

The Committee on Food Security

The CFS

“The Committee on Food Security is the foremost inclusive intergovernmental and international political platform on food security and nutrition with the explicit vision to foster the progressive realization of the right to adequate food for all.” (CSM website based on CFS Reform document)

The CFS and its 2009 reform

- The CFS was established in 1974 as an intergovernmental committee, hosted by FAO, to monitor the commitments made during the first World Food Conference in 1974, and later the World Food Summit in 1996
- **In 2009, under the impression of the world food price crises 2007/2008, the CFS underwent a profound reform and became the foremost inclusive platform with a particular openness to the participation of civil society.** The Committee reports to the UN General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and to FAO Conference.

The reform identified the following 6 roles for the CFS:

- Increase coordination at the global level to strengthen action among governments, regional organizations/agencies, CSOs, private sector and other stakeholders;
- Promote policy convergence and coordination through developing international strategies and voluntary guidelines on food security and nutrition policies, based on lessons learned from local experiences and input from national and regional levels;
- Provide support and advice on regional and country-led plans to eliminate hunger, based on applying right to food approaches that are founded on the principles of participation, transparency and accountability;
- Coordinate at national and regional levels through building and strengthening national and regional mechanisms and networks working on food security and nutrition issues;
- Promote accountability and share best practices through developing innovative monitoring mechanisms and common indicators to help countries monitor and report quantitatively on their progress on tackling hunger;
- Develop a global strategic framework for food security and nutrition in order to improve coordination and guide synchronized action by a wide range of stakeholders.

Participation in the CFS

CFS distinguishes between members (governments) and participants – with this distinction it remains despite its participatory character a multilateral institution in which decisions are taken by member States

The current 130 members have the right:

- To intervene in Plenary and breakout discussions
- **Approve** meeting documents and agendas
- Submit and present documents and formal proposals
- Have **exclusive voting and decision taking rights**, including drafting the final report of CFS Plenary sessions.

Participation in CFS continued

Participants: representatives of UN Agencies (FAO, IFAD, WFP, WHO), Civil society Organisations (CSO), International Agricultural research bodies, International and regional financial institutions (WB, IMF, WTO), Representatives from the private sector (PSM), associations and private philanthropic foundations.

Participants have the right:

- To intervene in Plenary and breakout discussions
- Contribute to preparation of meeting documents and agendas
- Submit and present documents and formal proposals
- Contribute regularly to intersessional activities of the Committee through the Advisory Group and Open-Ended Working Groups established by the Bureau

Observers: interested organizations invited to observe by the CFS or the Bureau (local authorities or regional associations)

How the CFS works

- GLOBAL PLENARY SESSION: Members, participants and observers at the CFS meet as whole once a year for an annual plenary session. The Plenary is the central body for decision making, debate, coordination, lesson-learning and convergence by all stakeholders at the global level on issues pertaining to food security and nutrition.
 - INTER-SESSIONAL WORK: the ongoing work of the CFS throughout the year is maintained through regular meetings of the Bureau (executive body composed of governments) and the Advisory Group (composed of reps from CFS participants), the OEWDGs and the TTs.
- à CSM participates and contributes to plenary sessions and inter-sessional work (through different delegations/speakers). It has its autonomous space to prepare for these and own funding (more details below)

- The Bureau: The Bureau is the executive arm of the CFS and it is composed by a chair and 12 elected members representing regional groups (Two from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East, and one from both North America and South-West Pacific).
- The Advisory Group: The CFS Advisory Group supports the Bureau and maintains links between participants and other stakeholders in a two-way exchange of information. Includes: UN agencies, CSM, PSM/Philanthropic Foundations, International Institutions (Trade, Agricultural Research)
 - The CSM has 4 seats within the CFS Advisory Group (I think PS has only 1 or 2). The CSM appoints 8 members of the CSM AG who then attend CFS AG meetings on a rotational basis.



FAO IFAD WFP

CFS Secretariat

High-Level Panel of Experts

CFS

Advisory Group (Participants)

Member States
All UN Regions
Annual Plenary
CFS Bureau (during the Interessional Period)

