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Interim Report on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System

Executive Summary

In December 2020, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a new resolution (A/RES/75/233) on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of United Nations (UN) operational activities for development. The 2020 QCPR guides the UN development system over the years 2021-2024, placing an unprecedented focus on supporting Members in accelerating progress towards the SDGs.

This interim report on the implementation of the QCPR presented to the Conference covers the period from June 2021 to June 2023. It provides an overview of FAO's progress in implementing QCPR resolution A/RES/75/233, including how FAO has aligned its programmes and policies with QCPR priorities, improved its efficiency and effectiveness, and strengthened its partnerships with other UN agencies.

The current report captures FAO's key accomplishments, achievements and results in leveraging financing of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and multi-stakeholder partnerships through stronger collaboration with a diversified base of stakeholders and resource partners, thereby unlocking the transformative potential of partnerships and achieving record results on resource mobilization in 2021-2023 to support SDG implementation at scale.

The report also illustrates FAO's strategic shift towards a greater emphasis on integrated and country-driven, high-quality policy advice through the mainstreaming of climate and biodiversity, gender equality, disability, youth and country-driven innovations into FAO's strategic planning and priority programming to support the most vulnerable and leave no one behind.

The report emphasizes FAO's meaningful engagement and leadership in UN global- and country-level coordination, efficiency and partnership mechanisms, ensuring that agrifood systems transformation is placed strategically at the centre of the UN sustainable development agenda with key inputs and engagements across initiatives, such as the Secretary-General's "Our Common Agenda", and UN global coordination mechanisms.

The report sharpens the focus on key trends emerging from the 2020 QCPR, including a sharp rise in food insecurity due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its lingering effects, aggravated by protracted conflicts, the climate crisis and economic downturns, causing a reversal of progress towards the SDGs, particularly SDGs 1, 2 and 10.

Suggested action by the Conference

The Conference is invited to take note of FAO's progress in the implementation of the 2020 QCPR resolution.

Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

Beth Bechdol
Deputy Director-General
Email: ddg-bechdol@fao.org

I. Introduction

1. The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) is the mechanism through which the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) “establishes system-wide policy orientations for the development cooperation and country-level modalities of the UN system in response to the evolving international development and cooperation environment”. In December 2020, the UNGA adopted a new resolution (A/RES/75/233) on the QCPR of UN operational activities for development. The Conference has requested the Director-General to take action to implement the UNGA resolutions on the QCPR.

2. The QCPR assesses the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and relevance of the United Nations development system’s (UNDS) policies, programmes and activities. The review evaluates the roles and contributions of the UNDS and serves as a means of identifying areas where it may improve its effectiveness and better respond to the international community's growing development needs and challenges. The QCPR seeks to boost the ability of the UNDS to provide effective and cohesive development assistance, as well as to improve the accountability and transparency in its operations. The QCPR serves as a platform for Members to examine progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and provides system-wide policy guidance on areas where more efforts are needed to accelerate progress to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda).

II. Funding of FAO’s operational activities for development

3. In response to the flat nominal budget for the past twelve years, FAO has increased its emphasis on mobilizing resources in support of its Strategic Framework 2022-31.

4. To increase the stability of cyclical Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows, FAO prioritizes ensuring a diverse donor base, exploring resource mobilization opportunities to strengthen underfunded but potentially high-impact areas in agrifood systems, and mobilizing unearmarked or flexible funding to ensure equal focus on high-impact work that may be less visible to donors due to technical or geographical focus.

5. FAO mobilized USD 3.6 billion in voluntary contributions in 2021-22, an increase of more than 38 percent over 2019-20, exceeding the aim of USD 1.7 billion and setting a record for annual resource mobilization of USD 2.14 billion in 2022. During this time, the resource partner base grew to 144, including Members, development banks, the private sector, and climate and environment funds. The top 20 resource partners accounted for almost 85 percent of all resources mobilized, with the top five accounting for 53 percent. Resources from vertical funds and international financial institutions surged by more than 208 percent compared to 2019-20, while private sector donations, primarily from foundations, increased by 183 percent, reaching USD 50 million.

6. FAO helped reach these historic achievements through its improved ability to generate and disseminate timely partner priorities and focus on developing framework agreements and templates with key partners that facilitate negotiations and contracting. Effective communication of FAO's efforts and impact increased partner trust and visibility.

