



IFSN and ActionAid Updates from Rome

Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
40th Session, Rome, 7-11 Oct 2013

Biofuels Industry strong-arms Governments at UN Food Security conference¹

Friday, 11 October, Rome: Today Civil Society movements blamed Governments negotiating on biofuels at the Committee on World Food Security for defending the interests of the biofuels industry rather than the interests of people pushed into hunger by biofuel policies. They refused to endorse the recommendations on biofuels as any references to human rights; links with food price spikes and land grabbing have been systematically refused.

Governments acknowledged that biofuels crops compete with food crops and influence food prices but did not have the courage to recommend any action to stop this. The domination of pro-biofuel countries in talks has resulted in decisions heavily favorable for biofuels expansion. Governments who spoke expressing strong misgivings have largely been ignored.

"Small scale food producers have spoken powerfully here about the reality they are confronted with every day: that biofuels crops compete with their food production, for the land they till and for the water that sustains them. They called on this assembly to take action to defend the right to food from the impacts of biofuels; instead the recommendations overwhelmingly defend the interests of the biofuels industry and legitimise violations of the right to food."

In June the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE), on the request of the CFS, released its report on biofuels policies to inform the negotiations. The report clearly concluded that there is a link between the energy policy and food security and that biofuels have been a key driver behind steep food price spikes and food price volatility in recent years. Other independent research such as by the European Commission has confirmed such findings.

¹ Press release by the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM)

Estimates suggest about six million hectares of land in sub-Saharan Africa is already controlled by European biofuel companies and about 293 land grabs covering more than 17 million hectares worldwide have been reported due to biofuels.

On Monday more than 80 civil society organizations sent a letter to CFS members warning that the current recommendations would fail to uphold the Right to Food or stop hunger caused by biofuels.

IFSN and ActionAid delegates meet UN Secretary General's Special Representative

Alberta Guerra, IFSN and ActionAid Policy Advisor

Thursday, 10 Oct, Rome: IFSN and ActionAid delegates met UN Secretary General's Special Representative Dr. David Nabarro to reflect on the CFS and the way forward and what IFSN plan to carry out over the next four years.

The one-to-one meeting offered an opportunity to present IFSN-III that started working - since April 2013 - through six regional networks aimed at creating a space for dialogue between regional institutions and civil society. However, creating such spaces is indeed challenging and not all the regional networks are at equal pace. For example, the REDSAN-CPLP² had been able to create a regular space for dialogue between the CPLP³ secretariat and civil society organization. On the other hand, in Asia with SAARC⁴ and ASEAN⁵ such space is yet to be created. Moreover, in case of Africa, the participation of CAADP⁶ non-state actors should be improved, particularly with regard to engaging smallholder producers in the decision making process.

² Regional network representing Portuguese speaking African countries

³ Portuguese Speaking countries

⁴ South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

⁵ Association of South East Asian Nations

⁶ Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme



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The participants agreed that we need to scrutinize these regional spaces as to how we can structure them where the regional institutions and the civil society can interact. Here the CFS can serve as an example of good governance, as the foremost inclusive global platform on food security.

Civil Society speaks out against the G8's New Alliance

Cécile Leuba, Food Policy Officer, Peuples Solidaires, France

Wed, 9 October, Rome: As part of the CFS's "Coordination and Linkages Session", a panel discussion was held where the G8 New Alliance was chosen as the regional multi-stakeholder initiative for this year's discussion. Moderated by David Nabarro, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Food Security and Nutrition, the discussion panel represented civil society, the private sector, DFID and CFS's own, Ambassador Yaya Olaniran of Nigeria.

Launched at the G8's Camp David Summit in 2012, the New Alliance is a partnership among the G8, the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and CAADP, the governments of the six African countries concerned and nearly 100 national and international companies. The objective of the G8 New Alliance is to help some 50 million people in sub-Saharan Africa to go out of poverty by 2022 with emphasis on "the acceleration of private capital", in order to ensure "robust and inclusive economic growth" for the African agricultural sector.

However, the civil society hold quite a different view indeed e.g. Mamadou Cissokho, leader of the African Peasant Movement and President Emeritus of ROPPA⁷, representing civil society on the panel from clearly denounced the New Alliance as it is opening more doors to the large private sector to dominate smallholder producers. The peasant leader insisted on the need for public investment - the only way forward to achieving food sovereignty and ensuring

independence of the States. Mamadou Cissokho called upon the private sector to invest in areas useful to farmers such as the processing, railways, natural fertilizers. He also criticized the "problem of leadership" as to food security, regretting that these discussions were not taking place within the African mechanism CADDP.

A British Government spokesperson representing the G8 acknowledged that the participation of civil society was not enough and agreed that investments should comply with the Voluntary Guidelines (VGs)⁸. On the other hand, he dubbed the new alliance as a 'fantastic and inclusive forum' that was compensating the insufficient investment capacity of the public sector.

