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**OUTLINE OF THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2022-31 AND
OUTLINE OF THE MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2022-25**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This document presents the outline of the Strategic Framework of FAO (2022-31) (SF) and of the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2022-25 (regional and technical priorities) which are being developed in the context of global developments, global and regional trends and major challenges and opportunities in the areas of FAO's mandate.
2. The Strategic Framework is being developed through an inclusive and transparent process involving extensive internal and external consultations, Governing Body meetings and informal consultations. This document builds on the *Provisional Outline of the new Strategic Framework (PC 128/2)* and guidance received from the Programme Committee and Council in their respective sessions held during June-July 2020. The roadmap is further detailed in *Annex 1*.
3. A world facing escalating threats demands that we act without delay to safeguard livelihoods, transform our food systems to future-proof our planet and lock in sustainable outcomes. The 2030 Agenda is there to guide us. The UN Secretary General's Food Systems Summit in 2021 will provide a process through which a food systems transformative approach can be better articulated and an improved alignment of food system actors' initiatives in support of more sustainable food systems promoted.
4. Feeding into the development of the Strategic Framework, FAO is undertaking a Corporate Strategic Foresight Exercise (CSFE) which aims to accelerate strategic thinking to increase preparedness and effectiveness in providing support to achieve Agenda 2030, and to share knowledge regarding challenges, threats and opportunities to move food and agricultural systems towards sustainability. The document outlines the results of the first stage of the CSFE.
5. The strategic narrative guiding the development of the new Strategic Framework is that FAO will work to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and three Global Goals of Members by promoting food systems to meet our aspiration of *Leaving No One Behind through sustainable, inclusive and resilient food systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life*.
6. FAO will apply four cross-cutting/cross-sectional "accelerators": *technology, innovation, data and complements (governance, human capital, and institutions)* in all our programmatic interventions. Sustainably feeding close to 10 billion people by 2050 is an unprecedented challenge. And it speaks to the paramount importance of minimizing trade-offs. The four accelerators can facilitate the management of these trade-offs.
7. The new Strategic Framework places the 2030 Agenda at its center and using key SDGs and their indicators to promote focus and track progress, grouped by the four betters (*Table 2*). FAO's contributions span all SDGs, and are guided by the lens of SDG 1, SDG 2, and SDG 10. FAO will use a distinctive food systems approach linking different aspects of FAO's work, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries and land use sustainability, poverty reduction, and improved access to investment and finance, in supporting food systems transformation to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.
8. The document also outlines areas of special focus, including partnerships; normative work; FAO's strategic role in emergency and resilience work; harnessing science, technologies and innovation for global development; and building more resilient agrifood systems. It describes the foreseen approach for coordination with other frameworks and initiatives, in particular the UN Food Systems Summit; and also highlights the importance of being prepared to operate in the context of increasing risk and uncertainty and the need to move towards a programmatic approach.
9. To underpin the Strategic Framework, FAO is developing a Change Management Strategy (CMS) which sets out FAO's *internal vision*, i.e. a healthy, efficient and effective Organization that is fit-for-purpose, future-proof and capable of fulfilling the aspirations outlined in the Strategic Framework. The SF and CMS are inextricably bound: as the SF spells out FAO's

vision, ambitions and aspirations, the CMS creates the necessary enabling environment to achieve these. The document also outlines seven key areas for efficiency and modernization in FAO's enabling environment, namely Business Management, Human Resources, Digital FAO, Communications, Decentralization, Multilingualism and Governance.

10. The Medium Term Plan section of this document provides an overview of the priorities stemming from the Regional Conferences and the Technical Committees which are available to-date. A more complete overview will be provided to Members as an Information Note prior to Council in December 2020.
11. FAO will continue with the development of proposed programmatic priority areas under the new results framework taking all relevant guidance into consideration and in full consultation with Members, and will submit Information Notes for further discussion, prior to the finalization of the full Strategic Framework document and the Medium Term Plan 2022-25.

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE JOINT MEETING OF THE PROGRAMME AND FINANCE COMMITTEES, THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE, AND THE COUNCIL

- The Joint Meeting and the Programme Committee are requested to consider the Outline of the Strategic Framework 2022-31 and Outline of the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and the Council is invited to provide guidance as deemed appropriate.

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I. OUTLINE OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

A. Background and Scope

1. This document presents the outline of the Strategic Framework of FAO (2022-31) and of the Medium Term Plan 2022-2025 (regional and technical priorities) which are being developed in the context of global developments, global and regional trends and major challenges and opportunities in the areas of FAO's mandate.
2. As called for in the Basic Texts,¹ since 2010 all of FAO's work is guided by a Strategic Framework prepared for a period of ten to fifteen years, reviewed every four years.²
3. This document builds on the *Provisional Outline of the new Strategic Framework*³ and guidance received from the Programme Committee and Council in their respective sessions held during June-July 2020,⁴ where Members:
 - a) stressed the importance of aligning FAO's Strategic Framework to the Agenda 2030 and measuring results through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators;
 - b) endorsed the new vision articulated by the Director-General for a dynamic and innovative FAO in a world where challenges are complex and inter-related;
 - c) welcomed the approach to develop priority areas linked to new global trends and challenges and requested that lessons learned from crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic be incorporated in the development of the Strategic Framework.
4. The document provides an elaboration of thinking to-date on the new Strategic Framework guided by FAO's vision and the three Global Goals of Members and firmly anchored in the SDGs. It also highlights the importance of FAO being a modern and efficient Organization and an agile enabler of change and outlines areas of FAO's focus for building an optimal enabling environment.
5. The Strategic Framework is being developed through an inclusive and transparent process involving extensive internal and external consultations, Governing Body meetings and informal consultations. Synergies and complementarities with concomitant work for the Food Systems Summit 2021 is also being taken in consideration. The roadmap for consultation is further detailed in *Annex I*.
6. FAO's Strategic Framework is being developed during an uncertain economic outlook for the medium term. As highlighted by the International Monetary Fund,⁵ COVID-19 has triggered the deepest global recession in decades, with the baseline forecast envisioning a -4.4 percent change in global GDP⁶ growth in 2020. The pandemic is expected to result in GDP growth contractions across developed countries, the vast majority of emerging markets (-1.7%) and developing economies (Latin America - 8.1%, Middle East and Central Asia -4.1%, and sub-Saharan Africa -3.0%) and cause lasting damage to output loss,⁷ labor productivity and jobs. This will potentially increase the number of extreme poor by between 88-115 million in 2020 with an additional potential increase of between 23 million and 35 million in 2021.⁸
7. In this scenario, global coordination and cooperation, as well as a reinforced commitment to sustainable policies and to undertaking the reforms necessary to support long-term prospects are critical.

¹ Basic Texts, Volume II, Chapter F, Article 1.(a)

² C 2009/REP

³ PC 128/2

⁴ CL164/6 and CL 164/REP

⁵ World Economic Outlook, October 2020, IMF

⁶ Gross domestic product (GDP)

⁷ Estimated around USD 11 trillion over 2020-21 to USD 28 trillion over 2020-2025 for cumulative loss

⁸ World Bank, [Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2020](#), [PovcalNet](#)

B. The 2030 Agenda and the Big Challenges Ahead

8. Despite the enormous progress made in the last 75 years since FAO was created, and even though we produce enough food to feed the world, 690 million people suffered from hunger even before COVID-19. Millions more are micronutrient deficient, and an alarmingly growing number of people are overweight across all ages, classes and borders. The pandemic has increased the number of undernourished up to 132 million more people, putting the importance and vulnerability of the world's food systems under the spotlight. As highlighted by the Secretary General in his recent address to the General Assembly, in many places, the pandemic coupled with conflict and disruption is dealing crippling blows to food security, with millions of people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, northeast Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen facing the risk of famine.⁹

9. This unprecedented situation is an opportunity for FAO and its Members to reaffirm FAO's leadership and position as the UN agency mandated to defeat hunger and achieve global food and nutrition security while preserving the planet's resources and reducing the environmental impact. There is growing recognition of the fundamental role of food systems in achieving the 2030 Agenda. The Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 identified building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns as one of the six key "entry points" where focused and collaborative action by various stakeholders can accelerate progress towards the SDGs. Major global initiatives such as the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit provide us a historic opportunity to build back better. The cornerstone of our existence, and at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is a healthy planet that allows our food systems to provide a healthy diet for all in a sustainable food system.

Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

10. A world facing escalating threats demands that we act without delay to safeguard livelihoods, transform our food systems to future-proof our planet and lock in sustainable outcomes. The 2030 Agenda is there to guide us. But the historic consensus surrounding its adoption must be matched by political determination to deliver it.

11. In September 2015, UN Member States unanimously signed up to a new vision for humanity. By tying broad principles to detailed benchmarks, the 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their related targets and indicators, charts a bold path. It squarely commits the international community to ending poverty, hunger and malnutrition. Its vision is one in which a healthy, prosperous and dignified life, rooted in thriving ecosystems, is a reality for all - a vision in which no one is left behind.

12. Today, progress is being made in many places, but, overall, action to meet the Goals is not yet advancing at the speed or scale required. 2020 has ushered in a decade of ambitious action needed to deliver the Goals by 2030. The Decade of Action has further set the direction for FAO's support to its Members calling for accelerating sustainable solutions to all the world's biggest challenges, ranging from poverty and gender, to climate change, inequality and closing the finance gap. The 2030 Agenda is the roadmap for the world we all want and its implementation a necessity for our survival.