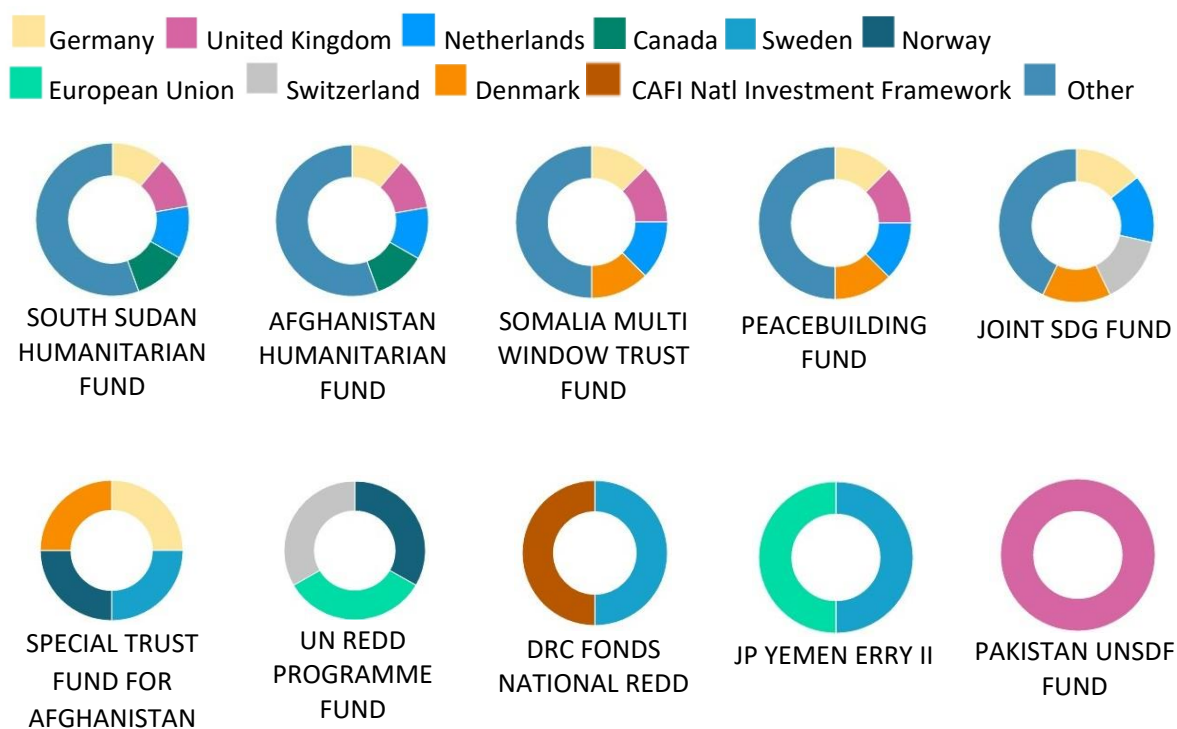
7. In 2021, FAO and its primary resource partners revised the Flexible Voluntary Contribution (FVC) mechanism as a less-earmarked pooled fund for 2022-25 implementation. Six of the FVC's 11 resource partners had contributed over USD 50 million by December 2022. The fund now has two contribution windows: unearmarked and soft-earmarked.

8. FAO is also mobilizing support for nationally led and owned investment programmes through the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative to accelerate agrifood system transformation to close the financing gap needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Twenty nations presented value chain investment priorities at FAO's HIH Initiative Investment Forum, in October 2022. Stakeholders, including the private sector, rallied around such priorities to implement national agriculture strategies and to make investments. Input and equipment suppliers, solution providers for climate financing, carbon credits, investment funds and banks represented the private sector through HIH matchmaking.

9. The Annual and Monthly Funding Overview webpages improved communication, openness, transparency and accountability while giving important visibility to resource partners. Members, international financial institutions (IFIs), UN agencies, vertical funds and private sector partners are featured in the 2020, 2021 and 2022 Annual Funding Overview.

