

September 2012



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para la
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Agricultura

JOINT MEETING

**Hundred and Twelfth Session of the Programme Committee and
Hundred and Forty-seventh Session of the Finance Committee**

Rome, 7 November 2012

FAO STRATEGY FOR PARTNERSHIPS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

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Executive Summary

1. This Strategy provides an umbrella framework to guide civil society's and FAO's work together in their pursuit of eradicating hunger and poverty.
2. Poverty, hunger and malnutrition have persisted despite numerous efforts made by countries, organizations and institutions to eradicate them. Many of the food-related crises of recent years are evidence that these problems are becoming increasingly interconnected. This means that the solution cannot simply be to intervene on isolated symptoms of a larger, more complex and multifaceted problem. It also means that efforts to tackle these issues cannot be solely of one organization or institution. This requires the decisions, perspectives, capacities, knowledge, skills and influence of multiple actors in order to achieve one common goal: A world free from hunger.
3. Numerous actors have been involved in areas complementary to FAO's mandate, in particular civil society organizations. Civil society has become a particularly important partner for FAO. Made up of women, youth, farmers, herders, fishers and fish workers, indigenous peoples, forest dwellers and more, many of whom are often FAO's beneficiaries, civil society organizations bring together the voices of these groups, reach the most marginalized groups of society, and bring the positions of people to policy dialogue and normative discussion. These organizations can play a catalytic role in improving and furthering the work of FAO, and vice versa, especially in the area of food security.
4. They have also increasingly shown their capacities and potential in programme and project design, execution and implementation at regional, national and subnational levels. In recent years they have succeeded in opening up areas for dialogue with governments and other actors at regional and global level, which are now either consolidated or institutionalized into governance fora, thus contributing their capacities and expertise to higher quality policy and normative discussions. FAO acknowledges these achievements by civil society, as well as the effectiveness of new governance areas to discuss public policies in the fight against malnutrition.
5. This document lays out objectives, guiding principles and benefits that civil society and FAO have in many common areas where civil society can contribute to FAO's work and vice versa. The Strategy provides the tools and know-how to increase the number of quality and effective partnerships with civil society. Six main areas of collaboration have been identified: policy dialogue; normative work; field programme; knowledge sharing and capacity development; advocacy and communication; and joint mobilization and use of resources.
6. Civil society includes a broad category of organizations which, although different, often share common goals, resources and/or approach. For the purpose of this Strategy, three main groups of civil society organizations have been identified: social movements; Member-based organizations; and non-governmental organizations.
7. These three main categories show that civil society is more than just large NGOs. There are multiple types of organizations across different constituencies (farmers; pastoralists and herders; fishers and fish workers; forest dwellers; consumers; landless; urban poor; NGOs; women; youth; agricultural workers; and indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities), and a balanced representation of these organizations in policy dialogue and normative discussion is essential for the empowerment, ownership, success and sustainability of any decisions made or actions executed.
8. As common principles, goals, and areas of interest bring FAO and civil society together, the benefits of collaboration for each organisation become increasingly apparent. The Strategy describes these benefits by capitalizing on each other's knowledge, expertise, technical capacities, and human and material resources. By combining efforts, FAO and civil society become stronger and more capable to individually and collaboratively provide longer-lasting results.
9. Lastly, while global partnerships with networks, mechanisms and INGOs are important for FAO's work, the emphasis of this Strategy is on building partnerships at the decentralized level. FAO is committed to developing the capacity of civil society at local level to enable local leaders to access higher levels of dialogue and debate. FAO's country offices will support these efforts, and FAO will also provide its staff with tools and knowledge to facilitate this work.

10. This Strategy, together with other complementary tools, will provide a corporate framework, indicating the direction and emphasis of joint work of FAO and civil society in partnerships, acknowledging the importance of engaging with a wide range of stakeholders in civil society. The Strategy is the result of extensive consultation with civil society, FAO staff in technical units, headquarters and decentralized offices. It has also been shared with all Senior Management. This document includes their vision and comments.

