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# JOINT MEETING

**Hundred and Twentieth Session of the Programme Committee and  
Hundred and Sixty-fourth Session of the Finance Committee**

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**PROGRESS REPORT ON FAO STRATEGY FOR PARTNERSHIPS  
WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS**

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## I. Background

1. The FAO strategy (the Strategy) for partnership with Civil Society Organizations (CSO) approved by the 146th Session of the FAO Council in 2013<sup>1</sup>, provides a framework for the development of alliances between the Organization and CSOs. The Strategy is complemented by a set of tools aimed at guiding FAO staff on how to establish effective partnerships in support of the Organization's Strategic Objectives (SOs).
2. The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) help to promote the setting up of effective partnerships in the public, public–private and civil society spheres to strengthen actions to achieve the Goals. The FAO is the body responsible for monitoring 21 global indicators covering six goals, and is a major contributor to the other four indicators.
3. The FAO recognizes that CSOs play a crucial role in food security and poverty reduction. They have increasingly shown their capacities and expertise in food and nutritional security project design and execution, including initiatives related to South–South and Triangular Cooperation.
4. Within this framework, the FAO reinforces the implementation of its strategies approved in 2013 for partnership with non-state actors (Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations), which contribute to achieving the SOs and link the work of the FAO to SDG 17: strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.
5. The SDGs promote the establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms as a mechanism for debate and construction of global policies in programmes to combat hunger, malnutrition and poverty. The FAO has taken up this challenge and has entered into a number of collaborative initiatives with public and private sectors (governments, private entities and Civil Society Organizations) that work together in various areas of the Organization, namely: agroecology, family farming, land tenure and so on.
6. Institutional mechanisms have been launched that guarantee the neutrality of the Organization and the use of a decentralized approach in implementing the Strategy, while maintaining and strengthening the fundamental nature of the FAO on issues such as: (i) the capacity to provide a neutral forum for discussion to help improve the decision-making capacity of Member States; and (ii) the Organization's evidence-based knowledge work and its dissemination.
7. The joint meeting of the Programme Committee in its 118th session and the Finance Committee in its 160th session (4 November 2015)<sup>2</sup> welcomed the progress made in the framework of the Strategies, particularly work aimed at promoting the implementation and dissemination of the various Voluntary Guidelines developed by the Committee on World Food Security (CSF). The Joint Meeting also stressed the importance of partnerships in helping to achieve the SOs, establishing links and increasing the efficiency of the FAO, ensuring a process of due diligence to assess risks and maintain the Organization's neutrality.
8. Strategic partnerships have been crucial during 2016 and are expected to demonstrate further results and positive impacts as they continue to support the implementation of the 2016-17 Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). Since the approval of the Strategies, the FAO has signed approximately 100 partnership agreements<sup>3</sup>, of which 25 per cent are with Civil Society Organizations and their platforms, which include a large number of regional and national networks.
9. During the past year, efforts have focused on deepening, replicating and increasing the scope of existing partnerships, supporting the implementation of the work plans of the various formal partnership agreements in force. However, new partnerships have been built with CSOs at local level linked to the network of decentralized offices.
10. Through various ongoing partnerships with CSOs such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Action-Aid International (AAI), The International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), Welthungerhilfe e.V. (WHH), La Via Campesina, and the World Wildlife

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<sup>1</sup> CL 146/REP, paragraphs 24 and 25

<sup>2</sup> CL 153/8 paragraph 7

<sup>3</sup> A complete list of partnerships with the private sector and progress made in their implementation can be found at <http://www.fao.org/partnerships/es/>.

Fund (WWF), among others, the FAO has undertaken major initiatives in the framework of response to emergencies, promoting sustainable use of natural resources and nutrition.

11. This work has included the involvement and support of CSOs for the implementation of regulatory frameworks such as the voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security (hereafter Tenure Guidelines), voluntary guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication (hereafter SSF Guidelines), voluntary guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security (hereafter Guidelines on the Right to Food) and principles for responsible agricultural investment and food systems (hereafter CFS-RAI Principles) emphasizing the search for partnerships and synergies at local level.

