

CFS Private Sector modalities

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A. BACKGROUND

1. *“Food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy lifestyle.”* CFS:2010/9 Achieving food security for all will demand engagement by multi-lateral bodies, governments, donors, private sector and civil society. The Committee on Food Security was reformed to better encourage the participation of all facets of these groups.

2 As was requested by the CFS: *“Private sector associations, private philanthropic organizations and other CFS stakeholders active in areas related to food security, nutrition, and the right to food are encouraged to autonomously establish and maintain a permanent coordination mechanism for participation in the CFS and for actions derived from that participation at global, regional and national levels. They are invited to communicate a proposal to that effect to the CFS Bureau.”* (CFS: 2009/2 Rev. 2, para 17)

3. The modalities described in this document represent the private sector arrangements to coordinate participation in the CFS. The private sector has built its own autonomous mechanism for participation in CFS activities, discussion, negotiation and decision-making. It is important to underline that this builds on the existing networks to facilitate aggregation of input from the broadest range of companies from the greatest number of countries.

The CFS is comprised of the Bureau (Chairperson and twelve members, two coming from each of the following geographic regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East, and one from both North America and South-West Pacific) and the Advisory Group composed of representatives of the UN system and the global monetary system plus:

-1 seat for private sector

- 1 seat for foundations

-4 seats for civil society

-1 seat for international agricultural research

4. The new CFS is not limited to an annual meeting. Rather, it is intended that there will be an on-going Work Programme implemented by the Bureau with inputs from the Advisory Group

and the High Level Panel of Experts. All participants in the CFS process, including the private sector, are invited to contribute to inter-sessional activities of the CFS at various levels, from national to regional to global. The Work Programme will be used to prepare the CFS Plenary Sessions and follow up on their conclusions and decisions. It will include the gathering of lessons learnt from national and regional levels, the development of policy guidance and the Global Strategic Framework, facilitating international support to national plans of action etc. Private sector engagement on implementation and investment is welcome. There are currently about one to three meetings a month in Rome at the FAO headquarters.

B. ORGANISING PRINCIPLES

5. All the private sector food actors who want to participate can do so, with a particular emphasis on those active in the area of food and nutrition at any level, particularly those that represent

- food producers,
- input suppliers,
- agro-retailers
- grain traders,
- food manufacturers and retailers,
- and other actors directly involved in producing and selling.

6. The private sector statement and submissions shall represent the maximum consensus possible.

7. The submissions and statements will be respectful.

8. The submission will be constructive, focusing on mechanisms to improve outcomes on food security.

9. Should any private sector group wish to submit a separate/additional paper it is welcome and encouraged to do so.

10. Statements at key events will be based on agreed submissions.

C. ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

11. The essential role of the private sector modalities is to facilitate the participation of the private sector in the work of the CFS, including input to negotiation and decision-making. To aggregate private sector input into the CFS, the private sector focal point (currently the International Agri-Food Network www.agrifood.net) will share documents, seek comments, draft positions, and facilitate timely response to CFS. **It is a network of the willing.** The private sector modalities will present common positions to the CFS where they emerge and the range of different positions where there is no consensus.

Activities may include:

- lobbying and advocacy,
- information sharing and education,
- formation and participation in specific working groups,

- capacity building,
- engagement on key issues,
- selection of and outreach to high-level private sector representatives
- and monitoring and preparation of specific proposals to be discussed by the CFS Plenary sessions.

12. The private sector is a broad range of groups from large multinational corporations, to national companies, to small and medium enterprises. The private sector focal point (IAFN www.agrifood.net) has established a list serve of interested parties. Individual companies, foundations, NGO's with a mandate on fostering entrepreneurship, and associations are all welcome. International associations representing networks of companies and national groups will be given appropriate weighting in participation to reflect their aggregating role and global reach.

13. In order to fulfil its facilitation role, the private sector focal point will perform a series of functions including the following:

- i) exchanging of CFS information, analysis and experience;
- ii) developing common positions as appropriate;
- iii) communicating to the CFS and, as appropriate, its Bureau through representatives designated by an internal self-selection process;
- iv) convening a private sector forum and/or other events before and in conjunction with CFS sessions.

14. The private sector focal point will facilitate participation in both inter-sessional activities (activities that take place between the annual CFS Plenary Sessions) and the CFS Plenary Sessions held in proximity to World Food Day in October each year.

15. The private sector focal point will dialogue with the CFS Bureau regarding the allocation of private seats in the annual CFS Plenary Sessions.

D. FOCAL POINT

16. The focal point (International Agri-Food Network) meets in-person once a year and by conference call as needed. **Membership in the focal point is not a requirement to participate in negotiations, the list serve, or the CFS related events.** All private sector actors are welcome. It should be noted that membership in the focal point does not guarantee automatic participation in the annual CFS plenary sessions.

17. The focal point is responsible for ensuring that the functions of the private sector modalities are carried out as effectively as possible and according to the organizing principles.

