

Meeting of the CFS Bureau and Advisory group, 25 May 2011

Speaking points

MS Swaminathan, HLPE Chairperson

Check against delivery

Dear Vice-Chairperson of the CFS Bureau, Hugo Verbist
Distinguished Members of the CFS Bureau and Advisory Group,
Dear Secretary of the CFS, Kostas Stamoulis
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the whole HLPE Steering Committee, Maryam Rahmanian, Vice-chair and I are really happy to meet with all of you today.

When I addressed the Committee last October, I referred to the need of a “**coalition of the concerned**” towards the eradication of hunger.

We, experts in the HLPE, and the CFS, Governments and all stakeholders, with the Bureau and Advisory group, **we are all here to make this coalition a reality. To foster its emergence and to make it a success.**

In our world, there are close to 1 billion hungry and 1 billion malnourished. These women, men and families are the first on the line. We should be the first on the front line thriving for a world free from this pain. We cannot abandon our determination towards this essential goal, and towards meeting MDG 1.

Today is an important moment to explain to the Bureau and the Advisory group where the HLPE stands, give an update of what we have done, and what is our horizon. I warmly thank the CFS Bureau and Advisory group for this opportunity.

We, in the HLPE, realize how important our task is. We are all determined to do our best, for the success of the CFS, to which we shall be an essential input, as the CFS has requested from us to be.

The CFS is in the first years of operation after its important reform. This is also the first year of the HLPE. It must set up high standards. In terms of procedures, in terms of quality of the process. In terms of substance, value, recommendations and quality of the reports.

The HLPE is a new process, just as new as the new CFS.

One year ago, we, Steering Committee, were not even appointed.

We now proudly stand in front of you, well engaged into our different streams of work.

We are proud to show that the HLPE can work quickly and efficiently. This is paramount to feed the political agenda. Measures, decisions to fight hunger cannot wait, for the sake of the afflicted.

So where do we stand now?

We were mandated by the CFS to start our work on 4 important topics: land tenure and international investments in agriculture, price volatility, social safety nets and, finally, climate change.

In December 2010, the HLPE Steering Committee met with the CFS Bureau and it was further decided:

- that the two studies on Price volatility and on Land tenure and international investments in agriculture shall be carried out by the HLPE in 2011 with findings to be presented at CFS 37 in October 2011.
- that the two studies on Social protection and on Climate change shall be subject of intermediate progress reporting by the HLPE at CFS 37, with final reports to be presented at CFS 38 in October 2012.

Internally to the HLPE, we have organized ourselves, with the support of the Secretariat, to deliver on this agenda.

The HLPE Steering Committee, for the 2 ongoing studies on price volatility and on land tenure and international investments in agriculture, has **appointed 2 Project Teams**.

For the price volatility study, a Project Team has been appointed in March 2011. It is comprised of 4 members: Benoit Daviron (Team leader), and Sophia Murphy, Niama Nango Dembélé, Shahidur Rashid.

The Project Team for the land tenure and international investments study has been appointed also in March 2011. It is comprised of 5 members: Camilla Toulmin (Team Leader), Prem Bindraban, Esther Mwangi, Jun Borrás, and Sergio Sauer.

These teams are deliberately “compact” because the HLPE felt it would be impossible to reasonably and efficiently produce a report within such tight deadlines with a list of 20 or 50 authors, and having to coordinate all of them.

For the Steering Committee, forming the Project Teams was not an easy task at all. We had to pick up from the best experts, in the respect of the principles that were given to us by the CFS which were, I quote *“scientific and technical relevance, regional expertise and balanced geographic representation, as appropriate”*.

Best, high level, experts have their own work agenda, which is filled months in advance. We had to seek for experts willing to put everything aside for 3 or 4 months, asking them to concentrate on the work for the HLPE and the CFS, under high pressure, in a very tight agenda. In the HLPE it all relies on the good will of the experts, on their conviction that the CFS is really important, that their work will be useful to the world.

It all works because each one of us feels to be part of this “coalition of the concerned”.

We shall all be very grateful that such high level experts, the two team leaders and members of the project teams have been kind enough to spare time for the good cause.

And the work of the Project Teams does not stop at their frontiers.

