

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PACIFIC COMMUNITY

SIXTH REGIONAL MEETING OF  
HEADS OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY SERVICES (HOAFS)  
(Apia, Samoa, 01-02 October 2019)

**CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT**

*(Paper prepared by the Secretariat)*

**Purpose**

1. A proposal for the establishment of a civil society mechanism to engage with the Heads of Agriculture and Forestry to ensure farmers' voices are heard and their concerns addressed by the consortium of the Pacific Islands Association of Non Governmental Organisations (PIANGO), Pacific Islands Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON), Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom) and the Pacific Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO).

**Background**

2. A network of Pacific regional Civil Society Organisations (CSO's) have approached Land Resources Division to establish a formal mechanism for a more formal engagement with the Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (HoAFS).
3. The regional CSO's concern the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (PIANGO), Pacific Islands Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON), Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom) and the Pacific Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO) and represent broad national networks of stakeholders working in the field of agriculture, forestry, food and nutrition security, social and economic development and environment.
4. Prior to the FAO 34<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific held in Nadi in 2018, the regional CSO's met to discuss more engagement in policy space ensuring that the voices of small holder family farmers and foresters are heard, and their concerns and priorities considered when formulating policies and priorities at both national and regional level.
5. Specifically, they reference the Civil Society Mechanism<sup>1</sup> to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Committee on World Food Security as a potential model for the Pacific.

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<sup>1</sup> Until 2011 the Pacific was represented on the Coordination Committee for the CSM through the Australian CSO representation. POETCom and the IFOAM organic International representative lobbied for the Pacific to have separate representation. This was granted and from 2012- 2018 the Pacific was been represented by POETCom with endorsement of the other regional CSO's. The representative role has, through agreement with the regional COS's shifted to PIANGO from 2019 as POETCom's term has come to a close. The regional CSO's see this as a vital role as the experience of the past 7 years has showed that usually Pacific Governments are not present at the Committee on World Food Security and the civil society representation is often the only Pacific voice in the deliberations.

6. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all. The Committee reports to the UN General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and to the FAO Conference. Using a multi-stakeholder, inclusive approach, CFS develops and endorses policy recommendations and guidance on a wide range of food security and nutrition topics.

### **Recommendation**

7. Noting whereas:
  - a. The significant role that civil society organisations play in achieving the development goals of the region and in particular the aspirations of small holder farm families, producers and consumers;
  - b. The importance of ensuring the voice of small holder farm families and producers in policy dialogue and development;
  - c. Respecting that the HOAFs provides a regional inter-governmental governance framework for joint planning and assessment;
  - d. It is therefore recommended that the HOAFS are invited to:
    - i. Acknowledge and note the rationale for LRD to recommend a Civil Society representation mechanism to obtain Observer Status;
    - ii. Provide the Civil Society representation clearly defined opportunities to provide comments on the strategic intent of the HOAFS and on its impact on small farm families and producers.

**Annex 1**

**Operational Guidelines for Civil Society Mechanism**

Planning

- In the year of the HOAFS meeting the regional civil society organisation consortium holds a CSM Forum open to all interested civil society participants. At the CSM Forum, CSOs are able to debate, consolidate, articulate and finalise their positions that will be shared and brought to the HOAFS. The CSM Forum is the space to assess the past processes, to consolidate the common positions for the present and to identify the key challenges and steps forward for the future.
- This CSM Forum could be convened in conjunction with other regional CSO consultations and could be undertaken electronically is required.
- The CSM Forum will select their representative to speak on their behalf at the HOAFS meeting.
- The Pacific Community is not responsible for funding or convening the CSM Forum, this lies with the regional CSO's.

CSO participation in the HOAFS meeting

- One representative of each member of the CSM consortium may attend HOAFS meeting as observers.
- The selected CSM representative will be given the opportunity for a 5 minute statement to the HOAFS on outcomes and priorities arising from the Forum
- The CSM representative will be given the opportunity to make one short (2 minute) comment on key agenda items for discussion. The agenda items open for CSM comment will be provided to the CSM consortium in advance of the meeting for development of joint positions.
- The HOAFS maintain the right to close the meeting to observers for discussion of selected agenda items.
- Funding of participation of CSO observers and representative is the responsibility of the respective CSO's.
- The CSM is to come into effect for the 2021 HOAFS meeting.