

43rd Session of the FAO Conference

Introduction to Item 13: Reports of the 48th (Special) (4 June 2021), 49th (11-14 October 2021) and 50th (10-13 October and 19 December 2022) Sessions of the Committee on World Food Security

The 48th (Special) Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was held virtually on 4 June 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The session was chaired by Mr Thanawat Tiensin, Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security from 2019-2021.

Under the only item on the agenda of the 48th (Special) Session, the Committee adopted the “CFS Policy Recommendations on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition”. These policy recommendations are based on the 14th Report of the CFS High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE-FSN) and their preparation concluded a process of policy convergence which started in 2019.

The Conference is invited to endorse the conclusions and recommendations of CFS 48, as well as to support the dissemination and utilization of the Policy Recommendations on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition.

It is also noted that in the context of the UN Food Systems Summit, a coalition was formed to promote knowledge and uptake of this policy agreement.

The 49th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was held virtually from 11 to 14 October 2021. Over 1 300 participants registered, including 10 Ministers and 7 Vice-Ministers, and representatives from 122 Members and 9 non-Members of the Committee. The session was chaired by Mr Thanawat Tiensin, Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security from 2019-2021.

The Committee expressed deep concern about the alarming food security and nutrition outlined in the 2021 Report on the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World. It also acknowledged the report’s emphasis on food systems transformation, which was considered essential to address the fact that more than 3 billion people were unable to afford healthy diets, and called for a systemic and holistic approach to food systems transformation.

The Committee welcomed the updated Issues Paper on the impacts of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition, prepared by the HLPE-FSN, and expressed concern over structural fragilities and injustices in contemporary food systems, exacerbated by the continuous impact of conflicts, diseases, poverty, inequalities, economic downturns and climate change. The Committee also requested continued deliberation on, and due attention to, the impacts of COVID-19 on food systems, agriculture and nutrition at all stages of the implementation of the approved Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPoW) workstreams.

In line with the Committee’s focus on enhancing the impact of its policies in countries, one of the main items on the agenda of the 49th Session was a discussion on the uptake of the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN). The Committee welcomed the concrete activities that had already been implemented by CFS stakeholders; reiterated the role of the VGFSyN as a tool to enhance policy coherence and address policy fragmentation across sectors; and re-affirmed that their use could foster and guide concrete actions to promote healthy diets through sustainable food systems.

The Committee also took stock of the use and application of two sets of CFS policy recommendations: (i) Food Security and Climate Change (CFS 39, 2012); and (ii) Water for Food Security and Nutrition (CFS 42, 2015). This review pointed to remaining challenges in these areas, including: insufficient data; inadequate attention to issues of governance, rights, and power relations; lack of integration of water and

climate change and their impacts on food security and nutrition into national policies and programmes; and a lack of integration of major global initiatives on food, water, and climate change.

With regard to its work on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment, the Committee reiterated the importance of organizing multi-stakeholder and inclusive consultations as a way to strengthen the ownership and success of the process, and for the Voluntary Guidelines to align with global, regional and national priorities, other relevant initiatives, good practices and experiences, in support of sustainable development.

The Committee also expressed appreciation for the HLPE-FSN report on "Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems", and its findings and recommendations, which formed the basis for an agreed set of policy recommendations which were endorsed at CFS 50.

The Committee reviewed and updated its MYPoW for 2020-2023, which included workstreams on (i) Food systems and nutrition; (ii) Agroecological and other innovative approaches; (iii) Gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition; (iv) Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems; (v) Data collection and analysis tools; and (vi) Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition.

Finally, the Committee elected H. E. Gabriel Ferrero y de Loma-Osorio, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Food Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Spain, to succeed Mr. Thanawat Tiensin as the Chairperson of the Committee.

The Conference is invited to take note of the progress made in the workstreams covered and endorse the Report of the 49th Session of the CFS.

CFS 50 was held in hybrid modality from 10-13 October, and on 19 December 2022.

Twenty-five Ministers and nine Vice-Ministers, representatives of 129 Members and 13 non-Members, as well as delegates from the UN system, financial institutions, civil society, research organizations, private sector associations and philanthropic foundations participated in the Session. The Session was chaired by H. E. Gabriel Ferrero y de Loma-Osorio, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Food Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Spain, and Chairperson of the CFS.

Based on the CFS 50 Plenary agenda, Members and participants discussed and deliberated on the following topical issues for global food security and nutrition:

First, during a Ministerial-level Segment, the Committee expressed deep concern over the global food crisis, underlining that geopolitical instability and increasing conflicts undermined food security and nutrition and had a negative impact on agrifood systems, and called for strengthening coordinated global policy responses to the multiple dimensions of the crisis, in line with the CFS reform document.

In this context, the Committee welcomed the High-Level Special Event co-convened on 18 July 2022 at the UN Headquarters in New York by the President of the General Assembly and the CFS entitled "Time to Act Together: Coordinating Global Policy Responses to the Global Food Crisis" supported by – and in support of – the UN Secretary-General's Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance.

Second, the CFS committed to prepare the next MYPoW 2024-2027, which was considered most critical for recovering from the crisis, progressing the transformation of food systems, and advancing the achievement of the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Third, the Committee reiterated its support for an inclusive and consensus-based approach to achieve agreement on the "CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in the context of Food Security and Nutrition" and called to conclude the work on the guidelines with a renewed approach and sense of shared responsibility.

Fourth, the Plenary called for greater collection, analysis and dissemination of data on all dimensions of food security and nutrition and concluded to take forward the CFS policy convergence process on Strengthening Data Collection and Analysis Tools for food security and nutrition.

Fifth, the Members endorsed new policy recommendations on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition, and requested to promote their effective utilization and uptake at country level.

Last, the Plenary discussed how to contribute to boosting the means of implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 by fostering responsible investment in sustainable agrifood systems, building on the experiences of the CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems, 10 years after the issuance of the guidance.

The Conference is invited to endorse the Report of the 50th Session of the CFS.

H.E. Gabriel Ferrero y de Loma-Osorio, Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security