



Participation in Policy Processes: Civil Society Engagement in the Committee on World Food Security

Scaling the Food Security Challenge:
Politics, Policy and Practice
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Structure of the Presentation

- Food Price Spikes (2007-8) as a catalyst for change in the architecture of global food security governance
- Reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
- Civil Society Mechanism
- CFS Reform within the context of Global Governance
- Case studies: Policy Roundtables
- Effective strategies
- Challenges



Key Points

- Reform of the UN Committee on World Food Security; includes CSOs as official participants
- CSOs developed mechanism to coordinate their participation in the Committee
- Policy approach: focus on how civil society actors participate in global policy making and the implications of this

Catalyst for Change

- Between 2005 and 2008, the world's staple food prices soared to their highest levels in 30 years: more than 1 billion people were chronically hungry
- Prices peaked in June 2008 (but then fell 33% in 6 months)
- Food riots broke out in more than 20 countries
- Rising food costs in 2010-11 pushed nearly 70 million people into extreme poverty
- Marked by 6 main policy reactions: Immediate Aid; Increased Productivity; Improved Markets; Increased Investment; Country-led Plans; Policy coherence and cohesion

Committee on World Food Security

- Now: Emerging consensus that the CFS is the forum for discussion and debate on global food security governance
- 1974: Established upon recommendation of the World Food Conference (Response to 1970s food crisis)
- 2009: Reform process initiated to address calls for greater coordination and cohesion of food security policies
- 2010: First Session of the Renewed CFS

Vision of the CFS

“To constitute the **foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform** for a broad range of committed stakeholders to work together in a **coordinated** manner and in support of country-led processes towards the elimination of hunger and **ensuring food security** and nutrition for all human beings”

Key Issues Addressed by the CFS

CFS	Issue
36 (2010)	Addressing food insecurity in protracted crises: Issues and Challenges
	Land tenure and international investment in agriculture
	Managing vulnerability and risk to promote better food security and nutrition
37 (2011)	How to increase food security and smallholder-sensitive investment in agriculture
	Gender, Food Security and Nutrition
	Food Price Volatility
	Methods for calculating number of food insecure
38 th Extraordinary Session (2012)	Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security
39 (2012)	Climate Change
	Social Protection
	Global Strategic Framework
	Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment

Civil Society Mechanism

- CSM facilitates the participation of CSOs in the CFS, including input in negotiations and decision-making
- Provides a space for dialogue between a wide-range of civil society actors
- Facilitates local struggles into political processes
- Open to all CSOs working on food security
- Executive: Coordination Committee (CC) comprised of 41 focal points from 11 constituencies and 17 sub-regions
- www.csm4cfs.org



Sub-Regions

(Total of 17, x1 focal point each)

North America	South East Asia
Central America & Caribbean	Central Asia
Andean Region	Oceania
Southern Cone	Southern Africa
Western Europe	West Africa
Eastern Europe	East Africa
West Asia	Central Africa
South Asia	North Africa
Pacific	

Constituencies

(Total of 24, x2 focal points each)

Agricultural & food workers	NGOs
Artisanal fisherfolk	Smallholder family farmers (4 focal points)
Consumers	Urban poor
Pastoralists	Women
Indigenous Peoples	Youth
Landless	

Smallholder-sensitive investment in agriculture

- **What:** For 30 years, investment in agriculture has been steadily declining, due in part to a growing perception that agriculture was unprofitable (top down)

OR

85% of the food that is grown is consumed locally or within national borders. The food consumed by over 70% of the population of the world is produced by small-scale food producers (bottom up)

- **CSO Concerns:** Corporate focus when the largest part of the investment in agriculture in terms of capital and knowledge is made by these small-scale food producers (context of RAI)
- **Key areas of Focus:** Support small-scale food production; protect it from corporate take over; re-focus decision box on food security and small-scale food production; monitoring and accountability; inclusive consultation process.
- **Outcome:** Generally positive

Food Price Volatility

- **What:** The price spikes in 2008 “pushed an additional 80 million people into hunger, increasing the number of hungry and malnourished to one billion.”
- **CSO concerns and areas of focus:** Included food reserves, financial speculation, and biofuels as well as the dominance of the G20 agenda
- **Outcome:** Poor. Dominated by a G20 agenda. A few wins, e.g. food reserves were included as an instrument for mitigating FPV but also recognised as playing a role in emergencies

Wins

Losses

Smallholder focussed (references to smallholders or farmers frame the actions); recognition of smallholder investment; awareness of the need to strengthen smallholder production systems

Value and political weight of the HLPE reports (weak language); pre-determining inputs into HLPE reports

Removal of generic references to agriculture, highlighting diversity in modes of food production

Mapping described as Framework. For CSOs the Global Strategic Framework is the overarching framework of the CFS.