13. As emphasized in the *Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations*, the peoples have to be at the centre of all our efforts and particular attention must be given to people in vulnerable situations. The spirit of "We the peoples" entails the full participation and empowerment of women and girls in all domains, and engagement with youth, the "missing piece for peace and development".¹⁰

⁹ Secretary General's address to the General Assembly, September 22, 2020

¹⁰ A/RES/71/1, paragraphs 7, 11, and 17

Transforming the world through food and agriculture

14. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs call for transformative shifts, integrated approaches and solutions to structural barriers to sustainable development and it recognizes the fundamental role played by sustainable agriculture in the connection between people, planet and prosperity.

15. Explicit in SDG 2 – Zero Hunger – but implicit throughout, the concept of food security – safe and nutritious food for all - underpins the 2030 Agenda. It is inseparable from the urgency to eradicate extreme deprivation, tackle climate challenges, build community resilience and responsibly manage natural resources and rich biodiversity. In short, achieving the 2030 Agenda calls for fundamental transformation of our food systems.

16. When many of the Goals in the 2030 Agenda are off-track, the need to engage more effectively all actors at all levels - from international to regional to national - becomes all the more pressing. Today's challenges require cooperation, not only across borders, but across the whole of society, with relevant stakeholders including regional and subregional organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, research institutions and academia and parliamentarians.¹¹

17. As highlighted by the *Global Sustainable Development Report* and confirmed by deliberation of the SDG Summit in 2019, actions to achieve SDG 2 and realizing sustainable food systems will accelerate progress across most other goals and targets, and help maximizing and scaling up results, while also mapping and addressing potential trade-offs. In short, to transform the world through food and agriculture, we must: i) get hunger back on a steep downward trend; ii) transform food and agriculture systems to nourish people, nurture the planet and build resilient livelihoods and ecosystems; and iii) commit to a rural transformation and invest expressly in vulnerable populations to reduce inequality, leaving no country and no person behind.

18. The Food Systems Summit in 2021 will provide a process through which a food systems transformative approach can be better articulated and an improved alignment of food system actors' initiatives in support of more sustainable food systems promoted.

Global challenges and opportunities

19. To accelerate strategic thinking on global challenges and opportunity, FAO is undertaking a Corporate Strategic Foresight Exercise (CSFE) which aims to increase preparedness and effectiveness in providing support to achieving the Agenda 2030, and to share knowledge on challenges, threats and opportunities in moving food and agricultural systems towards sustainability.

20. The Exercise comprises several stages including: i) an Internal Expert Consultation, ii) a Staff Sample Survey, iii) an External Expert Consultation, and iv) the preparation of selected technical papers on key trends and emerging challenges for food and agricultural systems. The results of the CSFE will be presented in the Strategic Framework and will inform its development over the next months. The CSFE will also result in a flagship report which is part of the FAO series *the Future of Food and Agriculture*.

21. An overview of the results of the Internal Expert Consultation is provided below and further details on the methodology is presented in *Annex 2*. The Internal Expert Consultation identified 18 key current and emerging interconnected socio-economic and environmental drivers impacting food and agricultural systems as shown in *Table 1*. Six are overarching drivers and the other 12 affect in particular food access and livelihoods, food and agricultural production and distribution processes, and environmental systems.

¹¹ A/RES/71/1, paragraph 16

Table 1: Emerging drivers impacting food and agricultural systems

A. Systemic (overarching) drivers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Population growth and urbanization, which are expected to increase and change food demand 2. Economic growth, structural transformation and macro-economic outlook, which are not always delivering the expected results in terms of inclusive economic transformation of societies 3. Cross-country interdependencies, which tie together food and agricultural systems globally 4. Big data generation, control, use and ownership, which enable real-time innovative technologies and decision-making, also in agriculture 5. Geopolitical instability and increasing conflicts, which include resource- and energy-based conflicts 6. Uncertainties, which materialize in sudden occurrences of events in many occasions impossible to predict
B. Drivers directly affecting food access and livelihoods
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Rural and urban poverty, with a high proportion of rural people living in poverty or extreme poverty 8. Inequalities, characterized by high income inequality and inequalities in job opportunities, in gender, access to assets, basic services and inequitable fiscal burden 9. Food prices,¹² which are in real terms lower than in the 70's but higher than in the 80's and 90's despite the fact that they fail to capture the full social and environmental costs of food
C. Drivers directly affecting food and agricultural production and distribution processes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Innovation and science including more 'systemic' technologies (<i>inter alia</i> agroecology, conservation, organic agriculture, biotechnologies and other sustainable approaches, digitalization, and other innovative solutions) 11. Public investment in food and agricultural systems, which is often insufficient 12. Capital/information intensity of production, which is increasing due to mechanization and digitalization of production, including in food and agriculture 13. Market concentration of food and agricultural input and output, which represents a challenge for the resilience and equitability of food and agricultural systems 14. Consumption and nutrition patterns, resulting from behavioral change of consumers which are increasingly being asked to make complex choices about the nutritional content and safety of what they eat and where shifting consumer demand in the direction of healthier eating patterns is key
D. Drivers regarding environmental systems
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Scarcity and degradation of natural resources, including land, water, biodiversity, soil 16. Epidemics and degradation of ecosystems, which may increase in the future due to rising trends in transboundary plant pests and diseases, agriculture encroaching in wild areas and forests, antimicrobial resistance, the increasing production and consumption of animal products and climate change, particularly weather extremes and variability of temperatures and rainfall patterns 17. Climate change, which is already affecting food systems and natural resources and is expected to accelerate hunger and poverty in rural areas 18. The 'Blue Economy', where the development of economic activities related to the fisheries and aquaculture sector is increasing globally, and arising trade-offs require sound policy-making integrating technical, social and economic solutions, principles of ecosystem restoration of production systems, and cross-sectoral stakeholder involvement in the context of transformative food systems.

UN Food Systems Summit

22. The United Nations Secretary General's Food Systems Summit will provide a process through which a food systems approach can be better articulated and an improved alignment of food system

¹² As measured by [FAO Food Price Index](#) (FFPI). The FFPI is a measure of the monthly change in international prices of a basket of food commodities. It consists of the average of five commodity group price indices weighted by the average export shares of each of the groups over 2014-2016.

actors' initiatives in support of more sustainable food systems promoted. The Summit is a catalyst for agrifood systems transformation.

23. FAO will act as a facilitator and enabler of change. FAO hosts the Rome-based part of the Food Systems Secretariat focused on ensuring the provision of evidence, knowledge and data on food systems as inputs to the Action Tracks and to the country level Food Systems Dialogues, in close cooperation with the Scientific Committee. FAO is also the core UN Agency directly supporting Action Track 1 on "Ensuring access to safe and nutritious food". The Scientific Group, with FAO's support, is developing short scientific papers on each Action Track and series of papers on, *inter alia*, definitions and concepts.

24. In FAO's new Strategic Framework, the identification and development of FAO priority programme areas will be informed by the Summit's five Action Tracks: *i.) Ensure Access to Safe and Nutritious Food for All; ii.) Shift to Sustainable Consumption Patterns; iii.) Boost Nature Positive Production at sufficient scale; iv.) Advance Equitable Livelihoods; and v.) Build Resilience to Vulnerabilities, Shocks and Stress.*

25. While the process towards the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit provides significant opportunities for FAO to further leverage its support to Members, the outcomes and follow-up actions resulting from it to support inclusive, sustainable and resilient food systems will guide FAO's work under the new Strategic Framework.

C. FAO's New Way Forward

FAO's Vision and Global Goals

26. The elaboration of the new Strategic Framework will continue to be guided by FAO's vision and the three Global Goals of Members, which are squarely centred around the SDGs, and target in particular SDG 2 (no hunger), SDG 1 (no poverty) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities).

FAO's vision: *A world free from hunger and malnutrition where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner.*

27. The three **Global Goals** of Members:

- 1) eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, progressively ensuring a world in which people at all times have sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life
- 2) elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all, with increased food production, enhanced rural development and sustainable livelihoods
- 3) sustainable management and utilization of natural resources, including land, water, air, climate and genetic resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

Our aspirations: the four betters

28. The strategic narrative guiding the development of the new Strategic Framework is that FAO will work to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and three Global Goals of Members by promoting food systems to meet our aspiration of *Leaving No One Behind through sustainable, inclusive and resilient food systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life.*

29. FAO will implement its Strategic Framework and deliver results against its results framework through programmes and, in line with the transformative nature of the Agenda 2030, will use a systems approach, considering social, economic and environmental development dimensions simultaneously, and addressing the relevant trade-offs in achieving the SDGs. Using the food systems lens, FAO will also focus on profiling agriculture beyond production and macro-economic purposes to ensure food

security and resilient livelihoods, promoting innovations, and better catalysing investment and partnerships.

FAO's accelerators

30. In order to accelerate our progress and maximize our efforts in meeting the SDGs and to realize our aspirations – the four betters - FAO will apply four cross-cutting/cross-sectional “accelerators”: *technology, innovation, data* and *complements (governance, human capital, and institutions)* in all our programmatic interventions. Sustainably feeding close to 10 billion people by 2050 is an unprecedented challenge. And it speaks to the paramount importance of minimizing trade-offs. The four accelerators can facilitate the management of these trade-offs.

Figure 1. Four cross-cutting/cross sectional accelerators



31. It is critical that *technology, innovations* and *data* are inclusive, gender sensitive, and are used to spur development.

32. *Complements* refers to the needed governance, human capital and institutions to assure an inclusive agrifood system transformation. The goal is to strengthen regulations that ensure competition among businesses by adapting workers’ skills to the demands of the new economy and by ensuring that institutions are accountable.

33. Even though emerging technologies are already changing the food and agriculture sector, most governments or food systems actors have yet to harness their power. For example, the integration of robotics and big data in agriculture - from AI¹³ algorithm-based apps for monitoring soil health to crop-harvesting robots - is already playing a key role in sustainably meeting the growing food demand of the future, but only in a few countries.