Guidance sought from the Joint Meeting

- The Joint Meeting may wish to endorse the Strategy for partnerships with civil society as a fundamental element in FAO's overall Strategy on the use of partnerships to achieve its Strategic Objectives. It is a Strategy intended to provide a platform for enhanced engagement with civil society.
- Specifically, the Joint Meeting may wish to:
 - endorse the commitment within the Strategy to the pursuit of enhanced dialogue with civil society; and
 - provide guidance on the implementation of the Strategy, especially with regard to the development and management of partnerships at decentralized level.

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Introduction

A. Preface

11. In today's world, the problems of poverty, hunger and malnutrition still persist, despite the many efforts made by numerous countries, organizations and institutions to eradicate them. Over the years, these problems have become increasingly more complex and interconnected. The efforts of individual organizations are insufficient and the need for collaborative measures and the construction and implementation of truly participative and transparent policy agendas have arisen. Success in reducing the proportion of undernourished and poor as per the first Millennium Development Goal,¹ requires combined and continuous efforts of multiple and varied actors. Seeking partnerships and collaboration among public sector institutions, intergovernmental organizations, private sector, academic and research centres, and civil society is now a must.

12. Civil society has come to play a crucial role in the area of food security. It has also increasingly shown its capacities and potential in programme and project design, execution and implementation at regional, national and subnational levels. In recent years, it has succeeded in opening up areas for dialogue with governments and other actors at regional and global levels, which are now either consolidated or institutionalized into governance fora, thus contributing their capacities and expertise to higher quality policy and normative discussions.

13. The goals of this document are to provide: i) a framework for enhanced partnerships between FAO and civil society organizations, recognizing them as central actors to empower, protect and improve the livelihoods of those most affected by food insecurity, malnutrition, poverty and natural disasters; and ii) guidance on how to engage in these partnerships, identify new stakeholders and potential partners, and work with them towards reducing food insecurity, poverty and all their consequences.

14. As a corporate umbrella document, this Strategy indicates the direction and emphasis of partnership work between FAO and civil society. The Strategy will have a set of complementary tools to be seen as "living documents,"² which will be discussed and updated progressively.

B. Background

15. In the 1990s, driven by the increasing prominence of civil society in global debates on different models of agricultural development, FAO assumed a new corporate policy aimed at enhancing collaboration and debate with civil society (including different social movements, NGOs, community organizations, etc.) that eventually resulted in the establishment of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC). This new approach was catalytic in ensuring broader civil society engagement at the World Food Summit, held in Rome in 1996.

16. In 1999, FAO adopted its "Policy and Strategy for Cooperation with Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organizations",³ acknowledging the changing roles of governments and civil society across the world and requiring changes in the corporate governance of the Organization in order to increase both its legitimacy and efficiency in decision-making.

17. In 2002, the World Food Summit: *five years later* gave a strong impetus to FAO's decentralized relations with civil society through its extensive involvement in the Summit process. As a result, FAO's regional offices have been designated as civil society focal points.

18. The Independent External Evaluation and Immediate Plan of Action supported the need to expand partnerships with different stakeholders and a general recommendation to increase the level of collaboration and agreements with civil society organizations that share FAO's mandate. Examples of

¹ UN Millennium Development Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

² These include a handbook with useful criteria to work with civil society and capacity development material for both FAO staff and civil society leaders. In addition, the Partnerships and Advocacy Branch (OCPP) is developing a Web portal with useful tips.

³ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/x2214e/x2214e00.htm>

increased inclusive and participatory governance mechanisms in FAO comprise the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), reformed in 2009 to include civil society; and the 2012 Regional Conferences, involving civil society as participants.

19. In 2012 the Director-General launched a Strategic Thinking Process to determine the future strategic direction of the Organization. As part of this process, the Director-General reaffirmed and enhanced the importance of establishing partnerships, in order to carry out the Organization's mandate, reasserting civil society as a key ally of FAO.

