

CIVIL SOCIETY MECHANISM WORK ON GENDER, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN THE 37th SESSION OF THE CFS

The CSM working group

1. The CSM working group on gender, food security and nutrition worked from July until October when the Plenary took place. The group had a wide membership and saw the active involvement of women's social groups and NGOs, had both the nutrition and development perspective inside, and was able to achieve common understanding and prepare comments to the different draft documents. It must be recognized however, that gender and nutrition are both large issues in and of themselves, and combining the two had its challenges. Initially the work was mainly carried out by mail and skype conference, then during the CSM Forum the group had the change to work face to face with an increased number of participants.
2. The major challenges of the working group were: to engage as much as possible with women's groups that often have less capacity to react quickly spending a lot of time in the field, to work in a multilingual context with problem in communicating with French speakers, the lack of awareness by UN Agencies of the different needs, times and constraints the civil society face in such "bureaucratic" processes, merging two sets of, at times, competing messages and priorities.
3. The CSM working group worked very well during the CSM Forum, the policy roundtable and the Plenary. However many CC members had to leave Rome when negotiations were not yet concluded. This left the gender, food security and nutrition group without the full capacity and the full range of speakers available to conclude negotiations. In our interventions we always referred to the common position paper but many issues were raised at the last moment and required immediate reaction that it was difficult to manage with a few members left in the room. This point should be considered in future years and agreement/arrangement reached on how this issue will be dealt with in a way that ensures previously agreed messages are not compromised/undermined while at the same time enabling those present to be reactive and flexible as required. This will require trust among members of the working group.
4. At the CSM Forum, the CSM WG prepared a common policy position (attached to this brief). It was the basis for the specific work on the decision box where we worked frantically to include our language and influence positive changes in the final recommendations.

The Policy Roundtable.

5. The Policy Roundtable was unsatisfactorily conducted mainly because the WFP Chair was not sufficiently briefed on some key process information. Five CSM speakers were allowed to speak and during the CSM Forum we identified all the 5 spokespersons and each person's point of intervention. Unfortunately they were initially not allowed to speak, and when we were about to claim for a point of order, the CSM spokesperson were given the floor as a single block (meaning all the five speaking in the same slot) and not in between the Governments interventions. This led to a weakened interventions from civil society as we didn't have the chance to use all the five slots but only three of them, and the intervention resulted too long to maintain a prolonged interest from Governments.
In addition, the quality of the discussion in the Policy roundtable from Governments was quite poor from the gender perspective.

5. We all lamented that particularly in the food price volatility roundtable the gender and nutrition perspectives and considerations were severely lacking while gender featured quite strongly in the final

decisions/statements from the Round table on investment in agriculture. Particularly point 30 as a whole, gender is integrated and the importance of recognising the differences between men and women which is encouraging to see.

There's the general feeling that a "silos approach" on both the gender and nutrition issues, was adopted in the CFS 37th CFS resulting mainly from having a policy roundtable completely focused on these issues. On one side, it helped raising attention on these crucial issues in the CFS, on the other hand, it limited the gender and nutrition discussion to that space instead of addressing them as cross-cutting issues going through all the policy roundtables. This aspect needs to be addressed when we look at the way forward.

The Assessment of the recommendations and outcomes of the 37th session

In general, the language of the background document improved a lot since the first draft presented in August. Thanks mostly to civil society continuous engagement in suggesting language, comments and entire new parts the final version of the background document looked better although it still presented important gaps.

During the discussion in the Plenary, we got a lot of improvements in the final recommendations thanks to the fruitful CSM team working and the positive engagement of some key Governments that were approached and continuously targeted by our colleagues (USA, Canada, EU, Netherlands). However, the final recommendations resulted too long, many of them in form of statement rather than action oriented, with the risk to jeopardize their effectiveness.

Below some wins:

1. We gained human rights language in the recommendations (point 32)
2. CFS recognized the crucial role of women in ensuring food and nutrition security.
3. The Committee affirmed that female smallholders should be given equal treatment in agricultural programming -- both as a matter of human rights and to promote economic development.
4. States have made ambitious commitments for gender equality in agriculture: CFS urges member states to take affirmative action to ensure women's meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making processes and in the control over natural resources, including land, and to actively promote women in their efforts of collective organizing.
5. Governments are asked to audit their national legislation to amend discriminatory laws, and have to enact and enforce laws against all kinds of violence
6. Agricultural investments are recommended to take into account and prioritize the specific needs of women, and the principle that investments in land and other natural resources have impact on women's food security has been included
7. The link between the UN Women, CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the CFS is made with the request to UN Women to report on progress in CFS 2013
8. From an implementation point of view, and ensuring action on the recommendations, the CSF also urges MSs to establish appropriate compliance monitoring to ensure equal access to productive resources (point 35)
9. Point 42 i. mentions statistics with regard to food security and nutrition should be sex AND AGE disaggregated. There is an opportunity within this to ensure a focus on that all important window of opportunity from conception to 2 years.
10. Point 42 iii. Now reads much stronger. The need for agricultural investments to be cognisant of women's and men's commitments to household economies and to child-rearing and recognizing their different needs is stressed.