34. As technologies revolutionize, the risks of unequal access and exclusion loom large. Investments in human capital by building capacities, as well as policy and regulations minimizing such risks are required. Women have to be actively included. For women smallholder farmers, for example, labor-saving technologies could free up time, which means they can undertake more productive work, earning more income. This principle also extends to minorities, poor, extreme poor and other disadvantaged groups on the margins of society. Technologies have to be affordable, so everyone can access them and use them, and other structural barriers to their application, including education and training, must be identified and addressed. Without such investments and preparation, past experience shows that many people would be left behind and inequalities increase.

¹³ Artificial Intelligence (AI)

D. FAO's New Theory of Change

35. The Strategic Framework sets out FAO's agenda for the future. It defines FAO's *strategic vision* in terms of its contribution to transformative and structural changes at global, regional and country levels. This will require not only reviewing the formulation and execution of a programmatic approach fit for tackling the SDGs, but also how FAO works across organizational layers and with partners to promote sustainable results and maximum impact.

36. This Section D outlines how FAO is reviewing its Theory of Change and ways of working to ensure that its contribution to development processes at country, regional and global level best leverage its comparative advantage as a UN specialized agency.

37. Section E delves further into areas of special consideration including partnerships, normative work, emergency and resilience work, harnessing science, technologies and innovation, and building more resilient agrifood systems. Section F outlines the importance of being prepared to operate in a context of increasing risk and uncertainty, and Section G provides elements of moving towards a programmatic approach to maximize impact.

38. The final Sections H and I shift the focus more to internal organizational aspects and FAO's Change Management Strategy which sets out FAO's *internal vision* for a healthy, efficient and effective Organization that is fit-for-purpose, future-proof and capable of fulfilling the aspirations outlined in the Strategic Framework. The Strategic Framework and Change Management Strategy are inextricably bound.

Impact – Strategic Objectives

39. FAO Members, as well as internal and external reviews, have stressed the need for the SDGs to become more central in FAO's overall Theory of Change and Strategic Planning. With COVID-19 threatening to exacerbate existing inequalities and reverse progress made in food security and livelihoods of people working in agriculture and food systems, the challenge is further accentuated. More broadly, countries face increasing uncertainty and exposure to shocks, and FAO must position itself in the most possible strategic way to help its Members prepare, have more resilient agrifood systems, and therefore respond effectively.

40. In this context, it is proposed that the new Strategic Framework does not continue to employ current Strategic Objectives to express its aspirations at the level of long-term outcome/impact, but rather truly place the 2030 Agenda at its center by using key SDGs and their indicators to promote focus and track progress.

Figure 2: The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



41. FAO is ideally placed to directly contribute to the achievement of a number of SDGs which would be organized around FAO’s four aspirations (better production, better nutrition, better environment and a better life). While the four aspirations are not Strategic Objectives as such, they would provide an overarching direction and guide underlying programme efforts, effectively serving at the level of the (former) Strategic Objectives to “be achieved by Members and the international community with support from FAO, including targets and indicators of achievement”.¹⁴

42. The key SDGs grouped by the four betters and with an articulated impact statement are shown in *Table 2*. FAO’s contributions span all SDGs, and are guided by the lens of SDG 1 *No poverty*, SDG 2 *No hunger*, and SDG 10 *Reduced inequalities*, including between rich and poor countries, urban and rural areas, and men and women. Beyond the lens of these three SDGs, *Table 2* highlights the importance of all SDGs in achieving FAO’s overall vision. For example, SDG 14 *Life below water*, spans all four *betters*, given the importance of, *inter alia*, supporting the sustainable intensification of aquaculture production, investing in transformative and innovative fisheries management, transforming and upgrading fish value chains, and making fish an indispensable component of food security and nutrition strategies.

¹⁴ FAO Basic Text, Volume II, Chapter F, Article 1.(a)

43. FAO will use a distinctive food systems approach linking different aspects of FAO's work, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries and land use sustainability, poverty reduction, and improved access to investment and finance, in supporting food systems transformation to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The new framework embraces the five basic principles that feed into all SDGs – the 'five Ps': people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership.

Table 2: FAO's Vision and contribution to development impacts under the new Strategic Framework

FAO's vision: A world free from hunger and malnutrition where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner			
Zero Hunger (SDG 2), No Poverty (SDG 1), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10)			
Aspirations	Impact Statement	Relevant SDGs	
		FAO as custodian/ contributing agency	FAO as key partner
Prosperity: Better production	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, through sustainable and inclusive food and agriculture supply chains at local, regional and global level, ensuring resilient food systems in a changing climate and environment	1, 2, 12, 14	7, 8, 9, 11, 13,17
Food: Better nutrition	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition in all its forms (including promoting nutritious food and increasing access to healthy diets)	1, 2, 14	3, 4, 11, 13, 16
Planet: Better environment	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial and marine ecosystems and combat climate change (reduce, reuse, recycle, residual management)	2, 6,14, 15	13
People: Better livelihoods	End rural poverty and promote inclusive economic growth by reducing inequalities (urban/rural areas, rich/poor countries, men/women)	1, 2, 5, 14	8, 10, 13

Programme Priority Areas

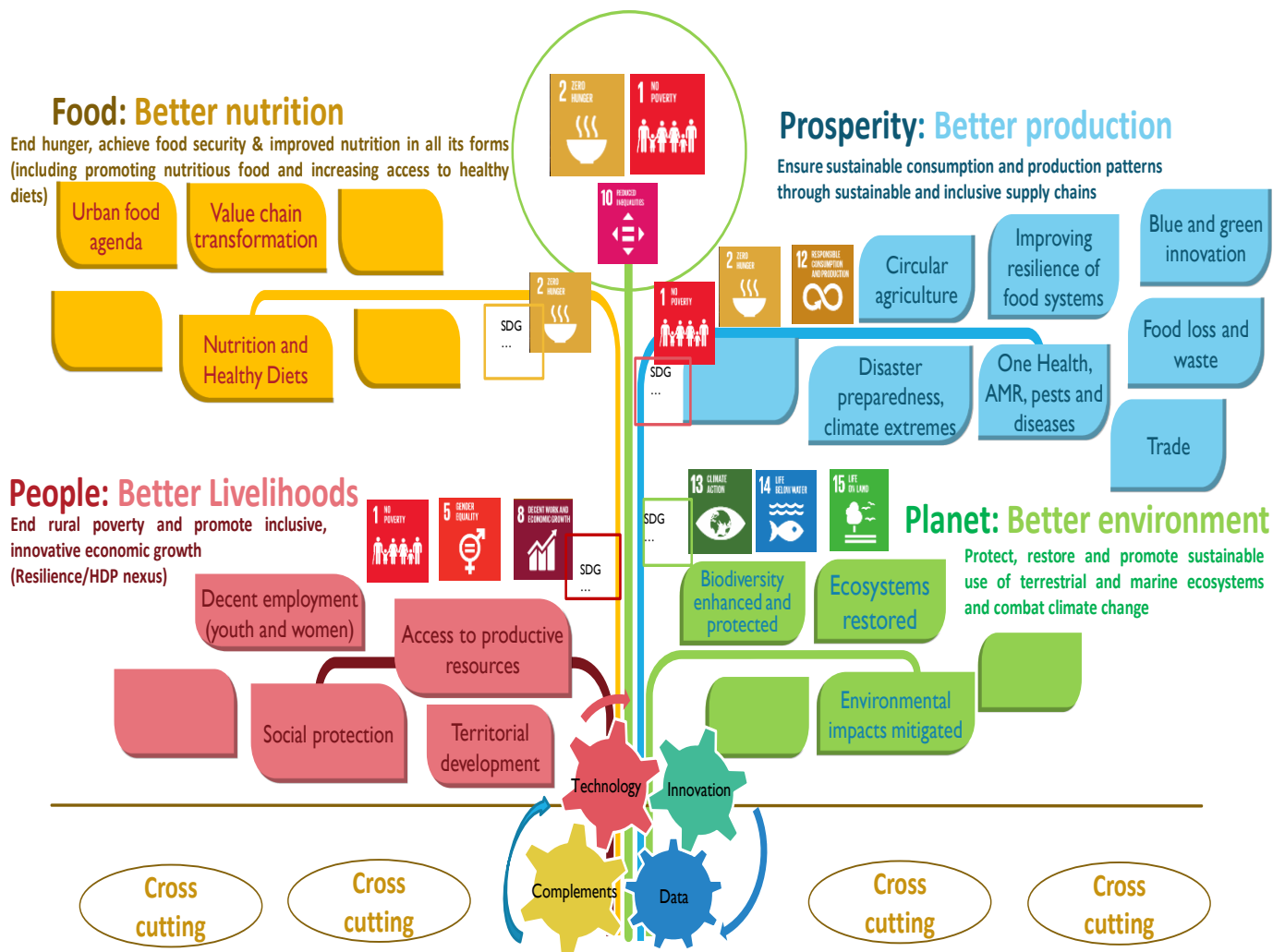
44. Programme Priority Areas will guide the programmes that FAO will implement in order to fill critical gaps and put in place the conditions needed to drive the changes that will ultimately contribute to the achievement of the selected SDG targets. The Programme Priority Areas would be formulated to respond directly to the issues and challenges emanating from the Corporate Strategic Foresight Exercise, the Regional Conferences, the Technical Committees, the Action Tracks of the Food Systems Summit and other formal and informal consultation processes. They will represent FAO's comparative advantage as UN specialized agency in contributing to the 2030 Agenda, bringing together FAO's breadth and depth of technical expertise and knowledge.

