

# **International Food Security & Nutrition Civil Society Mechanism for Relations with the CFS (UN Committee on World Food Security)**

## **DRAFT Terms of Reference for the NGO Constituency Coordination Committee Members**

### **Background**

During 2009 the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) underwent reform to make it more effective by including a wider group of stakeholders. The vision is for the CFS to become the most inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all. Its roles include the promotion of policy and strategic coordination and coherence, the sharing of best practices and encouraging accountability for delivery on commitments.

As agreed in the CFS reform document, civil society, which is one of the newly recognised “participants” of the CFS, has established its own autonomous mechanism for participation in the CFS. The essential role of the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) is to facilitate the participation of civil society organisations in the work of the CFS, including input to negotiation and decision-making. It is understood to be a year-round process, building links between participatory policy spaces at local, national and global levels. During the Civil Society Consultation held in Rome from 8-10<sup>th</sup> October 2010, an International Food Security and Nutrition Civil Society Mechanism was endorsed with the acknowledgment that there will be an evaluation after one year of operation, and adjustments made as necessary<sup>1</sup>.

### **Role of Civil Society Mechanism Coordination Committee**

The Civil Society Mechanism will be facilitated by a Coordination Committee<sup>2</sup>. The roles of this Committee include:

- ensuring that the functions of the Civil Society Mechanism are carried out as effectively as possible and according to the organising principles contained in the CSM document
- facilitating the participation of civil society organisations in the CFS.
- overseeing the work of the civil society members of the CFS Advisory Group and the Secretariat of the Mechanism
- ensuring access to adequate funding and ensuring accountability for the finances of the Civil Society Mechanism.
- facilitating effective two-way communication with all Civil Society Mechanism members world-wide in order to keep them informed on the work of the CFS and support their efforts to participate effectively in policy dialogue at all levels.
- making decisions on the functioning of the Mechanism such as:
  - criteria for participation in the Mechanism,

<sup>1</sup> For a copy of the CSM, please visit: <http://cso4cfs.files.wordpress.com/2010/04/csm-draft-2-en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> See paras 19-29 of the CSM document for more details on Coordination Committee.

- quotas for participation in/speaking during the CFS Plenary,
  - selection of civil society members of the Advisory Group,
  - provision of support to the CSO Advisory Group members, and
  - assistance in the organisation of the civil society forums related to the CFS.
- liaising with the CFS Bureau regarding the overall number of civil society seats/speaking slots in the annual CFS plenary sessions. *It should be noted that membership in the Coordination Committee does not guarantee automatic participation in the annual CFS plenary sessions.*

When the Civil Society Mechanism provides views to the CFS through its Coordination Committee and the Advisory Group members, it will seek to communicate the range of divergent positions that are held by participants in the Mechanism. This is notwithstanding that participants in the Mechanism will also be able to provide their own views directly during the annual meetings of the CFS.

## **The NGO Constituency**

The NGO constituency is one of the constituencies which compose the Civil Society Mechanism. The role of the NGO constituency, within the Civil Society Mechanism, is to promote the broadest possible participation of NGOs directly involved with food security and nutrition issues in the CFS process at international, regional and national level. Priority will be given to facilitate the participation of southern NGOs, especially those working directly with the groups most affected by food and nutritional insecurity. A Terms of Reference for the NGO Constituency is currently being developed.

### **Membership of the NGO Constituency**

All NGOs active in the area of food security, agriculture and nutrition, at any level are considered eligible to be members of the NGO Constituency.

However, NGO or networks affiliated to, or including, governments, political parties, private sector companies, foundations or associations are not eligible to members of the NGO Constituency as they have alternative channels and mechanisms to influence the work of the CFS.

The NGO Coordination Committee members will ensure that a database of NGO Constituency members is kept up to date.

### **Role of NGO Constituency Coordination Committee members**

The role of the NGO Constituency Coordination Committee members includes:

- contributing to the work of the Coordination Committee
- coordinating closely with the other NGO Constituency members
- facilitating the direct participation of NGOs in the Civil Society Mechanism and in the CFS whenever possible
- representing the NGO constituency as a whole in the Coordination Committee, being sure to represent any common positions that NGO constituency members

may have developed and the range of views and positions of constituency members when there is a lack of consensus – not only the position of their own organization or network

- ensuring the NGO Constituency as a whole is represented in the Civil Society Mechanism and in the CFS when direct participation is not possible, either by acting as representative or arranging for others to do so (representatives should present any common positions that NGO constituency members may have developed and the range of views and positions of constituency members when there is a lack of consensus – not only the position of their own organization or network)
- working with other Committee members to ensure that as wide a range of civil society organizations as possible are able to actively participate in the Civil Society Mechanism and in the CFS.
- working with the NGO Constituency as a whole in supporting the active participation of other constituencies, particularly those in the South, in the Civil Society Mechanism and in the CFS
- sharing information on the work of the CSM and the CFS as widely as possible and in a regular and timely manner, including via the NGO constituency website
- consulting with the NGO constituency as a whole prior to Coordination Committee meetings, including by organising physical or electronic meetings
- maintaining a contact database for the NGO constituency as a tool for communication and accountability
- developing an annual workplan and regularly reporting on progress to the NGO Constituency as a whole

During this first year, the role will also include:

- ensuring a regular and democratic process is put in place for selection of future NGO constituency members of the Coordination Committee

### **Ways of working of NGO Constituency Coordination Committee members**

The NGO Constituency Coordination Committee members act as “focal points” and “facilitators” for the NGO Constituency as a whole rather than only representatives of their own organizations or networks

They should do everything possible to ensure that the broadest range of NGOs from all regions, organizations, networks and sectors, have the opportunity to follow, express their views and feed into the work of the Civil Society Mechanism

NGO Coordination Committee members should not necessarily participate themselves in all the activities of the Civil Society Mechanism – nobody has the expertise to advise on all issues that are likely to be addressed.

