

Recommendations to the CFS Bureau on Food Price Volatility

Submitted by the civil society members of the Advisory Group

22nd February 2011

Given that global food price volatility triggered CFS reform and we are now seeing food prices increasing rapidly in many parts of the world, the CFS must be at the forefront of efforts to tackle food price volatility and ensure that both poor producers and consumers are able to take advantage of stable prices. The reformed CFS must be able to demonstrate that it can be dynamic and responsive to a changing world food security situation during inter-sessional periods. The planned study of the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) is critical in ensuring that policies and responses are evidence based but coordinated political action, particularly involving the governments of countries most affected by food price volatility, must begin now.

It is fundamental that G20 countries should be assessing the impact of their own policies, actions and investments and what they must do to help ensure that everyone has access to nutritious and affordable food. G20 countries have a crucial role to play on a number of issues (e.g. regulation of future markets, trade policies, transparent information on stocks, support to small-scale, sustainable farming). However, on these and a wide number of other issues there is also a need for a truly multilateral, multi-stakeholder approach (e.g. trade measures, securing access to land and other natural resources by poor people).

The governments and organisations of the people most affected by global food price volatility must be actively involved in decision making about coordinated policies and actions. The CFS is the appropriate international, inter-governmental platform for this purpose.

Plan of Action on Food Price Volatility

An inter-governmental plan of action is urgently needed specifying coordinated actions which governments and multilateral institutions will take to tackle the immediate causes and negative effects of high prices, as well the underlying causes of price volatility. The plan should promote coherent national policies and actions, which ensure effective domestic responses to food price volatility, do not impact negatively on the food and nutrition security of other countries, and ensure a coordinated approach to tackle the international causes of food price volatility. The primary motivation and objective in the development of the plan should be to promote food and nutrition security and ensure the right to food for all.

CFS Working Group on Food Price Volatility

The CFS Bureau should facilitate the establishment of a small but representative Working Group responsible for developing the FPV Plan of Action.

The CFS Working Group must involve Member States most negatively affected by food price volatility as well as countries, which have a role to play in tackling the immediate and underlying causes. Government members of the CFS Working Group should be represented at Ministerial level during a High Level meeting of the Group in June 2011 prior to the FAO Conference in Rome. Ministers in charge of development in developed countries and Ministers in charge of food security in developing countries should attend.

The CFS Working Group should involve the full range of organisations and entities that are represented on the CFS Advisory Group, especially:

- Civil society experts identified through the International Civil Society Mechanism

- Members of the existing inter-agency group on food price volatility that are providing advice to the G20.

The Working Group should also be informed by:

- The sub-regional, multi-stakeholder policy discussions being facilitated by FAO in March – May
- The High Level Panel of Experts' study on food price volatility. The HLPE should complement rather than duplicate, or substitute for, the work of the relevant multilateral institutions. The HLPE should focus on the most controversial issues where there is a lack of policy coherence or evidence base for decision making and which require independent, expert analysis to inform the identification of policy instruments.

In March 2011, the CFS Bureau should hold an open meeting for governments and other CFS participants, including civil society organisations, to launch the Working Group.

In June 2011, the Working Group should present recommendations to the CFS Bureau and Advisory on the emergency actions needed by governments to address the immediate causes and negative impacts of high food prices

In October 2011, at the 37th Session of the CFS, the CFS Bureau should present the Plan of Action for tackling both the immediate and underlying causes and effects of food price volatility for endorsement by Ministers

Signed by:

Beatriz Gasco Verdier
Chris Leather
George Fernandez Dixon
Mamadou Cissokho

Civil Society members of the CFS Advisory Group
cs04cfs@gmail.com

This proposal is supported by:
Action Aid