45. A graphic view of FAO's proposed framework with a preliminary indication of possible programme areas, subject to further discussion and articulation, is shown below.

46. It is important to note that the articulation of achieving the core SDGs 1, 2 and 10 is interlinked with all other SDGs across the *four betters* through the understanding of the tradeoffs and synergies amongst them following an agrifood systems approach. Food systems’ links and interactions with the society, the economy and the environment generate synergies, externalities and trade-offs that extend beyond the systems.

47. Many emerge from policies and interventions that aim to improve the performance of food systems, but also have effects elsewhere within and outside the systems. For example, land conversion policies and practices may increase agricultural land and available quantities of food, but may also lower food prices and incomes for producers and increase environmental impact. Conversely, policies to promote environmental sustainability and maintain ecosystem services may reduce incomes and increase poverty for people that depend on them. Interactions generate synergies, positively reinforcing performance and contributing to multiple objectives. For example, lower food prices in the previous example may also favour poor consumers. But negative interactions could compromise efforts to achieve SDG targets.

Figure 3: Leaving No One Behind through sustainable, inclusive and resilient food systems (preliminary framework)



48. Programme Priority Areas would be formulated as inter-disciplinary, issue-based (i.e. thematic) delivery mechanisms, representing FAO’s strategic contribution to specific SDG targets and indicators through a well-defined Theory of Change. These programmes would be actively managed and would

contribute to the medium-term outcomes¹⁵ in FAO's results architecture, which themselves will embed SDG targets and be measured by related SDG indicators. This is in line with the "Evaluation of FAO's Strategic Results Framework" by the Office of Evaluation, which recommended "updating the theory of change underpinning the results framework to identify more tangible, issue-based programmatic objectives".¹⁶ It also reflects the Programme Committee's welcoming the proposal to "include priority areas linked to global challenges, and anchored in the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs".¹⁷ Programme Priority Areas will embody the interconnectedness and indivisibility of the SDGs and, in order to achieve measurable, sustainable results on the ground, will work through new initiatives such as the Hand-in-Hand Initiative to develop evidence-based, country-led and country-owned policy solutions.

49. Replacing bespoke Strategic Objectives with a focus on SDGs and introducing issue-based Programme Priority Areas is also aligned with the objectives of the new headquarters organizational structure approved by Council in July 2020¹⁸ which is a modular and flexible structure aiming to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and cross-sectoral collaboration.

Cross-cutting themes

50. FAO's cross-cutting themes are important issues that need to be taken into account across all of FAO's programmatic work, and which may also require particular visibility. The current cross-cutting themes of the Strategic Framework *gender, governance, climate change* and *nutrition* are being reviewed based on the emerging issues and trends, in particular those identified in the Foresight exercise, as well as in light of the issue-based programmes to be formulated. Regarding gender, building on the corporate Evaluation of FAO's Gender Work and FAO Members' request for a Gender Action Plan, the new SF/MTP would seek to incorporate gender-related priorities and results in a more explicit manner, with clear linkages to the objectives of the FAO Gender Equality Policy.

FAO's core functions and basic attributes

51. Core Functions are the critical means of action employed by FAO to achieve results. FAO's core functions are based on the *Functions of the Organization* as described in Article I of the FAO Constitution¹⁹ which states that the Organization shall: i) collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate information relating to nutrition, food and agriculture; ii) promote and, where appropriate, recommend national and international action in these areas, and iii) furnish such technical assistance and missions as governments may request, and generally take all necessary and appropriate action to implement the purposes of the Organization as set forth in the Preamble.

52. As described in the Strategic Framework approved in 2017²⁰ FAO's Core Functions include: normative and standard-setting instruments such as international agreements, codes of conduct, etc.; data and information on food and agriculture; policy dialogue at global, regional and country levels; capacity development for evidence-based policies, investments, and programmes; provide advice and support uptake of knowledge, technologies and good practices; facilitate partnerships between governments, development partners, civil society and private sector; and advocate and communicate in areas of FAO's mandate.

53. The Core Functions ensure that, within the areas of FAO's mandate, countries at all levels of development, particularly the poorest, have access to knowledge, public goods and services they need. This requires FAO to work at different levels, including global policy setter, facilitator, partner and coordinator, as well as "doer". The core functions then, describe *how* FAO delivers its work, articulating the "product lines" under FAO's programme areas that work together to contribute to sustainable results.

¹⁵ Formerly "Organizational Outcomes"

¹⁶ Evaluation of FAO's Strategic Results Framework, para 10

¹⁷ CL 164/6 Rev.1 Paragraph 7.e)

¹⁸ CL 164/REP, paragraph 14.a)

¹⁹ Basic Texts of FAO, Volume I, Section A, Article I

²⁰ C 2017/7 Rev. 1, paragraph 109

54. While the Core Functions in the past provided a full menu of how the Organization may act in accordance with its mandate and the Basic Texts, FAO's Strategic Framework lacked a sharper, defined articulation of how these functions are applied in a purposeful, systematic and interlinked way to drive value and scale in development processes, promoting sustainable results and helping catalyse the transformational change required by the 2030 Agenda. This articulation, along with the structures put in place to deliver, represent foundational elements in the new Strategic Framework Theory of Change.

55. Although the basic elements of the core functions themselves will not change substantially, revisions to the individual core functions proposed in the new Strategic Framework will clearly illustrate a significant shift in working paradigm. For example, it is foreseen that language around innovation, governance, data and technologies (the four "accelerators"), building capacities to human capital, FAO's role in catalysing coalitions of partners, innovative ways of collaboration and funding, as well as distinct consideration of trade-offs and systems thinking will feature more prominently in FAO's core function descriptions moving forward.

56. In the new Strategic Framework, FAO will move to a more explicit vision of how the Core Functions are leveraged most effectively by the Organization in line with its role and status as UN specialized agency. Given its importance to the FAO business model, the Organization will also put in place supporting initiatives to enable the new, enhanced ways of working.

57. FAO also has a number of basic organizational attributes which are intrinsic and in combination unique to it, as outlined in *Annex 3*, which further guide how FAO tackles the challenges ahead.

E. Areas of Special Consideration

58. Internal and external stakeholders including the Office of Evaluation,²¹ MOPAN,²² Joint Inspection Unit²³ and FAO Members²⁴ identified a number of key areas requiring specific attention for the new Strategic Framework. The recommendation of putting SDGs at the centre of the new Strategic Framework under a robust Theory of Change has been presented above. Other recommendations including the approach to partnerships and normative work, are described below.

Transformative partnerships

59. Partnerships are central to reaching the goals of the 2030 Agenda; partnerships are highlighted as one of the 'five Ps' for sustainable development and are encapsulated in SDG 17 which calls upon all actors to work in alliance for implementing the SDGs. While partnership is not an end in itself, it is a key vehicle to achieve the complex challenges ahead.

60. FAO is seeking to strengthen partnerships across the spectrum. First and foremost, FAO aims to strengthen its partnerships with Members in order to work as one to support delivery of the SDGs at country level. FAO also seeks to strengthen its partnerships with other UN agencies and financial institutions, as evidenced *inter alia* by the introduction of "Centres" in FAO's new organizational structure.²⁵ FAO will also continue to seek to expand and deepen its partnerships with producer organizations, academic and research institutions, and civil society.

²¹ OED Strategic Framework Evaluation (FAO, 2019)

²² 2017-18 ASSESSMENTS (FAO), Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN, 2019)

²³ Results-based management in the United Nations development system analysis of progress and policy effectiveness (JIU, 2017)

²⁴ Including Report of the 127th Session of the Programme Committee (CL 163/4) Para 7, and Interim Report on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System (C 2017/27)

²⁵ CL 164/3, paragraphs 43 - 53

61. As the private sector is a key area of partnerships towards achieving the SDGs, FAO has embarked on an inclusive process with Members to develop a new Strategy and an update of the 2013 FAO Strategy for private sector engagement, as encouraged by the 163rd session of the Council in December 2019.²⁶ FAO's new strategy for private sector engagement will be presented at the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees in November 2020.
62. The engagement with the private sector is in line with FAO's commitment to support countries to achieve the SDGs by 2030 and it will help to implement the Strategic Framework and to achieve the ambitious transformative changes through strengthened collective actions.
63. FAO's new business model needs to include innovative financing mechanisms and financing sources to complement its traditional funding modalities, in order to reach the required development objectives under the 2030 SDG Agenda. Estimates for financial resources needed to implement the SDGs vary from USD 2.5 trillion to over USD 5 trillion a year. Official Development Assistance (ODA), while remaining important, will not be enough. Progress will require harnessing additional financial flows and capital. Food and agricultural systems transformation requires that all actors step up and play a more active role acknowledging that collective action can broaden the impact at scale. In particular, FAO acknowledges the crucial role that the private sector plays in food and agricultural systems. All private sector actors from farmers, to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and large companies are instrumental in driving these transformations.
64. Innovative partnerships will be sought to catalyze funds such as through 'matching-funds' modalities, Multi-Partners Trust Funds, Umbrella Programmes, etc. FAO seeks Transformative Partnerships to contribute to inclusive and sustainable growth, and to strengthen contributions to the SDGs. Newer forms of partnerships include reinvigorated North-South Partnerships and South-South and Triangular Cooperation. These invigorated partnerships can include businesses and academic institutions, regional organizations, and producer and civil society organizations working in collaboration with FAO and Members.
65. As propelled by the UN Reform and within a reinvigorated repositioning of the UN System at all levels, FAO will boost partnerships and joint programming efforts with other Agencies, Funds and Programmes at global, regional and country levels.
66. Areas of particular focus for partnerships looking ahead are expected to include the Food Systems agenda, partnerships for healthy diets and eradicating all forms of malnutrition (including obesity), and partnerships towards the eradication of hunger and rural poverty and addressing food crises. Furthermore, newer areas of emphasis may include scaling up Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) to achieve the SDGs, more and better public and private investments to bring technical expertise to scale, and leveraging data, non-traditional sources of data, and data science.

