

FOOD POLICY UPDATE

FROM ROME

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Food Policy Updates from Rome aims to provide an up-to-date information on the global food governance system and strategic activities of ActionAid and IFSN.

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The Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

Following the conclusion of the 37th Session of the CFS, the Committee is now working on a collective assessment of its work in order to set the [priorities for 2012](#) (Proposed calendar, 42.3KB, PDF). At the Bureau and the Advisory Group Meeting on 6 December, an overview was provided on the evaluation of the CFS 37 from various stakeholders including the civil society.

There was a general consensus on a number of issues, especially on the need to have a less ambitious agenda, focusing on fewer key topics and holding only two Round Tables, preferably not in parallel. Other common suggestions included respecting the deadline for the preparation and finalisation of the documents and having clearer guidelines on the preparation of the decision boxes. The Nordic countries, Mexico and a few other countries' suggestion of having a high-level segment at the 38th Session of the CFS has gained support, despite the fact such meeting could easily turn into a series of ministerial statements.

The priorities for next year's CFS will be discussed in two sessions in December and January, and the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) is currently preparing a joint contribution to submit at the meetings.

Below are the new members of the Bureau for 2012-2013:

- **Chair:** Mr Yaya Olaniran, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the FAO
- **Vice-Chair:** Mr Franklin Moore, Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the FAO
- **Members:** Angola, Australia, Brazil, China, Egypt, France, Guatemala, Indonesia, Jordan, Switzerland, USA and Zimbabwe

Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of tenure of Land and Natural Resources (VGs)

At the December Bureau and the Advisory Group Meeting, there was a strong emphasis on the need to conclude the negotiations of the VGs, and subsequently start the process of consultations on the principles guiding the responsible investments in agriculture. The Bureau members have agreed that the next round of negotiations will take place on 5-9 March 2012. The Bureau has proposed to hold "informal consultations" before the negotiations to identify and iron out existing problems, but it is unclear when and how these will be carried out. Once the final draft of the VGs has been agreed, there will be a lapse of around six weeks (the first three weeks for translation and the latter half for examination in capitals) before calling an extraordinary CFS Session for its adoption in early May. Due to the controversial nature of the remaining items, the CSM sent a letter to the Chair of the Bureau asking for a three day extension of the negotiations.

Further reading:

- [Latest draft of the VGs](#) (640 KB, PDF)

Global Strategic Framework (GSF)

The GSF Task Team met on 25 November and discussed the “Guidelines for the preparation of the GSF First Draft”, including a proposed table of contents. The CSM Members of the GSF Task Team—Svetlana Boincean (International Union of Food Workers - IUF) Andrea Ferrante (La Via Campesina), Gisele Henriques (Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité - CIDSE) and Natalia Landivar (Foodfirst Information & Action Network - FIAN) with the support of Flavio Valente (FIAN and facilitator of the working group), Luca Chinotti (Oxfam), Maria Pizzini (Save the Children), Alberta Guerra (ActionAid/International Food Security Network - IFSN) and the CSM Secretariat—attended the meeting and spelled out the main critical points.

First, the CSM Members highlighted the added value of the GSF, which is to align and to orient the work of the governments and non-state actors in their actions, while providing a tool for accountability. Second, the GSF should be built on the human rights framework and it needs to mainstream gender and nutrition perspectives rather than treating them as standalone issues.

Based on the comments received, Nick Parsons, the consultant who will be writing the GSF, will circulate the First Draft which will be reviewed by the Task Team and be finalised before the end of 2011. Once approved in English, the First Draft will be translated into the other official languages of the FAO by January 2012 in order for it to be presented and discussed at the FAO Regional Conferences, starting with the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC) on 12-16 March 2012.

In the meanwhile, a wider CSM drafting group is working on a joint civil society position to be presented at the regional consultations, based on the results of the CSM autonomous consultation on the GSF and a face-to-face meeting held in Rome last September.

Further reading:

- [Interventions from the civil society during the GSF Task Team Meeting](#) (18 KB, DOC)
- [Chair's Summary of the GSF Task Team Meeting](#) (24.2 KB, PDF)

Civil Society Mechanism (CSM)

The final report of the CSM Forum, held on 15-16 October 2011, is now available [here](#) (211 KB, PDF).

The Selection process for the Northern NGO Representative in the Coordination Committee of the CSM ended up with the nomination of Luca Chinotti, Policy Advisor from Oxfam International. Luca will join the other members of the Committee and will link up the CFS and the wider NGO constituency within the CFS.