20. This Strategy, deeply rooted in the recommendations received and lessons learnt in the past years, is an update of the 1999 FAO Policy and Strategy for Cooperation with Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organizations. The document has been finalized following a global consultation process involving all FAO Senior Management and key staff at headquarters and decentralized offices, as well as a wide range of civil society constituencies.⁴

I. Scope and objectives

A. Rationale

21. The Organization acknowledges that eradicating hunger, malnutrition and poverty is a fight that can only be won by joining forces with different stakeholders. FAO recognizes civil society as one of these key stakeholders.

22. Aligned with the 2011 Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development,⁵ this document elaborates on the key principles established in the 2010 FAO Organization-wide strategy on partnerships, supporting the Strategic Objectives and applying the core functions of the reviewed Strategic Framework.

B. Objectives

23. The main objective of this Strategy is for civil society and FAO to work together in reducing poverty and eliminating food insecurity. It will provide FAO staff with practical guidance on how to develop effective partnerships⁶ and alliances with civil society to reach the following specific objectives:

- a) enhance and enable policy dialogue between FAO, countries and civil society, and establish more inclusive processes;
- b) ensure that at the decentralized level, collaborations and partnerships between FAO and civil society take place during all stages of programmes and project development, when applicable;
- c) develop the capacity and ability of civil society organizations for their participation in new forms of governance in food systems;
- d) improve FAO's knowledge and capacity to work in partnerships with civil society; and
- e) help countries in achieving the five Strategic Objectives as 'development outcomes' in FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework. The Strategy supports in particular the delivery of outcomes addressing partnerships under Strategic Objective 1 on hunger eradication and Strategic Objective 3 on poverty reduction.

⁴ Small farmers, landless, agricultural workers, fishers and fish workers, pastoralists and herders, forest dwellers, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, urban poor, consumers, NGOs, women and youth.

⁵ The 2011 Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development calls for the involvement of all national and regional stakeholders, including civil society, in the prioritization, planning and programming processes, as the success of national and regional programmes depends on the level of ownership and leadership of member countries http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/newsroom/docs/Summary_Strategy_PR_E.pdf.

⁶ For the purpose of simplicity in this document, the term "partnership" has been used to refer to collaboration, agreement, alliance, engagement, etc.

C. Underlying principles for this strategy

24. Quality partnerships with civil society should be based on mutually accepted principles, mutual respect and common goals. These principles are:

Mutual Principles:

- a) A partnership is a voluntary association of actors sharing a common interest; based on mutual respect and acknowledgement of each organization's capacities; built upon the comparative advantage and knowledge of each organization, and not compromising the position, opinions and nature of any of the partners.
- b) Respect of UN principles, human rights and dignity, gender equality, and in particular, the right to food.

FAO's acknowledgement of relevant principles for civil society:

- a) Autonomy and self-organization: once granted access to a forum, civil society can autonomously organize, deciding how best to occupy the different spaces of dialogue and express its positions.
- b) Internal consultations: civil society will carry out internal consultations among its constituencies to establish their positions and representatives.
- c) Enough time: civil society organizations need time to cascade relevant information to their main offices and members prior to consolidating and presenting a joint position.

Civil society acknowledgement of relevant principles for FAO:

- a) Member-based structure: FAO is an organization made up of member countries to which they are accountable.⁷ The nature of the Organization entails agreements and adoption of standards of other UN and intergovernmental bodies.
- b) Neutral forum: FAO can provide a neutral forum for dialogue and debate.
- c) Knowledge organization: FAO is a knowledge organization, not a funding institution. In those cases when the Organization funds civil society, FAO's rules and regulations apply.

II. Definition and types of civil society organizations

A. Civil society: a definition

25. In 1998 the UN defined civil society as: "the sphere in which social movements organize themselves around objectives, constituencies, and thematic interests."⁸ Civil society is a broad category which encompasses a wide variety of organizations, which although different, often share certain common goals, resources and/or approach in order to maximize their decision-making capacity, advocacy and knowledge.

26. For the scope of this Strategy, any national or international non-governmental organization (INGO), association or foundation which has been set up by private entities, therefore stemming from a profit-seeking perspective, as well as cooperatives, which generally have for-profit orientations, will be considered under the Strategy for partnerships with the private sector. In instances where the divide is not clear, for example cooperatives which are established by social movements, FAO will look at them on a case-by-case basis to determine whether they fall more appropriately under the domain of civil society or private sector.

