

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

DATE: January, 2025

SUMMARY:

The Philanthropic Foundations Mechanism (PFM) Annual Report 2024:

- Describes the main steps in the institutional organization of the PFM;
- Describes PFM's engagement with the CFS working program in 2024, especially across two main topics (inequalities and uptake) and during the CFS52 Plenary;
- Presents its next steps: i) consolidating the mechanism, its governance and outreach strategy and, in parallel, ii) engage with CFS across its three functions: uptake, platform and policy, iii) engage with the CFS ecosystem;

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1. Institutional Organization of the PFM

1.1 PFM's organizing principles and reach out strategy

Governance

In 2024, the Philanthropic Foundations Mechanism (PFM) centered its efforts on finalizing the first edition of its governance document. This document builds on the foundation established in the 2023 [proposal for modalities for a philanthropic foundations mechanism for relations with the Committee on World Food Security \(CFS\)](#) that was presented to the CFS Bureau and Advisory Group in September 2023, and was included in the official documents of the CFS51 Plenary. The governance document expands on this proposal, offering a more structured and detailed approach to several key elements. Specifically, it defines:

1. Coordination Committee: the composition, role, and responsibilities of the PFM Coordination Committee, along with guidelines for participation.
2. Liaison Advisor: role and responsibilities of the PFM Liaison Advisor (consultant).
3. PFM Assembly: the role and responsibilities of the PFM Assembly.
4. Representation: regulations governing the representation of PFM members at CFS meetings.
5. Membership criteria: principles and criteria for selecting new Assembly members, including the application and review process.

As in 2023, the Coordination Committee in 2024 was composed of representatives from the Global Alliance for the Future of Food, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Agroecology Fund. This composition is expected to remain unchanged for 2025.

Ludovica Donati has served as the PFM Liaison Advisor since May 2023, continuing through 2024, with plans for her role to extend into 2025.

While the PFM Assembly only began to coalesce in late 2024 through an outreach webinar, activating it and attracting new members remains a key objective for the PFM in the coming years.

Outreach

A key area of progress in 2024 was the launch of the PFM's outreach strategy, aimed at increasing awareness among philanthropic foundations about the CFS and developing a robust Assembly. The CFS, recognized as a multilateral platform for international food system deliberations, stands out for its participatory, influential, and time-tested approach. The outreach efforts sought to inform philanthropic foundations about the PFM, emphasizing its role as a mechanism enabling their participation alongside civil society organizations, governments, and the private sector in global food systems governance. This strategy aimed to attract new members to the PFM, complementing the three founding philanthropic members.

Some advancements in this area included:

- a) Database creation: a shared database of philanthropic foundations that might be interested in joining the mechanism was initiated.
- b) Publication of an opinion piece: the article [“Why Philanthropy Should Back and Engage in the Committee on World Food Security”](#) was published in December 2024. Authored by Matheus Alves Zanella and Ruchi Tripathi from the Global Alliance for the Future of Food, and Daniel Moss from the Agroecology Fund, it was first featured in [FoodTank](#) and later by the [Global Alliance for the Future of Food](#).
- c) Reach out webinar: A webinar titled [“Why Global Food System Governance Matters to Philanthropic Foundations: Learning about the UN Committee on World Food Security”](#) was organized on December 4th 2024. The event aimed to introduce the CFS and its mechanisms (CSIPM, PSM and PFM) to philanthropic foundations interested in supporting equitable and sustainable food systems at local, national, or international levels. It encouraged them to consider joining the PFM as a means of fostering collaboration and strengthening participatory spaces for food system governance.

The webinar featured a strong lineup of speakers and generated meaningful discussions. The speakers included:

- Anna Lappé, Executive Director Global Alliance for the Future of Food (moderator)
- Ambassador Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile, CFS Chair
- Marie-Lara Hubert-Chartier, Right to Food Specialist for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Robynne Anderson, Coordinator of the PSM (Private Sector Mechanism)
- Deirdre Woods, Focal point for Western Europe of the CSIPM (Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism)
- Kyra Busch, Program Director at the CS Fund
- Challiss McDonough, Senior Program Officer in the advocacy team for agricultural development at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Ruchi Tripathi, Global Alliance for the Future of Food’s Climate and Nature strategy lead
- Daniel Moss, Co-Director of the Agroecology Fund and lead of the PFM Coordination Committee

It attracted approximately 69 attendees, with 250 people registering for the event. Although attendance from eligible philanthropic organizations was somewhat limited, the event’s follow-up engagement and visibility through platforms like FoodTank are expected to provide further opportunities to expand outreach. Notably, the number of eligible organizations that registered was higher than those that ultimately participated, signaling potential for continued interest.