One key element of the HLPE is the inclusiveness of all forms of knowledge and evidence, to inform CFS. The Project Teams were explicitly mandated in that sense. Tools like open consultations have been set up to guarantee the inclusiveness as well as the transparency of our process.

As the CFS has instructed us, the HLPE thrives to “*help create synergies between world class academic/scientific knowledge, field experience, knowledge from social actors and practical application in various settings*”. We will not thrive to force consensus on all issues, because we all know there are controversial ones. But we will thrive to reflect all sides of the debate, and to put forward “**solution-oriented**” knowledge.

These two teams have released their V0 draft for open consultation. The consultations will be open the 3rd of June. We call all parties to participate to these consultations, channelled through the FSN forum. All experts listed into the HLPE Roster have been invited to contribute also.

Then, the Project Teams will take into account feedback received from the consultation to finalize a revised version.

Following this, in June, the drafts will be submitted for scientific and evidence-based review. **3 Reviewers** per study are currently being appointed. The Steering Committee is making sure they represent a wide range of views.

The report will then go back to the Project Team for finalization, to take into account the result of the external review, and final comments and guidance by the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee will meet in the Netherlands in July, at the invitation of Prof Rudy Rabbinge, to approve the 2 reports, as per the HLPE Rules and Procedures. These reports will then be publicly released.

We expect to release the 2 approved reports in English shortly after our 3rd meeting (12-13 July). Other languages and all printed version will be available for early September, when we will seek to organize also an official launch

It is not my intention , in this meeting, to initiate a debate on the contents of the draft reports.

First, obviously, because we would not have the time.

Second, because the current versions are not the final versions. We are not at the end of our process: there are still important steps ahead, the first one being to receive feedback from the e-consultation. We need to complete all these steps in their integrity. This is how we will build the robustness, credibility and legitimacy of our final reports.

Third, we all understand that our reports are not for “adoption” or “rejection” by CFS. The HLPE is independent and our reports will stand in their own right. We hope that the CFS will give us a slot in the CFS Plenary in October to present our findings, and that the CFS will be able to make the best use of our work as a basis of its own discussions.

To facilitate the use by the CFS of our report and of our recommendations that we, HLPE, will have adopted in July, we will make sure that, **each report will also contain a summary for policymakers of up to 5 pages, as well as a compiled list of our recommendations.**

As you know, we have also two other studies on our agenda, and on which the HLPE will be able to make a progress report at CFS.

On Climate Change, I am glad to announce that the draft scope and terms of reference of the Study, in the framework of the mandate received by CFS, will be submitted for open public consultation for 3 weeks between the 13 of June and 1st of July.

This study on climate change and food security is particularly important. Our report shall not be just another report on climate change. Indeed, when food security is discussed at CFS, climate change is discussed in other international fora (like the UNFCCC). This is perfectly legitimate, but we must build bridges between the two. Several expert processes exist in this climate change area (such as the IPCC). We feel that agriculture and food security have not been given the proper space in climate change talks. There is a need, more than ever, to put food security considerations, and especially of the most vulnerable, in the front row when designing climate change mitigation and adaptation policies. Our study shall contribute to that aim. This is why we will try to feed into and be useful for the agenda of these other arenas.

On Social Protection, Catherine Bertini will propose a draft scope of the study to the Steering Committee after July. We hope to be able to release it for open consultation before the CFS Plenary in October.

It is my objective to have the 2 Project Teams on the two studies on climate change and on social protection appointed, if not already before the CFS Plenary, immediately after.

I have also the regret to announce, even if it is part of the normal life of a Committee, that Derek Byerlee has resigned from the Steering Committee of the HLPE, due to time and other personal constraints. We

will obviously miss his extensive experience and wise counsel. His contribution to the work of the HLPE has been invaluable. This is why I am also very glad that he accepted to keep on contributing to the 2 remaining studies.

Derek Byerlee has wished the “Committee all the best in its important work.” He is definitely part of the “coalition of the concerned”, and will continue supporting the work of the HLPE in a different way.

I have written to your Chair, Noel De Luna, and I would be extremely grateful to the CFS Bureau to rapidly decide on another expert to fill this vacant position.

Conclusion

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I do not want to be too long. Maryam and I are also here to hear from you.

I would like to thank all that have contributed and are contributing to the process, in their intelligence, knowledge, and also in administrative and financial support.

We hope that our products will justify the confidence that you have given us.