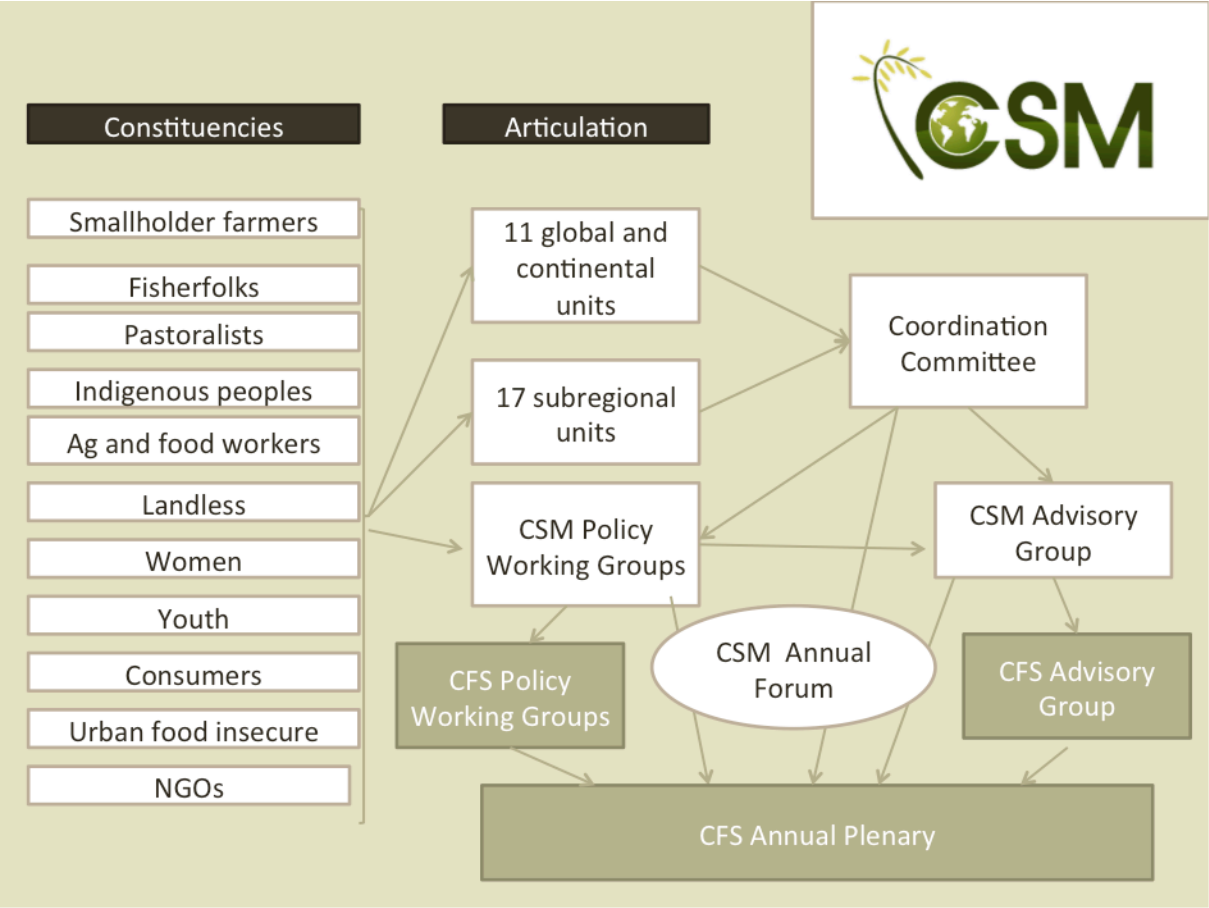
- Civil Society Mechanism (CSM)
- UN Institutions (including UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, UNSCN, FAO, IFAD, WFP)
- UN Research institutions
- Financial institutions
- Private Sector Mechanism
- Philanthropic Foundations

The CSM

- The Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM) is the largest international space of CSOs working to eradicate food insecurity and malnutrition.
- Founded in 2010 as an **essential and autonomous part (!)** of the reformed CFS. The purpose of the CSM is to facilitate civil society participation and articulation into the policy processes of the CFS.
- The CSM is an **open and inclusive space** and hence does not have formal members, but participating organizations. Every organization that belongs to civil society and works on food security and nutrition can join and participate.
- All participating organizations in the CSM belong to one of the following 11 constituencies: smallholder farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolks, indigenous peoples, agricultural and food workers, landless, women, youth, consumers, urban food insecure and NGOs.

How the CSM works

- CSM gives priority to the organizations and movements of the people most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition, recognizing that they are the organizations of the rights-holders that are the subjects of their own development and also the most important contributors to food security and nutrition worldwide.
- Respects pluralism, autonomy, diversity and self-organisation and tries to ensure a balance of constituencies, gender, and regions.
- As a space does not represent the organizations that participate in it. They represent themselves and articulate positions together with others in the CSM. The participating organizations, particularly those who organize small-scale food producers and consumers, have more than 300 millions affiliated members from all continents.