⁷ FAO can invite individuals from civil society to FAO meetings, based on their personal/professional capacity, as well as organizations. In these cases, FAO can select directly the professional or organization. However, they will not be considered as representatives of civil society, but as individuals.

⁸ UNGA A/53/170 "Arrangements and practices for the interaction of non-governmental organizations in all activities of the United Nations System" <http://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N98/202/59/pdf/N9820259.pdf?OpenElement>

B. Types of civil society organizations (CSOs)

27. Due to their varied nature, it is difficult to group all civil society organizations into rigid categories where overlap is likely to exist. However, for the purpose of this Strategy, three types of organizations have been identified: social movements (SMs); Member-based organizations (MBOs); and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Social movements (SMs)

28. This category includes platforms, committees, mechanisms, federations and networks of advocacy-based and policy-oriented organizations which promote claims or rights related to specific constituencies (e.g. land-holding farmers, fishers and fish workers, pastoralists and herders, forest dwellers, rural landless workers, urban poor, etc.).

29. Social movements emerge from historical circumstances, sharing similar goals, promoting awareness and attempting to influence policy-makers in relation to certain development, social and/or political issues, some of which coincide with FAO's mandate. While their legal status and characteristics may vary, their common trait is that they work to strengthen the capacities of the organizations under their coordination-umbrella to advocate for the common interests, concerns, views and goals of their constituencies.

30. Some examples of social movements with which FAO has collaborated are: La Via Campesina, the Civil Society Mechanism, and the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty.

Member-based organizations (MBOs)⁹

31. Member-based organizations are groups of stakeholders committed to improve the livelihoods of their members. The democratic governance structures of MBOs, which are subject to local laws and regulations, provide internal accountability to their members and give these organizations legitimacy. MBOs' leaders, elected democratically by their members, often come from the most vulnerable communities.

32. For example, MBOs may include small farmers or fisheries and forest groups that seek to better manage their commonly used resources. Their activities are aimed at impacting policies or providing public (not private) goods or service. These can range from training their members to performing advocacy and lobbying activities.

33. Some examples of MBOs are: Mexico's Rural Development Associations, sponsored by FAO under the Special Programme for Food Security; the foundation Promoción e Investigación de Productos Andinos (PROINPA), which experiments sustainable agricultural farming combining modern techniques with ancient practices; and the local agricultural research committees (CIALS) in the Honduras Hillside, sponsored by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)¹⁰

34. NGOs are formally constituted, legally registered, free from commercial interests, non-profit organizations that provide services, information and expertise, sensitize public opinion, and conduct advocacy activities.

35. For years, FAO has been working with NGOs on policy discussions, normative work and field initiatives (e.g. collaborating in assessments, exchanging technical support and knowledge on food security and nutrition, etc.). At the same time, and depending on the size of the NGO, FAO has also capitalized on their capacities when implementing its field programme. NGOs can also play a vital role in facilitating the quick delivery of emergency response interventions to affected populations, particularly in sudden onset emergency and conflict situations.

⁹ Member-based organizations are different from social movements in that they respond directly to their members. Social movements are coordination instances of different organizations, which may include MBOs.

¹⁰ A specific subcategory within this group is academic institutions and non-for-profit centres of knowledge, which produce high-quality information and knowledge in areas of work related to FAO's mandate.

36. An example is the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), which is cooperating with the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries for the benefit of small-scale fisheries and fishworkers.

Indigenous peoples and other ethnic minorities

Among the most vulnerable, indigenous peoples and ethnic minority groups deserve particular attention. It is estimated that although indigenous peoples represent 5% of the world population, they comprise about 15% of the total poor. The increasing participation of indigenous groups and other ethnic minorities in public policy debates and fora is an important step towards strengthening their rights and improving their situation. FAO considers indigenous and tribal peoples, with their wealth of ancestral knowledge, to be key strategic partners in the fight against hunger. This is acknowledged in the FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples,¹¹ which resulted from an inclusive and participatory consultation process directly with indigenous peoples and other civil society organizations.

