

Food For Life Campaign



39th Session of the Committee on World Food Security: EAA members comment on outcomes

Friday, 20 October 2012 marked the closing of the 39th session on the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) - the key multilateral and intergovernmental policy forum on food and agriculture. Several important issues were tackled during the week, including the adoption of the first version of the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF), approval of the Terms of Reference for developing principles for responsible agricultural investment, and the achievement of consensus on the 'Decision Boxes' on both Climate Change and Food Security, and Social Protection.

Members of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) were present at every step of the discussions and were actively involved in the negotiations. The following summarizes the outcomes of the issues that they tracked.

Stineke Oenema, ICCO's Policy Advisor on Food Security reports on the Food and nutrition terminology debate and her role in the Coordinating Committee: The CFS in 2011 decided there should be more clarity in the use of the terminology food security and nutrition security. A task force was established with participation of CFS as well. Outcome of the work of the task force was a recommendation to use the term Food and Nutrition Security instead of the currently used food security and nutrition, because the former reflects better the integrated nature of food and nutrition. However more work needs to be done on policy consequences and mandate of the CFS. This was called for from the beginning by civil society

organizations because everyone sees the added value of the new term food and nutrition security.

With regard to the role of the Coordinating Committee (CC): The CC met for two days, prior to the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) Forum and the CFS meetings. The CC spent considerable time together and this contributed to a very positive group process. The CC was able to make the final preparations for the CSM, reflect on future priorities to work on and assigned a few talks to CC members in order to further improve the functioning of the CC. A formal report of this meeting will follow shortly.

Gisele Henriques, CIDSE's Advocacy and Policy Officer Food, Agriculture and Sustainable Trade reports on the GSF: The GSF represents an important achievement of the CFS and civil society organizations, which have actively engaged in the development of the GSF and the reform process of the CFS. One of the central demands of civil society organizations from the very beginning was the development of a GSF which would become the primary global reference for coordination and coherence in decision making on food and agricultural issues, as we believe much of the issues surrounding food insecurity relate to fragmented and contradictory policies and the absence of a rights-based approach which upholds the right to food for everyone. CSOs, including CIDSE, have engaged with the GSF process in the spirit of affirming it as the overarching global framework which is meant to enhance the role of the CFS as the most inclusive

platform for global, regional and country-led food security and nutrition actions. The adoption of the document was put in peril by some states who wanted to reopen agreed upon language. This was immediately shot down by the G77 showing that the CFS is a truly democratic and participatory space where the will of the powerful are just as important as the will of smaller and politically weaker states.

Carol Thiessen, Public Policy Advisor for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) reports on the climate change and food security negotiations: Civil society organizations, including CFGB, participated fully in the CFS negotiations around Climate Change and Food Security and, overall, had meaningful interactions with governments. We were able to see a number of our key demands appear in the final outcome document, such as a recognition of the prioritization of adaptation for small-scale food producers and a commitment that actions to address the effects of climate change on food security must be done in a manner coherent with the progressive realization of the right to food. Unfortunately, member states (with strong backing from the private sector representative) were unwilling to include specific text around the promotion of agroecology, nor were member states willing to promote an experts' report on genetic resources and food security.

Gunnel Axelsson Nycander, Policy Advisor on Trade and Food Security at the Church of Sweden reports on the negotiations on social protection: Social protection and its potential in reducing poverty is currently discussed and promoted in many national and international fora. The presentation of the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) report: Social protection for food security represents one of the first times when the potential of social protection in reducing hunger was discussed in depth. An overall message from the report and CFS roundtable is that social protection is effective in reducing hunger, but that food and nutrition security considerations need to be integrated better in social protection interventions. The report and proposed recommendations were broadly welcomed by members of the CFS. In the recommendation, member states are urged to put in place comprehensive, nationally owned, context sensitive social protection systems guided by human rights norms and standards.

