



Concept Note

**CFS Forum on
Women's
Empowerment 23-24,
September 2017**

**CSM Women's
Constituency Meeting
26-27 September 2017**



Women

Background:

Rural women represent a very large segment of the labor work force in the rural economy but their work remains uncounted, and invisible. Rural women engage as peasants, agricultural and food workers, fisherfolks women, pastoralists as well as indigenous women, migrant and refugee women, consumers, landless and urban food insecure. However, the key issue of gender inequality, lack of fulfillment and full realization of women's rights based on historical patriarchal structure is augmented by the politics of class, caste and religion and by the lack of governments' political will to implement already existing international policy frameworks, such as CEDAW.

The CFS has taken a serious position on addressing challenges and persistent barriers to women's empowerment as this is central to 'achieving the CFS vision to achieve food security for all by raising levels of nutrition, improving agricultural productivity and natural resource management among others' as well as achieving the progressive realization of the right to food for all.

Based on the Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) 2016-17, the Committee of Food Security (CFS) was requested to realize a Forum on Women's Economic Empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition.

As per the background paper released by the CFS, the context of the Forum is to *"to discuss the challenges that remain in economic empowerment of women and help promote a shared understanding of how those issues are evolving in the agriculture and agri-food sector"*.

The CFS Forum:

The Forum is expected to lead to the identification of:

- Challenges, gaps and barriers that hinder progress in women's economic empowerment and the achievement of gender equality in the context of food security and nutrition;
- Experiences and good practices in the implementation of existing legal and policy frameworks, strategies and approaches, as well as practical initiatives, that address the gender gaps in the agriculture/agri-food sector and thereby contribute to women's economic empowerment;
- Next steps for CFS to advance women's economic empowerment, women's rights and gender equality in the context of food security and nutrition. In particular, how the outcome of the Forum will be incorporated in the development of future CFS policies taking into account that women's empowerment and gender equality are prerequisites for food and nutrition security for all persons.

The agenda of the Forum has already been finalized (attached). The morning plenary session will start with (a) a key note address by Miriam Nobre from the World March of Women, followed by a (b) panel discussion premised on the Background Document of the CFS and will focus on four thematic described in the agenda. The second half of the day will be based on three-breakout group, which will discuss more specifically the role of the CFS.

CSM Preparatory Meeting:

In order to prepare for the Forum, a two-day preparatory meeting will be held in Rome on 23-24 September, to prepare the Civil Society and social movements' participants for an active and meaningful participation and engagement in the Forum.

During these two days participants will critically analyse the background document that informs the Forum itself, will bring together and share their experience and expertise, their struggles and demands and their vision and expectations on the Forum's topic and the CFS role as a space of global policy convergence and coherence on food security and nutrition. They will identify key messages to be delivered during the Forum and will design a follow-up strategy toward the CFS Plenary Session of CFS 44 where this CFS workstream is expected to be concluded.

In this context the specific objectives are as follows:

Specific objectives:

1. Update on the CFS process, and get participants knowledgeable on the Forum, including the background document prepared with the contribution by the CSM
2. Revise the CSM women working group inputs thus far and define the CSM women WG' strategy for the Forum:
 - a. What are the key demands and main messages we want to convey to advance women's rights in agriculture?
 - b. What could be the potential political positions of other actors that could be contrary to the demands of women rights activists?
 - c. What are the expected outcomes of the Forum?
 - d. What do we want to see in the Chair Summary?
 - e. What the expected outcome of the CFS Plenary session?
3. Prepare for the break out session discussion in the afternoon – discuss the questions and agree the CSM responses to those questions
4. Support identified speakers in their interventions (keynote speaker and other panelists)
5. Identify speakers who will intervene from the floor and agree key messages
6. Organize advocacy meetings with key Government Delegations before the Forum if needed

2. CSM Constituency Meeting 26-27 September 2017

Taking advantage of the presence of women's activist and producers in Rome that will attend the Forum, the CSM Coordination Committee agreed during its meeting in May 2017 to hold the CSM Women's Constituency meeting on 26 and 27 of September 2017 in Rome.

This meeting aims at strengthening and fully re-activate the CSM Women's Constituency through a vis-à-vis meeting of two days.

The meeting intends to address the following key questions:

- Evaluate the last two years of the CSM Women's constituency work, the challenges faced in the past by this constituency, and have a common understanding about this space, its nature, mandate, structure and organizing principles (can we count on it? For what?)
- Evaluate the Women's forum process and the Chair's Summary. What shall be our focus – what issues shall we particularly pay attention to strengthen women's resistances on the ground? What are the expectations toward the CFS? How to connect this global space of struggle with the struggles on the ground at local level?

- How to strengthen the Women's constituency work for the next period – our own agenda, work plan and vision, in relation of other regional, sectorial constituencies and thematic working groups in the CSM? What conditions do we need to do it?
- How to prepare the selection of the new coordinators: timeline, consultation process, nominations.

Other Elements:

While participation to the Forum is open to all, the CSM is currently able to fund only 7 women coming from social movements, including the two Coordinators Committee members of the constituency. The self-funded participants should just communicate their interest in attending the Forum and the CSM Secretariat cso4cfs@gmail.com while for the CSM funded participants some criteria should apply.

Criteria for the selection of participants to attend the CSM preparatory meeting and the CSM Constituency meeting:

- Regional balance
- Constituency balance
- Familiarity with the CFS
- Capacity for future engagement in the CSM Constituency

Languages available for the meeting: ES/FR/EN

A budget will be soon prepared with the support of CSM Secretariat.