III. Mutual benefits and areas of collaboration

A. Mutual benefits

37. FAO recognizes civil society as a key partner in the fight against food insecurity and as one of the main actors to strengthen food security and reduce poverty for millions of vulnerable people. By prioritizing the establishment of partnerships with civil society, FAO aims at capitalizing on the perspectives, capacities, knowledge and skills civil society possesses, and ensuring that assistance provided by FAO in collaboration with civil society to vulnerable people is delivered in a coordinated and accountable way.

38. FAO acknowledges the following comparative advantages of civil society organizations: their outreach capacity to poor and vulnerable; their mobilization and advocacy capacity; the representativeness of their broader networks; their key role in community-based management of natural resources; and their knowledge of local contexts. Similarly, civil society obtains different benefits when collaborating with FAO. The following table summarizes some of these benefits:

<u>Benefits for FAO</u>	<u>Benefits for civil society</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion in discussions of isolated and vulnerable groups. - Better representativeness in debates and discussions. - Increased advocacy and mobilization capacity. - Complementary outreach and capacity for field activities, including improved emergency response. - Enhanced ownership of endorsed policies/strategies. - Joint development of improved forms of governance. - Access to resources (human, physical, knowledge). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FAO provides access to neutral forum for discussions <i>vis-à-vis</i> private sector, member countries and other stakeholders. - Access to information, capacity building, technical knowledge and expertise on key food security areas. - Ability to place items for discussion in agenda for high-level fora. - FAO can facilitate discussion between civil society and governments at all levels, especially in cases where tension exists between the two sectors. - FAO can also engage in promoting partnership between civil society and governments.

¹¹ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1857e/i1857e00.htm>

B. Areas of Collaboration

39. FAO and CSOs have jointly pre-identified six areas of collaboration from the sheer breadth of possible areas:

1) Policy dialogue: FAO will establish fora for policy dialogue on issues related to food and nutrition security, including civil society in the dialogue together with governments and decision-makers, thus increasing ownership, democracy, accountability and sustainability of policy adoption and implementation (e.g. the CFS, FAO Regional Conferences, Rio+20).

2) Normative activities: FAO will ensure the valuable involvement of civil society together with member countries, research institutions and other interested stakeholders in the development and implementation of codes of conduct, global conventions and regulatory frameworks in areas related to FAO's mandate (e.g. Codex Alimentarius; Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries; International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture; Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests).¹²

3) Field programme: to strengthen local capacities and project outreach in a more cost-effective manner, FAO will promote dialogue and partnerships at field level with civil society to design, implement and monitor quality and sustainable local initiatives, programmes, projects and emergency responses. FAO acknowledges that the chain of accountability to affected populations travels from the funding source to the end recipient, requiring FAO and other agencies to discuss and negotiate with their partners (e.g. collaboration with the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement; the food security cluster and its humanitarian partners; forestry national fire surveillance systems with local NGOs; seed multiplication in Haiti with local NGOs).

4) Knowledge sharing and capacity development: FAO is in a unique position to promote and facilitate the flow of global knowledge on agriculture and nutrition issues, and make it accessible to all sectors of society. However, FAO will also capitalize on the detailed knowledge CSOs have from the grassroots levels and regional contexts, which will greatly complement the stock of knowledge and technical expertise that FAO promotes. This exchange will allow FAO to better respond to local contexts and needs (e.g. the Gambia Forestry Department worked with FAO and local civil society institutions, such as the National Consultancy on Forestry Extension Services and Training, to institutionalize a step-by-step participatory enterprise development tool that supports the sustainability of transfer of forest resources to the communities).

5) Advocacy and communication: FAO and civil society will mutually raise public awareness and build strong support and political will towards reducing poverty and eliminating food insecurity by capitalizing on each other's extensive experiences, networks and outreach for advocacy and communication. FAO and civil society can jointly reach grassroots audiences and support raising their interests and concerns to decision-makers, informing public opinion (e.g. FAO has been discussing joint advocacy actions at the global level with a number of large INGOs).

