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منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة للأمم  
المتحدة

联合国  
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Food and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
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Organisation des  
Nations Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
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Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
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Organización  
de las  
Naciones Unidas  
para la  
Alimentación y la  
Agricultura

# FAO Regional Conference for the Near East

## Thirty-second Session

Rome, Italy, 24-28 February 2014

## Update on the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

### I. OVERVIEW OF 2012-2013 CFS SESSIONS

1. The purpose of this document is to provide an update to the FAO Regional Conferences (RCs) on the main outcomes of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) since the RCs last met in 2012 and on the current main activities of the Committee.
2. Since the reform of CFS in 2009, the key features and outcomes of the Plenary Sessions of CFS were presented at the last two RCs in 2010 and 2012 with the intention of strengthening the linkages between the RCs and CFS and fostering opportunities of mutual exchange of information and inputs in the field of food security and nutrition.
3. In the biennium 2012-2013, two annual and one extraordinary sessions of CFS were held. At the 38<sup>th</sup> Special Session held in May 2012<sup>1</sup>, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VG-GT) were endorsed by the Committee. They set out principles and internationally accepted practices which all stakeholders are encouraged to make use of when formulating strategies, policies and programmes on food security, nutrition, agriculture and the tenure of land, fisheries and forests.
4. The adoption of the first version of the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF) represents one of the major outcomes of the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of CFS held in October 2012<sup>2</sup>. The GSF is an overarching framework and a single reference, which contains practical guidance for policy makers in food security and nutrition-related areas such as trade, agriculture, health, environment, natural resources and economic or investment policies. The GSF is updated annually to include the latest CFS policy recommendations. The Committee, at its 40<sup>th</sup> Session<sup>3</sup>, endorsed the second version of the GSF and encouraged all stakeholders to promote and make use of this version, while acknowledging its voluntary nature.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/025/md958e.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/bodies/CFS\\_sessions/39th\\_Session/39emerg/MF027\\_CFS\\_39\\_FINALE\\_REPORT\\_compiled\\_E.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/bodies/CFS_sessions/39th_Session/39emerg/MF027_CFS_39_FINALE_REPORT_compiled_E.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/029/mi744e.pdf>

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5. The Committee continued its efforts to provide scientifically sound and evidence based policy guidance on food security and nutrition action at all levels and to a wide spectrum of stakeholders. The reports by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE)<sup>4</sup> provide the basis for the policy round tables that are held in CFS Plenary Sessions. At its 39<sup>th</sup> Session, the Committee considered reports on *Social Protection for Food Security* and *Climate Change and Food Security* and at the 40<sup>th</sup> Session reports on *Biofuels and Food Security* and *Investing in Smallholder Agriculture for Food Security and Nutrition*. The outcomes of these policy round tables are summarized in the decision boxes (one for each theme) which were considered, discussed and endorsed by the CFS plenary. These recommendations constitute important policy guidance for further action by a wide range of stakeholders. At the 41<sup>st</sup> Session, two policy round tables will consider the issues of *Food Losses and Waste in the context of Sustainable Food Systems* and of *The Role of Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture for Food Security and Nutrition*, both informed by a report of the HLPE.

6. The Committee took further steps towards monitoring and evaluating its work and effectiveness. In this context, the Committee acknowledged the progress made towards a framework for monitoring CFS decisions and recommendations and recognized the importance of monitoring for improving CFS effectiveness. As an important step in improving the CFS visibility and effectiveness, the Committee requested a plan of action to widely disseminate its plenary decisions and policy recommendations as part of the planned CFS Communication Strategy.

7. With regards to CFS workstreams and other activities, at its 40<sup>th</sup> Session the Committee adopted a Multi-Year Programme of Work for 2014-2015 (MYPoW) which includes a guidance note outlining the process for selection and prioritization of CFS future activities and suggested HLPE topics. CFS will take into account any relevant outcomes of the FAO RCs in the identification of food security and nutrition topics to be considered by the Committee in the current but also in future biennia.

8. At its 39<sup>th</sup> Session, the Committee also launched two consultative processes in line with the priority workstreams as identified in the MYPoW, which are highlighted below for the attention of the RCs:

- a) Principles for responsible agricultural investments in the context of food security and nutrition (CFS-RAI)
- b) Agenda for Action for Addressing Food Insecurity in Protracted Crises (CFS-AforA).