A new vision for FAO's normative work

67. FAO's normative work is a major comparative strength of FAO as a UN specialized agency. Normative work supports the development of norms and standards in conventions, declarations, regulatory frameworks, agreements, guidelines, codes of practice and other standard setting instruments, at global, regional and national level.²⁷
68. FAO's normative and operational work are not only largely interdependent, but they are also mutually reinforcing: the quality of FAO's activities in the field is ensured by the constant nourishment derived from the Organization's normative resources. Likewise, FAO's normative work is constantly reinforced by lessons learned in the field. It is this combination that gives FAO its comparative advantages and explains the unique "value added" that it provides to Members.

²⁶ CL 163/REP paragraph 10. b)

²⁷ Definition used by UNEG 2013, "UNEG Handbook for Conducting Evaluations of Normative Work in the UN System"

69. Based on recommendations from Governing Bodies and FAO's evaluations²⁸ calling for the improvement of the visibility and impact of FAO's normative work and its role as a provider of global public knowledge goods, a number of potential areas of focus have been identified including the following:

- a) Reviewing the definition of normative work in the Organization, with the view to improve prioritization and quality of work. This is based on the recognition that, in addition to the work on norms and standards, FAO produces global public goods in the form of "knowledge products" and "data and statistics" which are essential in the development of norms and standards and their implementation at different levels.
- b) Strengthening support for the implementation of norms and standards, taking into account national contexts, for the achievement of SDGs related to food and agriculture, fully utilizing knowledge products, data and statistics. Strengthening FAO's work beyond the current core role on the development and negotiation of norms and standards would need to be explored carefully, taking into account the paramount importance of FAO's core mandate as the United Nations Organization tasked to collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate information relating to nutrition, food systems, food safety and agriculture.²⁹
- c) Clarifying Members' requests relating to normative work, including collaboration on specific normative work with bodies hosted by FAO (e.g. Codex, CFS, IPPC)³⁰ and relationship with FAO's normative work role in the UN system, including with Regional Economic Commissions.
- d) Reviewing the current approach to resource mobilization for normative work, towards a more programmatic and long-term approach to facilitate product development, up-scaling, and implementation, including at country level.
- e) Increasing the visibility of normative work, through full integration in the FAO results framework monitoring and reporting system, and reinvigorated communication to raise awareness and increase impact, relevance and visibility.

The humanitarian-development-peace nexus and FAO's strategic role in emergency and resilience work

70. Global challenges such as climate-related extreme events, food chain threats and crises from animal and plant diseases and pests, conflicts in protracted crisis situations, downturns and slowdowns of economic growth, and their colliding effects, threaten all three pillars of sustainable development: social, environmental and economic. This is happening more rapidly and unpredictably than anticipated, across multiple sectors, dimensions and scales. Agriculture and food systems continue to bear the brunt of disaster impact with the resulting negative effects on food security and livelihoods, particularly in rural areas which are left behind. By closely monitoring the evolution of these shocks, we can rapidly intervene to mitigate their impacts.

71. To address the root causes of acute food insecurity,³¹ coherent actions are needed among humanitarian, development and peace actors. FAO's experience shows that interventions supporting livelihoods and food security contribute to local peace and broader peace processes, because these interventions address not only the symptoms, but also the root causes of conflict.

72. FAO plays a critical strategic role in alleviating human suffering and distress due to crises and conflicts, securing sustainable development gains and ensuring that agriculture and food systems are

²⁸ OED Evaluation of FAO Strategic Framework; MOPAN FAO2017-18; Report of the 164th session of the FAO Council

²⁹ Article I 1. Constitution of FAO

³⁰ Committee on World Food Security (CFS); International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)

³¹ Acute food insecurity is when sporadic, sudden crises limit people's access to food in the short-term to the point that their lives and livelihoods are at risk. This is different from chronic undernourishment which is the long-term inability to meet food requirements which is assessed by SDG indicator 2.1.1.

risk-informed, resilient and sustainably productive. FAO is ideally placed to deliver and work with other stakeholders to ensure a collaborative approach on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. The Organization brings a clear added value as technical agency (as illustrated during the recent Desert Locust response), building on its recognized technical excellence and knowledge at country, regional and global levels, leading and engaging in collective efforts to meet SDG targets. In the new Strategic Framework, FAO will step up its capacities in translating in-depth context analysis into risk informed, and context-specific policy, anticipatory actions and resilience building interventions.

73. FAO's revised business model and ongoing reforms, including in the Office of Emergencies and Resilience, aims to strengthen the Organization's programmatic interventions drawing from expertise across its humanitarian and development experience and technical capacities and with a clear focus on sustaining peace when necessary, as a pre-requisite of stability, sustainability and pathways to achieve the SDGs.

Harnessing science, technologies and innovation for global development

74. Globally, food and agriculture can highly benefit from the fourth industrial revolution which is driven largely by the convergence of digital, biological and physical innovations. The food and agriculture sector not only needs to reinvent itself, but is also ideally positioned to apply new disruptive technologies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of food systems. From the cell factory, to artificial intelligence, to microbiomes, to spatial computing, to omic-technologies, they all require new ways of partnering, and new conveners and facilitators, in order to employ them to increase agricultural production and food nutrition for global development.

75. FAO, as the house of know-how, is committed to assisting Members in bridging such multidisciplinary technological disruptions to ensure that everyone benefits from the fourth industrial revolution. Using the power of Science and Innovation, FAO will provide the building blocks to lead a global transformation towards more sustainable, resilient and equitable food systems.

Building more resilient agrifood systems

76. Agri-food systems are increasingly subject to fluctuations and shocks. As food is essential to human life, the ability to maintain the core function of supplying food to end-consumers is a key feature. With intensified climate variability and market volatility, new emerging pests and pandemics, combined with the complexity of more and more globalized food value chains, resilience of food systems has become a key factor for food security and nutrition. Food systems have multiple components, ranging across different scales: from national and subnational food systems to specific food supply chains (FSCs) down to individual farms/firms and households.

77. An agri-food system shock can occur at any level of the system, and how it propagates across the different levels will depend on the resilience of each level of the system. To determine system resilience, FAO will bring together the four accelerators in combination with risk analysis and develop a framework to assess the resilience of the food system on three dimensions: i) readiness – the ability to recognize, anticipate and prevent risks and disruptions before damage occurs; ii) response – the ability to respond quickly to critical situations; and iii) recover – the ability to restore and return to normal operations.

78. A risk analysis framework will allow the identification of the key drivers which should be reinforced to achieve a more resilient agrifood system to cope with shocks and uncertainty.

Coordination with other initiatives, frameworks and strategies

79. The development of the Strategic Framework is taking place in close alignment and full inclusion of other major activities, such as the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative and FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme.

80. FAO's thematic and operational strategies, such as on biodiversity, antimicrobial resistance, gender, nutrition, climate change, partnerships, and human resources, among others, will also be duly

reflected in the Strategic Framework, the results framework and the change management plan. It should be noted that many of these initiatives and strategies are currently in the process of being developed or updated, therefore, the Strategic Framework will take note of the necessity to maintain flexibility in including additional input and guidance at later stages.

81. The International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture and other UN-based collaborative frameworks such as the Regional Collaborative Platforms and the issue-based Coalitions will also feed into the articulation of the FAO Strategic Framework.

F. Operating in the Context of Increasing Risk and Uncertainty

82. FAO is committed to strong enterprise risk management (ERM) throughout the Organization. In recent years, efforts have focused on risk management in the context of work planning and implementation. As it is fundamental to consider risks in all stages, risk management will be fully integrated in the strategic thinking and strategic planning and foresight processes.

83. The concept of risk is closely linked to uncertainty and strategic planning is more affected by uncertainty than most processes mainly due to the length of time covered - assumptions, dependencies and plans are more subject to change. Furthermore, strategic planning depends on a complex system of trends and developments in the external political, economic and social environment and on the priorities of partners and other stakeholders – all potentially volatile. All strategic planning therefore involves significant risk and requires the incorporation of careful risk management in order to improve the achievement of the relevant goals.

84. The integration of risk management in FAO's strategic planning processes will take place in two main phases, as part of the development of the Strategic Framework and during the definition of the Programme of Work and Budget.

85. Risks to be considered during the development of the Strategic Framework include the following:

- ✓ Are we developing a Strategic Framework which is most likely to lead to significant progress towards the Organization's overall goals, including the relevant SDGs, and reflects FAO's mandate?
- ✓ Does the Strategic Framework reflect the priorities of Members, key contributors and donors and will the way it is formulated be compelling?
- ✓ Does the Strategic Framework focus on FAO's comparative advantages and FAO's place in the overall UN family and global development context?
- ✓ Does the Strategic Framework allow the development of a meaningful results framework, which will enable quality monitoring and reporting?
- ✓ Is the Strategic Framework likely to remain valid over time? What are the key uncertainties – political, social, technical, economic, financial? How can we build in monitoring of and adaptation to these uncertainties into the framework?

G. Towards a Programmatic Approach to Maximise Impact

86. To improve effectiveness, promote working at scale for sustainability and impact, and strengthen accountability for results, FAO aims to shift progressively from a project-based approach to a programme-based management approach. This encompasses policy, investment, and normative work, as well as technical and operational assistance. Accelerating this shift will facilitate adoption of FAO's revised business model and will enhance the efficiency, quality and impact of FAO's work.