6) Joint mobilization and use of resources: large international and national NGOs, foundations, and academic institutions have considerable stocks of human and financial capital, supplies, assets and capacity development strengths. Some of these entities are specifically mandated and funded to provide support to UN agencies with a range of services. In turn, grassroots CSOs will have numerous contacts, not only at grassroots level, but also with large formal and informal social networks and platforms. FAO will increase cooperation with some organizations to jointly mobilize and use the wide human, physical and financial resources available, increase the scale and focus of FAO's technical support, improve the coordination capacity of all stakeholders and ensure improved

¹² These normative frameworks and guidelines have resulted from negotiations and discussions at FAO's Technical Committees, such as the Committees on Forestry (COFO), Fisheries (COFI) and Agriculture (COAG).

Accountability to Affected Populations¹³ (e.g. humanitarian organizations have stand-by partner agreements with FAO through which staff, equipment and supplies can be made available for FAO's deployment missions when responding to crises).

C. Topics frequently raised by civil society

40. FAO is open to discussion on a number of topics frequently raised by civil society:

Ongoing discussions on **climate change adaptation, land tenure, protracted crises, food price volatility**, etc.

Food sovereignty: food sovereignty and food security are closely related concepts. Food sovereignty encompasses several aspects of agriculture and nutrition - food not as a commodity, but as a human right - and food production as an activity related to specific livelihoods, values and ecosystems. It is important to consider how both concepts might be related in normative and policy debates.

Family farming: family farming is an important concept in a globalized world as it relates to household food production, and in many developing countries it is often linked to subsistence agriculture, rural poverty and vulnerability.

Sustainable development: a pattern of economic growth in which the present use of resources meets human needs while preserving the earth's natural resources for tomorrow's generations.

Gender: exclusion of women from equal access to resources, services and opportunities is linked to perpetuating issues of food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty in rural areas. Empowering women and promoting gender equity and equality is a central aspect of civil society and FAO's mandate of food security.

IV. Implementing the Strategy: decentralization and tools and procedures for collaboration

41. Under the general guidance of the Director-General, the Partnerships and Advocacy Branch (OCP) in the Office for Communication, Partnerships and Advocacy (OCP) will be the lead unit for implementation of this Strategy, providing support and working in close collaboration with FAO staff in technical units and decentralized offices. OCP will assist FAO staff at all levels in developing and maintaining regular dialogue with civil society to develop fluid relationships, build trust and foster joint activities and collaboration. Collaboration and alliances between civil society and FAO should be based on this dialogue. OCP will pay special attention to support decentralized offices and, together with key units in FAO, will develop clear tools to explain how headquarters and decentralized offices will work together on the implementation of partnerships at local level. Civil society focal points in decentralized offices will also require extensive capacity development from the Partnerships and Advocacy Branch. OCP will also develop a stock-taking exercise to identify the existing collaborations in place in the different FAO departments.

A. Decentralization

42. Since 2012, the FAO decentralization process has been put on fast track. The renewed impetus on decentralization, following the Independent External Evaluation and Immediate Plan of Action for FAO renewal recommendations, coincide with the requests from civil society to foster more relations with FAO at global, regional and national¹⁴ levels.

43. While global partnerships with civil society organizations, networks, platforms and mechanisms are important for the improvement of food security in member countries and for FAO's

¹³ In 2011, through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, FAO committed to promoting Accountability to Affected Populations with its partners and to incorporating these commitments into partnership agreements. A guidance note on Accountability to Affected Populations is being prepared.

¹⁴ Including all the subnational levels: community, local, district, provincial.

work, the emphasis for the implementation of this Strategy is at decentralized level. The main goal is to empower local actors to be fully engaged with FAO in its activities and programmes, increasing the likelihood of ownership and more sustainable, long-term results, in a bottom-up approach. Otherwise, global discussions with civil society risk to lose grasp on reality and on the problems faced by the poor and vulnerable.

