

# 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.

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## The Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

### 1. Policy Round Tables—37<sup>th</sup> Session of the CFS

The recommendations that the CFS will adopt in the October Plenary Session will be informed by three policy roundtables, focusing on Food Price Volatility, Investments in Agriculture, and Gender, Food Security & Nutrition.

The policy discussions will be initiated by background documents, and civil society organisations (CSOs) are now contributing comments to the drafts. CSO comments will focus on the “Decision Boxes”, which represent the policy recommendations that Governments are expected to endorse.

As these recommendations will also define the CFS’ area of work for 2012, it is strategically important to influence the drafting of the background documents, demanding further feasibility studies on food reserves and investing more and better in women farmers through public policies.

#### Latest background papers:

- [Food Price Volatility](#) (350 KB, PDF)
- [Increasing Food Security through Stallholder-focused and Smallholder-sensitive Investment in Agriculture](#) (160 KB, DOC)
- [Gender: Food and Nutrition Security](#) (157 KB, PDF)

#### For further information on the CFS Policy Round Tables

Link: <http://www.fao.org/cfs/workingspace/>  
User Name: TaskTeam  
Password: CFS37RT

### 2. FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of tenure of Land and Natural Resources (VGs)

On 12-15 July, the CFS convened an Intergovernmental Negotiation on the VGs at the FAO Headquarters in Rome. Approximately 69 Member States and 20 representatives of the civil society, the private sector, international financial institutions and interested observers met to review, discuss and negotiate the final text of the VGs that would be adopted by the CFS Plenary in October.

Meeting in both plenary sessions and thematic working groups, the participants agreed on some parts of the text, but it was concluded that more time would be needed to consult with various authorities and constituencies. The negotiations will continue during 10-14 October, shortly prior to the CFS Plenary.

The July meeting had some important gains—the most important of which is the harmonisation of the VGs language to the UN human rights language. This signifies that the VGs should reflect the principles stipulated in international human rights conventions.

However, other controversial issues still remain, such as the inclusion of water and the balance between investments and safeguards with regards to the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for indigenous communities and all people affected by land deals.

For the negotiation in October, ActionAid is committed to pushing for a stronger gender perspective, providing alternative texts and lobbying for a separate section on women's access to land. ActionAid is also connecting with staff and partners at country and regional levels in order to facilitate joint advocacy for the adoption and implementation of the VGs by respective governments.

ActionAid, with other [CSOs actively involved in the VGs](#) (28 KB, XLS), will work in task teams on the basis of an agreed [work plan proposal](#) (48 KB, DOC) and [lessons learnt from the civil society participation in the July negotiations](#) (54 KB, DOC).

**Further reading:**

- [Chair's Summary of the CFS Intergovernmental Negotiations of the VGs, July](#) (100 KB, PDF)
- [Consolidated Changes by Plenary and Thematic Groups to the First Draft](#) (281 KB, DOC)

### **3. Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) for Responsible Agricultural Investments within the CFS**

The CFS will launch a consultation process in 2012 on responsible investments in agriculture. Although the initial idea was to launch a broader negotiation on the Responsible Agricultural Investment (RAI) Principles drafted by the FAO, IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) and UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), CSOs ultimately rejected the idea demanding that the RAI Principles are inadequate and insufficient (in terms of the content and the way it was drafted) to be endorsed by the CFS.

Farmers' organisations, in particular, have made a strong argument that the contents of the RAI Principles are only focused on alleviating the negative impacts of large-scale acquisitions, rather than addressing the type of agricultural investments that are needed to support small-scale farmers, especially women.

At the [first meeting of the OEWG on the principles for responsible agricultural investments within CFS](#) (Chair's Summary, 41 KB, DOC) held on 20 July, it was agreed that full coherence should be maintained to the VGs to avoid any duplication, and that the VGs must be approved before starting any kind of consultation process on the principles.

It was also agreed that the CFS should take the lead of the consultation process, the first step of which is to clarify the scope, purpose and intended recipients and structure of the principles as well as the format of the consultation process. At the same time, the World Bank, FAO, IFAD and UNCTAD will continue on with their pilot projects to test their RAI Principles in selected countries, in order to feed the results into the CFS consultation process.

### **4. The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) Study on Food Price Volatility and on Land Tenure and International Investments in Agriculture**

The HLPE has finally released the two CFS mandated reports, accompanied by summary versions for policy makers. Both reports have a strong language on biofuels, recommending the CFS to "demand abolition of targets on biofuels and the removal of subsidies and tariffs on biofuels production and processing" (p.13 of both studies).

On buffer stocks, the study confirmed that low stocks are strongly associated with price spikes and volatility, and recommended the CFS to explore forms of international cooperation regarding world food stocks and food security and to consider the role of community-based reserves at the national level to mitigate domestic price volatility.

The land study recommended that host country governments recognise the principle of the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in relation to land and natural resources, and that they prioritise agricultural investment in the “small farm sector and in alternative food systems that are socially inclusive and just as well as environmentally sustainable, using agroecological principles” (p.11 of the land study).

