



H.E. Ambassador Gornass
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Rome, 16 May 2016

Excellency,

In response to your letter dated 12 April 2016 inviting me, in my capacity as Chair of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), to offer substantive inputs to the 2016 meeting of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), I have the honour of conveying the attached contribution on the work of CFS.

The Committee on World Food Security is the foremost inclusive intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together for food security and nutrition policies. Supported by a joint Secretariat comprising representatives of all three Rome based Agencies, FAO, IFAD and WFP, the Committee allows the participation of a variety of stakeholders –representatives of UN agencies, civil society, private sector and philanthropic foundations, agricultural research, financial institutions- alongside Members who retain the decision-making prerogative. The Committee is supported in its work by evidence-based advice from the CFS High Level Panel of Experts (CFS-HLPE). CFS reports annually to the UN General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

CFS is currently discussing how it can provide a platform for sharing, learning and identifying challenges and successes related to the achievement of the SDGs, how it can address policy gaps that may impede SDG implementation and identify opportunities for accelerating progress on particular themes within the SDGs relevant to the mandate of CFS. A proposal will be submitted to CFS plenary for endorsement in October 2016, comprising a section on a regular CFS contribution to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) to support inclusive global follow-up and review of progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The attached contribution summarizes CFS Plenary decisions, endorsed policy tools and ongoing processes aiming to address in an inclusive manner, the root causes of hunger and malnutrition, with a special focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized. To facilitate discussions in the High Level Political Forum, the attached contribution follows the suggested template provided in the letter and inspired by the report of the Secretary-General (A/70/684). It includes a list of the major documents referenced.

CFS is recognized in the 2030 Agenda for its “important role and inclusive nature”. Its policy products are cited in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as powerful tools to support development financing in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

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H.E. Oh Joon

President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
New York

It is my hope that this CFS contribution will usefully support discussions in July 2016 on the importance of ensuring that no one is left behind as a crucial condition for sustainable development. I remain available to present the work of CFS, or provide any other information needed, and wish you all success in hosting this crucial meeting of the High Level Political Forum.

Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Amira Gornass
Chair
Committee on World Food Security



Contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

ECOSOC functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and forums, are invited to share relevant input and deliberations as to how they address goals and targets from the perspective of “*Ensuring that no one is left behind*”.

Inputs could follow the following template, inspired by the report of the Secretary-General on Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level (A/70/684).

Submissions will be publicly posted online at the United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, at sustainabledevelopment.un.org, as input to the 2016 meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Please send the completed form no later than **16 May 2016** to the Secretariat’s e-mail pietracci@un.org

Submission Form

A contribution to the global follow-up and review in the 2016 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on the work of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS),

submitted by H.E. Amira Gornass, Chair of CFS

The following contribution is sent in response to the invitation from the President of ECOSOC, HE Oh Joon, for CFS to “offer substantive inputs to the 2016 HLPF showcasing [CFS]’s contribution towards the 2030 Agenda in general, and particularly for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and respective targets that are substantial to [CFS]’s mandate”.

In 2016, CFS initiated a process to discuss and agree how CFS as a global, multi-stakeholder committee can contribute to advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. CFS is discussing how it can provide a platform for sharing, learning and identifying challenges and successes related to the achievement of the SDGs, how it can address these policy gaps and accelerate progress on particular themes within the SDGs relevant to its mandate. A proposal will be submitted to CFS’ 43rd Plenary for endorsement in October 2016, comprising a section on a regular CFS contribution to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) to support inclusive global follow-up and review of progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. CFS policy tools were re-examined under the SDG lens, to map the contribution of each integrated cross-cutting framework or set of recommendations. The result of this mapping can be found at the link at the end of this document.

An assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” at the global level:

A- Identifying who is at risk of being left behind

1. *According to the latest estimates of the State of Food Insecurity in the World Report (SOFI), jointly prepared by FAO, IFAD, and WFP, 793 million people are still undernourished globally, and at risk of being left behind. Although this represents a significant improvement over the last decade, it remains an unacceptably high number. In a fast changing global economic environment, these people are particularly vulnerable to commodity price fluctuations, unemployment, natural disasters, the impacts of climate change, political instability, protracted crises and conflict, social exclusion and poor nutrition. The vast majority of vulnerable populations live in developing regions, with women and children bearing the highest burden. Most live in rural areas, among which are many smallholder food producers, particularly women, and landless workers, but urbanization trends are leading to an increase of food insecure populations in urban areas. The multiplication of protracted crises worldwide has also taken a strong toll on the food security of people in these areas.*

2. *The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was reformed in 2009 with the specific aim to «ensure that the voices of all relevant stakeholders are heard in the policy debate on food and agriculture ». CFS’ reformed vision and rules of participation aim at gathering all relevant stakeholders, particularly those most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition, around the policy-making table, to devise inclusive policies targeting the most vulnerable. The Committee opened participation in its work to five categories of stakeholders: UN agencies and bodies with a specific mandate in the area of food security and nutrition; civil society and non-governmental organizations; international agricultural research systems; international and regional financial institutions; and the private sector associations and private philanthropic foundations. These participate in all of the Committee’s activities, submit proposals, provide advice and expertise in discussions, contribute to reaching a common understanding of the issues at stake and to finding consensus on joint solutions. Decisions are ultimately endorsed by CFS Members, and intended to be used by all stakeholders.*

3. *In order to ensure broad and diversified participation in CFS work, the different stakeholders were invited to establish mechanisms to function as facilitating bodies for consultation and participation, in response to which two coordination mechanisms were created. The [Civil Society Mechanism \(CSM\)](#) includes 11 different constituencies¹ from 17*

¹ Smallholders Farmers, Pastoralists/Herders, Fisherfolks, Indigenous Peoples, Consumers, Urban Food Insecure, Agricultural and Food Workers, Women, Youth, Landless, NGOs

sub-regions², with a strong emphasis on leadership of social movements directly representing rights holders. The [Private Sector Mechanism \(PSM\)](#) comprises organizations from across the agri-food value chain, from inputs to food retailers. The work of the CSM and PSM is instrumental in ensuring outreach, engagement and broad participation of stakeholders, and ensures that the perspectives of those often least heard are given priority in CFS work. Over the years, it has led to stronger commitment and demand for CFS inclusive policy instruments and activities.

4. The CFS reform also created a High-Level Panel of Experts (CFS-HLPE) to support CFS work with an evidence basis. Upon request from the Committee and to inform negotiated policy recommendations, the CFS-HLPE synthesizes existing research and produces independent reports on specific themes that address the root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition. Although not endorsed by the Committee, these reports are available as independent products in the public domain.

B- Inclusive tools for global governance of food security and nutrition

5. CFS work, by nature, is cross-cutting. While its mandate responds directly to SDG 2 “Eradicate hunger, ensure food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture”, its work addresses the nexus between SDG 2 and other SDGs. The [Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition \(GSF\)](#), updated annually, acts as the repository for CFS work and aims to improve coordination and guide synchronized action by a wide range of stakeholders.
- In response to identified policy gaps and pressing needs, the Committee agreed on [Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forestry in the context of National Food Security \(VGGTs\)](#), in 2012 after an inclusive process, to promote secure tenure rights and equitable access to land, as a means to eradicate hunger and poverty. Recognizing that the livelihoods of many, particularly the rural poor, are based on secure and equitable access to these resources, the VGGTs protect people from the arbitrary loss of tenure rights, including through forced evictions; they help ensure no one is subject to discrimination; they lead to more transparent and participatory decision-making and lastly, they help ensure that disputes are resolved before they degenerate into conflict. The VGGTs acknowledge the importance role of indigenous peoples and other communities, and recognize customary tenure systems. They are an integrated tool, linking responsible tenure to other major issues such as markets, investments, taxation, climate change, natural disasters and conflicts to name only a few.

