



Summary Report: Annual International Food Security & Nutrition CIVIL SOCIETY MECHANISM Forum

15 & 16 October, 2011
IFAD, Rome

I. Background

One year after the endorsement of the International Food Security and Nutrition Civil Society Mechanism (CSM), over 150 Civil Society Organisations gathered together to unite their voices and effectively participate in, and influence the 37th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

Since its reform, the Committee on World Food Security has become the foremost inclusive, intergovernmental platform working towards the elimination of hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all. One of the recommendations coming out of the Reform was for the newly recognized participants of the CFS; non-governmental and civil society organisations, to autonomously establish a mechanism to facilitate their participation in the annual and intersessional activities of the CFS.

In 2010, a proposal for the CSM was endorsed during the Civil Society Consultation, just prior to the 36th Session of the CFS, and subsequently recognized by Government States as a good participatory model and example to be followed.

The CSM works to ensure enhanced participation and consultation between NGOs/CSOs concerned about, and affected by food insecurity and malnutrition, in policy debates and processes at the national, regional and global levels. One of the various functions of the CSM at the global level is to “convene a civil society forum as a preparatory event before the annual CFS sessions”, open to all interested civil society participants. The purpose of the Forum is to ensure cohesive and strong CSO positions on the various policy issues being brought to the table, as well as to plan CSO participation for the on-going and intersessional work programme of the CFS.

More specific objectives included:

- To develop, as much as possible, common policy positions and lobbying strategies on key CFS policy issues for the 37th Session of the CFS
- To review the functioning of the CSM during 2010/11 and learn lessons to improve functioning in the future
- To develop our understanding of the role, organising principles and functioning of the CSM
- To agree on tenure of CSM Coordination Committee members
- To select new members of the CFS Advisory Group
- To identify key policy issues and develop CSM action plans for 2011/12 at global, regional and national levels

For the final programme of the CSM Forum, please see: http://cso4cfs.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/draftprogrammecsmforumfinal_en.pdf

II. Participants

A total of 150 individuals from civil society organisations participated in the CSM Forum, the majority of which represented those most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition. The annual CSM Forum was open to all interested civil society participants working in the context of food security and nutrition and were distinguished by two categories; participants and delegates. Delegates, being the only category of participants with formal decision making rights. The current 31 members of the Coordination Committee were considered Delegates, since the Coordination Committee represents a balanced range of constituencies, regions and gender, reflective of the CSM constituency and sub-regional quota system

III. Development and Challenges of the CSM

Panel: Former CSO members of the CFS Advisory Group: George Dixon Fernandez, Mamadou Cissokho, Natalia Landivar (absent: Beatriz Gasco Verdier)

Summary: In its first year of operations, the Civil Society Mechanism has progressed tremendously in terms of awareness raising and outreach to a diverse range of NGOs/CSOs worldwide, and in its functionality and engagement in policy negotiations at the global level. That being said, the CSM has also faced some major challenges and limitations. Specifically, filling gaps of the Coordination Committee, and a lack of long-term financial commitment by Governments and resource-rich donors. This has had rippling effects across all functioning aspects of the CSM, but has especially restricted the ability to communicate in all three working languages (translation of documents), impacting in particular, the involvement of non-English speaking CC members in the on-going discussions and activities of the CSM policy working groups.

Outcomes: In order to ensure that the momentum of the CSM continues, participants identified the following key points:

- Coordination Committee members to be given support in their outreach and communication work at the regional and national levels.
- There is a need to ensure CSO actors can easily and effectively participate in and provide inputs to the intersessional activities of the CFS, via the CSM Working Groups.
- CSM guidelines should be developed on specific issues including, communications, developing common policy positions, Coordinating CSM participation in other relevant meetings (i.e. FAO regional meetings).
- There needs to be a united effort to mobilize resources.