The Civil Society Mechanism is likely to have policy working groups addressing key issues within the CFS Work Programme. NGO Coordination Committee members should consult widely with Constituency members to identify the relevant organizations, networks and individuals that are best able to participate in these Civil

Society Mechanism policy working groups.

## **Tenure of members of the Committee**

The NGO Constituency Coordination Committee Members will hold the function for 10 months during the interim period 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011. Thereafter, Coordination Committee members will be selected for a period of 2 years. Coordination Committee members during the interim period will be eligible to stand for re-selection for a further 2 year period.

## **Functioning of the Coordination Committee**

The Coordination Committee will meet face to face at least once a year and electronically once every quarter.

Decisions will be made in consultation with members of the Mechanism as much as possible. Decisions will be made by consensus wherever possible. NB. The exact method of decision making will be agreed by the Coordination Committee once it is established. The Coordination Committee will determine which kind of decisions require consensus and which could be made through voting if no consensus emerges. It should be noted that silence will not be taken for consent, and the views of all Committee members will be clarified when seeking consensus. In any case, all divergent positions will be noted and reported.

The Coordination Committee will establish, with the support of the Secretariat, an email list and website. All relevant information will be posted on the website in English, French and Spanish. Any interested CSO will be able to sign up to receive the emails by registering their email address on the website.

## **Support**

The work of the NGO Coordination Committee members will be supported by an NGO Constituency Facilitation Group consisting of volunteers from NGO Constituency members. The role of the Facilitation Group will be to assist the NGO Coordination Committee members in their tasks and hold them to account. More discussion is required regarding the size, composition, selection and relationship with the Civil Society Mechanism

The work of the NGO Constituency Coordination Committee members and the Facilitation Group may also be supported by an NGO Constituency assistant.

The NGO Constituency will also receive support from the Secretariat of the CSM.

## **Financial resources**

The NGO Coordination Committee members will be responsible for facilitating access to funds to support the work of the NGO Constituency as well as the wider Civil Society Mechanism, the CSM Secretariat and the Advisory Group members. It may be possible for NGO Coordination Committee members to access financial

support from the overall CSM budget – however, these funds will be prioritised for other constituencies. It will, therefore, be essential to raise funds from members of the NGO constituency both to support the work of the constituency itself but also to provide support to the wider CSM.

## **Accountability**

The NGO Constituency Coordination Committee members will be accountable to all members of the NGO Constituency and will also report to the NGO Constituency Facilitation Group.

Each Coordination Committee member will be required to write reports on how they are facilitating participation within the NGO constituency.

The NGO Coordination Committee members will ensure that a web space (currently <http://foodnutgov.ning.com/>) and email address ([ngo4cfs@gmail.com](mailto:ngo4cfs@gmail.com)) and NGO contact database are maintained to facilitate the work of the NGO Constituency and issue an annual report detailing its activities over the previous year. These tools will be the main devices to facilitate and encourage accountability.

Members of the NGO Constituency will be able to feedback on the quality of their participation, the performance of the Coordination Committee members and make suggestions as to how to improve the functioning of the NGO Constituency and the wider CSM.

## **Annex 1: Organising Principles of the Civil Society Mechanism**

1. The Civil Society Mechanism will be an inclusive space open to all civil society organizations: it will involve the full range of constituencies concerned about and affected by hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, including social movements and NGOs, particularly those from developing countries, those affected by hunger and those committed to the realisation of the right to food and food sovereignty.
2. The Civil Society Mechanism will ensure that a wide range of views can be heard on how to address the problems of hunger, malnutrition and violations of the right to food. Priority will be given to ensuring that the voices of smallholder producers, fisherfolk, pastoralists, indigenous, urban poor, migrants, agricultural workers etc. are heard.[1] Particular priority will be given to peasant and indigenous food producers and workers affected by hunger and marginalization because they represent a large majority of the hungry people in the world and produce the largest proportion of the food in the world. The CSM will make special efforts to support the capacity of the marginalized to follow and participate in the CFS process.
3. The Civil Society Mechanism will respect pluralism, autonomy and self-organisation. It will ensure a balance of gender, regions and constituencies and sectors.
4. Participation within the Civil Society Mechanism should aim to preserve unity and solidarity amongst CSOs, but should not imply a flattening of the diversity that exists between civil society in terms of objectives, strategies, and content. However, decision-making mechanisms should be agreed by the CSM's Coordination Committee (see para. 26) in order to strengthen cooperation amongst all participants and allow common positions when possible.
5. The Civil Society Mechanism will avoid creating a bureaucratic structure in Rome, but will have a permanent secretariat, which will have a neutral role, dedicated to facilitating the functions of the Civil Society Mechanism as well as providing inter-sessional support to the four civil society members of the Advisory Group (see paras 35-37). " (CSM document)