² North America, Central America and Caribbean, Andean Region, Southern Cone, West Europe, East Europe, North Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, West Africa, South Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, West Asia, Australasia and Pacific

- *In order to feed the estimated 9 billion people by 2050, an estimated \$83 billion invested is needed per year to raise agricultural production. CFS endorsed the [Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems \(CFS-RAI\) in 2014](#). Based on a set of overarching values including respect for human rights, the RAI principles offer guidance on how to invest responsibly. They apply to all types and sizes of agricultural investments including in fisheries, forests, and livestock; they address all stakeholders involved in/affected by/benefiting from investments in agriculture and food systems; they apply to all stages of the value chain; they include actions to address a range of environmental, social, and economic issues, with particular attention to women and youth; and identify the specific roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders.*

- *In 2013 there were around 167 million undernourished people living in protracted crisis situations, a proportion about three times as high as in other developing contexts – and the longer the crisis, the worse the food security and nutrition outcomes. Strengthening resilience and improving food security and nutrition is key to improving the effectiveness of humanitarian response in addressing cycles of violence, and finding solutions to displacement caused by conflict and disasters. In response, CFS worked on developing specific policy guidance. In October 2015, CFS endorsed the [Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises \(CFS-FFA\)](#), representing the first global consensus on how to mitigate the threat to food security and nutrition during protracted crises. It recognizes that building resilience can boost capacity to absorb shocks and long-term stresses. Given the severity of undernutrition in protracted crises, nutritional needs require a special focus especially for the vulnerable and marginalized groups. In his report for the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016, “One humanity: shared responsibility”, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon calls for all stakeholders to work together to improve the lives of those living under protracted crises. The CFS-FFA can be an important tool to accelerate progress for those at risk of being left behind.*

- 6. *Also CFS agreed to policy recommendations addressing cross-cutting, nexus issues at the heart of food insecurity, including food price volatility, climate change, gender, water, food losses and waste, agricultural investment, and biofuels, with a focus on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized, and supporting integrated and holistic approaches.*

C- Continuous learning

- 7. *CFS decided to set up an innovative monitoring mechanism to promote accountability and share best practices at all levels. Working toward this aim, a framework for monitoring was agreed. As a first step, an opinion survey assessed perceptions of CFS’ effectiveness along a number of criteria, including inclusiveness and participation, coordination and engagement, evidence-based decisions and promotion of policy convergence. The survey’s findings were overall positive, and pointed to areas that warranted further reflection. CFS*

encourages stakeholders to share their experiences and best practices on a voluntary basis through events at global, regional and national level and is developing terms of reference to guide such events. In addition, an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the CFS reform will be undertaken in 2016 and propose forward-looking recommendations to enable CFS to respond effectively to emerging food security and nutrition challenges.

The identification of gaps, areas requiring urgent attention, risks and challenges:

A- Issues warranting further attention towards food security and nutrition for all

8. *CFS is currently working to address a number of gaps and areas requiring attention: recommendations on connecting smallholders to markets; the impact of rural transformation and urbanization on food security and nutrition, the significant interplay between nutrition and food systems, and sustainable agricultural development.*
9. *CFS involves all stakeholders in identifying the issues deserving attention from the Committee. That work is assisted by the CFS High Level Panel of Experts who, when requested, provides independent advice on critical and emerging issues for food security and nutrition. In a note released in 2014, the HLPE identified nutrition in changing food systems; livestock systems; inequalities; the role of financial markets; and pathways to sustainable food systems as emerging issues for food security and nutrition, which influenced CFS decisions on its current work plan. CFS may request further advice to help identify issues and prioritize actions to be ready in 2018.*

B- Challenges in the processes to ensure that no one is left behind in food security and nutrition policy discussions

10. *While CFS aims to have the voices of all stakeholders heard at global level, the reform of CFS also called for flexibility in implementation so that CFS can respond to a changing external environment and membership needs. In the era of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and as CFS scales up its work on nutrition, reflection on CFS modalities, as well as its impact at national level is warranted. The independent evaluation of CFS effectiveness being undertaken in 2016 may help lay the groundwork for this reflection.*

C- Implementation gaps: towards greater impact on the ground

11. *Impact on the ground of negotiated CFS policy instruments takes time, and relies on the action and coordination of each stakeholder and constituencies. While the results of the first stand-alone CFS policy framework, the VGGTs, are encouraging (the VGGTs are used in*

47 countries, in 4 regions, and their uptake has led to the set-up of national multistakeholder dialogues and groups), an acceleration is needed in the application of CFS instruments by countries and national stakeholders.

