



GUIDANCE NOTE ON CFS PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES ON NEGOTIATION MODALITIES

This guidance note aims at improving both the efficiency and inclusiveness of CFS negotiation processes. The following are general principles aimed at helping the process leaders with their efforts to ensure efficiency and inclusivity, as well as guiding all CFS stakeholders and participants during CFS negotiation processes. They should not be considered as formal rules or regulations, but rather as a shared and flexible reference point. They should help facilitators - chairs and/or rapporteurs - with their task, while preserving their autonomy, leadership and responsibility related to their function. These principles build on lessons learned and good practices observed in the context of previous CFS negotiations (both in-person and virtual).

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

1. **Leave no voice behind.** The Committee's negotiations should allow all parties to keep engaged and participate meaningfully, leaving no voice behind, recognizing the diversity of capacities amongst members and participants.
2. **Mutual understanding and respect.** While CFS Participants and Observers acknowledge the nature of the CFS as an inclusive intergovernmental committee, the CFS Members recognize the diversity of CFS Participant constituencies and delegates. While seeking to streamline negotiations, mutual understanding and respect will be observed.
3. **Predictability.** Negotiation schedules, sessions, timeslots shall be predictable and OEWG Chairs/Rapporteurs/Facilitators will seek to avoid, as much as possible, extended or non-planned sessions.
4. **Streamline.** CFS stakeholders are encouraged to refrain from making lengthy general statements, in order to allow as many interventions as possible.
5. **Focus.** Members and Participants are strongly encouraged to prioritize issues directly and unequivocally related to the topic being negotiated.
6. **Build on existing frameworks.** CFS stakeholders are encouraged to refrain from seeking to amend or renegotiate multilaterally-agreed text that is outside the CFS mandate.
7. **Readiness to reach consensus.** All delegations are encouraged to be ready to reach consensus, in a spirit of mutual understanding, on the policy documents to be presented in plenary for final endorsement.

GUIDELINES FOR NEGOTIATIONS

- a) Negotiations will be led by the OEWG Chairs/Rapporteurs/Facilitators, with the support of the CFS Secretariat. The CFS Chair will closely monitor progress and process.
- b) Inputs should be focused on substantive topics or issues where specific text amendments are requested. Interventions should contain concrete text proposals, and concise clarifications of their substantive rationale.
- c) In the interest of time and efficiency, OEWG Chairs/Rapporteurs may place limits on time available for individual interventions. Efforts will be made to include a “timer” displayed on the screen to help manage time.
- d) Where possible, Members, Regional Groups and Participant constituencies are encouraged to form collective positions, shared in advance as practicable. Delegates of the same constituency may be asked to coordinate responses in advance, to avoid multiple interventions on the same topic.
- e) Proposals by Participants that do not find Member support, will receive no further consideration, per standard practice.
- f) Following a first round of interventions on a specific paragraph, OEWG Chairs/Rapporteurs may offer a re-formulated text proposal reflecting comments and suggestions made, and project this proposal on the screen for Members’ agreement. The CFS Secretariat will take careful note of all statements and delegations will be provided sufficient time for internal consultations to reflect upon new text proposals.
- g) Absent agreement, OEWG Chairs/Rapporteurs may call for an additional round of focused interventions, after which a new proposal may be formulated and presented on screen.
- h) If no agreement is reached following this second round, OEWG Chairs/Rapporteurs may choose to “park” the unresolved text until a later time, or request that it be addressed in bilateral or small-group discussion. If/when appropriate, they may choose to convene a Friends of the Chair/Rapporteur discussion, to address specific unresolved text, bearing in mind that final agreement must be reached in formal OEWG negotiation sessions.
- i) Sessions will generally be convened as agreed with the host agency (typically between 9.30-12.30 and 15.00-18.00), pending availability of space and interpretation services. Formal sessions will be interpreted in FAO’s six official languages (English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, and Russian). Punctuality is required due to the limited schedule for interpretation.