10. Pursuant to UN Funding Compact commitments, FAO has activated its participation in the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) and other flexible funding instruments that bring together UN entities and public and private sector partners to support SDG implementation at scale and ensure the most transparent, effective and impactful use of SDG financing at country-level, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator (RC). According to the latest figures, 13 percent of FAO's earmarked contributions come through pooled funds. Only through the MPTF channels, since 2016 USD 448 million have been allocated to FAO in 92 pooled funds contributing to the SDGs, including USD 218 million during the reporting period 2021-2023 (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. FAO'S PARTICIPATION IN MULTI-STAKEHOLDER POOLED FUNDS THROUGH THE UN MULTI-PARTNER TRUST FUND (MPTF)



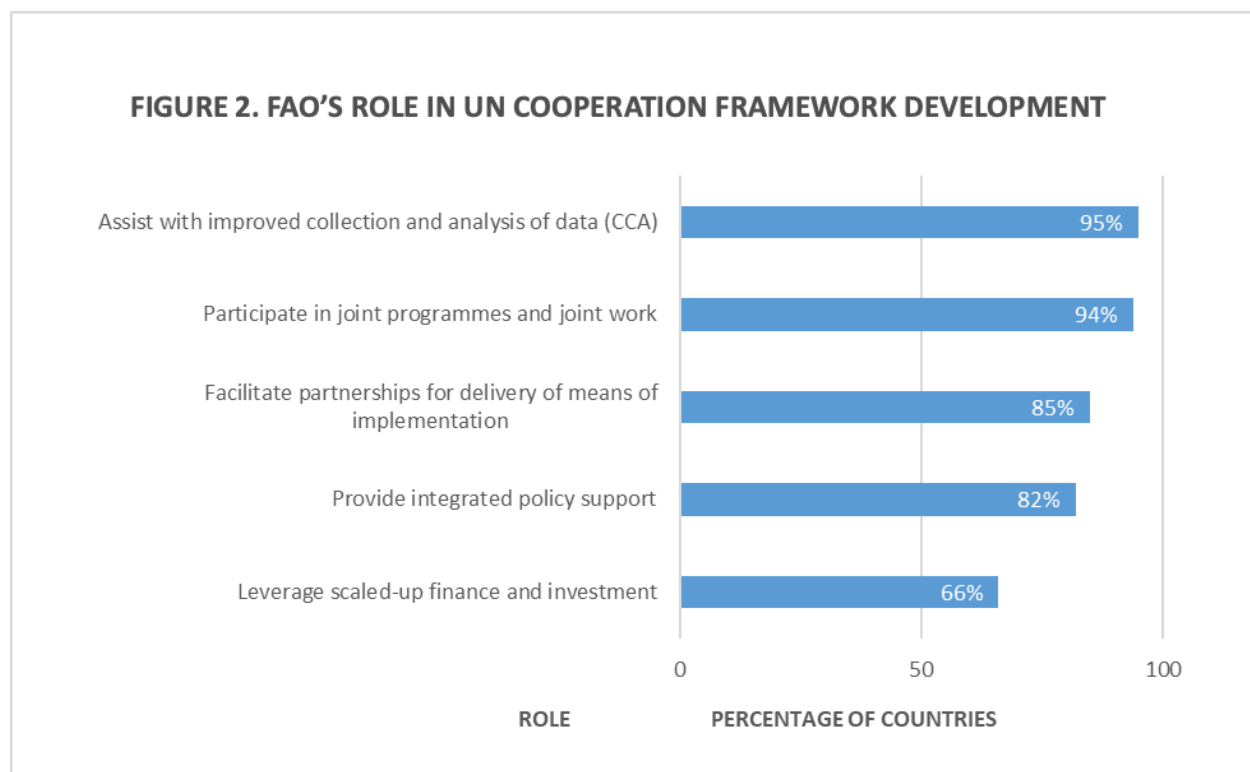
Source: UN MPTF Partners Gateway <https://mptf.undp.org>

III. Improved functioning of the United Nations Development System and FAO's participation in the UN system coordination mechanisms

FAO and UNDS repositioning

11. FAO adheres to the UNGA resolution A/RES/72/279 on UNDS repositioning, including elements concerned with: the need for a new generation of United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) with needs-based and tailored country presence; the reinvigorated RC system; revamped regional approach; improved strategic direction, oversight and accountability for system-wide results; and improvements to voluntary and grant-based funding through the Funding Compact.

12. Consolidating the UNDS repositioning has been vital to achieve greater aggregate impact of the entire UN system on the ground and leverage much-needed investments and efficiencies. FAO is aligning its strategic priorities with the UNDS repositioning, establishing synergies, and integrating its normative, programmatic and policy work to support the UN's collective efforts at all levels (Figure 2).

