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

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Action: The Executive Board is invited to review the update provided on IFAD's engagement with the Committee on World Food Security.

Technical questions:

Satu Santala

Associate Vice-President
External Relations and Governance Department
e-mail: s.santala@ifad.org

Ronald Hartman

Director
Global Engagement, Partnership and Resource
Mobilization Division
e-mail: r.hartman@ifad.org

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

I. IFAD's strategic engagement with the CFS

1. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) continues to be a key priority for IFAD's corporate global engagement and as a platform to further collaboration among the Rome-based agencies (RBAs).
2. IFAD's main role in the CFS is to provide strategic guidance around its objectives and workplan and technical support for the development of its products. To this end, IFAD participates actively in the formulation of CFS policy recommendations, in the Committee's Advisory Group, and by engaging IFAD staff expertise to contribute to the related technical workstreams and open-ended working groups in support of the Committee's Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) 2020-2023 and the development of the MYPoW 2024-2027. Additionally, IFAD makes an annual financial cash contribution of US\$500,000 to the CFS Secretariat through a small regular grant to support its activities and reinforce IFAD's commitment.
3. Key achievements from IFAD's strategic engagement with CFS during the period 2021/2022 include the following:
 - (i) **Contributing to CFS's strategic direction.** During Bureau and Advisory Group (B/AG) meetings, IFAD, in its capacity as advisory member, actively contributes to important discussions around food security and nutrition, also providing valuable input in development of the MYPoW 2024-2027.
 - (ii) **Contributing to the development, operationalization and promotion of CFS products.** IFAD provides technical support for the development of CFS policy products and workstreams. Through these products, it is able to translate global policy advice and guidance into country-level guidelines and recommendations. Moreover, it has explicitly referenced the CFS products in its action plans and training toolkits to increase awareness of these products. IFAD is also committed to assisting Member States in utilizing CFS products, when relevant and applicable. IFAD technical staff actively participate in working groups and negotiations related to CFS workstreams (i.e. youth, data and gender), collaborating with the other RBAs, Member States and constituencies (e.g. Private Sector Mechanism, and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) to ensure the development of sound policy products.
 - (iii) **Promoting rural transformation and sustainable investment in smallholder farmers.** IFAD's active participation in and contribution to CFS plenaries emphasize its comparative advantage in inclusive and sustainable rural transformation. IFAD has also been instrumental in ensuring that the voices of rural people are brought to the forefront of CFS discussions – for example, through the CFS plenary, and IFAD's leadership in organizing the International Day of Rural Women annual event.

II. Contribution to the CFS strategic direction

4. In its capacity as advisory member, IFAD provides strategic support to the CFS's B/AG, contributing to the discussions on food security and nutrition by sharing expertise and technical advice for the definition of the CFS's strategic focus and development of the MYPoW 2024-2027. These meetings enable IFAD to highlight critical and emerging issues that impact rural people and smallholder farmers (such as the potential of investments in smallholder agriculture to provide relief from the current food crisis and strengthen the resilience of food systems or to protect livelihoods and support smallholders); emphasize the importance of financing food systems transformation and the need to ensure adequate and appropriate finance to build resilient food systems; and to provide the B/AG members with an overview

of other relevant initiatives led by IFAD or in which the Fund is involved to promote synergies and avoid duplication. IFAD also participates in the annual CFS Advisory Group Reporting Exercise, through which it informs Advisory Group members about IFAD support for the CFS strategic direction and use of its policy products at the country level.

5. In addition to providing strategic advice to the B/AG, IFAD has also taken part in the Ad Hoc Technical Selection Committee for renewal of the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition Steering Committee, which is reconstituted every two years through an open nomination process based on scientific excellence. This year, 78 applications were received from nationals of 43 countries, covering a wide variety of scientific, field and regional expertise. Like the other RBAs, IFAD is also involved in the recruitment of the new CFS Secretary (in progress at the time of this writing).