Internal coordination

¹On-line meetings on January 11th, April 4th, July 2nd, September 26th and December 4th; in presence meeting on October 22, 2024.

Under the leadership of the Agroecology Fund, which served as the Lead Coordinator for 2024, the PFM convened five online meetings and one in-person meeting, including a session during the annual CFS Plenary¹. These meetings were instrumental in facilitating information exchange, setting priorities, and identifying common positions for philanthropic engagement in CFS workstreams.

1.2 PFM's communication

In response to requests from some CFS members for clear transparency, safeguards, and accountability mechanisms, the PFM prioritized maintaining and regularly updating its [website](#), more specifically its [participant page](#). This platform serves as repositories for all PFM activities and contributions to the CFS, including comments on CFS workstreams, details about side events, statements made during CFS plenaries and its annual reports. At the start of 2024, the PFM also finalized its logo and branding, enhancing its visual identity and reinforcing its commitment to a professional and cohesive presence.

2. PFM's engagement with CFS working programme

During 2024, the PFM i) actively participated in the Bureau and Advisory Group, contributing to its discussions and deliberations, ii) engaged with the CFS work program, with a particular focus on discussions related to the Uptake of CFS Policy Products and took part in the CFS policy convergence workstream on Reducing Inequalities for Food Security and Nutrition, iii) actively engaged in the CFS52 Plenary, contributing to its agenda and discussions, iv) co-organized a side event during CFS52 and v) explored ways to strengthen connections between philanthropic foundations' networks and the work of the CFS. This included efforts to bring inputs from the broader philanthropic community to the CFS and to disseminate and discuss CFS products and processes within these networks.

Bureau and Advisory Group

- PFM actively participated in all six meetings of the Bureau and Advisory Group (B&AG) as well as the two-day strategic retreat held on May 10th and 11th. Additionally, in April 2024, the PFM submitted to the CFS Secretariat its [CFS Advisory Group Reporting Exercise 2023](#).

Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition

- PFM contributed with its [comments](#) to the HLPE-FSN report on “Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition” in 2022 and early 2023, followed its launch in June 2023 and delivered a [statement](#) during CFS51.
- PFM provided some [inputs](#) on priority issues to be addressed during the CFS policy convergence process on “Reducing Inequalities for Food Security and Nutrition” in January 2024.
- It provided some [inputs](#) on the Zero Draft of the CFS Policy Recommendations on Reducing Inequalities in April 2024.
- It provides some [inputs](#) on the First Draft of CFS Policy Recommendations on Reducing Inequalities in May 2024.

- 3 PFM representatives followed the three rounds of negotiations of the policy convergence process on Reducing Inequalities without releasing any comment or statement.
- PFM, delivered a [statement](#) during CFS 52

Uptake

- PFM representatives participated in all the meetings of OEWG of the Uptake workstream between 2023 and 2024.
- PFM provided its written [inputs](#) on the Draft Outline of the Action Plan of the Uptake workstream in March 2024.
- PFM delivered a [statement](#) during CFS52.

PFM activities during CFS52

One of PFM's main activities at CFS52 was the co-organisation of the side event Uncovering the Invisible – A Feminist Call to Urban Food System Transformation, alongside TMG Think Tank, Brazil, Canada, Caritas Nairobi, Instituto Comida do Amanhã, and UNDP. The event was attended by about 20 people in the room and 22 participants online and was applauded for its content and for the use of the terminology “feminist call” in its title. The summary of the side event can be found [here](#).

Beside that, as showcased in annex 1, PFM intervened with a statement during two sessions of the plenary, namely:

- Item II. Coordinated policy responses to the food crisis the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024
- Item VI. Addressing multiple dimensions of inequalities

Furthermore, Challiss McDonough, Interim Senior Program Officer for Program Advocacy & Communications in Agricultural Development at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, represented the PFM with an intervention during the third panel of Item IX, the Forum on the Uptake of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment, alongside representatives from the other two mechanisms.

