

Input to the revision of the Comprehensive Framework For Action (CFA)

From Aksel Naerstad, International coordinator of More and Better – an international campaign for food, agriculture and rural development aid to eradicate hunger and poverty, and senior policy adviser in the Development Fund (Norway).

The comments and inputs below are based on discussions with many representatives from organizations of small scale farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolks, indigenous peoples, environmentalists as well as representatives from NGO's, but I'm writing only on behalf of myself. All references to the CFA are to the printed version July 2008.

Since the main purpose for this input is to propose improvements of the CFA, I will focus on the parts of the CFA which I think promote wrong policies and actions. This note is therefore not a holistic review of the CFA.

An alternative framework from civil society

Many civil society organizations took part in developing the working document *Policies and actions to eradicate hunger and malnutrition* (available in English, French and Spanish at www.eradicatehunger.org). About 250 organizations and 800 individuals working with food and agriculture from all parts of the world have signed on to the main points in the document. The document reflects my views on what is needed to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. The High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF) should adopt this document as the base for its own work and the policies for the institutions which constitute the HLTF.

The Committee on World Food Security in FAO (CFS) must develop its own strategic framework

In October 2009 CFS adopted the reform of the committee. The member states agreed that the committee in the second phase of the reform should

“Develop a Global Strategic Framework for food security and nutrition in order to improve coordination and guide synchronized action by a wide range of stakeholders. The Global Strategic Framework will be flexible so that it can be adjusted as priorities change. It will build upon existing frameworks such as the UN’s Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA), the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security.” (CFS:2009/2 Rev.2, REFORM OF THE COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY. FINAL VERSION, 6 iii)

It is important that the CFS develop its own strategic framework through a democratic and participatory process, not only adopt the Comprehensive Framework for Action or any other document as the framework. The working document *Policies and actions to eradicate hunger and malnutrition* (see above) developed by many civil society organizations, should also be one of the documents CFS should build on in the process to develop its own strategic framework.

Mixed content in CFA

The CSO document *Policies and actions to eradicate hunger and malnutrition* states the following about the CFA:

“The Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) developed by the UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis promotes some positive policies such as giving increased importance and support to smallholder agriculture and sustainable food production systems, and to a paradigm shift in urban planning. However, at the same time the CFA also promotes policies and actions that will increase hunger, malnutrition and poverty, exacerbate climate change, and undermine biodiversity and soil fertility. These include further trade liberalisation, unsustainable, chemical-intensive agriculture and increased power to corporations and the World Bank. The CFA thus cannot be the foundational document for policies and actions to ensure adequate food for all.”

Important and good points in the CFA

Even if the main purpose of my inputs is to propose changes where I think the CFA promotes wrong policies and actions, I would like to highlight some of the good points in the CFA:

- The division between the need to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable populations and building longer-term resilience and contributing to global food and nutrition security.
- The inclusion of nutrition. Too many policy-documents and action plans focus only on food, not also nutrition.
- The underlining of the importance of smallholder farmers, the need of supporting them and to strengthen their organizations. (Page 3, 9, 20-21)
- The focus on the need for *sustainable* food production and that “Increased food production should not occur at the expense of environmental sustainability.” (The quotation is from page 18. The environmental aspect is also highlighted at page 15, 20, 22)
- The need for and importance of increasing the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) and especially the share going to food and agricultural development (page xi, 33-35).
- The aspect of food in urban areas and the need for change in urban planning (page 15)
- The underlining of the importance of tracking the achievements of CFA outcomes, ensuring regular reporting and accountability (page 32).

Critique of and proposals for changes in the CFA

I will in this section focus on the main points in the CFA which I think promotes wrong, weak and insufficient policies and actions.

The right to food

The human right to adequate food is not underlined and highlighted in the CFA. This is an important weakness. The right to food has to be a base for the whole framework, and the CFA should highlight the importance of the *VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES* to support the progressive realization of the *right* to adequate *food* in the context of national *food* security

Sustainable and not sustainable agriculture

Above I have underlined that it is very positive that the CFA underlines the need for *sustainable* food production. The CFA is, however, not consistent in promoting sustainable agriculture. On the contrary, the CFA directly and indirectly promotes the wrong model of agriculture. There is no critique of industrial agriculture, monocultures, use of chemical fertilizer, hybrid seeds and GMO's which are contributing tremendously to climate change, loss of soil fertility and biodiversity, and

overconsumption of water. Even if some sustainable farming methods and the importance of small scale agriculture are highlighted, the potential for increased sustainable production is not highlighted, and the urgent need to change the industrial farming is not even mentioned.

There is no reference in the CFA to the *International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD)* which is the most comprehensive study of agricultural development and which underlines that “business as usual is no longer an option.”

Proposal: The CFA should promote real sustainable agriculture and the need for changing the industrial agriculture. The following documents should form the base for the revision of the CFA on this:

- Chapter 4 in the CSO working document *Policies and actions to eradicate hunger and malnutrition*
- Secure future food: towards ecological food provision (UK Food Group Briefing, January 2010)
- Small Scale Sustainable Farmers Are Cooling Down The Earth. Via Campesina Views, Jakarta December 2009 (www.grain.org/o/?id=96)

Wrong trade policies

The trade policies promoted by the CFA is probably the most directly wrong policies in the framework. The CFA promotes trade policies which will increase hunger and malnutrition, contribute to more rapid climate change and reduction of biodiversity through promoting more liberalization of international trade, weakening the support of and protection of local and national food production for domestic consumption. There is a strong need to promote total different trade policies than promoted in the CFA.

Proposals:

- The trade policies in the CFA should be based on the principles of food sovereignty¹
- The policies promoted in chapter 6 in the CSO working document *Policies and actions to eradicate hunger and malnutrition* should be supported in the CFA.

A need to “boost” productivity and production?

The CFA underlines many times the need to “boost” the productivity and production. There is a need to increase both productivity and production in many parts of the world, at the same time it must be underlined that the industrial production of food which is seen as high productive, is not sustainable, and that the increase of production and productivity must be based on sustainable production methods. It should also be underlined that there is enough food in the world to fulfill the right to food for everyone and that most of the hungry people don’t suffer because food is not available, but because of lack of access.

Agricultural research

It’s good that the CFA highlight the need for agricultural research, but as long as it does not underline what kind of research there is a need for and which there is not a need for, the CFA indirectly supports the research driven by the needs and interests of the multinational companies.

¹ See the definition of food sovereignty at www.foodsovereignty.org/public/terrapreta/31Mar2007NyeleniSynthesisReport.pdf

Proposal: The CFA should support the reframing of the research as outlined in chapter 4 (page 16-17) in the CSO working document *Policies and actions to eradicate hunger and malnutrition*.

Agrarian and aquatic reforms

Agrarian and aquatic reforms are strongly needed to fulfill the right to food and to secure sustainable food production in the future. This is, however, not underlined in the CFA.

Proposals:

- The CFA should support agrarian and aquatic reforms as outlined in chapter 4 (page 18-22) in the CSO working document *Policies and actions to eradicate hunger and malnutrition*.
- CFA should support the recommendations and follow up of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD)

Moratorium on industrial production of agrofuels

The CFA is promoting more production of agrofuels. The industrial production of agrofuels is contributing to increased hunger, social and environmental disasters.

Proposals:

- The CFA should support the policies on agrofuels and energy as outlined in chapter 5 (page 25-27) in the CSO working document *Policies and actions to eradicate hunger and malnutrition*.
- The CFA should support the proposal for the Special Rapporteur for the right to food of a five years moratorium for increased production of agrofuels.

Aksel Naerstad

Senior policy adviser, The Development Fund, Norway (www.utviklingsfondet.no)

International coordinator of the More and Better Campaign (www.moreandbetter.org)

E-mail: aksel@utviklingsfondet.no

Skype: akselnaerstad

Phone: +47 23 10 95 91, mob: +47 48 25 82 85

Fax: +47 23 10 96 01

Postal address: Grensen 9 B, N-0159 Oslo, Norway
