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Investing in rural people

Update on IFAD's Engagement with the Committee on World Food Security

Note to Executive Board representatives

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CSM	Civil Society Mechanism
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEM	Global Engagement and Multilateral Relations Division
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
RBA	Rome-based agency
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNSCN	United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition
WFP	World Food Programme

Update on IFAD's Engagement with the Committee on World Food Security

I. Purpose of the update

1. This is IFAD's first written update for the Executive Board on its engagement with the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). It is a reflection of the importance that IFAD attaches to the CFS as a key multi-stakeholder platform of the United Nations devoted to eliminating hunger and promoting food security and better nutrition in developing countries.
2. The purpose of this update is to brief Board members on IFAD's engagement with the CFS in 2018, outline actions for 2019 and seek guidance from members about the way forward. To improve dialogue with Member States on the topic, a written update on IFAD's engagement with the CFS will hereafter be provided to the Board on an annual basis.

II. Background

3. The CFS was created in 1974 as an intergovernmental body under the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Council to serve as a forum for the review of food security policies. At the thirty-fourth session of the CFS in October 2008, member nations agreed to embark on a reform of the Committee to ensure that it could fully exercise its vital role in the area of food security and nutrition. Following the reform, CFS' status changed from that of an FAO Committee to a Committee hosted in FAO. Since around 2014, the CFS Secretariat has also received financial support from IFAD and the World Food Programme (WFP), directly reporting to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the FAO Conference held every two years.
4. The CFS is an intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder platform of the United Nations that deals with policy coordination and guidance for combating hunger and promoting better food security and nutrition globally. The unique feature of the CFS is its inclusive and participatory nature, and while its members are governments only, the Committee is comprised of a wide range of stakeholders, including the Rome-based agencies (RBAs), civil society organizations, private sector associations, research institutions and selected international financial institutions. The variety of stakeholders involved in the CFS results in a robust exchange of views and experiences and leads to consensus on cross-sectoral policy recommendations and guidance to achieve food security and nutrition.

III. Progress in IFAD's engagement with the CFS

5. IFAD attaches high importance to the CFS, and the Fund's active engagement with the multi-stakeholder platform is explicitly mentioned in the IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025, IFAD's corporate global policy engagement approach paper and the annual joint progress report on RBA collaboration. The importance that IFAD attaches to the CFS is based on the rationale that active engagement with the Committee will contribute to the development and promotion of an enabling policy environment for financing smallholder agriculture and inclusive rural transformation, thus empowering smallholder farmers and poor rural people, and helping countries meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
6. In 2018, IFAD substantially increased its engagement with the CFS. IFAD has been heavily involved in various ways, among them as the RBA providing the predominant share of the CFS Secretariat's budget in cash, as well as a complementary in-kind contribution. In 2019, IFAD, together with FAO and WFP, will continue to provide financial support to the CFS Secretariat in kind and/or in cash.

7. In an effort to increase IFAD's holistic engagement with the CFS, several management decisions were adopted in 2018, including: (i) more systematic consideration of CFS policy recommendations in the development of IFAD country strategies and country-level policy dialogue, depending on their relevance to the country context; (ii) building greater internal awareness among IFAD staff about the CFS and its implications for country programmes; (iii) providing an annual update to the Executive Board on IFAD's engagement with the CFS; and (iv) ensuring that IFAD provides its full annual financial contribution to the CFS Secretariat and its work, pursuant to the established agreements.
8. IFAD was actively engaged in the Bureau and Advisory Group meetings on the strategic direction of the CFS, open-ended working groups, technical task teams, the management team of the CFS Secretariat; informal consultations and joint events on themes of strategic importance for meeting the food security and nutrition goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. During intersessional periods, IFAD provided support and technical expertise to a number of CFS work streams: food systems and nutrition; CFS engagement in advancing the 2030 Agenda; evaluation; and monitoring (i.e. the use and application of CFS policy recommendations).
9. Moreover, as part of the follow-up to the CFS Independent Evaluation conducted in 2016-2017, IFAD actively engaged in the reformulation of the Committee's strategic objectives, ensuring their better alignment with the 2030 Agenda and making the CFS even more relevant to the United Nations reform agenda and IFAD's own engagement in their delivery, also as part of the United Nations Development System.
10. IFAD provided ample support to the CFS Secretariat in the lead-up to CFS 45 week in October 2018. IFAD senior management participated in the CFS plenary and the organization of various side events covering a wide range of topical issues, including family farming; investments; strengthening resilience for food security, nutrition and gender equality; home-grown school meals; climate change; the role of the livestock sector through the SDGs; improving agricultural investment contracts and; indigenous peoples' communal access to land.
11. Furthermore, IFAD contributes to the work of the CFS through its active engagement with various CFS Advisory Group constituencies such as the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM). IFAD has been a strong partner and supporter of the CSM in fulfilling its mandate to facilitate and strengthen civil society participation in the CFS, and in jointly underscoring the importance of CFS policy products in support of small-scale food producers. IFAD participated at the highest level in the annual CSM forum that precedes CFS week and facilitated and supported the participation of a woman representing the smallholder farmers' constituency at the CFS plenary in October 2018 on the occasion of the International Day of Rural Women. This was the first time a woman farmer¹ had been invited and had addressed the opening of the plenary.
12. At the global level, IFAD, together with FAO and WFP, provided support and technical expertise to the CFS Secretariat in developing and finalizing the CFS contribution to the 2018 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development. Moreover, during the 2018 HLPF side event co-organized by the CFS and the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN), FAO delivered a statement on behalf of the RBAs: "Moving to Sustainable and Resilient Societies: The Food Security and Nutrition Dimensions". From IFAD's perspective, global forums such as the HLPF and linked events continue to provide an important platform for showcasing the work of CFS policy products at the global level and encouraging their uptake by Member States and other stakeholders.