44. At the country level, FAO can play a catalytic role in facilitating and supporting member countries in their work to increase dialogue and foster partnerships with civil society, by providing expertise in technically-related discussions or a neutral debate forum. In this way, FAO can contribute to creating a conducive environment for dialogue between civil society organizations and member countries.

B. Tools and procedures for collaboration

45. Over the years, FAO has developed a number of administrative tools, procedures and practices¹⁵ to collaborate with civil society organizations. Collaboration covers a wide range of thematic areas and takes various forms such as policy dialogue, normative work, field programme work, knowledge sharing, capacity development, advocacy and resource mobilization. A number of institutional tools are used:

1) Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)

46. MoUs can be developed by FAO in order to establish a framework for collaboration of significant importance with civil society organizations.

2) Exchanges of letters

47. If collaboration is limited to a reduced period of time, or if its scope is more limited, and does not entail any financial commitments, a more informal exchange of letters may be an appropriate tool. An exchange of letters can be used, for example, to carry out a joint assessment or to coordinate actions while implementing field activities. The approval process is similar to that of MoUs.

3) Letters of Agreement (LoAs)

48. Letters of Agreement (LoAs) may constitute a useful administrative tool for contracting services from civil society organizations. The scope of LoAs is generally limited to contracting services from non-commercial entities (e.g. organizing a meeting in regional, subregional or national offices; implementing a transboundary animal disease surveillance programme with local NGOs, etc.). LoAs entail a transfer of resources from FAO to a registered non-profit organization in exchange for pre-defined services and are governed by Section 507 of FAO Administrative Manual under the overall responsibility of the Procurement Service (CSAP) and technical units.

4) Formal relations

49. Some CSOs with international status and governance mechanisms have formal relations with FAO and may be invited to attend FAO's meetings as observers. The relevant regime is defined in FAO's Basic Texts which foresee that formal relations with an international non-governmental organization may take one of three forms according to the importance of its field of activity in relation to the activities of FAO, whatever the degree of cooperation envisaged in the common field of activity. These are: consultative status, specialized consultative status or liaison status.

50. However, it is important to stress that a very large number of CSOs which do not have formal relations with FAO are now able to participate in many FAO meetings and fora on the basis of ad hoc, pragmatic arrangements that have been developed in the course of the past years. Ideally, new procedures should be defined for CSOs participation in meetings. However, the definition of general

¹⁵ Civil society organizations have requested on several occasions that FAO review and upgrade some of these tools to better fit their needs, especially those of social movements who lack proper legal status. FAO acknowledges the limitations of some of these tools and is discussing internally how to best address this problem. Finance Division is supporting OCP both in identifying short term ad hoc solutions to immediate problems and for the development of longer term more suitable instruments.

procedures applicable throughout the Organization and to all CSOs is a complex process, because of the differentiated nature of the CSOs, the different mandate and status of bodies and meetings of the Organization and the fact that there may not be full consensus among the membership on the matter. The issue remains under active consideration by the Secretariat.

5) Partnership Committee for review of financial and other agreements

51. In 2010, the Director General established the Partnership Committee for the review of financial and other agreements which examines partnerships with non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations. Review by the Committee is aimed primarily at ensuring compliance with a number of principles and guidelines, and specify measures, conditions and contractual clauses as appropriate to avoid potential problems related to conflict of interest, image, governance and codes of conduct.

6) Multi-Donor Trust Funds to support civil society participation

52. In 2011, a Multi-Donor Trust Fund for the participation of civil society in the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was established for donors to allocate resources to support civil society participation in the CFS.

53. Similarly, a new Multi-Donor Trust Fund for the participation of civil society in other FAO Technical Committees and Regional Conferences is currently being finalized to support increased civil society participation in other FAO meetings.

V. Monitoring and evaluation of partnerships

54. OCP, together with key FAO units, will develop a monitoring system, designing progress indicators and determining means of verification. The monitoring system will be linked to FAO's corporate information and project management tools and will not imply complex ad hoc reporting from the technical units and field offices. Evaluation of the impact of partnerships between FAO and civil society will be based upon the data provided by the monitoring system.