## **II. PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONSIBLE AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION (CFS-RAI)**

9. At its 39<sup>th</sup> Session in 2012, CFS launched a two-year consultative process to develop and ensure broad ownership of principles for responsible agricultural investments (CFS-RAI). These are expected to promote investments in agriculture in a way that contributes to food security and nutrition and to the *Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security*.

10. Investing responsibly in agriculture, and particularly in smallholder agriculture, is essential for reducing poverty, creating decent employment opportunities, promoting food security and environmental sustainability. Agricultural investments can generate a wide range of developmental benefits. In order to do so, however, investments need to be responsible and specifically directed towards the achievement of such benefits, while aiming to avoid potential negative consequences that may arise from less responsibly planned investments patterns.

11. The CFS-RAI principles are intended to provide practical guidance to governments, private and public investors, intergovernmental and regional organizations, civil society organizations, research organizations and universities, donors and foundations. They will be voluntary and non-

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-hlpe/en/>

binding and should be interpreted and applied consistently with existing obligations under national and international law.

12. Regional consultations were held between November 2013 and February 2014 with the intention to receive feedback and inputs on the Zero Draft of CFS-RAI from a broad range of stakeholders and improve the existing draft and foster ownership of the principles on a global level. The outcomes of the consultation will contribute to the preparation of the First Draft which will subsequently be negotiated by the CFS-RAI Open-Ended Working Group in Rome on May 2014. The resulting CFS-RAI principles will then be presented to the 41<sup>st</sup> Session of CFS in 2014 for endorsement by the Plenary. See website for more details at: <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-home/resaginv/en/>.

### **III. AGENDA FOR ACTION FOR ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY IN PROTRACTED CRISES (CFS-AforA)**

13. Protracted crisis situations are associated with severely reduced levels of food insecurity and have been recognized as a special category requiring a broad set of related policy and operational responses. Common characteristics of protracted crisis contexts include recurrent shocks, multiple underlying causes, the breakdown of local institutions, unsustainable livelihoods and food systems, longevity and the presence of conflicts and/or civil insecurity.

14. As highlighted in the State of Food Insecurity in the World 2010, food insecurity is significantly worse in countries in protracted crises than in the rest of the developing countries in four key food insecurity indicators: proportion of undernourished, proportion of children stunted, mortality rate of children under five years old, and the Global Hunger Index.

15. To help prevent and respond to food insecurity in these contexts, CFS, at its 39<sup>th</sup> Session in 2012, launched a two-year consultative process to develop and ensure broad ownership of an Agenda for Action to address food insecurity in protracted crises.

16. The Agenda for Action is intended to provide experience-based guidance and set out principles for action and describing associated practical actions that can be taken. The aim is to assist stakeholders in developing appropriate policies, investments, institutional arrangements, programmes and activities to improve food security and nutrition in protracted crises situations. The CFS-AforA will be voluntary and non-binding and should be interpreted and applied in line with existing obligations under national and international law.

17. The expected outcome is a greater understanding of the multi-dimensional causes of protracted crises, the sharing of more effective analytical tools to assist in identifying root causes and the appropriate combination of political technical responses to address them. New ways of working in partnership and harmonized action at global, regional, national and local levels will be identified. Improved monitoring of the overall progress made towards reducing the number of countries affected by protracted crises and the prevalence of food insecurity and undernutrition in those countries will also be included.

18. A global consultation will be held in April 2014 and its outcomes will contribute to the preparation of the First Draft of the document which will subsequently be negotiated by the CFS-AforA Open Ended Working Group in Rome in July 2014. The resulting CFS-A4A will then be presented to the 41<sup>st</sup> Session of CFS in 2014 for endorsement by the Plenary. See website for more details at: <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-home/cfs-fipc/en/>.

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## V. MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE RCs

19. CFS invites RCs to take note of the CFS outcomes. In particular, the RCs are asked to consider the two key policy convergence processes currently under consultation, *Principles for responsible agricultural investments in the context of food security and nutrition* (CFS-RAI) and *Agenda for Action for Addressing Food Insecurity in Protracted Crises* (CFS-AforA) and to encourage the active participation of all stakeholders during the upcoming final negotiations which will take place in Rome at FAO HQs with the following calendar:

- Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investments in the context of food security and nutrition (CFS-RAI) - 19-24 May 2014
- Agenda for Action for Addressing Food Insecurity in Protracted Crises (CFS-AforA) – 29 July -1 August 2014.