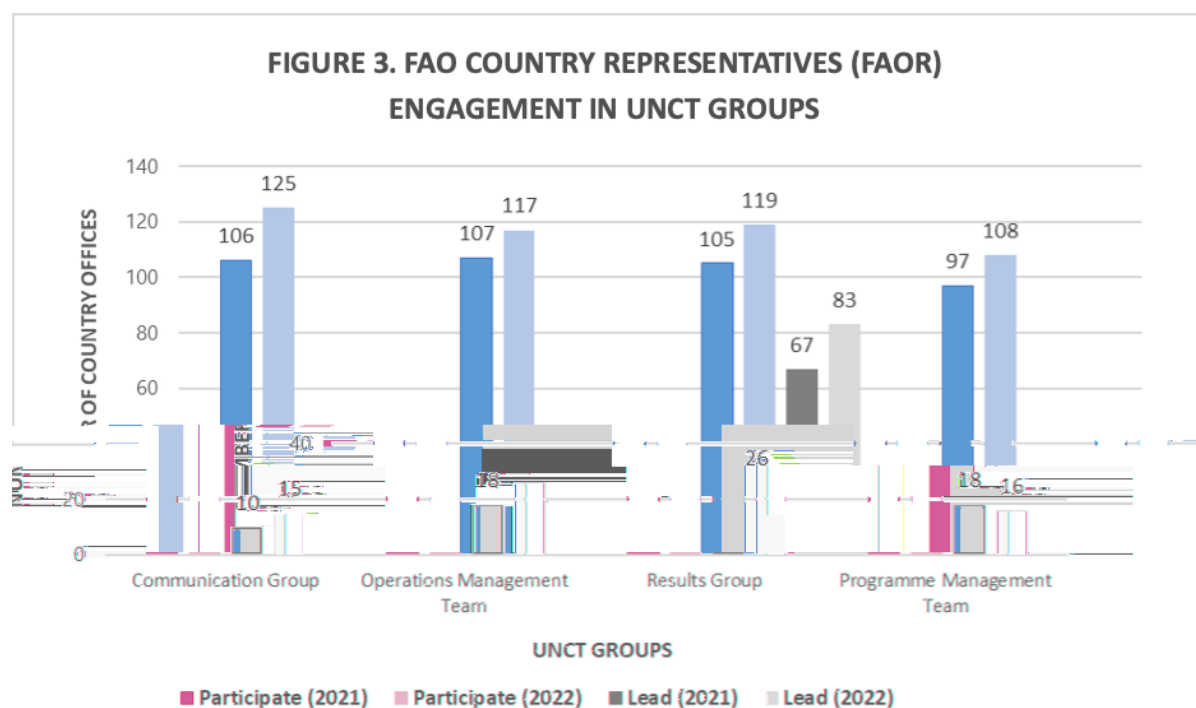


Source: FAO 2022 Country Annual Reports (CAR) database.

13. FAO has strategically placed agrifood systems transformation at the centre of the UN sustainable development agenda with key inputs and engagements across initiatives like the Secretary-General's "Our Common Agenda" (OCA) and UN coordination mechanisms (i.e. UN Sustainable Development Group, Chief Executives Board (CEB), UN Senior Management Group (SMG), and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) bodies).