Tanja Korkalainen, Food Security Advisor at Finn Church Aid reports on her experience as part of the Finnish delegation: Finn Church Aid had taken a special interest in the round table on food security and climate and, together with another Finnish EAA member, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM), submitted a briefing on this issue to the Finnish Foreign Ministry. It was gratifying to see that some of its concerns such as broad-based approach to food security in climate change and participatory decision-making had made their way from the briefing to the Finnish intervention that took place in the plenary session. After having listened to the round table discussion as well as other debates, my foremost thought is that the CFS must remain the forum where all food security related issues can be freely discussed. The CFS may not be the institution to steer policies such as national climate change adaptation strategies, but it has to provide its members with space to express their concerns on all challenges that undermine food security.

EAA colleagues who attended this years' annual negotiation session included Finn Church Aid, Church of Sweden, Tearfund, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, World Vision International, ICCO, Bread for the World, Caritas Internationalis, CIDSE, Church World Service, Trocaire, and Maryknoll.

Diversity in farming systems results in diversity on the plate!" said Olivier de Schutter, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food at the CSM side event entitled: Food systems facing climate change - Agroecology provides the answer!' His statement referred to how agroecological practices improve nutrition among the poor and most vulnerable communities.

The EAA Coordinating Office at the 39th CFS

The contribution from EAA members to this work has been extremely valuable because very few organizations have been able to work on this theme - ensuring food security in the face of climate change - covering both the CFS and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

Change (UNFCCC) processes this year. EAA members have also been able to suggest specific responses to this global challenge, backed up by our [agroecology report](#).

1. EAA collaborated with Canadian Foodgrains Bank and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) in the preparation of an internal briefing paper for participants about the climate change and food security debates, and provided our members with useful tips about the process leading up to the CFS, government positions, what CSOs could do during the 39th CFS and which key governments should be targeted.

2. EAA organized a meal for members to get together on the first day of the negotiations to prepare their strategy for the 39th CFS.

3. EAA members organized a side event through the CSM entitled 'Food systems facing climate change - Agroecology provides the answer!' During this event, Olivier De Schutter made a special reference to the EAA report '[Nourishing the World Sustainably: Scaling up Agroecology](#)' as a valuable collection of best practice experience from members and partners around the world.

4. EAA served as one of the four civil society organizations on the CFS Task Team to prepare a draft decision for the CFS roundtable on Food Security and Climate Change in the run-up to the CFS.

This negotiation turned out to be the most contentious of the week, and EAA was able to actively participate in the final formal negotiation session on the outcome document. One of the obstacles in the negotiations was that the United States perceived that its negotiating position at the UNFCCC would be compromised by a reference to the UNFCCC principle of 'common but differentiated responsibility' in the CFS outcome. This principle was enshrined in the UNFCCC that entered into force in 1994, and asks developed countries to "take the lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof" and therefore be responsible for the adaptation needs of developing countries. Brazil maintained that the UNFCCC convention is international law and must be respected. Canada sided with the US, India, Argentina, Philippines and China. Civil society supported Brazil. Agreement was ultimately

reached by the unfortunate removal of the references to "the principles of the UNFCCC".

However, a major success of the outcomes of the CFS was the explicit recognition of the Right to Food in a climate-related multilateral policy document. Civil society organizations viewed this as an important step forward that, if taken seriously by governments, could result in a major shift in the way agriculture and land use are considered at the international climate negotiations. EAA was pleased that politically charged and contentious terms such as "climate-smart agriculture" did not make their way into the final text. Civil society organizations welcomed the final agreed text's recognition of the impact climate change has on small-scale food producers, the need to address its root causes, and the importance of adaptation.

You can access the final report at:

<http://bit.ly/TcjutW>

5. EAA members met with their national delegations to discuss pertinent issues ranging from the Global Strategic Framework (GSF), the overarching themes within the CFS and the importance of its reform process, and the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment. They reminded delegations that human rights language must be included in the final outcome decision boxes from the 39th CFS, and stressed the importance of agroecology in this process.

Unfortunately the CFS did not take on civil society's request for a High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) study on genetic resources, but it did request that the HLPE take forward studies in 2014 on (i) the role of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition and (ii) food waste in the context of sustainable food systems.

For more information, check out:

<http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/food/committee-on-world-food-security/>



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