The Land Portal

The Right to Food Team, Women's Rights Team and the IFSN launched a call to all the ActionAid affiliates and partners to send their land rights related research, papers and materials to build a more comprehensive picture of the Federation's work on land rights. These documents will be collated, categorised and uploaded on hive and on the Land Portal, and serve as the basis for the production of an update/ presentation on land rights which everyone can access and use. All documentations should be sent to Michela DiDonato (Michela.DiDonato@actionaid.org).

The Land Portal is a valuable, interactive, and easy-to-use platform for sharing land-related information, monitoring trends, and identifying information gaps to promote effective and sustainable land governance. A lot of information on land exists on the Internet, but this is often times very fragmented and difficult to locate. ActionAid and IFSN have a long experience of working on land rights, and all are invited to register as a user on the Land Portal following the simple steps, and start contributing to this meaningful initiative.

- Click on “Join the Portal” tab on the main menu.
- Click on “Create a new account”.
- Fill in the form and provide necessary information.
- You will receive an email with first-time login.
- After logging in, you will be redirected to the Land Portal where you can change your password.

World Food Programme (WFP)

The [Annual WFP-NGOs Consultation](#) (Programme, 38KB, DOC) took place at the WFP Headquarters in Rome from 30 November to 1 December. The Consultation allowed the WFP to share views with the NGOs and jointly reflect on the most recent developments on food and development assistance. The Forum was attended by around 40 major NGOs working in partnership with the WFP and the senior management staff of the WFP.

The opening session illustrated the main shift in the WFP strategy, from delivering food aid to improving resilience through innovative tools and policy change. The WFP’s new policy focuses on *the right to food at the right time* and on moving away from short term humanitarian assistance to the longer term *resilience*. Another major point in the new strategy is to integrate the *nutritional* element in the delivery of food assistance. In this regard, the WFP is working with the FAO to support small-scale farmers in transforming farmers’ crops into products that serve vital needs for food, nutrition and energy.

The WFP illustrated a number of innovative tools, such as the Cash and Vouchers System, the Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative, Food-Based Safety Nets, and the Food Security Cluster (FSC).

Regarding the **Cash and Vouchers System**, the WFP has completed its pilot and learning phase and now entered the building stage to improve the capacity for implementing this new tool. During this stage, the system requires major changes which include the definition of operational roles for finance and information technologies (IT), and expansion of partnerships with NGOs, host governments, banks and telecommunications institutes in planning and implementation. NGO representatives at the Consultation recommended the WFP to consider the lessons learnt from their longstanding experience on the ground and to develop a set of guidelines for this system that respects the context specific challenges.

Through the **Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative**, the WFP uses its purchasing power and expertise in logistics to offer smallholder farmers the opportunities to invest in their production, to access agricultural markets, and to become competitive market players to improve their livelihoods. The five-year pilot initiative links the WFP’s demand for staple foods in 21 countries with the expertise and resources of partners who support farmers to produce food surpluses and sell them to reliable buyers for a fair price. According to the WFP, it has bought 3 million tons of staple food in 2010 – more than 80 percent of this from developing countries.

The WFP is currently developing its policy on **safety nets** to realise the right to food in a way that improves communities’ resilience while reducing poverty. The first draft of the new WFP policy on safety nets will be circulated in January for consultation with NGOs and partners, and be officially launched in June.

The **Food Security Cluster (FSC)** is based at the WFP and is co-led by the FAO and the WFP. The FSC has been established to coordinate the food security responses during humanitarian crises. The FSC had its inception meeting in May and organised two rounds of trainings in Rome and Nairobi, while a third round to be held in Kuala Lumpur in mid-December. The FSC runs periodic teleconferences and has working groups on Nutrition, Advocacy, and Assessment with clear deliverables and timelines. The WFP highlighted how the NGOs are invited to play an active role at the country level, where they can

even chair the Cluster. However, the NGOs raised the problem of not having clearly dedicated staff to the cluster at the country level, and how they could rather facilitate the direct involvement of national NGOs in the process.

It was clear from the consultation that the WFP priorities not only on humanitarian relief and assistance, but also on food security policy, planning and strategy - considering their pilot projects and work on emergency food reserves. Despite the limited capacity of its current policy department, the WFP stressed that it will continue to advocate so that food security and nutrition stays high on the agenda for the next G20 Summit.