12. This report covers ongoing work with cooperatives and producer organizations (POs), particularly those aimed at capacity-building in the management of agricultural cooperatives<sup>4</sup>.

13. This document also includes some of our ongoing activities with academic and research institutions<sup>5</sup>. Partnerships with universities account for 40 per cent of partnership agreements and support the FAO through research, data collection and monitoring projects.

14. The report also covers some of the activities undertaken by the Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger and the Alliance for Food Security and Peace between the FAO and the Nobel Peace Laureates.

## **II. Partnerships within the sphere of the FAO Programme of Work and Budget**

15. The 2014-15 Programme Implementation Report (PIR) described the role of the Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development Division (OPC), which is one of the units responsible for complying with Functional Objective 8 on Outreach<sup>6</sup>. This quantified the Organization's outreach functions through partnership creation, institutional development and capacity-building, communication, resource mobilization and South–South cooperation.

16. The PIR highlighted that the 2014-2015 biennium was very satisfactory for partnership, outreach and capacity-building activities because the goals established within Functional Objective 8 were met and some of the expected results were even exceeded.<sup>7</sup>

17. Given its significant contribution to the SOs during 2016, the FAO maintained and stepped up its efforts to ensure the incorporation of strategies in working mechanisms throughout the Organization.

## **III. Enabling and implementing Strategic Partnerships**

### **A. Enabling broader capacity development**

18. Implementation of the Strategy with CSOs during the current stage has focused on the implementation of existing agreements and/or their extension to each particular case. The FAO also continued to strengthen the technical capacity of the decentralized offices to identify partnerships at country level in order to support regional initiatives and activities identified by governments in Country Programming Frameworks.

19. Similarly, implementation of the Strategy has allowed the various decentralized offices to significantly increase dialogue and cooperation with CSOs in recent years over: (i) specific partnership initiatives; (ii) joint campaigns to raise awareness of key messages promoted by the FAO; and (iii) exchange of technical knowledge and skills.

20. At regional, subregional and national levels, dialogue and partnership with CSOs has focused on several areas relevant to the FAO's mandate. These included gender, family farming, soil and pulses

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<sup>4</sup> Other working initiatives developed with Cooperatives and POs are included in the Report on the Implementation of the FAO Strategy for Partnerships with the Private Sector.

<sup>5</sup> Work in this area is based on the *FAO Internal Guidelines for Partnership with Academic and Research Institutions*, following appropriate risk management mechanisms to establish the neutrality of potential partners from academia and to ensure that the partnership agreements are consistent with the Organization's rules and procedures. This report provides information on activities carried out with academia and public and private research institutions with the aim of avoiding duplication of information in the Report on the Private Sector Strategy.

<sup>6</sup> C 2017/8 Paragraphs 245 and 246

<sup>7</sup> C 2017/8 Paragraphs 248 and 249

(within the context of their respective International Years), sustainable food systems, including food loss and waste reduction, promotion of agroecology practices as well as disseminating the legislative instruments of the FAO and the Committee on World Food Security, namely: Guidelines on the Right to Food, Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure and the CFS-RAI Principles.

21. Ensuring that the Strategy is applied consistently in the decentralized offices remains a priority for the Organization. In this regard, as part of technical capacity-building activities in its headquarters and decentralized offices, the FAO has promoted the use of eLearning tools on the subject of partnerships that provide staff with guidance on the FAO's mechanisms for establishing partnerships with different types of non-state entities.

#### **B. Strengthening of risk management in FAO partnerships with civil society organizations**

22. The Strategy establishes a risk management mechanism for assessing proposed partnerships. Throughout last year, the database on non-state actors was updated and new IT tools were implemented in order to conduct a more thorough analysis of potential FAO partners able to make a substantial contribution to the SOs.

23. The preliminary analysis is based on the Guiding Principles of the United Nations and establishes the observance of fundamental values laid down within the framework of human rights, labour, environment and governance emanating from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

24. The work conducted by the FAO in the fields of risk management is complemented by the work of guidance and review performed together with technical units for managing relations with CSOs. This procedure operates through the organization of technical meetings for sharing information as well as for evaluating and recording the participation of civil society stakeholders in FAO meetings, among other things.