87. Some key elements required to achieve a programmatic approach include: i) better incorporation and reflection of “bottom up” needs emanating from country, subregional and regional level processes into a coherent overall framework; ii) focus on leveraging FAO’s comparative advantage to contribute to programme outcomes, reduce fragmentation of efforts and reduce transactions costs and streamline operational procedures; iii) an enabling environment for efficient and accountable delivery based on the principle of subsidiarity; iv) appropriate incentives that promote more joined-up and interdisciplinary ways of working; and v) agile and reactive structures that support FAO’s response to evolving needs and unforeseen events.

FAO and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF)

88. Promoting a unified FAO requires adopting a programmatic management approach and delivering results more efficiently and effectively at the country level where FAO engages in UNSDCF-related processes. This requires the Strategic Framework to reflect the diversity of country situations and the need to respond to national priorities, within the broader framework of the SDGs.

89. The Strategic Framework will incorporate country-level results as defined in the context of the UNSDCFs and linked to the achievement of SDG targets and indicators. This will allow all FAO offices to use a common language, and facilitate measurement of FAO’s interventions at all levels, by aggregating and rolling-up results from country, regional and global levels.

90. The new UNSDCF guidance emphasizes the primacy of the UNSDCF, the “Cooperation Framework,” in articulating United Nations Development System (UNDS) collective commitments in support of national SDG Goals and Targets. The Cooperation Framework is meant to be the polestar of all UN country-level activities and it serves as the results framework against which contributing UN entities are held collectively and individually accountable. The FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF) is therefore duly derived from the UNSDCF and seamlessly aligned with its process and cycle. In line with these more coherent efforts and coordinated actions, the UNSDCF National/UN Joint Steering Committee (JSC) will also serve as the main governance and oversight mechanism for the CPF.

91. The JSC will avoid separate mechanisms and effectively ensure that the UN approach is cohesive and that the efforts of the UNDS collectively support country ownership and address national SDG priorities and gap. The UNSDCF JSC is co-chaired by the Resident Coordinator and the most senior representative of the central government counterpart for the UN system and it ensures strategic direction and oversight of the Cooperation Framework, alignment with national, regional and international development processes, mechanisms and goals. A JSC takes place at least once a year and, *inter alia*, monitors progress, challenges and opportunities, steers the direction of implementation and reviews the One UN Country Results Report.

H. FAO as a More Agile Enabler of Change

92. FAO’s aim is to create an inclusive and agile Organization that is transparent, open, innovative, responsible, effective and impactful, and that serves its Members to achieve the “four betters”. Certain steps have already been taken in this regard, for example with the introduction of a modular management approach and the approval by Council in July 2020 of a new organizational structure at headquarters.³² To ensure that the Organization continues to evolve as an agile enabler of change, FAO is developing a Change Management Strategy (CMS) in conjunction with its Strategic Framework, leading to a new business model, as further outlined below.

93. To achieve the Strategic Framework’s overarching goals, FAO itself will in the coming decade undergo change, shifting from a more traditional business model to an innovative and more impactful one that upscales FAO’s relevance in the 2030 Agenda. FAO will reposition its renowned technical knowledge and normative work, move towards a more programmatic approach, boost transformative

³² CL 164/REP, paragraph 14a)

partnerships, seek innovative financing mechanisms and sources to complement its traditional funding modalities and promote forward-looking thinking in science, technology and innovation.

94. The Change Management Strategy sets out FAO's *internal vision*, i.e. a healthy, efficient and effective Organization that is fit-for-purpose, future-proof and capable of fulfilling the aspirations outlined in the Strategic Framework. The Strategic Framework and CMS are inextricably bound.

95. FAO's CMS will also be transformative and comprehensive, addressing not only *what* needs to change in terms of structures, systems and processes, but also *how* FAO will introduce innovative ways of collaborating internally and with external partners, *and how that change will be managed*.

96. FAO's Change Management Strategy will build on recent structural changes at headquarters level, which already reflect a cultural and managerial shift in the way of working in FAO. The new structure adopts a modular and flexible business model, aimed at fostering a programme- and demand-driven culture for impact at scale. It also encourages a people-centric cross-sectoral collaboration at all levels of the Organization (headquarters, regional and country), while enabling swift adjustments in managerial assignments to respond to emerging needs efficiently. By removing layers of bureaucracy, the new structure will enable the Organization to become more agile and innovative. Other changes are already envisioned, including efforts to transition towards a digital FAO and modernize ways of working.

97. The programmatic approach identified in the Strategic Framework must be supported and underpinned by agile, efficient and effective organizational 'enablers'. Based on a comprehensive assessment of the Organization, the CMS will include a well-orchestrated, synchronized and sequenced set of actions/initiatives to support the desired changes to the current business model, governance, structure and accountability policies, procedures and mechanisms, work processes, operational modalities and systems, human and financial resources management, digitalization, communications, and organizational culture. Taken together, these changes will bolster FAO's readiness to meet the challenges of the 2030 Agenda and achieve its goals.

98. Facilitating decentralized levels of delivery requires an appropriate balance between allocation of resources, authority, and responsibilities for the delivery of results. It also requires a process of organizational change, the adoption of a modular management approach, and the upgrading of the corporate enabling environment for efficient delivery. Delivering as a unified Organization will also require moving from a top-down approach to an approach where all relevant technical and functional units efficiently support implementing units.

99. Another component of the CMS will be to modify corporate management governance, based on lessons learnt from the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, the Food Coalition, Regional Initiatives and other programmatic initiatives.

100. FAO needs to build and utilize transformative strategic partnerships to strengthen contributions to the SDGs, FAO Goals, and national development goals. The CMS will provide guidance on how to establish a culture of innovation, transparency and responsiveness in order to build these partnerships.

101. The main components of the CMS are presented in *Annex 4*. Seven key areas for efficiency and modernization in FAO's Enabling Environment are outlined below.

I. Key areas for Efficiency and Modernization in FAO's Enabling Environment

102. In order to ensure a more efficient and modern FAO over the next ten years, as part of the new Strategic Framework 2022-31, the institutional Organization, management, and internal processes need to be modernized and made more efficient, so that FAO can carry out more effectively its realigned programmes and activities, in pursuit of the aims of its mandate. Seven key areas for efficiency and modernization in FAO's Enabling Environment are outlined below.

- a) *Business Management* – moving towards FAO as a real UN enterprise, in line with findings of external assessments (e.g. MOPAN): robust discharge of fiduciary responsibilities, internal

control and risk management instruments; upgrading of ERP system and integration with other business management systems (PIRES, FPMIS etc.); simplified administrative processes supported by automation and digitalization; a new integrated Logistics Division for corporate support, including post-COVID office premises management; and a further strengthened Shared Services Centre.

- b) *Human Resources* – aim to transform FAO into a knowledge Organization valuing its employees as its main asset: ensuring qualified and motivated staff; improving learning strategies; increase the ratio of professional to support staff; increased leadership competencies of managers; new organizational culture with great emphasis on youth and diversity; and accountability and zero tolerance for misconduct.
- c) *Digital FAO* – digital transformation through a ten-year, multi-stage roadmap, based on three pillars. Digital Agriculture – solutions to be used directly in delivery of Organization’s substantive work. Digital Workplace – new tools to unify one-FAO, and move away from old office-centric ways of working. Digital Culture – to help FAO workforce embrace new technologies and tools.
- d) *Decentralization* – following the revamping of the headquarters structure, the next phase focuses on establishing more coherent regional and subregional structures and approaches to ensure FAO delivers tangible, impactful, and visible results to its Members as One FAO. Task force teams consisting of internal³³ and external experts would be established to respond to specific country-level needs in a comprehensive manner, with task force coordinators situated at regional level and overall task force coordination support provided by subregional levels. Focus would also be on strengthening decentralized administrative and operational capacities, including through delegation of authority, and improving skills mix.
- e) *Governance* – greater transparency and accountability. Modernization of Governing Bodies’ meetings, with continuous inter-sessional dialogue. Enhanced liaison with Members, integration of innovated communication platforms e.g. Members’ Gateway, FAO Website and Mobile Applications.
- f) *Communications* – strategy to be improved, with multiple media communication rather than simple information sharing and a special focus on social media. FAO.org at the heart of changes, as a partnership platform and an internal performance monitoring indicator. Strengthen communications capacity at regional and country level.
- g) *Multilingualism* – boost translation delivery to ensure that all important and priority FAO products are translated into all six official FAO languages; continue to allow and increase the support to translation of useful regional and country products into local languages upon request and with sponsorship; help keep indigenous languages alive by providing necessary support for the translation of key products. Escalate and innovate interpretation services and improve communication with FAO’s Members.

³³ From headquarters, regional or subregional levels.

II. OUTLINE OF THE MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2022-25

103. The *Outline of the Medium Term Plan* section of this document was intended to provide a full overview of the priorities stemming from the Regional Conferences and the Technical Committees. Given the delayed timetable for these Sessions, only a partial overview can be provided. A more complete overview will be provided to Members as an Information Note prior to Council in December 2020. Similarly, FAO will continue with the development of proposed programmatic priority areas under the new results framework taking all relevant guidance into consideration and will submit Information Notes for further discussion with Members, prior to the finalization of the full Strategic Framework document and the Medium Term Plan 2022-25.

A. Regional Priorities

104. Regional Conferences provide advice on programme and budget matters for consideration by the Council in the first year of the biennium. At the time of preparation of this document, the Regional Conferences for Africa (ARC), Europe (ERC), Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC) and the Informal Regional Conference for North America (INARC) had not yet taken place. Therefore, this section draws from reports of the Regional Conference of Asia and the Pacific (APRC 35th session) and the Near East (NERC 35th session), and uses documents prepared for ARC, ERC, LARC and INARC to provide an initial overview of regional priorities.