11. Again point 42, point iv. Is also now stronger urging stakeholder to take into consideration the specific food and nutrition needs of women, men and children.
12. The decision to begin discussion and propose options on the meaning and different uses of the terms 'Food Security', 'Food Security and Nutrition', 'Food and Nutrition Security', and 'Nutrition Security' is much needed and welcomed, and can help clarify the role, linkages and added value of the CFS to other initiatives such as the SUN.

A couple of points that could have been stronger:

- In point 38, it would have been a good opportunity to also include the 'development of specific indicators targets and time tables to measure progress made towards advancing women's food security ...' 'AND NUTRITIONAL WELL BEING'.
- Point 42 – given the lack of inclusion of nutrition indicators and outcomes in evaluations and monitoring, it would again have been a good opportunity if it had read 'Recommends that gender AND NUTRITION OUTCOMES are included in the monitoring mechanisms of'
- Point 41 v – 'Support adoption of safety net programmes including home-grown school feeding and school gardens..' Safety nets are vitally important for protecting the food and nutrition security of the most vulnerable groups. Social protection and safety nets are much wider than school feeding and gardens and much learning and new initiatives and methods of dissemination of safety nets have emerged over the last few years that could and should have been raised but weren't. In addition, school feeding misses the window of opportunity (up to age 2) and so its mention in this roundtable seemed out of place and another missed opportunity for a strong point on optimising social protection and safety net initiatives.

The way forward – looking at 2012

1. Considering that the Bureau, the CSM, the Advisory Group is in the process to identify priorities to avoid an overloading of the CFS work next year, we need also to understand how to follow up with the gender and nutrition related recommendations, particularly those most action-oriented. These are in my view the following. How we can follow up on that? Monitoring and moving forward?

- Urges the Bureau to encourage and engage as appropriate with UN Women in the development of specific indicators, targets and time tables to measure progress made towards advancing women's food and nutrition security, and to invite UN Women to report on progress at the 39th session of CFS;
- Recommends that gender and nutrition is included in the monitoring mechanisms of current and future Voluntary Guidelines, including the "The Progressive Realization of the Right to adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security", and "Responsible Governance of Land Tenure, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security" and similar initiatives that will be discussed or endorsed by CFS.
- Requests the Bureau, in consultation with the Advisory Group and joint Secretariat, as well as with relevant international organizations, in particular World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), to propose options on the meaning and different uses, if any, of the terms "**Food Security**", "**Food Security and Nutrition**", "**Food and Nutrition Security**" and "**Nutrition Security**" to the CFS Session for the standardization of the official terminology that the Committee should use taking into account that nutrition is a key pillar of "Food Security" as officially defined.

2. A US Official raised a proposal to civil society on how to follow up on gender in the context of the CFS. She suggested the CSOs to develop a concept note for the Bureau, in which we explain what CSO concretely mean when talking about gender mainstreaming in the context of the CFS and we outline the process to achieve that.

She suggested the following concrete examples of actions:

what does it mean gender mainstreaming concretely in the work of the CFS?

That ALL the documents prepared by the CFS have to be revised by gender specialists? That the documents that the CFS is starting to work on (the Global Strategic Framework, the rai consultation process...) have to include a separate section on how gender perspective has to be guaranteed in that particular issue?

I think it's a very interesting idea as we'll have the chance to suggest concretely how to bring gender as a cross-cutting issues in all the upcoming areas of the CFS work, to influence some important upcoming processes since the beginning, and to give a concrete follow up on the outcomes of the CFS 37th.

3. Members of the CSM working on nutrition have been discussing whether or not a Working Group on Nutrition within the CSM would be beneficial to ensuring that momentum around nutrition is sustained and translated into concrete action in the CFS. Members of the CSM working on both nutrition and gender should informally discuss this idea as soon as possible to ensure that we are pursuing the most coherent and effective approaches that will ensure both nutrition and gender are adequately dealt with in the CFS.