CONCORD European Food Security Group (EFSG), Brussels

The EFSG met on 29 November in Brussels to discuss the most recent updates and to set the work priorities for 2012. The report of the meeting is available [here](#) (586KB, DOC),

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Reform

After an analysis of the six legislative documents released by the European Commission (EC), the EFSG agreed that new CAP proposal should provide a monitoring system of the external impacts of the EU's production activities in the South. The EFSG further concurred that the new CAP should strengthen small farmers' bargaining power in the value chain and the developing countries' right to protect their production through tariffs and barriers. Furthermore, the EU must eliminate export subsidies without waiting for the completion of the Doha Round and should develop strategies to avoid that direct payments create dumping effects in the South and depression of world food prices with major impacts on local food producers. A further debate on the role of subsidies was instigated by the presentation of a recent report produced by ActionAid Denmark, '[Milking the poor: How EU subsidies hurt dairy producers in Bangladesh](#)' (705KB, PDF), which demonstrates how the EU export subsidies and direct payments are causing dumping effects on the local milk producers in Bangladesh. Based on the discussions, the EFSG will prepare a letter to circulate to the Members of the European Parliament by the end of January 2012.

EU Policy Framework on Food and Nutrition Security

After a long period of uncertainty due to internal restructuring, Jean-Pierre Halkin has been appointed as the new Head of the Rural Development, Food Security & Nutrition Unit, EuropeAid. It is hoped that his appointment will help accelerate the progress on the EU Policy Framework on Food and Nutrition Security and Implementation Plan. The Plan has remained a draft format for some time and is currently awaiting final elaboration. The EU Policy Framework contains many positive points around food security strategies and the role of the EU in supporting small-scale farmers from developing countries. However, it needs to be spelled out in a concrete work plan in order for it to be implemented and monitored.

Plans for 2012

One of the main areas of work for the EFSG in 2012 will be on land grabs. FIAN, with a number of other partners, is preparing a document on the four reported cases of land grabs by European companies. This report will be released in January and a workshop will be organised around the topic in February. The German CONCORD Platform is also preparing two case studies of land grabs in Cambodia and Sierra Leone. ActionAid plans to release around March 2012 its report on land grabs with four case studies from Senegal, Guatemala/Honduras, Tanzania and Kenya.

Gates Foundation Funding Proposal

On 14 October, CONCORD (European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation signed a contract for the funding proposal on "[More and Better Aid from the European Union](#)" (Summary of the Proposal, 37KB, DOC).

The proposal focuses on the following two priority areas for ensuring the quality and quantity of overseas development assistance (ODA):

1. Strengthening the pan-European “AidWatch” campaign to monitor and influence policy development and financial budgets;
2. Contributing to the negotiations and democratic debate on the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 (MFF) in order to engage the EU Institutions and Member States on the future of development funding

This work will aim to advance the case for more and better European development funding, and thereby increase the chances of an effective and high quality use of European ODA over the next decade. A small share of the budget will be also be allocated to monitor the EU spending on agriculture and food security.

The CSM for the Western Europe Region

The EFSG has helped the process of setting up the CSM for the West Europe region to increase the dialogue among different constituencies across Europe, to feed European perspectives into the broader CFS consultations, and to support Stineke Okena (Interchurch Organisation for Development Co-operation – ICCO and Chair of the EFSG) and Wily Schuster (EcoRuralis) as the representative of Western Europe and Eastern Europe respectively in the Coordination Committee of the CSM of the CFS. These representatives are responsible for ensuring that European CSOs have full access to information on food issues, strengthening their advocacy capacities at whatever level they are working, and encouraging them to feed their views into international debates. During the CSM Western Europe meeting on 30 November in Brussels, the group agreed to send a joint [letter](#) (57.3 KB, PDF) to the EU with a set of demands to move forward with what was agreed at the CFS 37.

Upcoming Events

JANUARY 2012

- **CFS Bureau / Advisory Group Meeting**
19 January, FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy
- **International Scientific Symposium on Food & Nutrition Security Information: From valid measurement to effective decision-making**
<http://www.foodsec.org/web/newsevents/iss/home/en/>
17-19 January, FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy

FEBRUARY 2012

- **IFAD Farmers' Forum**
20-21 February, IFAD Headquarters, Rome, Italy
- **IFAD Governing Council**
22-23 February, IFAD Headquarters, Rome, Italy

MARCH 2012

- **FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC)**
12-16 March, Hanoi, Vietnam

- **FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC)**
26-30 March, Argentina

APRIL 2012

- **FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)**
16-20 April, Baku, Azerbaijan
- **FAO Regional Conference for the Africa (ARC)**
23– 27 April, Brazzaville, Congo