A more detailed evaluation form is now available for all participants of the Forum to better enhance the future work of the CSM, see:

IV. Achievements and Challenges of CSM Working Groups in Relation to CFS Policy Issues

Panel: CSM Working Groups Facilitators

Summary: The establishment of CFS Task Teams in preparation for the 37th Session of the CFS marked the first year that stakeholders other than the Secretariat participated in the development and drafting of CFS background documents. In order to effectively interface with the CFS Task Teams, the CSM established working groups in relation to the policy issues, which facilitated CSO inputs during the drafting stages of the documents. Although it is a great example of the open and participatory nature of the reformed CFS, there were some limitations with the process, including the ways of working within the Task Teams. For review, the Facilitators of the following working groups provided brief background and reflections on their experience of facilitating CSO participation in the CFS Task Teams:

- (1) Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forests and Fisheries.
- (2) Agricultural Investment
- (3) Gender, Food Security & Nutrition
- (4) Food Price Volatility
- (5) Global Strategic Framework and
- (6) Food Security in a Protracted Crisis

Outcomes: After some discussion, participants and facilitators of the working groups identified the following recommendations for next year:

- The need for transparency and openness in the submission of comments and text changes from all stakeholders.
- When applicable, the inclusion of and linkages with HLPE recommendations should be used as the basis for discussion.
- Increase the involvement of social movement actors in the working groups.
- Coordination Committee members should take a leading role in facilitating the working groups, with the support of resource peoples / members of the Methodology Group.
- Interface at the regional levels.

Moving beyond the 37th Session, the current CSM working groups will continue in their follow up with CFS policy-related activities, and more will be added depending on CSO interest/demand and subject to the agenda items of the 38th Session. For instance, there have been suggestions to include and further develop working groups on, nutrition, social protection, and climate change.

The processes for each CSM working group have been documented on their respective homepage. For more information. see: <http://cs04cfs.org/csm-working-groups-2/>

V. Preparation of Policy Messages for CFS 37 (Parallel Working Groups)

One of the main objectives of the CSM Forum is to provide a space for CSOs to develop common policy positions and lobby strategies in preparation for the CFS policy roundtables, the essence of the reformed CFS. The CSM working groups completed much of the preparation work, but the CSM Forum gave the opportunity for a broader group of CSOs - some new to the process, others, such as social movements who have difficulties contributing to the online and English-dominated process of the working groups, to provide their inputs and perspective to the policy discussions.

In order to facilitate this dialogue, parallel-working groups broke out to focus and prepare for the following CFS Policy Roundtables and agenda items:

1. Food Price Volatility
2. Agricultural Investment
3. Gender, Food Security and Nutrition
4. Global Strategic Framework

The main purpose of the working groups were to identify the contentious issues and desired outcomes of the CFS, strengthen CSO policy messaging, identify spokespersons and to agree on lobby strategies and ways of working during the CFS 37.

The documents used as a basis for discussion were the decision boxes, drafted by the CFS Task Teams and a report provided by the CSM working group facilitators. The report provided an assessment of the process, expected outcomes, and suggested text changes for the decisions boxes, all based on the working group's recommendations.

The Facilitator's background reports for Agricultural Investment, Food Price Volatility and Gender can be found here: <http://cso4cfs.org/csm-forum-2011/>

The outcomes of the working groups were proposed text changes, with specific recommendations for the CFS with a clear rationale. CSO speakers for each of the roundtables were also identified.

At the end of the working group sessions, presentations of the results were given in plenary. This gave the opportunity to address outstanding issues, and above all, ensure coherence on cross-cutting issues.

Results of the working groups can be found here: <http://cso4cfs.org/document-library/cfs-37/> or in any of the CSM working group's home pages .

VI. Functioning of the CSM

After the policy working groups, the CSM Forum turned its attention to the institutional functioning of the CSM, including the roles of the Coordination Committee, Advisory Group and Secretariat, the development of a selection process to fill gaps in the Coordination Committee, to consider extension of tenure of Coordination Committee members and to select the new CSO members of the Advisory Group, by and among the Coordination Committee.

During the morning plenary session of Day two, a review of the selection criteria for the CSO members of the Advisory Group was conducted. It was advised that throughout the day, Coordination Committee members should meet within their own regions and constituencies to discuss candidatures, before the scheduled meeting in the afternoon. It was made clear that members were to be selected on their individual capacities, and not by their constituency or sub-regional representation.

The Second half of Day two was dedicated to two parallel meetings; (1) Meeting of the Coordination Committee members and (2) Meeting of NGOs and others in the CSM, to discuss the working relationship to other CSOs/Constituencies, and ways of supporting those most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition.

