

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)

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



The final text of the VGs was concluded on 9 March, after a week-long intergovernmental negotiation at the FAO Headquarters in Rome. As a next step, the VGs will be considered for final approval by the CFS at a special session in Rome in mid-May. Upon the adoption, the focus of the debate will shift to the implementation of the VGs.

The conclusion of the VGs marks a historical moment for several reasons. **Access to natural resources is a question of dignity and a matter of life and death for millions of peasant communities, pastoralists, indigenous peoples and fisher folk.** In many parts of the world, large-scale land acquisitions are increasing pressures on land, and violating the tenure rights of local communities. In the context of weak land governance, many poor communities are finding it difficult to defend their rights, and are often at the risk of being displaced or evicted from their own land.

The VGs process, first initiated at the ICARRD (International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development) held in Porto Alegre in 2006, was developed with the **aim of improving tenure governance, through the**

development of a framework which can be used by Member States to develop their own national strategies, policies and programmes, and to effectively respect, protect and fulfill the rights to use, manage and exercise control over land, fisheries and forests.

The VGs are robustly **anchored in international human rights language and principles**. Although the VGs are voluntary, they have the capacity to provide guidance to authorities to improve land tenure systems, as well as an additional instrument to strengthen the civil society's and local communities' demands for political change.



Through active participation in the three rounds of intergovernmental negotiations, ActionAid and IFSN along with other CSOs contributed to the VGs by providing a **strong language on gender, adequate provisions regarding land investments, and safeguards to protect legitimate tenure rights** from risks that could arise from large-scale land transactions.

The VGs were **negotiated within the CFS**, which was reformed in 2009 to become the **central UN platform dealing with food security and nutrition issues**; the fact that the CFS was able to reach a consensus on a controversial issue such as land demonstrates the growing effectiveness of the Committee.

Further reading:

- [Final text of the VGs](#) (165 KB, PDF)
- [Final CSO statement](#) (52 KB, PDF)

2. CFS Booklet Launched

[The Committee on World Food Security \(CFS\): A Guide for Civil Society](#) (5 MB, PDF) is finally available. The Booklet was produced with the support of IFSN,



and it is a result of the collective effort from a wide range of Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) members.

It explains what the CFS is, why it is important, and how CSOs worldwide can monitor, influence or get involved in the work of the CFS at the global, regional and the national level. It also contains updated contact details of the CSM Constituencies. Portuguese, Spanish and French versions of the Booklet will be available soon.

3. Global Strategic Framework (GSF)

The [First Draft of the GSF](#) (307 KB, PDF) is now available and open for consultation. It is being discussed at the FAO Regional Conferences (March - May 2012), and also online through the [Food Security and Nutrition \(FSN\) Forum](#) (12th March to 1st May 2012). All comments will feed into the preparation of the Second Draft, which will be finalised in May 2012. The Second Draft will be examined at a CFS consultation in Rome in June 2012, and then be submitted to the CFS in October.

ActionAid and IFSN participated in the online consultation on the Annotated Outline of the GSF in 2011, and are now preparing to collect inputs from ActionAid affiliates and IFSN members. The Second Draft will contain a series of boxes with case studies that illustrate best practices related to the policy recommendations in Chapter IV, and CSOs are invited to provide innovative examples for this section.

Further reading:

- [Opening note on the GSF](#) (186.7 KB, PDF)
- [PowerPoint presentation on the GSF](#) (113 KB, PDF)

4. CSM January Consultation

In January 2012, the CSM held a meeting with several members of the Coordination Committee to prepare for the upcoming civil society regional con-

sultations during the FAO Regional Conferences. The [summary report](#) (105 KB, PDF) highlights the main conclusions from the meeting, including proposals for CSM ways of working.

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific

The 31st FAO Asia Pacific Regional Conference (APRC) was organised in Hanoi, Vietnam from 12 to 16 March. Prior to the conference, a **CSO consultation** took place on 10-11 March with 130 representatives of smallholders farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, rural women, pastoralists, youth, cooperatives, labour movements, consumer groups, and NGOs from 20 countries worldwide.