18. The focal point will be reviewed at the private sector in-person meeting in 2013 and every two years thereafter.

19. The focal point will make decisions on the functioning of the private sector modalities such as:

- a) participation issues arising from the private sector modalities,
- b) quotas for participation in the CFS Plenary
- c) selection of private sector member of the Advisory Group

d) and assisting in the organization of the private sector events related to the CFS.

20. Decisions will be made through systematic consultation with interested participants in the private sector. Decisions will be made by consensus wherever possible, and made through voting if no consensus emerges. Votes will be weighted to reflect any international associations representing the breadth of an interested sector. Silence will be taken as consent.

21. Any divergent positions will be passed on to the Bureau and Secretariat when submitted in writing to the focal point.

22. The focal point will be responsible for dialogue with the CFS Bureau and Secretariat regarding the allocation of private sector seats in the annual CFS plenary sessions and position statements.

E. MEETINGS

23. The focal point will facilitate the organization of at least one private sector meeting every year. The meeting will be open to all interested private sector participants that are members of the private sector list serve. For decision making, a balance among constituencies and regions is important. Appropriate mechanisms, including possibilities to vote when consensus is lacking, will be established. The meeting will provide an important occasion for exchanging information, discussing priority food security and nutrition issues, identifying priorities for private sector advocacy and, eventually deliberating common positions to be taken to the annual CFS Plenary. If there is not consensus, positions presented to the CFS will state clearly the names of the organizations which endorse them. The organizations that support the statement are free to make those statements available on their own websites. In the case that there is no consensus or a dissenting opinion, private sector actors are welcome to provide specific remarks in writing.

F. PRIVATE SECTOR MEMBER OF THE CFS ADVISORY GROUP

24. The role of the Advisory Group is to bring the views of the non-voting CFS participants, including the private sector, to the Bureau of the CFS and *“to provide input to the Bureau regarding the range of tasks which the CFS Plenary has instructed it to perform”* (CFS:2009/2 Rev.2, para.32). It also has a role in nurturing and maintaining linkages with different actors at regional, sub regional and local levels (CFS:2009/2 Rev.2, para. 23).

25. The reform of the CFS provides one seat to private sector and one seat to foundations. This seat is currently held by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This document does not deal with the modalities for foundations.

26. To facilitate efficiency and co-ordination, a nominee from the focal point will be appointed to the Advisory Group for a period of two years. The focal point will inform the Bureau of that nominee. One alternate will be designated.

27. Key selection criteria include:

- a) Ability to participate regularly in Advisory Group meetings in person or via tele-conference and video conferencing facilities
- b) Demonstrable commitment to the CFS
- c) Ability to network with a broad range of constituencies, organizations, networks and sectors
- d) Communication and networking skills
- e) The overall balance of the Advisory Group seats should reflect the principle of gender balance and the priority given to constituencies representing the agri-food sector.

28. The essential tasks of the private sector Advisory Group member will be to share information and to present the range of views of the private sector, with an emphasis on any common positions that the private sector may have developed.

29. The focal point will aim for the maximum possible participation and the most useful points of participation in the Bureau and the overall CFS process. The Advisory Group will respect the organizing principles of the private sector, in line with the CFS: 2009/2 Rev. 2, para 17.

G. ALLOCATING PRIVATE SECTOR SEATS IN CFS PLENARY SESSIONS

30. There may be a limit on private sector seats in the CFS Plenary Sessions, and there will certainly be a limit on the number of private sector participants who are able to speak during the Plenary Sessions. Seats and speaking slots allocated to the private sector in CFS meetings will be distributed among interested parties and based on the key themes being addressed in the plenary. Direct links to food security activities, gender sensitivity, and engagement in regions facing significant food insecurity are priorities.

31. Priority will be put on high level participation and engagement by private sector associations at the plenary.

32. Information about annual CFS Plenary Sessions will be put on the focal point's website (www.agrifood.net) and sent to the e-mail list.

33. Organizations wishing to attend the CFS session are requested submit information on their organization, areas of work and organizational affiliations, which agenda item they are most interested in, and what they think they can contribute to the discussion. This does not preclude proactive solicitation of participants through the focal point.

H. COMMUNICATIONS

34. The focal point will establish an e-mail list and website. Information will be posted on the website in English. Any interested private sector party will be able to sign up to receive the emails by registering their email address on the website.

I. ACCOUNTABILITY AND EVALUATION

35. Elements of accountability:

- a) The focal point will be accountable to the private sector worldwide working on food security and nutrition on the one hand, and the CFS on the other
- b) The focal point will maintain an updated website and email list and ensure private sector positions are developed on issues related to CFS.
- c) The annual in-person meeting provides a forum to reflect on the work of the focal point and the membership in the Advisory Group.

36. In addition to at least one annual in-person meeting, the private sector e-mail list and website will be the main tools for outreach. The website will contain the following information which will also be distributed through the e-mail list:

- a) The key current documents for consultation, with an emphasis on policy development
- b) Link to the CFS website
- c) List of current focal point and advisory group members
- d) Dates and agendas of annual CFS Plenary Sessions; number of seats allocated to the private sector in CFS sessions and an online to request participation in the sessions
- e) Date of the annual meeting of the private sector that will take place each year
- f) Any joint statements that are approved by consensus