The private sector, represented by Ruth Rawling from Cargill, a multinational company – tried to defend the activities conducted under the New Alliance e.g. cotton growing and processing of cocoa. The representative of the agri-food multinational rejected the criticism regarding lack of participation of civil society and instead called CSOs to "assist the private sector" She added, the new alliance was ensuring food security for the concerned populations and advocated for its strengthening and for the development of large scale projects.

However, CSO interventions and questions from the floor raised serious concerns that the G8 New Alliance is undermining the role of the CFS as the foremost and inclusive international platform on food security issues. The G8 New Alliance is developing agreements between States and Agribusiness that exclude the family farmers who are not able to raise their voices. For the civil society organizations, it is crucial that the New Alliance respects the international texts adopted by the CFS such as the Global Strategic Framework and the Voluntary Guidelines. It is alarming to note that the New Alliance clearly encourages land grabs and imposes top-down policies that ignore the realisation

⁷ Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa

⁸ Voluntary Guidelines on the responsible Governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security



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of the right to food. Such interventions must stop immediately at any cost, the civil society concluded.

CSOs hold governments responsible for private sector dominance in food and agriculture

Hillol Sobhan, IFSN Communications Adviser



Tuesday, 8 October 2013, FAO HQ, Rome: Civil society organizations (CSOs) representatives at a side event reaffirmed that agro-ecology is the way forward to protect farmers from agro-giants. The issue of seed and agro-ecology was discussed at a side event entitled **Seed and agro-ecology: Priorities of civil society in the CFS**, organized by CSM working group, in particular: MAELA⁹, International Planning Committee (IPC) for Food Security, USC Canada, ETC Group, ActionAid and IFSN.

Moderated by Antonio Onorati from IPC, the event had a number of speakers: Faris Ahmed (USC Canada), Maria Emilia Pacheco (President, CONSEA¹⁰), Maria Noel Salgado (MAELA), Chey Siyat Farmer and Nature net (FNN) and Tong Chantheang (CEDAC) and Ratan Sarkar (AFSN¹¹).

⁹ Movimiento Agroecológico de América Latina

¹⁰ Conselho Estadual de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional

¹¹ Asia Food Security Network (a part of IFSN)

While opening the discussion Antonio Onorati expressed that it is not very clear as to why CFS is yet to focus on the issue of seed regardless of the fact that seed is closely interwoven with food security. Seed impacts everything related to food and nutrition security but we are still struggling to place it on the table.

Faris Ahmed in his presentation introduced www.seedmap.org which is an online portal on seed, biodiversity and food. Seed plays a critical role in our everyday life as “our planet has lost 75% of its plant genetic diversity between 1900 and 2000, and 75% of our food is derived from only 12 plant and 5 animal species.” As informed by Faris, the online portal has developed an interactive map that uses Google technology to let you visit hundreds of case studies around the world where agricultural biodiversity originated, is threatened, and where people are working to safeguard it.

CONSEA President in her speech underscored that seed should not suffer from restrictions. She expressed concern that in Brazil seeds are excluded from agricultural insurances. Nonetheless seeds are duly recognised in Brazilian Agricultural Policies. The existing legal framework does indeed offer support to the ongoing seed-struggle in Brazil.

Ratan Sarkar from Asia Food Security Network emphasised on harnessing local and indigenous knowledge. He also demanded that farmers should be allowed to take decision on their own on anything related to agricultural practices. For example: adopting agro-ecology should be a decision taken by the farmers, not by outsiders.

Maria Noel emphasised on agricultural model that is biodiverse, not hegemonic.

The speakers agreed that the incredible concentration of power and dominance by the private sector food and agriculture giants is not about the companies being powerful; it is about the government being weak. The governments had over the years allowed this to happen through *accommodative* public policies. As a result we are faced with manipulation of wealth and privatisation. The CFS hosts over 140 govts; how come it is still



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happening? The govts are primarily responsible for the situation, the speakers added.

Background information: During CFS 39, social movements proposed seeds and agro-ecology as the new themes to be included on the CFS agenda, in order to continue to promote access to natural resources and regain control of models of production and their interconnected social and cultural aspects. The goal is to provide coherence and recommendations on global governance on related policies. Although the Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) has recognised the urgent need to discuss these issues, seeds and agro-ecology have still not been taken into account despite a whole year of work at inter-sessional sessions.