25. With regard to the system for tracking and monitoring partnerships with the aim of evaluating their role in supporting the FAO's SOs as defined in the Strategy, in 2016 work continued on linking this system to the FAO's corporate information and reporting mechanisms and the project management tools used as part of the Organization's results-based planning.

## IV. FAO partnerships with civil society organizations

### A. Approach to the FAO's work with Civil Society in 2016

26. Civil Society Organizations can contribute to: (i) mobilizing and raising public awareness around social issues, (ii) sharing best practices and technical expertise with governments and international organizations for the design of strategies and programmes, and (iii) directly providing technical assistance to certain communities, among other things.

27. This type of partnership generates positive impacts by strengthening the capacities of CSOs for using the FAO's technical expertise, which includes the dissemination of global instruments that are developed and approved by the governing bodies as well as the exchange of traditional and ancestral knowledge possessed by small-scale farmers.

28. Following the guidelines approved by the FAO Conference for the 2016-2017 PWB, throughout the last year, efforts have been focused on deepening existing partnerships, supporting implementation of the work plans adopted by the various formal partnership agreements in force. At the same time, and following the recommendations of the meeting committee to introduce programmes to strengthen gender aspects in partnerships, the Organization has opened up an opportunity for new strategic partnerships with some key CSOs, such as: the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) of India to promote local initiatives focused on the empowerment of rural women and young people, and the Italian NGO Network: Italian Coordination of International Networks (CINI), "Link 2007" Coordination Association, Association of Italian Organizations of International Cooperation and Solidarity (AOI), with the aim of working together within humanitarian aid and resilience building.

29. In general, areas of work where CSOs have supported the FAO's strategic objectives to the greatest extent are:

- a) implementation of regulatory frameworks / Voluntary Guidelines (International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty - IPC, Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development -AFA, Caritas Internationalis);
- b) sustainable use of natural resources and agroecology (La Via Campesina, World Wildlife Fund - WWF, Action-Aid International-AAI);
- c) nutrition (Civil Society Network on Nutrition);
- d) sustainable food systems (Slow Food);
- e) emergency action and building resilience (Welthungerhilfe e.V - WHH, Red Cross and Red Crescent);
- f) broadcasting and communication (World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters - AMARC).

30. The FAO has ensured regional balance in partnership building. Partnership initiatives and/or projects implemented with CSOs cover all regions and fully support the FAO Strategic Framework since they are directly and operationally related and thus provide support for Country Programming Frameworks and/or Regional Initiatives.

31. With regard to Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure, together with a variety of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) we have continued to provide support for implementation of a training module to raise awareness of Guidelines by CSOs and community organizations through the use of people's facilitation methodologies (People's Manual on the Implementation of Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure). Specific activities have been developed in South Africa, Senegal, Guatemala, Nepal, the Philippines, Colombia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Mongolia.

32. Similarly, during the current year, the FAO has entered into a partnership with the International Union of Notaries, aimed at supporting the process of disseminating the Guidelines and best practices among its members around the world.

33. Work with civil society on the CFS-RAI Principles has involved opening a dialogue on the role of CSOs including Cooperatives and Producer Organizations (POs) within the context of the FAO's work on responsible agricultural investment. In June 2016, the FAO organized a workshop for CSOs with the aim of sharing knowledge and identifying priority areas relating to the CFS-RAI Principles with a view to incorporating them in the Implementation Programme (umbrella programme), which will be coordinated by the FAO.

34. Following up on commitments arising out of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN-2), a partnership was entered into with the Platform of Civil Society Organizations on Nutrition to support the implementation of the Decade of Action on Nutrition.
35. During the 2016 International Year of Pulses, CSOs took part in the Steering Committee coordinating the activities of the International Year, through technical contributions and dissemination.
36. With regard to CSO involvement in ongoing FAO processes, the FAO provided guidance and support to ensure that this takes place in compliance with the Basic Texts and the Strategy, through efficient, transparent and participatory mechanisms. In this context, it facilitated their participation in FAO Regional Conferences and Technical Committees and in other global meetings such as the Regional Symposia on Agroecology for Food Security and Nutrition, and the FAO International

*SO2: Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner*

44. In contributing to the achievement of SO2, partnerships and collaboration with CSOs, we have focused on increasing the effectiveness of FAO field projects and programmes based on civil society experience in poverty alleviation and sustainable natural resource management.