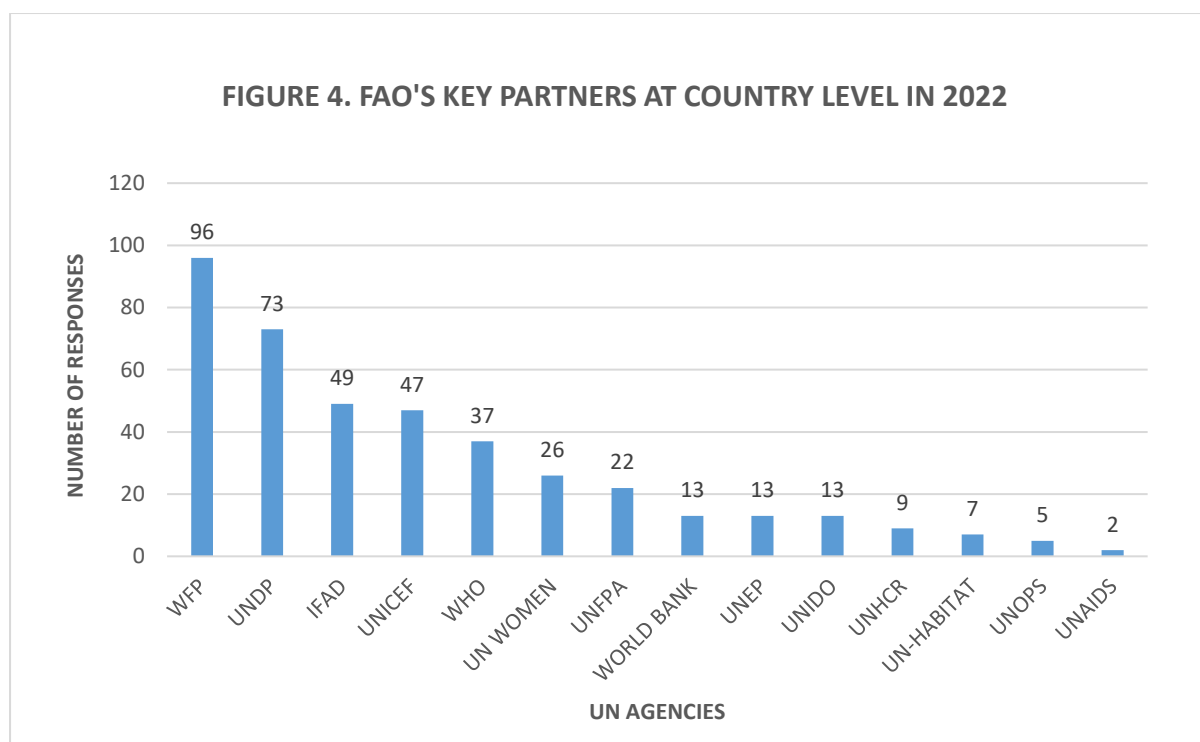
14. Under the direction and coordination of the RC, FAO actively contributes to Common Country Analysis (CCA) and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) processes to leverage the transformative potential of agrifood systems to advance the 2030 Agenda. These joint UN processes are undertaken in full consultation with national counterparts, and are therefore aligned with national priorities, strategies and development plans.

15. Being the fourth largest UN entity in terms of field presence, FAO is an active member of 130 UNCTs, contributing to the formulation of 87 UNSDCFs, participating in 119 UN Joint Programmes, and 97 percent of the UNCT results and functional groups. FAO supported the Funding Compact, improving country-level cooperation and collaboration with UN multiparty trust funds and climate finance institutions (Figure 3).



Source: FAO 2022 Country Annual Reports (CAR) database.

16. FAO revamped its partnerships with UN partners to deliver its key mandates across the *four betters* and achieved goals and impact that FAO could not realize by operating alone. Through its numerous thematic collaborations, platforms and mechanisms such as One Health, Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus, UN Environment and UN Nutrition, FAO was able to leverage the comparative advantages of other sister UN agencies and related organizations, to enhance its policies, knowledge and programmes. More strategized, integrated and country-focused partnerships with *inter alia* Rome-based agencies (RBAs), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have enabled FAO to enhance the UN collective offer to national governments in programme countries and leverage much needed investments and resources through joint planning, programming and resource mobilization actions (Figure 4).



Source: FAO 2022 Country Annual Reports (CAR) database.

**The results represent 422 responses received by 133 FAO country offices for 2022. Each country office selected up to three top partners among UN agencies.*

17. FAO recently established an internal UN Efficiency Board, chaired by a Deputy Director-General, to oversee FAO's effective engagement in the UN efficiency agenda. The Board provides overall and high-level guidance and strategic direction on FAO's participation in UN business operations.

18. FAO is involved in all country-level UNCT efficiency initiatives, spearheaded by the Operations Management Team (OMT). Efficiency gains, including cost savings, time savings and quality improvements are expected across six common service lines: human resources, procurement, administration, logistics, information technology and finance.

19. Furthermore, all UN entities are expected to prioritize high-impact common services which have a social impact and directly contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. FAO took part in 119 country-level business operations strategies, with FAO Country Offices leading over 80 common services and chairing 10 OMTs, while managing approximately 63 common services worldwide.