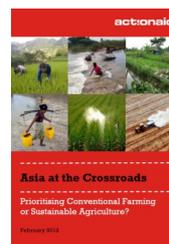


The CSOs took joint positions and participated in the APRC with demands, such as: a) stop land grabbing and implement genuine reforms on land, agrarian and rural development; b) adopt and implement voluntary guidelines on land; c) design adequate policies that support small-scale enterprises and value chains for smallholder farmers and other food producers; and d) develop gender responsive policies and allocate 20 per cent of the national budget to support smallholder-led sustainable agriculture.

This year's APRC saw an increased space for the civil society. In addition to the opportunity to speak as observers, the CSOs this year were given the space to intervene during official sessions with government delegates, albeit with some restrictions in terms of number of CSO speakers per session. This progress is seen as a result of the civil

society's continuous lobbying and engagement efforts with the FAO, which led to various institutional reforms particularly in the CFS.

ActionAid and IFSN were represented by Aftab Alam Khan (Livelihoods and Food Security Coordinator) and Pham Van Tranh (CIFPEN, Vietnam) respectively. During the APRC, ActionAid launched the new report, [Asia at the Crossroads – Prioritising conventional farming or sustainable agriculture](#) with the support of IFSN, and distributed it to various government delegates. ActionAid and IFSN also demanded the Assistant Director General and the Head of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific of the FAO to give more space to CSOs in the FAO national offices, and to facilitate regular engagement of the CSOs in the implementation of the APRC decisions. ActionAid and IFSN also contributed to the drafting of the [final CSO statement](#) (33.5 KB | DOC) at the end of the conference.



Further reading:

- [Blog on the new ActionAid report](#)
- [Full version of the CSO statement](#) (47 KB, DOC)

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Farmers' Forum

The fourth global meeting of the Farmers' Forum was held in Rome, Italy from 18 to 23 February. The Farmers' Forum is an on-going, bottom-up

The Farmers' Forum

February 2012



consultation and dialogue among small farmers' and rural producers' organisations, IFAD and national governments, focusing on the issues of agricultural and rural development and poverty reduction. The Forum is rooted in concrete partnerships and collaborations at the country and regional levels. The Farmers' Forum was born in 2005 and it meets every two years for a global consultation, in conjunction with the Governing Council of IFAD.

Representatives of farmers' organisations attending the Forum are nominated by its Steering Committee, composed of International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), La Via Campesina, Réseaux des Organisations Paysannes et Producteurs Agricoles de l' Afrique de l' Ouest (ROPPA), Coordinadora de productores familiares del MERCOSUR(COPROFAM), and World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF). ActionAid and IFSN were represented by Ruchi Tripathi (Senior Programme Manager, Resilient Livelihoods), and Alberta Guerra (Food Policy Lobbyist).

During the Forum, there was an intensive discussion between the IFAD management team, and farmers' and fisherfolk's organisations, where they assessed their partnership with a view to progressively improve it. Participants noted how the IFAD incorporates small-scale farmers into 85 per cent of its country strategies and 80 per cent of its projects, but it does not give equal consideration to fisherfolk. In turn, the fisherfolk's organisations urged the IFAD to include them in the IFAD's operational programmes, and to allocate more space for them to participate in the next Forum.

Further reading:

- [Agenda of the Farmers' Forum](#) (230 KB, DOC)
- [Synthesis of recommendations from farmers' organisations](#) (20.5 KB, DOC)

CONCORD European Food Security Group (EFSG)

The Concord EFSG released a [joint communiqué](#) (642 KB, PDF) with the European Coordination of Via Campesina, demanding the EU to respect the rights of developing countries to protect and develop their domestic production. Some of the demands were to ban export subsidies, and to use the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to drive a transition to sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture in Europe and worldwide. The EFSG also sent out a more comprehensive [statement](#) (342 KB, PDF) to the European Parliament, with recommendations on the legislative proposals on the post-2013 CAP.

World Food Programme (WFP)

The official report of the WFP/NGO Annual Consultation held last December is now available [here](#) (808 KB, PDF). The full list of participants is also available [here](#) (407 KB, PDF).

Upcoming Events

MARCH

- **Latin America and Caribbean FAO Regional Conference**
26-30 March, Buenos Aires, Argentina

APRIL

- **Europe FAO Regional Conference**
16-20 April, Baku, Azerbaijan
- **Africa FAO Regional Conference**
23-27 April, Brazzaville, Congo

MAY

- **Special Session of the CFS for the final adoption of the VGS**
TBC, FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy