



Inquiry Into the Role of Development Partnerships in Agriculture and Agribusiness in Promoting Prosperity, Reducing Poverty, and Enhancing Stability in the Indo-Pacific Region

Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Aid Sub-Committee

November 4th, 2015

The CFS Secretariat welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Sub-Committee's inquiry into the role of development partnerships in agriculture and agribusiness in promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, and enhancing stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Our submission explores innovative modalities and practices to enhance the contribution of all relevant stakeholders in supporting agricultural development and better nutrition, drawing on the experience of the Committee in following a multi-stakeholder approach to decision-making and engagement on food security and nutrition. We highlight some of the key elements that have assisted the Committee in motivating stakeholders to engage and some of our experience on how multi-stakeholder partnerships have played a role in supporting agricultural development and better nutrition.

Terms of Reference focus: Innovative modalities and practices that would enhance the contribution of all relevant stakeholders in supporting agricultural development, better nutrition, and inclusive economic growth in the Indo-Pacific region

Recommendations

- Incorporate stakeholders from diverse sectors with diverse roles in food systems and diverse areas of expertise, in decision-making on agricultural development, better nutrition, and inclusive economic growth.
- Foster platforms and forums which contribute to *ongoing* collaboration and sharing of best practices among a diverse group of stakeholders.
- Combine broad stakeholder engagement with a strong evidence base to underpin policy formulation and subsequent stakeholder collaboration.
- Define a clear policy with associated incentives for multi-sector and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The Committee on World Food Security

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was established in 1974 as a United Nations intergovernmental body responsible to review and follow-up on food security policies. In 2009, CFS agreed on a substantial reform by adopting an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach to decision-making with the aim of increasing its legitimacy as a decision-making body in the context of the global governance of food security and nutrition. Multistakeholder processes have been defined as processes 'in which actors from civil society, business and governmental institutions come together in order to find a common approach to an issue that affects them all'¹. Indeed, one of the main characteristics of the reformed CFS is the concrete inclusiveness for all interested actors in the policy debate. The member states continue to have the prerogative of the final decision but the discussions and debates leading up to final decision-making include actors from a wide variety of constituencies. The Committee is now open to participants from i) UN agencies with specific mandate in the field of food security, ii) civil society and non-governmental organizations, iii) international agricultural research systems, iv) international and regional financial institutions, and v) private sector organizations and philanthropic foundations.

The multi-stakeholder approach was seen as a way to not only enhance the quality of the decision-making through the incorporation of diverse views and experiences, but also to increase ownership of the decisions among a broader group of stakeholders to facilitate wider adoption.

CFS modalities and practices to enhance stakeholder engagement

Food security and nutrition have multiple dimensions – availability, access, utilization and stability. Eradicating hunger and malnutrition requires policy action that addresses all of these dimensions. Depending on the specific context, actions may be required to increase productivity, promote rural development and incomes, strengthen social protection mechanisms, improve infrastructure and invest in education and health. These multiple actions involve a variety of stakeholders who often have diverging views and goals. The challenge is to improve stakeholders' coordination to enhance the effectiveness of actions to promote food security and nutrition. Such coordination requires an enabling environment that creates incentives for all stakeholders to work together and empowers them to participate in policy formulation and implementation. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) promotes such an enabling environment at the global level through following specific practices and modalities for working together that empower and encourage greater stakeholder engagement, including:

- Providing a guaranteed seat at the table from start to finish;
- Encouraging self organization;
- Facilitating access to diverse stakeholders from other sectors and regions; and
- Underpinning stakeholder engagement with a strong evidence base.

¹ Roloff, J.2008. Learning from multi-stakeholder networks: Issue-focused stakeholder management. Journal of Business Ethics 82 (1): 233-250

Providing a guaranteed seat at the table from start to finish

In many processes and institutions, stakeholder engagement is conducted in an *ad hoc* manner and the process for engagement may not always be clear or accessible for all stakeholders. Institutionalizing stakeholder engagement and identifying how stakeholders can engage in an ongoing manner can help to provide consistency and predictability to assist stakeholders in planning how they can and will contribute. Stakeholders are unlikely to invest the time and resources to contribute their perspectives and expertise if it is not clear exactly what their role and participation entails. By providing ways for ongoing engagement, stakeholders are much more likely to feel ownership and buy in to the process. At the same time, ongoing engagement provides the opportunity for diverse stakeholders to begin to build trust among each other, which fosters greater possibility for lasting partnerships. CFS has formed an Advisory Group which includes seats for all of the stakeholders outlined above, that allows for regular engagement and serves as a way for stakeholder groups to remain aware of upcoming topics and processes in order to prepare their contributions.

Encouraging self-organization

While aiming to encourage as diverse participation as possible, managing broad stakeholder engagement can be time-consuming and costly. When stakeholders with a common interest are encouraged to join together and self-organize, there is scope for not only more efficient engagement, but also presenting a stronger collective voice in collaborating with stakeholders of potentially opposing or divergent views. CFS stakeholders were invited to establish autonomous coordination mechanisms to facilitate participation in CFS. To date, civil society organizations and private sector organizations have formed mechanisms that have helped to coordinate their participation over the last 6 years and have facilitated a steadily increasing number of organizations participating.

Facilitating access to diverse stakeholders from other sectors and regions

The best solutions to particularly complex challenges such as ending hunger and malnutrition are often found by combining a variety of approaches and building on interlinkages among stakeholders engaged in the range of sectors involved in agricultural development, better nutrition, and inclusive economic growth. Engaging with stakeholders in a one-off or individual manner does not provide the opportunity for stakeholders to learn from each other or build on ideas based on their respective strengths. CFS has aimed to incentivize multi-stakeholder collaboration through working groups which are open to all stakeholders and which guide the thematic and intersessional work of CFS.

Underpinning stakeholder engagement with a strong evidence base

While involving multiple stakeholders with varying perspectives is key to identifying lasting solutions to end hunger and malnutrition, more opinions doesn't necessarily translate into better outcomes if there is a lack of evidence or scientific analysis to inform the debate. At the same time many expert-led dialogues or academic research lacks a direct connection with policy formulation, so stakeholders interested in influencing policy decisions may be less likely to engage. In order to address this missing link, CFS established the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE)² to complement existing research and knowledge and serve as

² The **High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE)** was established in 2010 as the science-policy interface of the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS). The HLPE aims to improve the robustness of policy making by providing independent, evidence-based analysis and advice at the request of CFS.

universal evidence-based starting point for stakeholder engagement on policy recommendations on specific issues.

As a result of the innovative mechanisms and practices employed by CFS since its reform in 2009 to engage with stakeholders, the contribution of all types of stakeholders – civil society, private sector, academia, UN agencies, international finance institutions, and others – has been steadily increasing, providing a clear indication that stakeholders are finding value in their engagement. For example, the overall participation in the CFS annual weeklong plenary meeting has almost quadrupled, participation by the private sector has more than tripled, and participation by civil society actors has doubled. Not only have the numbers of stakeholders increased, but the diversity of stakeholders has also increased. For example, the private sector mechanism now includes companies, associations, and organizations active at all stages of food systems from primary production, input processors, to retailers, and from all types of sectors – food production, bioenergy, fisheries, forestry, and many others. Similarly, the civil society mechanism has grown to represent over 11 different constituencies including small family farmers, NGOs, youth, fisherfolk, agricultural and food workers, consumers, indigenous peoples, and many others.

Positive results of multi-stakeholder engagement

The participation of a broader range of stakeholders has not only had a positive impact on the diversity of issues discussed and solutions proposed, but also in the range of partnerships formed to address food security and nutrition.

Impact on CFS products and outcomes

Over the last six years the CFS has dealt with a number of contentious issues impacting food security and nutrition, including access to land and tenure rights, the role of biofuels, rights related to genetic resources, price volatility, climate change, and many others. In each case, the diversity of viewpoints and subsequent debate and decision-making has resulted in more durable and broadly owned solutions to those developed unilaterally. As a result of the combination of a strong evidence base and broad stakeholder inclusion in the formulation and subsequent endorsement of CFS products, they represent a global starting point for stakeholders to work together on implementation. This enables stakeholders to get down to the business of translating the global guidance into actions on the ground, without having to rehash debates or define what the underlying base principles should be for addressing an issue.

For example, the development of the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests and the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems* began with extremely divergent views and yet by working together over the course of a multi-year process, stakeholders were able to identify ways to achieve both greater investment and secure tenure, thereby providing security for farmers to invest in yield improvements, banks to lend to smaller actors based on land titles to serve as collateral, and larger investors understanding the risks of operating in areas with communal or customary tenure. Since the CFS agreed on these guidelines many partners have come together, to work at seeing them take form in the laws and policies of actors like the World Bank and Coca Cola. Civil society organizations have also developed capacity building materials, to facilitate greater understanding of land rights and land transactions among rural communities. Most recently, the G20 and the 3rd Financing for Development Conference in Addis have taken these guidelines and principles up as part of the

foundations for their work to facilitate not just *more* investment but *better* investment by all stakeholders.

The varying interests of the stakeholders involved has at times led to long debates, but has also raised issues often left out of policymaking on food security and nutrition. For example, focusing on smallholder sensitive investments and smallholder access to markets is an issue of high importance to the civil society organizations involved in CFS and as a result of their engagement it has been included as a topic for High Level Panel of Expert reports, policy recommendations resulting from the plenary roundtable discussions, a high-level forum on connecting smallholders to markets, and addressed in the *Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems* on smallholders.

Similarly, the issues of youth engagement and talent development have been priorities for the private sector as they struggle to find skilled labour and individuals who are trained and able to tackle today's challenges. By bringing this issue to CFS and emphasizing its importance, the private sector was able to partner with governments and civil society in making youth and talent development a major focus at CFS42. As a result of this new focus, many stakeholders who hadn't previously engaged with CFS participated and shared their ideas and experience with identifying solutions to food insecurity and malnutrition. Tackling new issues or approaching issues from different angles can help to spur innovation while also broadening the reach of the outcomes of the Committee.

Partnerships among diverse stakeholders

Achieving sustainable agricultural development, better nutrition, and inclusive economic growth requires participation of all stakeholders – from the private sector, to civil society, to family farmers, to research organizations and universities, among many others. While most stakeholders would agree that each and every stakeholder has a role to play, the challenge can be in identifying complementarity among roles and establishing trust to work together. Over the last 6 years, CFS has served as a forum to share experiences, discuss roles, and foster partnerships that can build on strengths of various stakeholders. While certain stakeholders may tend to play certain roles, it is also true that some of the most lasting or beneficial partnerships have come out of stakeholders also playing 'non-traditional' roles. For example, the private sector's role in policymaking is often characterized from a lobbying or self-interest standpoint, but increasingly the private sector actors in CFS are playing a role in providing examples and evidence of the impacts of innovative business models to inform policy development. Similarly, the advocacy role of civil society organizations is well known, but civil society organizations are also playing a key role in working with communities and smallholder farmers on building their capacity to engage with larger private sector actors and disseminate information coming out of government institutions.

Some examples of partnerships among actors in the Asia Pacific region that CFS stakeholders have considered successful and that have provided value to all participating stakeholders include:

- *Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) partnerships to end iodine deficiency*³: GAIN is working with governments, food industries, UN agencies, civil society

³ GAIN, Universal Salt Iodization in India, <http://issuu.com/gainalliance/docs/universal-salt-iodization>

organizations, and media on strategies to increase food fortification, for example working with the Institute of Health Management Research in Rajasthan, India, food processing companies, and centralized kitchens in order to ensure quality assurance and scale-up fortification.