20. FAO Decentralized Offices are progressively implementing the Local and Global Shared Services Centres Initiative, as well as the Mutual Recognition Statement, which help to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the UN operational support services available to FAO country programmes.

21. In 2022, regional and subregional offices were transformed to deliver the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 with strengthened technical expertise, and by promoting liaison and partnerships, and streamlined, client-oriented operational and administrative services.

Mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals

22. The FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 (the FAO Strategic Framework) is fully aligned with the SDGs, including their targets and indicators, and was formulated through a consultative process with FAO Members and Management. The FAO Strategic Framework seeks to support the 2030 Agenda through the transformation to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable

agrifood systems for *better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life*, leaving no one behind – the *four betters*.

23. The *four betters* of the FAO Strategic Framework, and their 20 constituent Programme Priority Areas (PPAs), are designed to respond to specific gaps around SDG targets in agrifood systems where FAO has a comparative advantage. Moreover, three overarching “Guiding SDGs” ensure a focus on No Poverty (SDG 1), Zero Hunger (SDG 2) and Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10).

24. The FAO Strategic Framework also emphasizes the need for transformative partnerships, innovative funding and financing, risk awareness and risk management to operate more effectively in light of increasing risks and uncertainties, and FAO's normative role and strengths as a specialized agency of the UN.

25. FAO's technical knowledge and expertise in agrifood system transformation makes it uniquely suited to guide, co-design and steer local, national, regional and global agrifood systems transformations. The *four betters* reflect the interconnected economic, social and environmental dimensions of agrifood systems, and call for a strategic and systems-oriented approach within all of FAO's interventions. Top-tier policy alignment and the establishment of fit-for-purpose units, such as the Office of SDGs, the Office of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDs), and the Office of the Chief Statistician further demonstrate the commitment of FAO to mainstream the SDGs in its policy and operational activities.

Empowering Decentralized Offices

26. Decentralized Offices have streamlined and restructured their technical work to align with the PPAs, reflecting regional priorities expressed by Members during the Regional Conferences.

27. Regional Technical Platforms on several priority technical areas such as water scarcity, green agriculture, 1000 Digital Villages Initiative, agrifood systems transformation, and Blue Transformation provide continuous support to governments, regional and subregional institutions and other partners.

28. Decentralized Offices promote liaison and partnerships with subregional and regional institutions, such as the African Union, CARICOM, ASEAN, etc., including through the UN Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCPs), providing support on SDGs at regional and subregional levels and through the Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) at country level.

Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

29. FAO actively participates in national, regional and global 2030 Agenda follow-up and assessment as the primary UN agency for food security; it is custodian of 21 SDG indicators and contributor to five more. FAO supports global SDG indicators, stakeholder discussions and Members' engagement in review processes, by collecting and analysing data.

30. FAO is an active participant in the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), the major SDG review mechanism. Relevant FAO Governing Bodies and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) provided comments to the HLPF planning process, and FAO contributed to the Secretary-General's Report on "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals". FAO participated in SDG Expert Group Meetings, with a focus on SDG 2, agrifood systems and their potential, to accelerate the 2030 Agenda goals. Given the global food crisis and the HLPF's focus on food security in 2022, FAO's high-level participation was key.

31. FAO leads and/or co-leads issue-based coalitions on sustainable food systems and contributes to the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development and UN regional collaboration platforms.

32. At the national level, FAO provides support for Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), which allow countries to assess their SDG progress, share lessons learned and identify areas for improvement. FAO supports countries to prepare their VNRs and has developed a tailored toolkit of support which includes a guidance note with timelines and roadmaps, webinar series and capacity

development activities, as well as context-based consultations and support for the post-review action plans.

IV. Other Areas of Implementation of the QCPR of Relevance to FAO

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, strengthened integrated approaches for poverty and hunger eradication

Poverty eradication

33. Recognizing poverty's multifaceted and multisectoral nature has strengthened FAO's poverty eradication strategy. FAO's poverty-reduction actions include increasing poor people's access to decent livelihood opportunities and development; facilitating their access to inputs, technologies, knowledge, finance, services, value chains, institutions and infrastructure; and empowering people and promoting their agency, collective action and inclusivity, including in development processes.

