

UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS):
Group of Friends of the CFS Chair– Implications of the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS)
on CFS

Here: Germany's initial input on the "Open Guiding Questions" (included in a CFS background document circulated on 28 November 2021)¹

General remarks

At present the world is off-track for achieving the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015. Only eight years remain to implement the 17 SDGs successfully. The UNFSS generated momentum to accelerate action towards achieving the Agenda 2030 through sustainable food systems, offering important opportunities also for the CFS and its High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE).

CFS offers a unique opportunity – given its integral expertise especially for SDG 2 "Zero Hunger", its inclusive multi-stakeholder format and its human rights-based approach – to have a central role in all global processes for achieving the 2030 Agenda. In order to strengthen its impact it is necessary to include the CFS adequately in the UNFSS follow-up process, fully implement CFS' 2009 reform (e. g. coordination at national level) and increase the visibility of the CFS, HLPE and its strong policy products (Voluntary Guidelines, Policy Recommendations, Reports).

We welcome that the CFS and its Chair have taken up the discussion and created a space for open exchange by establishing a Group of Friends. It is crucial to bring all stakeholders together constructively and further advance the CFS' important work. Rebuilding trust and advancing the collaborative vision for achieving the 2030 Agenda will be key in this regard. The five "Open Guiding Questions" are both relevant in terms of strengthening CFS' impact on achieving SDG 2 as well as pursuing the outcomes of the UNFSS. While contributing to the attainment of the Agenda 2030, both objectives can even reinforce each other: An effective UNFSS follow-up mechanism can benefit from CFS' unique intergovernmental and inclusive multi-stakeholder platform, while playing an important role in the UNFSS follow-up process could increase CFS' visibility – of course taking into account CFS' existing resources and capacities.

Open Guiding Questions

- 1. How can we increase the impact of CFS policy products? How can the CFS membership better disseminate and make use of the existing and future policy products in a way**

¹ The proposals mentioned here are to be understood as preliminary contributions, especially in light of the CFS' existing resources and capacities.

that they better inspire our governments’ policies and strategies, and empower all stakeholders, including as key reference frameworks for the FSS National Pathways and Coalitions?

Background: In 2017 an independent evaluation of CFS found “a failure to translate its products into widespread use and application at regional, country, or local levels” (BurAG/2021/05/20/02). To better implement CFS products, all CFS members and stakeholders are needed.

Suggestions on how to increase the impact of CFS policy products, including as key reference frameworks for the UNFSS National Dialogues, National Pathways and Coalitions:

- CFS could support the work of the “Food Systems Coordination Hub” with its opportunities as an intergovernmental and inclusive multi-stakeholder platform. In this context, we recognise the importance of an UN-wide approach to the UNFSS follow-up and call for CFS’ participation in the Hub. To avoid any duplication of work, the CFS mechanisms could also act as the intended Hub’s Stakeholder Advisory Group.
- Active participation in the UNFSS follow-up puts CFS in a position to advocate for its policy products. A higher visibility might also lead to a broader CFS membership base and help the needed diversification of its limited funding basis.
- By capitalizing on the excellent CFS policy products, the Hub could offer concrete guidance to Member States, which could use CFS policy products to enrich their National Pathways. Furthermore, Member States could use the inclusive global CFS model as an inspiration for their National Dialogues structure.
- CFS products should be underpinned by more practical examples in order to assist countries in applying the products and translating them into practical action (e.g. in collaboration with the Rome-based Agencies, RBAs, where applicable).
- Increased CFS membership and visibility, leading to additional multi-stakeholder voluntary contributions, and deeper collaboration with the RBAs would contribute to a more secure basis and more scope for action for CFS.
- In general, it is crucial that all CFS members and stakeholders remain committed to the promotion of the products and their uptake.

2. How can CFS better support countries’ efforts to articulate and implement national food security, food systems and nutrition strategies, including the emerging National Pathways?

Background: The CFS is the “foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all” (<https://www.fao.org/cfs/en/>). CFS’ unique setup as well as its policy products that address

a broad range of items related to SDG 2 make it a very suitable forum to help pursuing UNFSS recommendations through inclusive exchanges at all levels and with all stakeholders.