- *Cargill's partnership with CARE International*⁴: This partnership was highlighted during a CFS forum on connecting smallholders to markets, and has spanned multiple decades and numerous countries, but was renewed in 2013 to focus more on food security and nutrition and to fill a dual need. For example, in Vietnam Cargill has worked with CARE to train farmers on how to grow sustainable cocoa – Cargill has secured a more sustainable supply and CARE has gained knowledge related to quality seed and animal feed that they can extend to more and more communities.
- *Mars Incorporated*⁵, a participant in CFS, is partnering with the *World Food Program* and others, including leading research institutes, to advance knowledge and capacity to manage food safety, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Mars' supply chain is threatened by aflatoxins, found in peanuts and maize, as is the food that UN agencies deliver in humanitarian efforts. By combining their resources to address this shared challenge, they hope to build the capacity of actors in supply chains to control these risks and ensure food safety.
- *Project Laser Beam (PLB)*⁶ in Bangladesh: Business, civil society, and community partnership which began in 2009 by the World Food Program, Unilever, Mondelez International Foundation, DSM, GAIN, BRAC; WaterAid, and Consumer Action Bangladesh, to address undernutrition. Although the formal partnership ended with the end of the project, the project was considered a success due to the holistic solutions developed by having so many partners with diverse expertise and perspectives engaged.
- *Oxfam*⁷, through its 'behind the brands' program, is playing a leading role working with companies like *Unilever and Cadbury* in identifying how inclusive business models can help support effective supply chain development.
- In Japan – which consumes approximately 6% of the world's fish harvest – the largest supermarket chain, Aeon, has partnered with the *Marine Stewardship Council*⁸, an NGO, to work together on anticipating consumer preferences and raising awareness about more sustainably harvested fish.

⁴ CARE and Cargill: An innovative NGO-Private Sector Partnership to Fight Global Poverty, <http://csis.org/publication/care-and-cargill-innovative-ngo-private-sector-partnership-fight-global-poverty>

⁵ Mars Announces Pioneering Partnership with WFP, <http://www.mars.com/global/press-center/press-list/news-releases.aspx?Id=6540&SiteId=94>

⁶ Project Laser Beam: Scheme puts the focus on malnutrition in children, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/8539c624-9bab-11e0-98f2-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3pwtEltLn>

⁷ Oxfam Behind the Brands, <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/behind-the-brands>

⁸ Marine Stewardship Council, Global impacts delivered in partnership, <https://www.msc.org/documents/msc-brochures/global-impacts-delivered-in-partnership-commercial-commitments/>

- *Infomediaries in the Philippines*⁹: A new partnership from the government of the Philippines, to address the challenge of providing remote rice farming communities with the information and extension support that they need to improve productivity. They have partnered with local research institutes and high schools to enable youth to serve as 'info-mediaries'; where they are receiving the latest information and research via mobile phones and then able to pass this information on in their communities. This has served as an inexpensive way for the government to facilitate productivity increases while also providing youth a way to contribute to the food security and nutrition of their communities.
- *Grow Asia*¹⁰: After just launching in April 2015, the partnerships between government, private sector, civil society, and research institutions have already resulted in launching 26 projects aimed at improving the efficiency and sustainability of value chains throughout the region. The target is to reach 10 million farmers in ASEAN, enabling them to increase their yields and profits by 20%, with 20% less environmental impact.

Overall, CFS experience with multi-stakeholder engagement has illustrated that motivating stakeholders to work together on contributing to global challenges, like food security and nutrition, requires both a degree of flexibility on who to engage and when, but also a degree of certainty for stakeholders on how to engage and what the potential value proposition is for all parties. Ending hunger and malnutrition requires urgent action by all stakeholders. Much more can be achieved by joining efforts and building on the various strengths and roles that different stakeholders can play.

⁹ Infomediary Campaign, <http://www.infomediary4d.com/>

¹⁰ Grow Asia Partnership, <http://growasia.org/partnership>