45. These partnerships have supported various initiatives in Asian and African countries in sustainable forestry management and agroecology areas linked to the additional SO on cross-cutting themes (gender and climate change). At world level, some of these partnerships facilitate a policy dialogue on Farmers' Rights established by the Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the implementation of SSF Guidelines. Organizations working for SO2 include: *Action-Aid International (AAI)*, *World Vision International (WVI)*, *La Vía Campesina (LVC)*, *IPC* and *World Wildlife Fund (WWF)*, amongst others.

*SO3: Reducing rural poverty*

46. Partnerships with family farmers, social movements and producer organizations supporting the work of the FAO in the field of SO3 seek to disseminate good practices through communication for development, generating synergies between social protection measures and rural development programmes to effectively reduce food insecurity amongst rural populations.

47. Within the scope of this objective, CSOs associated with the FAO have continued to contribute to the *Family farming knowledge platform*, which collects quality digital information on family farming from throughout the world, considering national laws and regulations, public policies, good practices, relevant data and statistics as well as research, articles and publications.

48. Similarly, as the joint programme committee highlighted the importance of developing and disseminating knowledge, specific initiatives have been supported in Latin American and Asian countries intended to strengthen community means of communication as a driver of social change and development in rural areas. Partners supporting SO3 include: *the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC)*.

49. This work was also supported by various activities carried out in the Near East and Africa, with Cooperatives and Producer Organizations (POs), aimed at capacity building in management and organization. Prominent examples are work carried out by the FAO jointly with We effect with regard to access to rural finance for women in Africa, or the partnership agreement with SEWA to strengthen women's organizations as well as activities to promote greater access by women to technologies.

*SO4: Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems*

50. When contributing to the achievement of SO4, partnerships and collaboration with CSOs have focused on carrying out joint activities for knowledge-sharing and capacity building based on inclusive and efficient business models to support farming and food systems, as well as to determine synergies to address problems posed by food waste and loss.

51. Various specific partnerships covering countries in Africa and Europe enabled the FAO, based on the technical capacity of CSOs, to identify innovative models that increase access to family farming product producer markets as well as solidarity-based food distribution systems (producers and consumers). At world level, some of these partnerships promote specific measures for food loss and waste reduction in support of the SAVE FOOD initiative. Partners include: *Caritas Internationalis*, *Regional Food Bank Network*, *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*, *Slow Food*, *IPC*, *Urgenci*, among others.

*SO5: Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises*

52. Partnerships with CSOs within the context of SO5 focus on jointly mobilizing and using the extensive available human, physical and financial resources, increasing the scale and priority of technical support from the FAO aimed at increasing resilience as well as disseminating knowledge and periodic reporting, particularly on disaster preparedness with early warning systems.

53. These partnerships support specific actions in the Near East and Africa. Some of these are part of the work of the Global Food Security Cluster (GFSC) led by the FAO and the WFP in order to coordinate the international response with regard to food security during a humanitarian crisis. The main

partners include: *Welthungerhilfe e.V. (WHH)*, *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*, *World Vision International*, among others.

### C. Examples of the implementation of partnerships with Civil Society Organizations

54. Some examples are given below of results arising out of the implementation of partnerships with CSOs during 2016 in support of the Organization's SOs.

#### a) **International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC)**<sup>8</sup>

- i. In 2016, it continued its work to support the implementation of regulatory frameworks within the sphere of the **Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure**. As part of this effort, a guide was published for CSOs to facilitate the understanding and application of the Voluntary Guidelines within a national context.
- ii. Work also continued on application of a training module to raise the awareness of CSOs and community organizations of the Tenure Guidelines. The second phase of the project is continuing in South Africa, Senegal, Guatemala, Nepal, the Philippines, Colombia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Mongolia.
- iii. As part of the process of applying the Voluntary Guidelines to achieve sustainability of small-scale fisheries (SSFs), the IPC's contribution has been channelled toward outreach, awareness and capacity-building activities relating to the general implementation programme.
- iv. Within the context of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), various IPC organizations supported the organization of policy dialogues through regional CSO consultations on progress made regarding the application of Farmers' Rights (Article 9) of the ITPGRFA in preparation for the Global Consultation on Farmers' Rights, held in Bali in September 2016.
- v. Following up on the activities carried out in 2015 relating to the Regional Symposia on Agroecology, conducted in Brazil, Senegal and Thailand, in 2016 organizations belonging to the IPC were actively involved in preparing and developing the International Symposium on Agroecology for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems, held in China in August 2016. These forums for dialogue enabled the FAO and the various CSOs to share knowledge by presenting case studies and best practices in agroecology.