CSOs demand inclusion of agro-ecology in rai principles

Cécile Leuba-Food Policy Officer, Peoples Solidaires, France

Tues, 8 October, Rome: The issue of responsible investment is at the heart of the discussions of the 40th plenary session of the CFS. In addition to the round table on the report of the HLPE entitled "Investing in smallholder agriculture for food security", the CFS is also considering the progress made regarding the elaboration of principles for responsible agricultural investment (rai). These principles should be adopted at the next session of the CFS in October 2014 and the objective of this item on the agenda was to provide an update on the ongoing consultations and to present the next steps until the CFS's next session.

During the plenary session, the Chair of the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Responsible Agricultural Investment Christina Blank provided information on the consultation process and briefed on the work done this year by the OEWG and the next steps left until October 2014. A calendar proposal was also presented where it states the first draft will be proposed by the OEWG in April 2014, based on regional consultations which will start from October 2013. Then the negotiations will start and accordingly to the agenda presented in plenary, the rai principles will be adopted in October 2014.

During the CFS 40 plenary session, the CSM pointed out the gaps of the current draft of the rai principles. For example, the draft does not mention anything

related to ecology or agro-ecology, fails to take into account smallholders farmers and is clearly designed from the point of view of investors on a large scale. Furthermore, this draft makes no reference to convention 69 of the ILO or to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In addition, civil society organizations (CSOs) insisted on the fact that CSO input and recommendations should be taken into account more holistically and not inserted marginally as the COS represent the poor and hungry, not the big investors.

Multi-level, multi-stakeholder, nationally focused CFS monitoring mechanism stressed

Hillol Sobhan, IFSN Communications Adviser



Tuesday, 8 Oct, Rome: Speakers at a CFS side event underline on a multi-level, multi-stakeholder, nationally focused monitoring mechanism built on participation, accountability and transparency in ensuring food and nutrition security of the poor. The event 'Towards the innovative monitoring mechanism of the CFS' was organized today by members of the CSM Working Group on Monitoring, in cooperation with the World Rural Forum.

Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food reiterated that the CFS monitoring mechanism should be rights based built on participation, accountability, and non-discrimination. This would allow people to influence the decisions that affect their lives. He further pointed out that



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many of the pertinent issues have already been agreed and outlined in 'Guideline 17: Monitoring, indicators and benchmarks'.

Ambassador Mary Mubi, Chair of the CFS Open Ended Working Group on Monitoring in her speech emphasized that the monitoring principles and indicators must take into consideration the national level context to ensure effective monitoring. She expressed concerns that a common set of monitoring indicators may not always work.

Francisco Sarmiento from REDSAN-CPLP that represent the Portuguese Speaking African Countries who are also a part of the International Food Security Network (IFSN) expressed that the whole monitoring mechanism should be considered from the perspective of governance of food security and nutrition. A multi-level approach should be in place especially to link the CFS and its member countries as often many discussions and decisions do not go beyond Rome to the regional and national level

Martin Wolpold-Bosien from FIAN who is also Co-facilitator of the CSM Working Group on Monitoring suggested that a multi-actor platform should be established with active participation of the constituencies in developing a monitoring mechanism built on human rights approach, food and justiciability.

It should be mentioned that the CFS Reform Document of 2009 establishes as one of the main tasks of the CFS to strengthen monitoring and accountability of policies related to food security and nutrition. The CFS Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Monitoring is currently discussing the framework of how to monitor the implementation of CFS decisions as well as the impact of these decisions on national realities.

The purpose of the event was to contribute to monitoring processes that help strengthening the accountability and the improvement of policies related to food security and nutrition.

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CSOs hold talks with French delegation

Alberta Guerra, IFSN and ActionAid Policy Advisor

Monday, 7 October 2013, Rome: CSOs and social movement representative, including the IFSN delegates, met the French delegation and the French Minister for Development Pascal Canfin to share concerns and demands as to the CFS processes, especially the Tenure Guidelines on Land, Fisheries and Forests. They reported what they had been doing to support the implementation of the TGs: development of a manual by and for social movements, designed to respond to their own needs and aimed at explaining the TGs, their rights, in order for them to be able to claim for their own rights. A series of regional consultations in countries with representatives from communities from different constituencies, are being held to help the drafting committee better design the manual.

The other issue that gained prominence at the meeting was the New Alliance (NA). France raised some concerns around this initiative and CSOs raised their concerns about the fact that NA is promoting the TGs implementation more to secure land titling in favor of private investors than for securing the rights for communities.

CSOs urged the Minister to hold dialogues with like-minded countries in order to build some pressure towards land laws reform in accordance with national demands by CSOs, and to revisit its commitment to the NA that is working more for safeguarding interests of private investors rather than the rights of poor people and their land rights.

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International Food Security Network (IFSN), co-funded by the European Commission and implemented by ActionAid and 11 official partners, works in partnership with 1,100+ civil society organizations in 31 countries across continents to strengthen national and regional food security and sovereignty networks to ensure the right to food in southern countries.