**Further reading:**

- [HLPE Report on Food Price Volatility](#) (1.4 MB, PDF)
  - [Extract for Policy Makers](#) (139 KB, PDF)
- [HLPE Report on Land Tenure and International Investments in Agriculture](#) (1.5 MB, PDF)
  - [Extract for Policy Makers](#) (95KB, PDF)

## 5. Launch of Consultation on the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF)

The CFS has launched a global and inclusive online consultation to gather feedback for the preparation of the GSF. It is open to all interested stakeholders and will be open from 26 July to 15 October. The consultation will be facilitated by different guiding questions, whereby participants are requested to upload their comments each week on different aspects of the CSF Annotated Outline.

In order to coordinate CSO inputs, the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) Working Group on the GSF, has proposed to conduct an autonomous CSM consultation on the GSF. Comments collected by 19 August will be systematised and discussed in a special meeting, organised by the working group on 5-6 September in Rome. The results from this meeting will be delivered at the CFS Plenary in October.

Focal points for CSOs will be Natalia Landivar from FIAN ([landivar@fianecuador.org.ec](mailto:landivar@fianecuador.org.ec)), Nico Verhagen from La Via Campesina ([nverhagen@viacampesina.org](mailto:nverhagen@viacampesina.org)) and Flavio Valente from FIAN ([valente@fian.org](mailto:valente@fian.org)).

**Further reading:**

- Annotated Outline of the CFS ([EN](#), 111 KB, PDF | [ES](#), 109KB, PDF | [FR](#), 112 KB, PDF)
- [Guiding Questions for the Consultation on the GSF](#) (25 KB, DOC)

## UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

### Emergency Ministerial-Level Meeting on the Horn of Africa, 25 July, Rome

At the request of the French Presidency of the G20, an Emergency Ministerial Meeting was organised by the FAO on 25 July to address the drought crisis in the Horn of Africa and to mobilise international support for affected countries. From ActionAid, Luca de Fraia (Deputy Secretary General of ActionAid Italy) and Alberta Guerra (Policy Officer—Food and IFSN) attended the meeting.

The meeting has been an important step for forging better coordination among UN Agencies, donors and NGOs working on the Horn of Africa crisis. The participants acknowledged the need for a “twin-track” approach of meeting both immediate needs of affected communities and long term investments in small-holder agriculture to improve farmers’ resilience to future climatic shocks.

**Further reading:**

- [Summary of Co-Chairs of the Meeting](#) (60.2 KB, PDF)
- Webcast of the meeting and press conference: <http://www.fao.org/webcast/>
- All documents and official statements of the meeting: [http://www.fao.org/crisis/emergency\\_meeting2011/en/](http://www.fao.org/crisis/emergency_meeting2011/en/)

## UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF)

### 14<sup>th</sup> HLTF Coordinator's Exchange with NGOs and Civil Society

On 22 July, David Nabarro, Coordinator of the UN HLTF, convened the [14th consultation call](#) (briefing paper, 96 KB, PDF) with NGOs and civil society to share assessments on the situation and prospects regarding food insecurity and malnutrition in the Horn of Africa and the outcomes and future perspectives of the recent G20 Agriculture Ministerial meeting in June.

During the call, ActionAid highlighted the failure of the G20 in addressing the structural causes of poverty and food insecurity and how public support systems for food reserves, for example, could have alleviated the detrimental impacts of drought on food security in the Horn of Africa. ActionAid also raised concerns about how the G20 is not taking appropriate measures to eliminate targets on biofuels and subsidies, despite the strong recommendations contained in both the Inter Agency Report and the HLPE study on food price volatility.

## CONCORD European Food Security Group (EFSG), Brussels

### CONCORD Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) Report

CONCORD is preparing its second report on PCD, aimed at informing and influencing the European Union (EU), including Member States' governments and their national parliaments, with evidence-based analysis on the impacts of European policies (e.g. agriculture, trade, biodiversity, land and fisheries) on developments outside Europe.

The report will address four thematic areas: 1) Security and development, 2) Migration and development, 3) Natural resources management and wealth distribution, and 4) Food security. On the food security chapter, the EFSG is mandated to lead the work along three main items: a) models and multifunctionality of agriculture, b) access to land including biofuels, and c) EU Agricultural Policy including EU trade relations with developing countries.

ActionAid is a member of the CONCORD Team responsible for the overall coordination and overview of the report and has contributed in drafting the chapter on food security particularly on the topic of food reserves. The [draft](#) (64 KB, DOC) is ready for comments and the final version is scheduled to be released in October.

## Upcoming Events

### SEPTEMBER

- **Special Meeting of the Working Group of the CSM on GSF**  
5-6 September, Rome, Italy
- **FAO Round Table to review methods used to estimate the number of hungry**  
12-13 September, Rome, Italy

### OCTOBER

- **Family Farming International Congress: Feeding the World, Caring for the Earth**  
Organised by World Rural Forum: <http://www.ruralforum.net>  
5-7 October, Bilbao, Basque Country, Spain
- **Intergovernmental Negotiation on the VGs**  
10-14 October, FAO, Rome, Italy
- **CFS 37th Plenary Session**  
17-22 October, FAO, Rome, Italy