¹ Zala Shardaben Fathesinh, small-scale farmer and member of the Executive Committee of the Indian Self-Employed Women's Association.

13. In late 2018, IFAD (represented by the Director of the Global Engagement and Multilateral Relations Division [GEM]) engaged actively in the recruitment process for the incoming CFS Secretary, participating in both the RBA interview and selection panel. Moreover, in an effort to increase the visibility of the CFS within IFAD, a Bureau and Advisory Group meeting was hosted at IFAD for the first time in November 2018.

IV. RBA collaboration in the context of CFS

14. Joint support to the CFS is a priority for the RBAs and is recognized as a key mechanism in advancing RBA collaboration. For this reason, IFAD and the two other RBAs fund the core cost of the CFS Secretariat. Under IFAD's recent organizational realignment, as of 1 April 2018 both RBA collaboration and the CFS agenda have been under GEM in an effort to further strengthen RBA collaboration and build enhanced synergies with IFAD's wider multilateral relations and global policy engagement work, also under GEM. Moreover, the RBAs continue to advance strategic discussions and support the CFS Secretariat in assessing how to boost the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the CFS's work by prioritizing fewer strategically important work streams committed to advancing the 2030 Agenda and related CFS strategic objectives.

V. Visibility of CFS within IFAD

15. In July 2018, a bilateral meeting was held between IFAD and the Chair of the CFS to discuss means for increasing the visibility of the CFS within IFAD. In this regard, it was decided to undertake proactive internal awareness building on IFAD's engagement with the CFS and the implications for IFAD's country programme staff and operations. IFAD is now developing an internal communication plan that includes the organization of an IFAD interactive session on the CFS in an effort to build greater internal awareness among IFAD staff about the inclusive nature of the Committee, its policy products and how IFAD can increase the dissemination and awareness of CFS policy guidance at the country level.

VI. Utilization of CFS products

16. CFS products on themes directly relevant to IFAD and its stakeholders have been used in various ways as a basis for developing and adopting related policy recommendations. The CFS Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security have been used as a basis for providing voluntary guiding principles to underpin access and ownership of land and water (including forests and fisheries) in the design of several IFAD loan projects in developing regions. Another CFS policy product, the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises was used by IFAD, in partnership with WFP, to provide high-level guidance for engagement with states with fragile situations and under protracted crises as part of the RBA Resilience Initiative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger and Somalia. Moreover, the new revised country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) guidelines have introduced the scope for enhancing and monitoring efforts to disseminate the CFS policy guidance. Depending on the country context, national development priorities and IFAD priorities, CFS policy recommendations will be duly considered in forthcoming COSOPs, country strategy notes and IFAD policy dialogue efforts.

VII. Synergies between IFAD's engagement with the CFS and other platforms

17. IFAD's engagement with the CFS and technical discussions complement the Fund's engagement with other global platforms such as the UNSCN and UN-Water. IFAD's Vice-President continues to chair UNSCN. With the scaling-up nutrition commitments, IFAD's commitment to mainstreaming nutrition and CFS technical expertise in nutrition, there is an opportunity for joint advocacy, knowledge-sharing and promoting the linkage of global nutrition platforms to advance country-based initiatives. UN- Water, chaired by IFAD's President, is the only United Nations entity devoted exclusively to water issues, offering a unique opportunity to develop synergies with the policy-oriented products of CFS, which provide a synthesis of existing evidence on the multiple links between water, food security and nutrition, from the global to the household level.

VIII. Plans for 2019

18. IFAD will continue to support the CFS Secretariat and CFS activities, including the work related to the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, thematic work streams, plenary, and active engagement with the Bureau and Advisory Group. IFAD will also host another Bureau and Advisory Group meeting in 2019.
19. The Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028), whose official launch is slated for May 2019, offers a unique opportunity to draw attention to the importance of family farming in the promotion of sustainable and inclusive rural transformation and the achievement of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The Ambassador of the Dominican Republic to the RBAs – who is the current CFS Chair – is a member of the Decade's International Steering Committee (ISC). IFAD would like to explore opportunities to systemize the participation of the CFS Chair in the ISC, given the interconnections between the work of the CFS and the Decade. It was recently announced that there will be a dedicated event marking the kick-off of the Decade during CFS 46.
20. IFAD will seek to enhance the use of CFS policy recommendations and products in IFAD country strategies and operations, among other things through its country-level policy engagement, South-South and Triangular Cooperation and knowledge-sharing activities. IFAD will explore opportunities for supporting the CFS Secretariat, building awareness among relevant actors on the ground about the work of the CFS and the unique role it plays globally as the foremost inclusive multi-stakeholder platform for policy coordination and guidance on food security and nutrition. Relevant outreach events at the country and regional level will be explored with the CFS Secretariat in an effort to increase knowledge about the CFS and its policy products.

IX. Conclusion

21. IFAD's engagement with the CFS will remain a cross-departmental endeavour, given the Committee's unique role as an important agriculture and rural development policy platform. IFAD recognizes that more can be done to increase the visibility of the CFS at all levels, strengthen interactions with relevant actors on the ground and increase knowledge about CFS' work at the country level. IFAD looks forward to working with the other RBAs and the CFS Secretariat to advance CFS commitment to putting the SDGs at the centre of its work until 2030.