Valuable lessons learned on ensuring that no one is left behind:

12. *The key lesson for CFS on ensuring that no one is left behind has been on the importance of broad commitment to a truly inclusive process (inclusive prioritization of issues, consultations, recommendations on actions, leading to endorsement by Members).*
13. *The process of reaching consensus on policy is important for the credibility and legitimacy of the outcome among all stakeholders, and makes the investment in time and resources worthwhile.*
14. *The effectiveness of platforms such as CFS requires an investment to build trust and foster mutual understanding. CFS experience shows so far that value added lies not only in inclusive policies, but also in CFS' convening power, and in the dialogue it fosters on a range of issues in all its activities. For instance, the side events organized on the margins of the annual plenary session are perceived by many as a safe space for innovating and debate, convening different groups and catalysing partnerships. Intersessional work plays an important role in laying the foundations for dialogue and collaboration.*

Emerging issues likely to affect the realization of this principle:

15. **Malnutrition in all its forms** *has overtaken hunger in terms of the numbers of people affected worldwide: According to WHO estimates, in 2014, more than 1.9 billion adults were overweight, of which 600 million were obese, while 800 million people were still chronically undernourished in 2014-2016. Over 2 billion people are suffering from micronutrient deficiencies. Malnutrition is closely linked to inequalities and the sustainability of food systems, and has complex political, economic, social and environmental factors involved. Policies that address malnutrition in all its forms will encourage nutrition actors and stakeholders to break silos and reach out to each other from the health, agricultural, sanitation and education sectors. The UN Resolution declaring a Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025) will support countries follow-up on their commitments made during the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) will provide an important framework for sustained political momentum. The partners collaborating to implement the Decade, making use of coordinating mechanisms such as the UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) and multi-stakeholder platforms such as CFS, are participants in CFS work.*

16. *CFS recognizes that **rapid urbanization and the transformation of rural spaces** are creating challenges and opportunities in relation to food security and nutrition. Inclusive discussions leading to global policy convergence is required to ensure that the possible negative impacts on food security and nutrition of urbanization and rural transformation (increased urban poor and food insecure, land use change and decreased national food production and food security) are transformed into opportunities for the most vulnerable and food insecure.*
17. *The agriculture sector is underperforming in many developing countries, in part because men and women do not have equal access to the resources and opportunities they need to be productive. Across countries and contexts, women have consistently less access than men to agricultural assets, inputs and services and to rural employment opportunities. **Increasing women's access to land, livestock, education, financial services, extension, technology and rural employment** would boost their productivity and generate gains in agricultural output, food security, economic growth and social welfare. The gains in agricultural production alone from equal access to productive resources could increase yields on women's farms by 20-30 percent and raise agricultural outputs in developing countries by 2.5-4 percent, lifting 100–150 million people out of hunger. Closing the gender gap is not only the right thing to do. It is crucial for agricultural development and food security.*

Areas where political guidance by the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development is required:

18. *CFS would welcome a discussion and policy guidance during the 2016 meeting of the HLPF on means to accelerate the uptake of CFS products in countries and by national stakeholders, including through better links to regional processes.*
19. *CFS would also welcome a discussion in the HLPF emphasizing the importance of nutrition-related coordinating processes such as the implementation of the Decade of Action on Nutrition and the follow-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition, which are important for the achievement of the SDGs.*

Policy recommendations on ways to accelerate progress for those at risk of being left behind

20. *A holistic approach to address food insecurity, malnutrition and unsustainable agriculture is a key factor to decrease the number of hungry and malnourished people. This is also the main message of "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable*



Development". To date, the Committee on World Food Security has issued policy recommendations informed by evidence, and comprehensive policy frameworks. In each, the Committee calls for all stakeholders – States (including other relevant levels of governance), international organizations, the private sector and civil society – to recognize the centrality of food security and nutrition, and to undertake cost-effective, practical and environmentally sensitive actions in an inclusive, integrated and participatory manner, according to their priorities and means.

21. *CFS products and policy recommendations constitute ready-available tools for countries to advance food security and nutrition policy with a focus on the most vulnerable within the population. They have the potential to advance integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda.*

Links to useful resources:

[Negotiated CFS instruments: policy frameworks and recommendations](#)

[Mapping of CFS policy instrument across SDG targets](#)

[Independent CFS-HLPE reports informing CFS policy discussions](#)

[The CFS model: brief](#)