bureau with the assistance of the Joint Secretariat and in close collaboration with the Advisory Group and **involvement of all stakeholders**, with the aim to develop the first version of the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF) by October 2012, **which will be subject to regular updates reflecting the outcomes and recommendations of the CFS.**

Mapping Tool for Food and Nutrition Security Initiatives:

- The Secretariat to continue facilitating, with the support of stakeholders in the CFS Advisory Group, the development and implementation plan for mapping actions and resource flows at country level as “**one of the core activities of the CFS 2010/11 work programme**” ... [and] ... **4 to 6 national governments present the results of mapping at the CFS session in 2011 and inform discussions on national actions and investments, lessons learnt, good practice and the benefits thereof, and the need for international assistance**

For the final report, please visit: <http://cso4cfs.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/final-report-cfs-36.pdf>

IV. Next Steps for Civil Society relations with the CFS

Establishing the Civil Society Mechanism

Selecting the Coordination Committee Members (CC)

With the focal points in place, consultations among all regions and constituency's will be taking place to appoint the CC members by the end of the year, December 2010.

Selecting the Advisory Group Members (by and among the CC)

Once the Coordination Committee members for the 2011 work year are instated, 4 Advisory Group members will be nominated by and among the CC members. This should be done no later than end January 2011.

Work plan with expected outcomes for 2011

A detailed work plan for the upcoming 2011 year should be submitted by all Coordination Committee and Advisory Group Members, outlining their outreach and work programme within their respective constituencies and at the National and Regional levels, with expected outcomes. This should be submitted no later than February 2011. An overall work plan on the planned objectives and activities of the CSM should be submitted by the *interim* AG members by December 2010, to be discussed and approved by the Coordination Committee, no later than February 2011.

Setting up the Rome-based Secretariat

The interim AG members, will draft TORs, advertise the post, conduct interviews and hire the Rome-based Secretariat by the end of the year, December 2010.

Funding

Secure funding from member governments, document how finances will be managed and accounted for, and outline budget allocations. Although many governments expressed their support to the process, several, including the US have

asked for a detailed account, before they are able to move forward on providing financial support. This must be completed by the *interim* AG members no later than, December 2010 for the CSM to be fully operational at the beginning of 2011.

Participating in and influencing the outcomes of the CFS 2010 / 11 work programme

Prepare for upcoming joint Bureau/Advisory Group meeting on 22 November 2010

The upcoming joint Bureau/AG meeting is critical for follow up to the 36th session. Civil society input into this meeting is extremely important. The agenda will be posted on cso4cfs@gmail.com as soon as it is available and all comments are welcome.