Guidance from APRC and NERC

105. The 35th sessions of APRC and NERC noted progress made towards the development of the Organization's new Strategic Framework in determining the future strategic direction and priorities of the Organization and promoting efficient and effective achievements of results in the field. The importance of Agenda 2030 was underlined, and the further anchoring of FAO's new Strategic Framework within the Sustainable Development Goals was acknowledged. Furthermore, APRC and NERC took note of recent global and regional developments and emerging issues such as COVID-19.

106. APRC recommended³⁴ mainstreaming a food systems approach into national planning processes including social protection, to reinforce the role of agriculture for ending hunger and eradicating poverty, and to enhance multi-sectoral and sector-based action to address climate change risks and support sustainable livelihoods. It also recommended to take into account increasingly important issues such as overweight and obesity, resilience to multiple risks, transboundary animal and plant pests and diseases management and control, food safety, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), water scarcity, biodiversity and green financing.

107. Finally, APRC called for comprehensive support to smallholders, family farmers and fisherfolk, including women and youth, as well as for data collection and statistics related to agriculture, food security and nutrition, and help to mobilize financial resources that can improve the quality and frequency of data collection, especially in the SIDS, and welcomed the support provided for the implementation of the Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in Small Island Developing States.³⁵

108. NERC³⁶ endorsed four priorities for the Region: i) rural transformation for youth employment and income; ii) developing food systems that promote food security and healthy diets for all; iii) greening agriculture: addressing water scarcity, ensuring environmental sustainability and climate action; and iv) building resilience to protracted crises and emergency situations. NERC called upon FAO to achieve the above through the enhancement of rural transformation and agribusiness

³⁴ APRC/20/REP

³⁵ Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

³⁶ NERC/20/INF/22 endorsed by 35th session of NERC on September 22

competitiveness focusing on youth entrepreneurship in value chains, innovation and access to financial resources, as well as supporting family farming. NERC also recommended to promote in the region sustainable food systems, food security and healthy diets that are culturally appropriate to each country, including design and implementation of public education programmes, while also addressing water scarcity ensuring environmental sustainability and climate action, build resilience to protracted crisis and emergency situations supporting the improvement of early warning systems, increasing countries' preparedness, response and coordination and strengthening regional collaboration to address transboundary pests and diseases.

109. Regarding cross-cutting issues, NERC called for an effective support to mainstream gender in the agriculture and food sectors; develop data and statistical frameworks to support decision-making; as well as promoting partnerships with private sector and improving coordination among specialized agencies and institutions.

110. NERC furthermore identified the strategic role of agriculture in responding to, and recovering from COVID-19, the need for a strategic shift towards comprehensive food security policies and strategies reflecting the importance of food trade and food security, and the need to increase public, private and blended investment in agriculture. The importance of sustainable value chains (taking into account the role of consumers, the informal sector, women and youth), social protection, innovation, managing multiple risks in a coherent and comprehensive approach were also highlighted.

Priorities common across all regions

111. Priorities contained in documents³⁷ submitted to the Regional Conferences were developed in consultation with Regional Groups. Several areas of priority stand out, such as developing sustainable food systems, addressing food insecurity and malnutrition, promoting sustainable natural resource management, as well as climate-resilient agriculture to adapt and mitigate climate change, promoting rural transformation focused on youth employment and smallholder income generation, control and prevention of transboundary animal and plant pests and diseases. In addition, special emphasis is on innovation, access and use of digital technologies by smallholders, agricultural data collection and statistical analysis capabilities, enabling public-private sector partnerships, conservation of biodiversity and development of inclusive and nutrition-sensitive value chains.

112. There is a common trend in all regions to prioritize the transformation of food systems as a new approach to ensure that farmers and producers produce safe and nutritious food, are assured of sustainable livelihoods and incomes and consumers can access affordable, healthy and sustainable diets. Multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional engagement will be required to ensure that the sustainable and resilient food systems framework is incorporated into developmental policies.

113. In addition, all regions stressed the importance of safeguarding livelihoods and expanding social protection and safety net systems essential to ensure food security and nutrition for vulnerable groups including women, children, migrants, and indigenous communities, smallholders and family farmers especially during and in the aftermath of COVID-19.

114. Finally, all regions recognized the role that the Hand-in-Hand Initiative can play to strengthen national ownership and capacities to accelerate progress to end poverty and hunger and promote rural development, as well as economic growth. The benefit of improved use of data and analytics for improved decision-making have been underscored, as well as the flexible new match-making approach to building multi-dimensional partnerships.

³⁷ APRC/20/6, ARC/20/8, ERC/20/5, LARC/20/5, NERC/20/2, NERC/20/INF/22.

B. Technical Priorities

115. This section summarizes priorities arising from the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) 27th session held from 28 September to 2 October 2020, and the Committee on Forestry (COFO) 25th session held from 5 - 9 October 2020. The Committees on Fisheries (COFI) and Commodity Problems (CCP) sessions are scheduled in 2021 and therefore relevant information was not available at the time of writing this document.

116. COFO and COAG highlighted the need to prioritize the 2030 Agenda and its commitment to ending hunger and poverty, notably tackling its root causes by building sustainability and resilience in food systems. COFO stressed the need to consider national priorities, local realities and different production systems in this regard, while COAG requested enhanced work with partners, including with UN country teams and host governments.

117. Key elements of the guidance provided by COAG relating to the Strategic Framework are as follows:

- a) Maintain a strong focus on eradication of hunger and malnutrition, food systems and nutrition while strengthening the following areas: digital agriculture, capacity development at country level for data, information and tracking of SDG indicators for better decision-making, reducing food loss and waste, addressing issues related to climate change and biodiversity in relation to food and agriculture, and a strategy for innovation with inclusion of smallholder farmers.
- b) Strengthen FAO's normative and standard setting role, including support to the Codex Alimentarius-related science-based programmes and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), and increased focus on One-Health, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), food safety and addressing transboundary pests and diseases.
- c) Invest and advocate for all innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems, while ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment.
- d) Review the ways FAO establishes its partnerships for closer cooperation with other agencies around its top priorities.

118. COFO provided the following guidance relating to the Strategic Framework:

- a) Continue to prioritize normative and technical work, as well as the provision of up-to-date and high-quality data on forests.
- b) Support efforts to protect, restore and sustainably manage forests, including through halting deforestation; restoring forest ecosystems, including degraded forest ecosystems; and promoting the conservation and sustainable use of forest resources, agroforestry and legal and sustainable value chains for forest products.
- c) Consider national priorities, local realities and different production systems when planning and implementing activities related to forests and forest management, as well as sustainable food systems as a whole, in a way that acknowledges those differences and support the 2030 Agenda.
- d) Reflect in the Strategic Framework the importance of forest issues, the need for cross-sectoral work within the Organization as appropriate and FAO's leading role on forest matters in the UN system.

Annex 1: Roadmap for consultation on the FAO Strategic Framework

2020		
FAO internal strategic thinking		
June – (ongoing)	FAO In-house Strategy Team (IST) and Representative Decentralized Group (RDG) established, holding consultations across the Organization including all Decentralized Offices, FAORs and relevant technical divisions at headquarters, to initiate new thinking and reflect key priorities and concerns.	
Date	Governing Body / Informal meeting	Document
2020		
Programme Committee and the Council		
Jun 8-17	128th Programme Committee	Provisional outline of the Strategic Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusive consultation process based on FAO's Vision and Goals initiated - Consideration of FAO results framework in the context of Agenda 2030
Jul 6-10	164th Council	Provisional outline of the Strategic Framework
Regional Conferences:		
Sep 1-4	35th Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific	Results and priorities for FAO in the Regions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional Conferences to provide guidance on areas of regional priority for FAO's work in 2020-21 and beyond
Sep 21-22	35th Regional Conference for the Near East	
Oct 19-21	36th Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean	
Oct 22-23	Informal North American Regional Conference	
Oct 26-30	31st Regional Conference for Africa	
Nov 2-4	32nd Regional Conference for Europe	
Technical Committees		
Sep 28-Oct 2	27th COAG	Results and priorities in FAO technical areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion of technical priorities at respective Technical Committee meetings
Oct 5-9	25th COFO	
Informal consultations		
Sept-Oct	Informal virtual meetings with each Regional Group	Informal discussion to seek Members' views on key programmatic and other aspects for the new Strategic Framework
Oct 23	Informal virtual consultation	Discussion on the Outline of the Strategic Framework, the proposed Theory of Change and Change Management Strategy

Date	Governing Body / Informal meeting	Document
2020		
Nov 9	Joint Meeting of the 129th Programme Committee and 183rd Finance Committee	Outline of the Strategic Framework and Outline of the Medium Term Plan 2022-25
Nov 30- Dec 4	165th Council	Outline of the Strategic Framework and Outline of the Medium Term Plan 2022-25
Nov 2020- Mar 2021	Informal meetings	Draft Strategic Framework and programme priority areas
2021		
Nov 2020- Mar 2021	Informal meetings	Draft Strategic Framework and programme priority areas
Technical Committees		
Mar 10-12 2021	73rd CCP	Results and priorities in FAO technical areas - Discussion of technical priorities at respective Technical Committee meetings
Feb 8-12 2021	34th COFI	
Programme and Finance Committees, Joint Meeting and the Council		
Mar 22-26	130th Programme Committee	Strategic Framework 2022-31 Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23
Mar 22-26	184th Finance Committee (FC)	Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23
Mar 22	Joint Meeting of 130th PC and 184th FC	Strategic Framework 2022-31 Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23
Mar 29- Apr 2	166th Council	Strategic Framework 2022-31 Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23
Jul 12-16	42nd Conference	Strategic Framework 2022-31 Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23

Annex 2: Methodology of FAO Corporate Strategic Foresight Exercise (CFSE)

1. FAO's Corporate Strategic Foresight Exercise (CSFE) findings will be consolidated as a FAO flagship report in the series '[The future of food and agriculture](#)' (FOFA), and provide the basis for the preparation of the new Strategic Framework. It builds upon the previous forward-looking exercises which fed into the corporate reports '[The future of food and agriculture – Trends and challenges](#)' and '[The future of food and agriculture – Alternative pathways to 2050](#)'.