#### b) **World Wildlife Fund (WWF)**

Within the context of the SSF guidelines, the FAO together with the WWF and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) organized a Regional Conference in March 2016 entitled "Building a future for sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea", which took place in Algeria. The Conference enabled a dialogue with CSOs over the main socio-economic and environmental challenges for the development of the small-scale fishery sector in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

#### c) **Action-Aid International (AAI)**

- i. Activities with AAI focus on supporting the field programme; during the current year, within the framework of the Organization's Forest Law Governments and Trade Programme (FLEGT) and the Country Programming Framework for Liberia, the FAO developed a Project on *Promotion of Women and Community Rights in Forestry Governance and Management in Liberia*. This initiative is linked to SO6 on cross-cutting themes (gender) and aims to improve the forestry restoration and management abilities of women in 27 Liberian communities between 2016 and 2018.
- ii. Similarly, within the context of the Country Programming Framework in Haiti, joint awareness and capacity-building workshops were held for CSOs and communities on the importance and usefulness of the Guidelines on Tenure for securing community rights of tenure. In Cambodia, it is planned to launch a community organization land mapping process using the FAO's open software for free land administration that allows the collection of data on tenure.

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<sup>8</sup> The International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) is a global platform bringing together more than 800 rural workers' associations and social movements related to farming and food issues.



d) **Caritas Internationalis**

Under the Guidelines on the Right to Food, in 2016 we continued our joint activities aimed at increasing the dissemination and promotion of key messages for hunger eradication awareness and the call to action. Similarly, together with Caritas Internationalis, we also reinforced specific partnership initiatives relating to food loss and waste reduction.

e) **La Via Campesina (LVC)**

- i. The partnership with LVC focused on knowledge-sharing and capacity building in the field of promoting good practice in sustainable agriculture.
- ii. In 2016, we continued our work of documenting and disseminating knowledge, experience and best practices on agroecology from LVC's agroecology schools for farmers. In the spirit of South–South Cooperation and using "farmer to farmer" training methodology, we held various knowledge-sharing sessions in Indonesia, Thailand, Mali and Burkina Faso. It is planned to organize similar activities in other countries. This work supports the FAO's efforts with regard to the dissemination of knowledge and best practices. It is planned to prepare audiovisual learning material based on "farmer to farmer" methodology.

f) **IPC - Urgenci**

In the area of knowledge-sharing on inclusive business models, this partnership with Urgenci, an organization belonging to the IPC, enabled us to map CSO stakeholders participating in solidarity-based food marketing systems (producers and consumers) in order to identify the know-how and capacity of CSOs involved in direct supply chains between producers and consumers in countries of the Mediterranean region: Algeria, Croatia, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey.

g) **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

- i. Activities were aimed at further promoting resilience and adopting measures for risk and disaster prevention and mitigation for the most vulnerable communities. During the current year, a joint paper was prepared for implementing a "Tree Planting and Care Campaign" to support the Great Green Wall for the Sahara Initiative (GGWSI).
- ii. The initiative should be seen as a set of interventions in all countries throughout the Sahara, aimed at mitigating and adapting to climate change as well as improving livelihoods, food security and nutrition.
- iii. In 2016, we continued capacity development activities for the training of more than 4,000 Federation volunteers through FAO eLearning courses with the aim of improving the skills of staff and volunteers world-wide. With regard to mobilizing the joint use of resources, we are considering broader support for the Chad and Burkina Faso MPP in order to strengthen resilience strategies.

h) **Welthungerhilfe e.V. (WHH)**

WHH is an important partner for the FAO in the field because it works to increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crisis situations. In the context of actions for the joint use of resources in emergency situations, this partnership enabled us to conduct joint projects in Syria, Sudan and South Sudan, Madagascar and Zimbabwe through the provision of rural extension services and training courses as well as seed distribution.