3. PFM Contributions to the HLPE-FSN process

Throughout the year 2024, PFM has been actively following the work of the [High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition](#) however, it did not submit any contribution to the HLPE-FSN Report on “[Strengthening Urban and Peri-Urban Food Systems](#)” as PFM Coordination Committee Members either lacked the resources to respond in a timely manner or felt that it was not sufficiently a priority focus of their work.

PFM will nonetheless actively follow the work of the OEWG and the negotiation process on this topic that will start in 2025.

4. Next steps

The main tasks ahead for the PFM are: i) the consolidation of its outreach strategy; ii) a proactive engagement of the PFM and its members with the ecosystem of the CFS and a iii) direct engagement of the PFM and its members within the CFS' workstream with a particular focus on the Resilient Food Systems workstream (a topic that strongly resonates with all three Coordination Committee members).

- I. In 2024, the PFM organized a webinar addressed to philanthropic organizations that might have a potential interest in its activities in relationship with the CFS. In 2025 it will further develop its outreach strategy to actively communicate about the work of CFS and about its constitution to networks of funders and private philanthropic organizations that might have an interest to join the mechanism.
- II. PFM and its members will be proactively involved within the ecosystem of the CFS and will strive to actively support the work of other constituencies.
- III. Regarding PFM's engagement with the CFS 2024-2027 MYPoW, the Philanthropic foundations are consulting their networks on how to contribute to the upcoming Urban and Peri-Urban Food System negotiations and the Resilient Food Systems debates (possibly through open consultations with their networks before and during the policy convergence processes and/or through a some webinars to amplify the work of the HLPE-FSN).
- IV. Finally, PFM intends to explore how to position ongoing discussions by the philanthropic community on investing in food system transformation with the initiative of the CFS to strengthen coordinated policy responses to the global food crisis (global interlinkages dialogues and uptake function).

Annex 1 - PFM's statements at CFS 52

Item II.

MESSAGE

Coordinated policy responses to the food crisis the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024

Thank you to the Chair for the opportunity to speak and for recognizing the role of the mechanisms within the Committee. We would also like to take this moment to thank the Bureau, Advisory Group, and the Secretariat for their commitment and ongoing support to the CFS.

Unfortunately, we are witnessing the world drifting away from our collective goal of achieving zero hunger. As private entities dedicated to public purposes, philanthropic foundations are increasingly called upon to address the escalating challenges posed by disrupted food systems.

Foundations are collaborating with one another and with various bilateral and multilateral donors to launch initiatives that tackle these pressing issues. Our unique position allows us to take risks, fund exploratory research, catalyze essential processes, support community-led initiatives, and build local capacities. We are committed to uplifting civil society actors who are often marginalized from development processes and who, from the core advocates for food security at the local, national and international levels. But, as the latest SOFI report has demonstrated, the resources that philanthropies invest in food security, nutrition, and food systems is relatively small in the total landscape of financing, which suggests that we need to continue to grow a community of funders committed to equitable and sustainable food systems. Increasing the commitments of philanthropic foundations to equitable and sustainable food systems is the principal logic of the PFM.

The CFS has a unique opportunity to promote the right to food as a key instrument for addressing multiple crises in a coordinated, participatory manner, fostering solutions rooted in dialogue.

We welcome the CFS's decision to closely examine the impact and uptake of its policy decisions and its efforts to enhance its engagement with other UN processes and HLPE panels that influence food security, nutrition and the transition towards agroecological food systems. There is a pressing need for better coordination among these processes, and the CFS should continue to lead global discussions on food governance. We are making efforts to better understand how foundations investments align with CFS priorities, and we are committed to working across the CFS community to ensure the adoption and implementation of CFS products.

We welcome other ongoing efforts to advance the global food security and nutrition agenda. In particular, we welcome the G20's initiative to establish the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty. We simply will not achieve SDG2 and related goals if we don't level up our efforts, our coordination and our financing. We are encouraged by the G20's negotiations, which have established a critical link between this Committee and the Alliance. It is now up to this community to fully leverage this opportunity. Philanthropic organizations are in conversation with G20 leaders to explore how our philanthropies, collectively, could make a significant contribution to that Alliance.

The coming year will be a critical one for food systems, and for the entire sustainable development agenda. We look forward to engaging in discussions in the upcoming High Level Forum on strengthening responsible investments and financing for Food Security and Nutrition. These discussions are timely, and urgent.

