



IFSN and ActionAid Updates from Rome

Civil Society Mechanism (CSM)
Rome, 5-6 Oct 2013



CSOs VOW TO PROTECT SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE

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The CSM (Civil Society Forum) Forum - prior to the CFS 40 - took place on October 5 and 6 at FAO Headquarters in Rome. Inaugurated by FAO DG Graziano Da Silva, the CSM was attended by over 240 civil society representatives from 175 countries.

The two-day global event discussed issues pertaining to responsible agricultural investment, protracted crises, biofuels, coordination and linkages with the CFS and Global Strategic Framework that affect food and nutrition security of millions of people. The purpose of the forum was to find consensus on key issues to be discussed in the plenary meeting of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and to better coordinate the civil society participation at the CFS Plenary.

Biofuel formed the core of major CSM discussions as many CSOs and NGOs are quite vocal against land grabbing for biofuel production. Biofuel has already been recognized by the HLPE report as a major driver of land grabbing and increased food prices. The CSM agreed to push for elimination of direct and indirect subsidies for biofuels, including

targets, mandates and blending quotas and other incentives that are contributing to food price rises and volatility, land and water-grabbing, displacement of food production, resulting in food insecurity and malnutrition.

The discussion around **investment in agriculture** touched upon both the policy roundtable processes and the consultation process in developing the principles for responsible agricultural investment. In both processes CSOs have agreed on the following key concerns and demands: need to reaffirm the centrality of smallholders, challenge the dominant model of industrial agriculture in favour of agro-ecology, ensuring secure access to land and seeds and making markets work for smallholders.

As to influencing the outcomes of the CFS discussions around the decision box¹ on investment in agriculture, the CSM has recognized that all investment in the context of food security must promote and defend smallholders' own investments bolstered by respective national policies. This decision box offers potential in pushing governments to develop strategies particularly focused on smallholders which in turn would influence other national policies and frameworks.

As to **responsible agricultural investment**, civil society discussed intensively the concept and new trend of investment in agriculture, and worked on a set of "CSO-owned principles for responsible investment in agriculture". During the forum, CSOs also discussed outcomes from the regional consultations held over the past three months. The foremost important issue that surfaced there was the *nature* of the principles as in the UN space, the principles are legally binding as they are based on human rights.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/029/MI342e.pdf>



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The concept of investment was revisited as well: investment should not only be measured in monetary terms, it is not just about the mobilisation of financial resources; it is about the commitment of multiple resources (financial, natural, human, social, and cultural) to realize a range of goals beyond mere economic return. The third prominent issue that emerged was that land and resource grabbing deserve a much stronger condemnation. For instance, agro-fuels production (causing land and resource grabbing) can in no way be considered a 'responsible' agricultural investment, and a legally binding regulatory systems to discipline large-transnational investors is imperative. The issue of models of production too was discussed as a priority issue where most people expressed solidarity towards promoting and supporting agro-ecology and sustainable food systems.

The CSM forum also discussed the process of selecting the CFS priorities for the next biennium. Social movements were strongly in favour that CFS should discuss the issue of genetic resources as major workstream towards ensuring coherence and coordination among the different bodies governing genetic resources management.

Since the CFS reform, social movements have recognised access to natural resources as one of the key priorities on their agenda. During the CFS 39, social movements proposed seeds and agro-ecology to be the new theme on the CFS agenda, in order 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. However, the current proposal is yet to take, seeds and agro-ecology into account despite a whole year of inter-sessional activity. Nevertheless, the CFS plenary still offers a platform where the priorities of small-scale



food producers can be put forward through sharing their experiences on the ground. .

With regard to **monitoring**, 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. In order to take the agenda forward, a number of proposals have been made:

- building efforts on already existing experiences of national, regional and global level;
- taking into account the five guiding principles of the Global Framework for Food Security and Nutrition that would guide the way towards human rights based monitoring and accountability;
- starting the monitoring exercise with the first most transcending decision of the new CFS, the Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (Tenure Guidelines);
- conducting monitoring of public policies through national inclusive platforms where all actors, particularly the organizations of small-scale producers, are represented, as well as all relevant sectors of government.
- using the GSF as the key reference tool for CFS stakeholders, as it offers essential elements for policy coherence and accountability, by providing principles on monitoring and accountability, guidance



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for country level actions and the content of policy decisions to be monitored.

All these elements should flow into the innovative monitoring mechanism of the CFS. Civil society is willing to contribute to the definition of its key elements, including guiding principles, common indicators and specific methodological instruments which can be adapted to realities and existing mechanisms on the national, regional and global levels.

As to **CFS communications strategy**, CSOs welcomed the overall CFS Communications Strategy as raising awareness and ownership of the CFS and CSM process to a broader range of stakeholders at the global, regional and country level is critical.