2. Consolidated findings from the CSFE brought by FAO experts, as also catalysed in flagship reports, are going to be systematically considered at various stages of the developing the Strategic Framework and consolidated in a FAO flagship report in the series '*The Future of food and agriculture*'.

Methodology

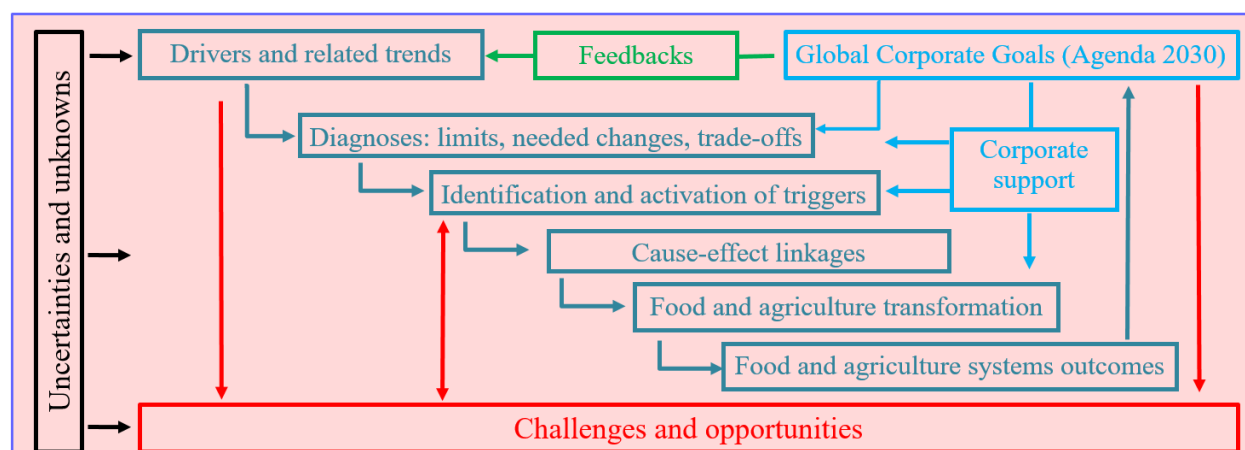
3. The first stage of the CSFE was the Internal Expert Consultation collected inputs from approximately 40 senior staff and Directors nominated by FAO Management across headquarters, regional and subregional offices. Based on their experience, professional expertise and corporate knowledge, and drawing on flagship reports (SOFIA, SOFA, SOFI, FOFA, SOCO etc.),³⁸ these experts provided the key elements to design theories and practices of change for food and agricultural systems that:

- a) Consider the main drivers and related trends intended as forces, both external and internal to the systems, impacting on food and agriculture.
- b) Take stock of the Global Corporate Goals (and Agenda 2030).
- c) Diagnose the main limitations (pitfalls/drawbacks) of current food and agricultural systems vis-à-vis the achievement of the Global Goals, identify needed changes and balance trade-offs among conflicting objectives.
- d) Identify key triggers (pillars) of change and causal linkages to transform food and agricultural systems.
- e) Highlight challenges and opportunities along the transformative process to achieve the Global Goals and the uncertainties (including 'unknown unknowns' such as COVID-19 before its outbreak) that might disrupt food and agricultural systems.
- f) Consider the role and preparedness of FAO to support such transformative changes.

4. The 'theory and practices of change' framework including the elements above are shown in *Figure 4*.

³⁸ *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA); The State of the World's Forests (SOFO); The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA); The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI); The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets (SOCO)*

Figure 4. Theory(ies) and practices of change for food and agriculture systems



Steps ahead

5. The next steps of the CSFE, to be carried out in 2020 and early 2021 include: the Staff Sample Survey, the External Expert Consultation, and the preparation of a set of technical papers on key trends and emerging challenges for food and agricultural systems, contributing to further analyses of the preliminary findings, their validation and articulation.

6. In this process, within the scenario framework set by FOFA 2050, selected narratives of possible alternative development patterns will be designed.³⁹ This will allow the exploration of ‘*uncertainties*’ that frame the whole transformative processes (*Figure 4*), including ‘*unknowns*’ such as the COVID-19 outbreak before it occurred. Those narratives will also address how to balance trade-offs among conflicting objectives and pave the way to further qualitative and quantitative analyses of the future of food and agriculture.

³⁹ The FOFA 2050 framework includes a scenario reflecting a ‘*Business as usual*’ dynamics, a scenario under which food and agricultural systems move ‘*Towards sustainability*’ and a ‘*Stratified Societies*’ scenario reflecting increasing inequalities, exacerbated climate change and overuse of natural resources.

Annex 3: FAO's basic organizational attributes

FAO's future role and work needs to be considered in light of its basic organizational attributes. The most relevant basic attributes and strength of an organization are those that are intrinsic and unique to it, and which define its basic organizational characteristics. There are several basic attributes which are intrinsic and in combination unique to FAO:⁴⁰

- a) It is the United Nations specialized agency in food and agriculture, with a comprehensive mandate from its Members to work globally on all aspects of food and agriculture (including fisheries, forestry and natural resources' management), food security and nutrition across the humanitarian-development continuum.
- b) Its intergovernmental status and neutrality and the authority to provide a neutral platform where nations can call on each other for dialogue and knowledge exchange.
- c) It has the authority to request any Member to submit information relating to the purpose of the Organization.
- d) Its Regular Budget is derived from assessed contributions that provide a minimum guaranteed amount of resources that can be committed for priority activities agreed upon by Members in the Governing Bodies, complemented by voluntary contributions, [...] to leverage FAO's knowledge and enhance outreach
- e) Its staff with a broad range of expertise across its areas of mandate [...] working in an interdisciplinary fashion.
- f) Its country-level presence, supported by regional and global teams of experts, to respond to demands articulated by countries and regions.

⁴⁰ C 2017/7 Rev. 1, paragraph 108

Annex 4: Main components of FAO's Change Management Strategy (CMS)

The main components of the CMS are presented below.

1. Setting out the aspirational vision for the Organization

- a) FAO aspires to become a transparent, innovative, effective and unified Organization, capable of delivering timely results, based on a common and enduring sense of purpose and vision that inspires and promotes collaboration across all disciplines and levels, in a spirit of partnership. It seeks to promote a professional culture and a healthy, inspiring working environment, where empowered and motivated staff work together more effectively and are accountable to deliver transformative results, especially at the country level.
- b) Recognizing the diversity of country situations and the need to respond to national priorities and demands in an effective, joined-up way, the modular management approach underpinning the Strategic Framework will mean that expertise can be called upon in a flexible and timely manner, irrespective of geographical location, based on the subsidiarity principle. Agile, client-oriented response mechanisms with streamlined operational procedures will support country level delivery.
- c) Seen within the context of the UN development system reform, delivering as a unified Organization in this way, in close partnership with others outside FAO, will involve a systematic devolution of responsibility whereby all relevant units contribute to delivery in an efficient and streamlined manner. This will be achieved through wider delegation of authority and accountability, strengthened delivery capacity of decentralized offices, simplified administrative processes, human resource policies to transform FAO into a knowledge Organization valuing employees as its main asset, responsible risk management, adoption of results-based budgeting principles, digital transformation, shifting from a project to programmatic approach, and a revamped communications strategy.

2. Assessing the extent to which the Organization in its current state is fit-for-purpose, where changes are needed, and why

- a) A robust and comprehensive organizational assessment will be conducted to determine the level of readiness of the Organization, i.e. the extent to which the Organization in its current state is fit-for-purpose, where changes are needed, and why. This organizational assessment will draw on relevant existing material (including evaluations, assessments, reviews and staff surveys) and be complemented with a diagnosis of current management practices, the organizational structure, accountability mechanisms, business policies, processes and systems, human resource management, knowledge management, external relations and – last but not least - the extent to which prevailing mindsets and behaviour limit or accelerate performance.

3. Change Management Plan

- a) Building on FAO's strategic vision for the Organization and the results of the organizational assessment, a Change Management Plan will be developed. The plan will consist of a number of interconnected priority initiatives (what), designated responsibilities (by who), timeframe (by when), as well as the sequencing / synchronization of each of these.
- b) These initiatives will serve as an opportunity to reshape the work environment and, more particularly, the mindsets which determine behaviour and limit or enable change.

4. Implementation

- a) Implementation and monitoring will be conducted by a Change Management Team. Generating support and energy within the Organization for the Change Management Plan, will support its implementation. Staff participation in planning and delivery will be critical and generate positive momentum. Strong, sustained two-way communication will help manage expectations,

change peoples' perceptions and make the change more personal and therefore truly transformational.

5. Adapting and advancing

- a) Operating in a fast-paced, ever-changing environment, the need for ongoing organizational change at FAO is a given. Thus, this stage of the CMS will be one of continuous adaptation and improvement. Having gone through a sustained period of organizational and personal change, FAO will by now have institutionalized a learning culture and infrastructure that promotes knowledge sharing and rewards enabling mindsets and behaviours as a necessary prerequisite for organizational development and growth.