We are a diverse group of philanthropies, each with its own approach, strategy and priorities, but we recognize the need to work together in support of the shared goal of a world free of hunger and malnutrition and a transition towards truly equitable and sustainable food systems. Some of the key topics of our interest include: a) redirecting public investments, incentives and subsidies to food systems that respect environmental and human rights principles; b) investing in agro-ecological transformations, and in inclusive transformation of agrifood systems, including closing gender gaps; c) incorporating environmental and social accounting in investments; and d) strengthening an ecosystem of funders to finance food system transformations through public, private, grassroots, and blended finance approaches.

In conclusion, we reiterate that we take this responsibility seriously. This commitment reflects our ongoing effort in philanthropy to elevate food security, nutrition, and food systems transformation within global processes while collaborating with diverse actors.

Thank you.

Item VI.

Addressing multiple dimensions of inequalities

MESSAGE

Thank you Chair for giving me the floor. I'm here on behalf of the Philanthropic Foundations Mechanism, and you can find our full statement on our website.

- We entered these negotiations with the expectation that this Committee would examine the diverse and deep-rooted systemic drivers of inequality. As we have stated before, this is an issue of significant importance to us. Private foundations, after all, are both products of inequality and organizations designed to address it;
- We welcome the outcomes of these intense negotiations and are pleased with the ambitious recommendations that emerged. These touch on several key issues relevant to our work—such as acknowledging and addressing power asymmetries in food governance and value chains, reinforcing the role of social protection and gender policies, and highlighting the need for better data collection on inequalities, among others. We commend the negotiators for their dedication and flexibility in achieving these results;
- For many we consulted, the key challenge was how to engage with the structural sources of inequality without losing a practical focus—ensuring the recommendations are implementable and actionable;
- We see at least two ways in which philanthropies can make use of these outcomes. First, we now have a consensus-driven, internally agreed-upon menu of options that foundations can leverage to align their strategies, mobilize international support and partnerships, and adapt these global

recommendations to their national and local contexts;

- Second, foundations can advocate for these recommendations in other international policy discussions they are involved in related to food system transformation, such as climate, biodiversity, and land conventions, the G20's Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, and the upcoming +4 review of the Food Systems Summit, among others;
- While we are just at the beginning of this journey, these recommendations will serve as a guiding framework for philanthropies committed to addressing structural inequalities.

Item IX.

the Forum on the Uptake of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment, alongside representatives from the other two mechanisms.

MESSAGE

Thank you to the CFS Chair for the opportunity to speak in this forum, and thank you to the Secretariat and all of the stakeholders from across the CFS community who engaged in good faith in the workstream on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment that produced these Voluntary Guidelines.

The Philanthropic Foundations Mechanism (tbc) recognizes the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment across agrifood systems, and we encourage robust commitment from all actors within the CFS to promote the uptake of these Guidelines.

Two recent reports from the Food and Agriculture Organization underscore the importance of these Voluntary Guidelines and their uptake and implementation.

Last year, the Status of Women in Agrifood Systems report sent the stark message that progress has been far too slow in closing gender gaps in access to assets and resources that are key to healthy, sustainable agrifood systems – including access to and control over land, access to high-quality seeds and other inputs, and access to critical services and finance.

If policies, strategies, programs and interventions all focus on closing the gender gaps, it would help lift entire economies – everyone would benefit. We would reduce hunger faster, and increase prosperity sooner. A second FAO report published earlier this year, titled The Unjust Climate, is a powerful testament to how climate change takes a steeper toll on women and female-headed households. Extreme heat, flooding and other extreme weather events cause women to lose more income, and to take on additional work burdens compared to men.

Both of these reports make clear that it is critical to promote interventions that tackle multiple, intersecting forms of marginalization and vulnerability if we hope to close gender gaps and sustainably end hunger. We cannot do one without the other.

We do wish the Voluntary Guidelines were more ambitious, but we also recognize that their implementation will make meaningful positive differences in the lives, livelihoods, and living and working conditions of millions of women and girls.

We have important opportunities in the coming years to highlight the importance of these voluntary guidelines and urgency of closing gender gaps across agrifood systems. In 2026, we will celebrate women food producers of all types during the International Year of the Woman Farmer.

We encourage all CFS members and stakeholders to view these guidelines as a baseline, and build on them as a foundation for their efforts to work toward gender equality and women's empowerment across agriculture and food systems. As we promote the uptake of these guidelines, we will keep our own ambitions high, and we hope that the work we do now will create momentum to build true gender equality at every level, in every community, all across the world.