

Side Event 4: Implementing CFS Guidelines for people and planet: the role of the private sector Summary of Session

The World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA), CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) hosted a session to demonstrate how CFS Policy Products are used by organisations and therefore extend the impact of improving food security worldwide.

Moderator **Lindiwe Majele Sibanda**, Director and Chairwoman, African Research Universities Alliance Centre for Excellence in Sustainable Food Systems (ARUA-SFS), started by setting the scene of the discussion around the importance of alignment in metrics when measuring private sector impact. Next, **Hans Hoogeveen**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the UN Organization for Food and Agriculture, gave a keynote address. Hans stated that although the CFS guidelines are practical and implementable, they are just a first step and to go further we must translate the guidelines into actions in the context and circumstance of each country. This is not only the job of governments, but also companies, civil society and NGOs.

Luiza Margulias at WBA presented a concrete example of how they integrated products, such as RAI principles and VGGT, into the methodology of the Food & Agriculture Benchmark. The benchmark, which will be published alongside the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) in September 2021, will measure and compare 350 global agri-food companies on a broad range of topics across the food system transformation agenda. The CFS products play a key role in respect to social inclusion measurement area, where WBA looks at farmer & fisher productivity and land rights. WBA asks companies to commit to CFS guidelines, have a grievance mechanism accessible by external individuals and describe process for providing adequate remediation to those negatively affected.

The session then flowed into a panel discussion, of which Lindiwe joked was a “gender-correct” line up, as it was exclusively women. **Tiffany Talsma, Climate Strategy Specialist, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT**, spoke to the lack of robust and concrete evidence in the types of metrics companies are interested in to support more sustainable agroecological practices. **Victoria Crawford, Investment Partnership Network Manager, The Just Rural Transition at WBCSD**, said that CFS guidelines are integrated in the core of WBCSD membership policy, and then also regarding their own roadmap development for companies that draws on existing frameworks and metrics out there. **Nono Sekhoto, Commercial Farmer, Agriculturist, Lead of African Leadership for Agribusiness Network (ALA)** informed participants of policy in South Africa that says big companies must support SMEs in variety of way. However there needs to be awareness and encouragement to how companies can support SMEs because generally big business will focus on what they need like a tick exercise, which may not translate to impact for farmers. Nono emphasized the importance of building partnerships with organisations that are supporting farmers on the ground and to teach big business to have equitable partnerships rather than extractive. **Viktoria de Bourbon de Parme, Lead Food and Agriculture Transformation at WBA**, addressed how the changes companies make need to go beyond commitment to ensure impact in their supply change, which is challenging to get data on and requires the efforts of multistakeholder initiatives.

The session finished with **Philippe Ellul, UNFSS Secretariat, Research & Innovation Strategy 2030** giving insight into the processes of the UNFSS and the role of complementary indicators to develop a set of emerging conclusions, actions and approaches to review the private sector. Overall the session highlighted how we must continue to embed, integrate and build upon the guidelines, such as those proposed by CFS.