CFS Roundtable on gender: food security and nutrition

CSM Position paper

In response to the document prepared for the Policy Roundtable on Gender, Food Security and Nutrition, we would like to commend the CFS for the proposals that they have put forward in the policy document. However, we would like to strengthen the proposals with the following recommendations:

Economic Empowerment of Women

1. We would like to strongly reiterate the important role of women as small food producers¹, i.e. farmers, fishers, agricultural workers, pastoralists, and indigenous women in food and nutrition security, despite the systematic discrimination and marginalization they face. Women's human rights must be at the center of global efforts to achieve food and nutrition security. **Given that gender will be an important issue in 2012 with the Commission of Status of Women focusing on women as farmers, and the new report by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to food focusing on gender, we ask gender to be at in the agenda of the 38th session of the CFS.**

Women's right and access to productive resources:

As highlighted in the latest SOFA report, women suffer from a gender gap with regard to access to natural resources, including good quality land, and opportunities. Foreign land acquisition deals that are initiated to establish large-scale plantations are threatening the customary and communal land systems upon which communities depend for livelihood, worsening women's already tenuous land holding rights and the food security of both them and their families.

2. **We call on and urge governments and international institutions to not only promote equitable access to productive resources but also to implement land reform that redistributes land to those who actually cultivate the land, with a specific focus on ensuring women's access to secure land.**
3. **We urge governments to support genuine agrarian, fisheries, forestry and pastureland reform, as well as recognition and protection of ancestral domains, waters and territories to serve the needs for food security and nutrition, health and well-being of women.**
4. We welcome the negotiations of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land and other Natural Resources and call for a quick conclusion of the negotiations and for its effective implementation.
5. Women in the global value chain are often exploited, with low wages, long hours, working in harsh and unsafe conditions. We urge governments to ensure that companies sourcing agricultural goods and services from the global value chains comply with local and international laws including ILO Conventions and Human Rights Laws to ensure that these women get fair wages, better working conditions and enjoy full labour rights.
6. Urge governments to support measures that address women's unique needs, constraints and multiple roles in child care, nutritional well being, agricultural production, food preparation, post-harvest, processing infrastructure and effective development of local markets. These should include: providing adequate public financing and financial services; guaranteeing secure access, use and control over good quality agricultural land and other productive resources, including appropriate seeds of nutritionally dense and diverse foods; providing women-targeted agricultural research and extension services; capacity building and appropriate technology and the development of local markets and infrastructure in order to realize their potential.

¹ Women small food producers includes small holder farmers, fishers, agricultural workers, pastoralists, and indigenous women

- 7. To further enhance women's potential in ensuring social economic development especially food and nutrition security we need to focus on education for women, removal of all discriminatory laws and practices regarding property rights, inheritance, and access to financial services and information, lack of adequate social services in rural communities, nutritional status and pervasive violence against women. National governments and the international community need to work to create a more enabling environment and a rural fund for women in order for them to actively participate in, and shape, the rural economy.**

MODELS OF FOOD PRODUCTION – AGROECOLOGICAL APPROACH

- 1. We would like to urge governments and international institutions to provide support for an independent, ecological based food production² that not only protects human health and the environment but is also economically feasible.**
- 2. We urge governments to adopt food sovereignty policies and strategies by ensuring that women food producers can decide what to produce and how to produce it, have access to productive resources to produce quality, nutritious and safe food.**

Women have been promoting ecological approaches in agriculture, the use of indigenous seed varieties and crops grown to ensure local food security provide nutritious food for women and their families and communities, and primarily producing the right types of food, foods that contribute to dietary requirements.

In contrast, high value agriculture tends to be associated with high input and high costs (such as chemical fertilizers, genetically modified patented seeds and export-oriented cash crops). This high value agriculture creates barriers for women's access to the inputs (i.e. seeds and fertilizers) due to increased costs; in addition, certain pesticides currently in use in agriculture negatively impacts women's health (e.g. leading to chronic ill health, reproductive problems, birth defects and irreversible intergenerational impacts); and creates further problems for the health of their households due to the contamination and declined nutrient levels in the food, and poisoning of surrounding water and agro-ecosystem. Ultimately, the ill health of women often leads to an inability to work and therefore receiving lower wages and a real lack of job security.

NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY

- 1. Urge Governments and International Institutions to ensure that programmes increase women's opportunities in sustainable food production that takes a nutrition sensitive approaches and that ensures quality and safe food. The achievement of food and nutrition security requires multiple stakeholders and involvement of sectors such as agriculture, education, social protection and health, working together in order to address the social determinants of malnutrition. Governments and international institutions must also support the adoption and implementation of maternity protection legislation and related measures that allow women to perform their caregiver role and protect their own health, whilst also protecting their employment and/or income security**

The nutritional needs of women and adolescent girls must be ensured since they are nurturers of the future generation given the link between maternal nutrition and birth weight.

Ensure a supportive and conducive environment for sustainable consumption and optimal feeding practices, including communication to address behavioral change, cultural taboos and adequate complementary feeding.