**D. Examples of partnerships with cooperatives and producer organizations (POs)**

55. Some examples of work done during 2016 with cooperatives on different topics are given below:

a) ***We Effect***

The strategic alliance with We Effect helped to promote the independence and collective action of women and young small-scale producers and family farming, with an approach focusing on financial management and access to credit for women. The work focused on producer organizations and cooperatives in Bolivia, Guatemala, Kenya, Malawi, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Vietnam and Zambia.

b) ***World Farmers' Organization (WFO)***

The FAO continued its partnership with the WFO, focusing on training courses and disseminating the land tenure guidelines, with special emphasis on women's access to land. One example of this is a series of training courses held in Uganda. A number of other joint events were held within the framework of Agenda 2030 on themes of nutrition and rural youth.

#### **E. FAO partnerships with academic and research institutions<sup>9</sup>**

56. In recent years, the FAO has increased and stepped up its existing partnership with public and private local and regional academic and research institutions, in support of the Country Programming Framework (CPF) and regional initiatives. This has made it possible to appropriately identify particular partnership opportunities that contribute specifically to achieving the Organization's five SOs.

57. In accordance with the above internal guidelines and following appropriate risk management mechanisms to establish the neutrality of potential partners from academia, which maintain many links with private sector entities and CSOs that could influence their areas of work, the FAO applies various procedures depending on the nature of these institutions to ensure that the partnership agreements are consistent with the Organization's rules and procedures. Publicly-funded academic and research institution agreements follow the procedure laid down in the Strategy for Partnerships with Civil Society Organizations. Privately-funded agreements, on the other hand, follow the procedure laid down in the Strategy for Partnerships with the Private Sector.

58. In 2016, agreements were drawn up with the University of Ankara (Turkey), University of Kyoto (Japan), Roma Tre University (Italy), Tufts University (USA), the African Institute for Agrarian Studies (Zimbabwe) and Sapienza University (Italy). These agreements strengthened joint work in the areas of family farming, climate change, statistics and nutrition.

59. Some examples of these partnerships are described below:

- a) Together with the Asian Institute of Technology, the FAO was involved in the rice intensification project in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand.
- b) Through the Texas A&M University AgriLife Research Centre, the FAO implemented a predictive early warning system for livestock in Kenya, a tool allowing the modelling of arid grazing regions in order to provide shepherds and relief organizations with key information on livestock water status.
- c) The FAO's partnership with the M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University allowed its Eurasian Centre for Food Security to strengthen its role as the Regional Soil Partnership Secretariat.
- d) Among the research institutions, CIRAD contributed to various activities for sustainable forest management, surveillance of diseases of cassava, capacity building of national laboratories for disease detection and the analysis of livestock health and disease management in East and West Africa. The research centre of the International Centre for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) is supporting the Near East Water Scarcity Regional Initiative for developing a multi-stakeholder approach to the design of a nationwide drought monitoring system.

60. In terms of capacity building, the FAO is sharing its technical knowledge to improve master's degree programmes in five partner universities: Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), LaSalle Beauvais Polytechnic Institute (LSB), Union of Universities of Latin America and the Caribbean (UDUAL), Roma Tre University (Roma Tre), Texas A&M University (TAMU) in areas of food security, family farming, gender equality, climate change and livestock management. Learning generally involves sharing the FAO's experiences in the field, case studies and e-learning courses.

61. Universities partnered with the FAO have also been very active in the area of outreach, particularly during the International Year of Pulses, with a series of events being organized to raise general awareness of their dietary and environmental benefits as well as events on food loss and waste, RAI and nutrition, among other things. One example of these initiatives was an interactive session with students from seven universities in different regions to mark the *FAO International symposium on "The Role of Agricultural Biotechnologies in Sustainable Food Systems and Nutrition"*, held this February.

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<sup>9</sup> This section provides information on activities carried out with academia and public and private research institutions with the aim of avoiding duplication of information in the Report on the Private Sector Strategy.