Decision making within the CSM

- The Coordination Committee (CC) is the governing body of the CSM; this means that all relevant political decisions within the CSM, on internal and external issues, are taken by the CC by consensus, if possible, and by vote if a consensus is not possible, reporting the divergent view.
- The Members of the CSM Coordination Committee **are elected by the 11 constituencies and 17 sub-regions.**
- Gender and geographic balance within its composition is always ensured.
- Composition: 2 members per constituency (except small scale food producers who have 4) and 1 member per sub-region → ENSURES PRIORITY VOICE TO THOSE AFFECTED (NGOs are only one constituency)

CSM Participation in CFS

- CSM Participates in Plenary discussions (October) and in Intersessional events
- CSM organises a two-day forum preceding the October plenary session (one week) and holds meetings throughout the week (CSM can use CFS/FAO space)
- CSM participates in CFS policy work streams (incl. OEWGs, Technical Task Teams) and has its own WGs to prepare for these
- CSM organizes side events and bilateral meetings with governments
- CSM sits on the CFS Advisory Group (four representatives)

Policy Working Groups

- The Policy Working Group is the space where political inputs to CFS Processes are articulated, debated, constructed, analyzed and confronted. The aim, starting from the pluralities of expertise, knowledge and point of views, is to build a civil society common position to be brought to CFS inter-sessional and plenary decision-making and policy debate activities.
- Working Groups are established in relation to the CFS processes approved in the Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW). Working Groups are open to all participating organizations of the CSM and ideally comprise organizations from all global constituencies and sub-regions.
- Each of the WG is led by one or two coordinators who are members of the CC and is usually supported by technical facilitators and resource persons.

Financing of the CSM

- Since the constitution of its first Coordination Committee in May 2011 the CSM was financed mainly by governments and international institutions active into the CFS.
- FAO and IFAD also supported the CSM activities with smaller contributions and in kind support, by hosting CSM CC meetings, CSM Fora and in general CSM preparatory meetings to CFS events.
- Finally Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and NGO active into the CSM also contributed importantly to the CSM financing not only providing almost the 20% of its financial resources during the period 2011-2015 but also providing in-kind contributions and directly covering the costs of the participation and active engagement of its own members to the Annual CSM Fora and CFS meetings.

The Private Sector Mechanism

- The Private Sector Mechanism (PSM) is coordinated by the International Agri-Food Network
- The Private Sector Mechanism (PSM) is an open platform for providing a permanent seat for for-profit enterprises, and their associations, right across the value chain at the UN Committee on Food Security. From farmers to input providers, cooperatives, processors, small-medium enterprises, food companies, and more, we welcome all those involved in addressing agriculture and food security.
- As every year, the PSM will conduct quarterly calls in March, September and December, for which members will receive invitations. In addition, we invite you to attend two key meetings in 2019:
- The mechanism is dependent on donations for continuing operations. We welcome funding from members of the Private Sector Mechanism on a voluntary basis.
- Supporters include: Bayer, Danone, Nestle, DSM, International Council of Beverages Association, etc.
- **Level of support determines level of influence** (e.g., participation in high-level dinners and bilateral meetings with MS)! (see bottom of page on membership levels and services)

Participation in practice

- Open communication with governments
- CSM very vocal and recognized voice in CFS meetings (can speak throughout meeting)
 - à weight that comes with a collective voice and diverse CSM delegations (rather than just one rep) - enabled through CSM funding
- PSM speaks less – however PSM positions often put forward by ist allies eg., EU, WFP, etc.
- More recently PSM has become more visible and vocal – process on CFS Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (e.g., event to present their vision on guidelines)
- PSM holds high-level dinners, etc. Space for lobby more relevant than actual inputs to sessions.

Reflection

- Important space – gives direct voice to those most affected – it was a struggle to make this happen!
- CSM strong because of its collective voice and this being based on real experiences / perspectives of those affected
- Governments usually interested in events and orientation provided by CSM, and value contributions / perceived expertise. At the same time of course PSM can invite to high-level dinners etc...
- Influence of private sector and linked organisations not only through PSM but also through CFS funding. Increasingly looking into „innovate ways“ of funding...
 - CFS currently receives its core funding equally from FAO, IFAD and WFP.
 - Funding for specific workstreams through voluntary funding from MS (EU; France; Germany; Switzerland; etc) BUT also since 2014 (which is when the CFS started working in nutrition) from the BMGF. (influence noted in first draft of CFS role in nutrition)

Model for WHO?

- Very different in terms of CSO membership (largely social movements) – so it will difficult to achieve the same „participatory approach“ within WHO CSO constituency – however it could be something to aim for gradually (increase meaningful participation of groups representing affected)
- Shared culture (social movements first, NGOs take a back seat / facilitator role while political role with CC)
- Shared political line among CSM participants (or construction of such for new policy processes through exchange). (NGOs with different views participate as well but would not go against this shared political line.)
- CSM funding for participation of reps (with priority to SMs from the global south) – this is key to their participation in e.g., OEWG processes, CC meetings, etc.
- CSM has a full-time secretariat (3 people) which does an amazing job in facilitating participation of CSO / SM reps (including through translation of information / preparatory calls / etc.)
- Collective and participatory character implies a lot of work – but unique spirit and space for learning from each other and importantly from those affected