Gender analysis and nutrition impact assessments should be conducted to inform food and nutrition security policy(s), programmes and project designs at the early planning stages, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, including appropriate nutrition and gender targets and funding.

² Food production includes agriculture, fisheries, pastoralism and forestry as sectors equally contributing to food production. A system that allies agriculture, forestry and pastoralist affects best opportunities in nutrition.

We welcome the positive approaches in the discussion paper and decision box and urge that food and nutrition security should be in all contexts at all times.

Urge that the nutritional status of women and children must be protected and considered in all emergencies, areas of protracted crises and as well as development initiatives, through monitoring rates of malnutrition to ensure early response and where possible, take action to mitigate food crises. Consideration should also be given to the type, quality, appropriateness of food and sustainability of the emergency interventions such as food transfers and modalities of interventions (vouchers/cash/direct food, reserves) to ensure a focus on nutritional outcomes. Special consideration should be given to the nutrition of women and children affected by HIV and AIDS and anti retroviral treatment (ARVs).

We would like to also standardize the terminology to read, Food and Nutrition Security.

POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

- 1. We urge governments, international institutions and development partners to take affirmative action to ensure women's rights and their equal participation in all social, economic and political aspects. Women should be full active participants in development, implementation and monitoring of decision processes, governance and programmes and receive adequate training to do that.**
- 2. We urge governments to expedite policy, legal and regulatory framework protecting women against domestic, cultural and structural violence.**

There is also a need to take into consideration the different realities of women in agriculture who come from diverse sectors and backgrounds (caste, class and ethnicities) who have distinct and particular needs and concerns with food security and nutrition.

- 3. Call upon Governments to implement the Beijing Platform for Action**, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, and to report back on progress made, in particular its recommendations for advancing women's food security under the Strategic Objectives on macroeconomic and development policies (A1), vocational training and continuing education (B3), health (C1), access to resources, employment, markets and trade (F2) and sustainable development (K2). States should include specific information on progress made towards improving women's food security when reporting to the United Nations on national implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The CFS could work closely with UN Women to develop a system to monitor government action, as well as develop specific targets and timetable on women's food security under Beijing, the lack of which are impeding implementation.

We urge governments to expedite translation of their policy intentions into action in order to have the benefits reflected at the individual women's level. Progress made need to be monitored through a set of indicators and Governments should report back on their progress.

- 4. We call on Governments to facilitate women's participation in all relevant decision processes through mandatory quotas of at least 40%, continuously leadership training and visibility.** The formation of independent groups and women's committees in mixed (male and female) organizations should be encouraged through budgetary and technical support. They should promote labor-savings devices and time efficient technologies that will free more time for women's to participate adequately to political processes.

Political decision makers and various development partners must take into account and ensure participation of indigenous and pastoralist women in all processes of food and nutrition security and take into account the DANA Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and the 169 Convention of ILO.

GENDER CROSS CUTTING ISSUE

- 1. While it is necessary to address women's food and nutrition security as a specific standalone issue in the Policy Roundtable on Gender, Food and Nutrition Security, a focus on gender equality should be integrated transversally throughout all the issues discussed at the CFS, to**

ensure that women's rights, priorities and specific needs are not marginalized or addressed in isolation.

Policy Roundtable on Gender, Food Security and Nutrition should focus on issues that are specific to women, as well as on how all actions to be agreed at the CFS (to tackle food price volatility, the lack of access to and control over land and natural resources by vulnerable communities, and the need to invest in small-scale sustainable and resilient food production) can contribute to breaking down barriers to women's empowerment and achieving gender equality. Furthermore, in order for the CFS to achieve policy agreements that advance women's equal right to food, a focus on gender equality should be meaningfully integrated throughout the session, in particular in the two other policy roundtables on smallholder agriculture and food price volatility.

Urge national and international action on food price volatility to be responsive to the specific needs and experiences of women and girls who are struggling disproportionately despite the huge contribution they make to agriculture. The background paper and Decision Box for the Policy Roundtable on Food Price Volatility fails to address the gender dimensions of food price volatility. At the very least, the CFS should focus on ensuring that social protection schemes actually reach the most marginalized women and girls, help cushion them from rising food prices and bolster their resilience. The CFS should also look into the role food reserves can play in supporting women's smallholder farming and resilience in the context of price volatility.

There is the need for a **stronger reference to the gender and nutritional impacts of global challenges** such as those relating to trade and investment, price volatility, climate change, unsustainable patterns of consumption and production and increasing commercial pressure on land. The discussion should look at structural causes of women's inequality (including patriarchy) and into the overall context of the trends in agriculture and of how women in particular are being impacted by the multiple crises. It is also crucial to address hunger, poverty and malnutrition that especially burden women's food security and health and reproductive rights of women.