Food security as a parameter for investment

Promotion of the G20's agenda; Promotion of neoliberal principles

Ensuring the completion of the VGs before discussions on principles for responsible investment in agriculture

Unable to shift away for the productionist paradigm (desire to “boost agricultural production”)

Assessment of impact of partnerships on smallholders

Marginalization of CSOs throughout the process (for Food Price Volatility roundtable)

General report on the state of implementation; Reporting in national multi-actor forum;

Food reserves as an instrument for mitigating FPV but also playing an emergency role

Discussion on contentious issues

What helps: Effective Strategies

- Technical Capacity/
Knowledge
- Political Savvy
- Coherent Political
Framework
- Positivity
- Linking back to the CFS's
Mandate & HLPE
- Alliances
- Legitimacy



Technical Capacity

- NGOs and social movements have people dedicated to working on key issues = high level of technical knowledge and expertise
- Diversity of actors from many perspectives enhances this
- They make strong interventions are often provide strong references to academic literature, international law, etc.

Political Savvy

- CSOs are increasingly competent and confident in the workings of the CFS
- Able to assert themselves more effectively
- Prepare clear strategies based on key demands, red lines and their own values in a consultative manner
- Constant evaluation and reflection to inform strategy
- Flexible in their approach
- Social Movement v. NGO

Coherent Political Framework

- Food Sovereignty as unifying principles of a global social movement
- Also a well articulated political framework
- Undertakes a rigorous political analysis of agricultural policies and programmes with a focus on relations of power and control of resources
- Production – not productionist – centred

Positivity

- CSOs make positive contributions
- Generally aim to stay positive with interventions
- Propose solutions to critique
- Highlight their processes as a model of cohesion and consensus building
- Even use humour at times

Linking back to the CFS and HLPE

- Framing proposals within the context of the CFS mandate was successful
 - Food security
 - Most vulnerable populations
 - Right to Food
- Despite weakened language around the HLPE, CSOs were able to reference the reports to strengthen their positions

Alliances

- Strong alliances amongst civil society have proven useful: speak as one
- Alliances with countries and regions, including meetings to share positions, working on shared positions, seeking backing for amendments, has proven very powerful
- CSO positions gain strength when backed by governments (and vice versa)

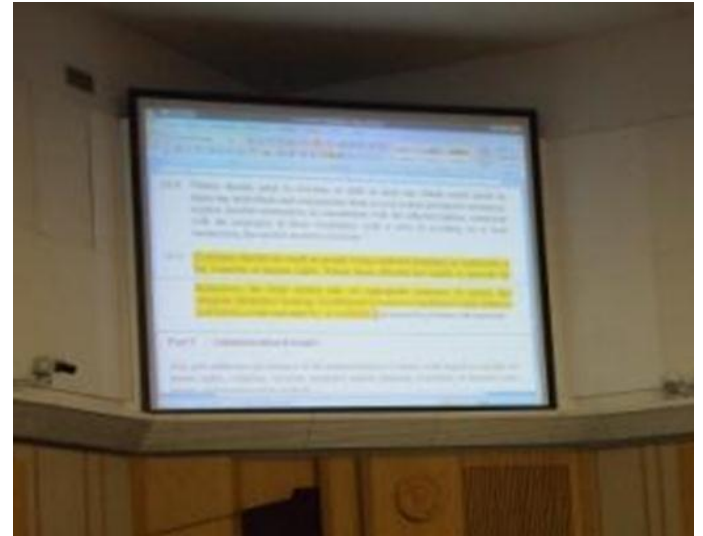
Legitimacy

- CSO actors have the capacity to speak about on the impact of policies on their communities
- They have more freedom to break through the political speak and call governments to account
- AU holds a lot of legitimacy in these negotiations as well



What Hinders: Challenges

- Language
- Scope
- Coherence
- Power Politics
- Limitations of Food Security



Language

- Texts are negotiated in English, leaving many people out of the negotiations
- Speaking social movement versus speaking UN



Scope

- Food security is increasingly complex and dynamic, and necessarily so
- Brings together many actors
 - Challenges communicating across sectors
 - Turf wars
- Everybody's problem becomes nobody's problem

Coherence

- Operating under notion that cohesion is lacking
- BUT global food security policies are coordinated around values of productionism and neoliberalism
 - Boosting yields, increasing trade, opening markets
- Neoliberal hegemony
- Hard to counter “common sense”

Power Politics

- Increased interest by financial actors (land grab, speculation, commodities trading)
 - Rio +20
- Strength in the reformed G20
- Food security on G8 & G20 agenda
- Shifting geopolitics (BRICS)

Limitations of Food Security

- Technocratic definition and approach
- Apolitical: fails to accept the political processes that contribute to food insecurity
- States are being asked to monitor their own progress and to prioritise development
- States predominantly continue to prioritise economic values: food security as an outcome of strong economy



Conclusion

- The CFS represents a forum with the potential to change the way food security policy is framed by changing who defines the topics and who participates in the debates
- **Through the CSM-CFS, social movements translate their struggles into broader political processes**
- The impact of civil society engagement has broadened the scope of debate within the CFS and expanded the scope of policies coming out of the CFS
- Analysis can help to inform CSOs about which approaches to take in future negotiations
- Application to other sectors where CSOs are increasingly engaged in policy negotiations and multilateral processes?



Thank you

Download presentation: foodgovernance.com

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