The main **Outcomes** of the CC meeting were as follows:

- The tenure of the current Coordination Committee will be extended for two years until 2013 (for a list of Coordination Committee members see: <http://cso4cfs.org/>).
- The current interim Secretariat will remain in place until a transparent and open recruitment process can take place (sometime between Dec '11 to April '12).
- It was agreed that eight names for the CFS Advisory Group would be chosen, and serve on a rotational basis for the following two years based on their time availability and in accordance to the agenda items. For administrative purposes, only 4 names will be communicated to the CFS Secretariat. The eight names are:

2011 / 12	2012 / 13
1. Jorge Stanley	1. Svetlana Boincean
2. George Dixon Fernandez	2. Ibrahim Coulibaly
3. Margaret Nakato	3. Kalissa Regier
4. Lalji Desai	4. Maria Noel Salgado

For a detailed meeting report from the CC and AG meetings, see: <http://cso4cfs.org/csm-forum-2011/>

The main **Outcomes** of the non-CC meeting were as follows:

- There is a need for enhancing the communication strategy - not necessarily to reinvent the wheel, but to tap into to pre-existing structures (i.e. Nyeleni newsletter).
- Recognition of the effectiveness of the CSM working groups, and taking the lessons learned from the Voluntary Guidelines negotiations on how the CSM can effectively prepare joint statements and facilitate participation to influence a process during intersessional activities of the CFS.
- Important to ensure that the CFS feeds into other global policy discussions, such as Rio +20, UNFCCC, etc.
- Next step is to bring the global processes and negotiations to the regional and national levels, including the FAO regional conferences.

VII. Next Steps

As we move forward, the following steps should be prioritized, to maintain the momentum and ensure that the Civil Society Mechanism is able to progress beyond the global processes and engage in lobbying and outreach activities at the regional and national levels:

Engaging in Regional and National level processes (including the FAO Regional Conferences)

Identifying opportunities for national and regional level engagement will be a main priority for the CSM in 2011/12. Given adequate funding, the FAO Regional Conferences will provide the perfect occasion for CSM members to organize parallel or side-meetings to engage in awareness-raising and outreach activities within their region and to lobby governments on key policy issues.

Identifying priority policy issues for 2011/12 (including the addition of new CSM working groups)

Members of the CSM need to lobby CFS Bureau members before their first meeting (scheduled for November 18, 2011) to ensure that CSO priority issues coming out of the CFS decision boxes will be included in their priority list of actions for 2011/12. Subsequently, this will influence the CSM working groups that are formed for the CSM 2011/12 work plan.

Collating existing analysis at the country level on the causes and effects of hunger relating to the policy issues being discussed at the CFS.

Collecting country case studies to support policy asks will only strengthen CSO positions for the 38th Session of the CFS.

National level advocacy efforts to mobilize key developing countries to engage in the CFS at the global level

Between the annual CFS plenary sessions, it is critical that the outreach and lobby work continues at the national and regional levels. CSM Members must use the time to set-up meetings with Governments to discuss the value added of engaging in the CFS. The FAO regional conferences in 2012 will provide that opportunity.

Further development of CSM Guidelines on ways of working

It was decided that the CSM is to develop, in consultation with the Coordination Committee members, guidelines on ways of working, including specific activities such as how to develop common policy positions, communications etc. The guidelines will then be used as a benchmark for future CSO participation in CFS-related activities.

Mobilizing long-term funding

For the future success of the CSM, it is crucial that we secure long term funding from Governments and resource-rich NGOs. Since the reform of the CFS, Governments have recognized the value added of CSO engagement, therefore, it is now time for them to back their statements with financial support. It is the collective responsibility of all actors in the CSM to mobilize funding. Funding

proposals have been drafted for circulation, and are available here: <http://cso4cfs.org/document-library/cso-mechanism/>

Filling the gaps in the Coordination Committee

Current focal points for constituencies and sub-regions, which have not yet undergone a nomination process will be responsible for finalising the selection of the new Coordination Committee members by the end of the 2011.

Recruitment of longer-term Secretariat

To ensure the smooth and effective operations of the CSM, a full-time Secretariat needs to be recruited and fully operational to support the activities of the Coordination Committee and Advisory Group members. The new Secretariat should be appointed by no later than April 2012.

VIII. Acknowledgments

All those involved in the preparation of the CSM Forum, including members of the Organising Committee, Methodology Group, worked tirelessly to ensure that the participants were able to participate in and contribute to this extremely important process. Special thanks to the following Organisations for their support:

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Centro Internazionale Crocevia

Oxfam International

Action Aid

TAFAD

CIDSE

A special thanks to the CSM Forum Rapporteur, Jessica Duncan (Centre for Food Policy, City University, London)