- CFS could serve as an inclusive global platform to offer a space for connecting country-led national pathways, to present and review their progress. The CFS Chair, Gabriel Ferrero, suggested this at the Ministerial discussion of the Alliance for Multilateralism at the Paris Peace Forum on 13 November 2021.

This could be achieved in various ways:

- By providing intergovernmental and inclusive space to the UNFSS follow-up, e.g. through progress reports by the UNSG and discussion with all stakeholders within the annual CFS Plenary.
- By making use of CFS Plenary spaces (e.g. Side Events, CFS Special Events) to take forward the UNFSS discussions on sustainable food systems by sharing experiences of interested CFS members on National Dialogues, National Pathways and Coalitions of Action.
- By reporting of the Hub back to the joint CFS Bureau and (ad hoc) Advisory Group.
- By giving guidance from CFS (through the Hub) to countries aiming at implementing or reinforcing multi-stakeholder platforms and inclusive dialogue formats on the national level as part of their National Pathways inspired by the global CFS structure.

3. How can the CFS provide its platform to multi-stakeholder alliances, coalitions and initiatives to share progress, connect with each other, in a strategic way (including those that emerged from the FSS and already existing ones)? How shall the CFS consider the five action areas (plenary, special events, side events...)?

- The convening power of the CFS is unique – due to its inclusive multi-stakeholder and intergovernmental composition. The Coalitions that emerged from the UNFSS might find it helpful to benefit from the CFS as a global platform that brings actors together. As mentioned above, Side Events within the CFS Plenary could invite interested members and stakeholders to share best practice with regard to the different Coalitions.
- Furthermore, the CFS Chairperson’s intent to continue the tradition of starting the joint Bureau and (ad hoc) Advisory Group meetings with a substantive discussion on a globally-relevant topic (as stated in CFS/Bur/2021/25/11/Outcomes) and to reach out to UN-organizations for briefings will help CFS to enhance collaboration with key players in the fields of food security and nutrition. This will strengthen CFS’ position at the center of global food security and nutrition governance.
- To highlight the importance of outreach to support the uptake of its policy products the CFS could consider the next MyPoW 2024-2027 to dedicate a separate

workstream to an in-depth internal debate on enhanced efforts by the CFS and its stakeholders to increase global awareness and use of all CFS Voluntary Guidelines and Policy Recommendations. As stated in the statement on behalf the EU and its 27 Member States made at CFS49 this could further guide progress toward the achievement of the SDGs.

4. How can the CFS global science-policy interface represented by the HLPE be strengthened and well connected to other science-policy interface UN-mechanisms, in view of the proposal in this area that emerged in the context of the FSS?

- As stated in the statement on behalf the EU and its 27 Member States made at CFS49, we believe that the HLPE should be closely involved in the UN FSS follow-up process. Recalling the importance to ensure strong science-policy interfaces to enable fully informed policy decisions on food systems, we also believe that the HLPE, in cooperation with other relevant bodies, could explore options to strengthen its role. Lastly, we would recommend that the HLPE could also enhance its foresight role and impact of its publications.
- While we agree that there should be no replication of existing UN-structures, HLPE could join efforts with other independent bodies such as the IPCC and IPBES to form a network that provides coordinated scientific evidence to inform the food systems transformation process. In this context, the development of flagship reports every two or three years could be considered.
- We also agree that a stronger HLPE means a stronger CFS, which can contribute to more effective policies to address the pressing food security and nutrition challenges we currently face. To strengthen HLPE's role, the regional impact of its reports as well as enhancing its capacities and outreach efforts could be key elements.

5. What is possible to strengthen accountability within and among all stakeholders?

- In order to achieve the SDGs and the transformation to sustainable food systems members and stakeholders need to work together and be determined to find compromise solutions. All actors – governmental and non-governmental – should jointly and actively contribute to achieve the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs.

Final general remarks:

To strengthen its impact and contribution, CFS' insecure funding situation needs to be tackled. Therefore, financial commitment of all stakeholders is key. A much broader and more diversified resource base is needed to better reflect CFS' membership base and to create ownership among all 138 CFS members and beyond.