CSOs also expressed commitment to continue to facilitate effective communication on CFS issues with civil society organizations and encourage other stakeholders to engage in the CFS processes and implement the CFS policy guidance as needed. CSOs wished to work closely with the CFS Secretariat in developing and tailoring different communications messages and products suited to a range of audience.

The CSM Forum finally concluded with the plenary endorsement of the positions agreed and proposed by the thematic groups, getting ready for the CFS 40th Plenary Session.

CIVIL SOCIETY KEY MESSAGES ON CFS 40 AGENDA ITEMS Prepared by the Civil Society Mechanism

BIOFUELS

We need to act now, and address policies that are at the root cause of the food crises. Biofuel production – and the policies, subsidies and mandates behind much of the supply and demand in the biofuels market – has been directly linked to higher food prices and increased food price volatility in recent years. The demand for biofuels and high prices for food crops are also directly linked to land - and water - grabbing. Coordinated policy actions at the global level are necessary to eliminate mandates and subsidies; protect the rights to food, land, and water; and ensure that biofuel production does not threaten food security. The CFS has no other option than to deliver to meet its obligation to improve policy coherence for the realization of the right to food and to ensure food and nutrition security for all.

INVESTING IN SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE

Small-scale producers – mostly women - are the principal investors in agriculture and the major food producers. Public investments should support:

- The family farming model which is more diversified, more nutritious, and more useful from an environmental perspective than the industrial model.
- The rights of peasants to access land and seeds, which is the first step towards food sovereignty.
- Small-scale food producers' markets that exist everywhere.



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PROTRACTED

We appreciate the efforts to include civil society in the development of the Agenda for Action (A4A) for Addressing Food Insecurity in Protracted Crises, but demand further involvement in the immediate actions surrounding resilience and the New Deal, and the criteria and selection process for countries in protracted crisis. Additionally, we stress on the following:

- Affected communities should be at the centre of the assessment of the underlying structural causes, consequences of protracted crisis to enable them to be active in decision-making processes and claiming their rights under legally binding instruments.
- The A4A should be directed at enhancing local food systems defined by affected communities rather than short-term interventions that breed dependency.
- The A4A should ensure that “nutrition” is mainstreamed into the A4A title, design, implementation, and monitoring processes.

CFS PRIORITIES (Multi Year Programme of Work)

On the process, we have complained about the attempt of certain governments to reduce the work of the CFS, as this undermines the role of the CFS as the global governance platform, which gives recommendations and coordinates policies on food and nutrition security. The reduction in the number of HLPE reports from two to one for the 2014-2015 period is just one example. There are no economic reasons why the number of HLPE reports should be reduced.

On CFS priorities, we believe that the topic of seeds is central to food security, especially for small-scale food producer organizations. The CFS should be able to coordinate the actions of international bodies involved in the topic of Genetic Resources at one single articulation level, with bodies such as the ITPGRFA and the Commission on Genetic Resources, the CBD, WIPO and UPOV. This should

CRISES



be a priority for governments in order to provide coherence to international agreements aimed at guaranteeing food security.

MONITORING

We welcome and appreciate the work done so far by the OEWG. We recall the importance of monitoring and accountability as one of the main tasks of CFS. Particularly we stress the mandate of the CFS Reform Document to develop and establish an innovative mechanism on monitoring, which is to be built on the elements agreed upon by the OEWG and the GSF. We understand that the explicit OEWG mandate given by the CFS 39 to further develop the innovative monitoring mechanism will be part of the work plan in 2014.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The CSM supports the overall CFS Communications Strategy and suggests further consultations with civil society on communication needs assessment in finalizing the strategy and implementation plan. The communications strategy should take into consideration the people who do not have regular access to electronic infrastructure such as internet/email or even electricity and explore alternative communications means such as traditional/folk media, radio, and interpersonal communications and others. The CSM wishes to



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work closely with the CFS Secretariat in developing communications messages and products, which sho



should be made available during campaigning activities across the globe.

To ensure coherence in implementing CFS policy guidance, the CFS strategy should elaborate how it relates to, and supports the processes. The CSM wishes to highlight that different constituencies may not always automatically endorse CFS communications messages and products which at times may need adaptation and contextualization for a specific audience. In addition to this, the CFS website should be separate from that of the FAO, “articles” should be replaced with “other communication products and initiative” on page 7 (point 26) and “CFS Champions” should clearly be defined on page 7 (point 27) as the CSM constituencies and sub-regions would also like to be a part of the “Champions”.

GLOBAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (GSF)

As the CSM we are deeply committed to using the GSF. We expect the CFS, in its communication strategy, to disseminate and raise awareness of the GSF in the same manner that we are doing. As far as this year's decision box, we will accept it. However: Although we are in favor of this being a living document we caution against the yearly update, as cut and paste from decision boxes. We urge the CFS too identify a clear inclusive process for the periodic update of the GSF and to resource it accordingly. In case it is decided to go ahead with yearly updating this should be done using annexes. We would like to see the removal of the sentence which refers to updates being subject to available resources.

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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.

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