III. Contribution to the development of CFS products

6. A core outcome of IFAD's engagement is the co-development of CFS policy products in the form of guidelines and recommendations. These policy products provide a launching pad for discussions with governments, stakeholders and local organizations on how to integrate food systems and nutrition into national pathways and policies.
7. For the period covered by this progress report (second half of 2022 and first half of 2023), IFAD provided technical expertise to support the development of several CFS workstreams, including the development of:
 - (a) **Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment**, not approved during CFS 50 but which will be adopted at CFS 51 in October 2023 following a second round of negotiations. IFAD, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme, provided invaluable technical support to the CFS Secretariat during negotiations to ensure that solid guidelines were developed. IFAD provided clarifications and inputs to respond to specific questions raised during the negotiations, particularly on how to advance gender equality, women's and girls' rights and women's empowerment. The RBAs also released a joint statement during the second round of negotiations, stressing the importance of the guidelines and reiterating their support for their finalization.
 - (b) **CFS Policy Recommendations on Strengthening Collection and Use of Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) Data and Related Analysis Tools to Improve Decision-making in Support of the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the context of National Food Security**. IFAD stressed the importance of capturing data for food systems transformation (in particular on climate and gender) and underscored that investments in data production and improved methodology that enable data interoperability are essential; that country ownership of the process and political will are key to promoting data use and can be achieved by supporting countries in strengthening their capacity for data analysis and interpretation; and finally, that agreement is needed on what data are useful. Further discussions are needed on FSN data governance and on what incentives can be created to encourage those involved to act together.
 - (c) **CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work 2024-2027**, which will be approved at CFS 51 in October 2023.
8. In the current global development context, IFAD's participation in these collaborative technical discussions is essential to ensuring that CFS and IFAD are aligned in addressing the escalating food security crisis and that CFS products are informed by evidence and technical know-how.

IV. Operationalization and promotion of CFS products

9. CFS's voluntary principles and guidelines are informed by IFAD's own work and underpin IFAD's efforts towards food systems transformation. IFAD is committed to supporting Member States in utilizing CFS products when relevant and applicable to translate these principles and guidelines into concrete progress for smallholder farmers and the rural poor.
10. IFAD continues to update the [CFS database](#), launched in October 2020, to further facilitate the utilization and dissemination of CFS products and recommendations within IFAD. The aim of the database was to assist in expanding the use and application of CFS products, particularly in IFAD's policy dialogue with borrowing country governments.
11. In November 2022, IFAD hosted a CFS event organized in support of the CFS 2020-2023 MYPoW, specifically its workstream "Reducing Inequalities for Food Security and Nutrition". The objective of the event was to provide the CFS High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition with substantive inputs and contributions towards the preparation of a report on this topic, which was released in June 2023 to inform the preparation of related CFS policy recommendations. The event was open to the participation of all CFS interested parties and relevant institutions, including members, United Nations bodies, civil society and private sector organizations, and international financial and agricultural research institutions.

V. Promoting rural transformation and sustainable investment

12. The CFS plenary is the central body for decision-making, debate, coordination and convergence in a multi-stakeholder and participatory manner on a number of food security, nutrition, gender equality and other issues. IFAD actively engages in CFS plenaries and special events, underscoring its commitment to the Committee, as well as its role as global leader in food security discussions, a key partner in rural development and advocate for ensuring that the voices of poor rural people and marginalized communities are represented.
13. At CFS 50, IFAD played an extremely active role in the plenary: represented by its President at the opening session, IFAD also participated in seven side events and spearheaded the organization of the International Day of Rural Women, a yearly event that honours and recognizes the impact and work of rural women. Recognizing the key role of gender transformation, IFAD organized a special event during the CFS 50 plenary, in partnership with the development community and government actors, bringing the voices of marginalized rural women and their communities to the CFS. This special event came before the discussion on the yet-to-be-agreed-upon voluntary guidelines for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment. The event was a timely reminder of the importance of finalizing the guidelines and recognizing the integral role that women, and rural women in particular, play in safeguarding global food systems.
14. IFAD's participation in various side events provided an opportunity to share key updates on the Fund's work in promoting food security and nutrition in general and in the context of the food crisis, highlighting the way the crisis is affecting smallholder family farmers in developing countries and the need to focus on short-, medium- and long-term responses.
15. Furthermore, during CFS 50, the [Policy Recommendations on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition](#), to which IFAD actively contributed and provided technical expertise, were approved.

16. Ahead of CFS 51, to be held from 23 to 27 October 2023, IFAD has been providing feedback on the programme and has begun preparations for side events, participation in the main plenary session, organization of the annual celebration of the International Day of Rural Women and other special events.

VI. Conclusion

17. The CFS continues to be relevant for IFAD, as a key multi-stakeholder platform through which discussions of critical policy principles and thematic areas relevant to food security and nutrition can be held. IFAD recognizes the need to increase the visibility and utility of the CFS platform and encourages the Committee to continue engaging in relevant global policy discussions, bringing its multi-stakeholder value to the table.
18. IFAD will continue to support the CFS by actively contributing to the B/AG, provide technical support and expertise in the formulation and implementation of the MYPoW and various thematic workstreams and support the organization of the annual CFS plenary.
19. IFAD is committed to supporting the food security and nutrition and the right to food agenda and to ensuring that no one is left behind. With only seven years left to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, strengthening partnerships with key stakeholders at the global and local level remains key to reaching the ultimate goal of a world free of poverty, hunger and food insecurity.