34. By systematically adopting intersectional approaches, FAO enhanced its capacity to better identify and challenge structural causes of inequalities, exclusion and discrimination that perpetuate poverty among certain people and social groups. FAO enhanced the poverty focus of its projects, adopting a poverty marker that categorizes projects based on their poverty focus. To effectively capture progress in poverty eradication, FAO is enhancing its capacity in disaggregated data, monitoring and reporting.

35. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution A/RES/77/183, FAO is responsible for drafting the Secretary-General's report on eradicating rural poverty to implement the 2030 Agenda.

36. FAO and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative have developed and tested the Rural Multidimensional Poverty Index which measures rural communities' overlapping deprivations in food security and nutrition, education level, living standards, rural livelihoods, access to resources and vulnerability to risks.

Leave no one behind

37. Leaving no one behind ensures that everyone can participate in, contribute to and benefit equally from, economic growth and human development. It represents the unequivocal commitment of all UN Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole. This requires addressing the structural barriers that prevent the impoverished, food insecure and those who face exclusion, marginalization, or live in vulnerable situations from participating in their societies.

38. FAO strengthened its capacity to more systematically mainstream inclusion in its activities, particularly field programmes, to support Members' efforts to eradicate poverty and inequities and promote inclusive growth. To ensure no one is left behind, FAO's work mainstreams gender, youth and inclusion. Management responsibilities, tools and capacity development help programme and project formulators discover and target the poor and vulnerable.

39. FAO is implementing programmes and initiatives that prioritize social and economic inclusion for all, including its advocacy mandate for the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in global, regional and national policy dialogues and for the respect of their rights over territories, lands and resources, as outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. FAO is implementing and monitoring Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) principles, creating inclusive platforms, and organizing important events that place Indigenous Peoples at the centre of the discussion and empower them in their key role as game changers to meet the important challenges of our era by bridging traditions to innovations.

Mainstreaming inclusion: gender equality, disability and youth

40. Gender Equality and Rural Women's Empowerment, one of FAO's 20 PPAs, supports women's equal participation in agrifood systems. FAO's performance monitoring systems track gender equality, enabling sex-disaggregated SDG data that feeds into UN system-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) reporting.
41. The FAO Policy on Gender Equality 2020-30's minimum standards are compatible with the UN-SWAP 2.0 accountability framework and its performance indicators. FAO exceeded 15 UNSWAP Performance Indicators in 2021 and 14 in 2022.
42. FAO has published the first Code of Ethical Conduct and improved the senior managers' performance evaluation and management system. FAO will create a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Framework with action plans for gender parity and other forms of inclusion in its workforce.
43. FAO is committed to implementing the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS). FAO reports annually on the 16 UNDIS indicators, in order to evaluate progress made and plan further disability-inclusive interventions.
44. According to the 2022 report, FAO meets 12 of the 16 UNDIS indicators. FAO is working with other UN agencies, the UNDIS Network, and the UN Women-led Working Group on Gender Equality and Disability Inclusion to address gender-disability intersectionality.
45. FAO is providing technical assistance to its Decentralized Offices in mainstreaming inclusion and diversity and is also developing a Disability Inclusion Marker to measure disability inclusion in projects and programmes.
46. By supporting Youth 2030: The UN Youth Strategy, FAO promotes youth-inclusive policies, strategies, investments and programmes.
47. FAO and the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus (GIYC) co-hosted the inaugural bi-annual UN Global Indigenous Youth Forum (GIYF). The 2021 Indigenous Youth Global Declaration on Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems included GIYF recommendations and actions.

Country-driven enhanced capacity development and innovation for sustainable development

48. The SDGs Capacity Development Platform provides training to FAO personnel on SDG policy integration, transformative pathways, levers and risks for change and development, foresight and progress monitoring to support Members sustainable agrifood systems transformations.
49. FAO helps countries to strengthen their agricultural innovation systems at individual and institutional levels, creating an enabling environment to harness science, technology and innovation to transform agrifood systems. This includes institutional transformation, re-orientation and reform of national research, extension and innovation systems.
50. The user-friendly South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) Gateway Platform connects knowledge and expertise suppliers and searchers, and creates new private sector relationships. In line with the FAO Strategic Framework, it helps Decentralized Offices mainstream SSTC into agriculture policies, programmes and investment initiatives. The FAO-China South-South Cooperation (SSC) Programme offers agricultural and food security capacity-building initiatives for government officials, agricultural professionals and researchers, in conjunction with universities, research institutions and centres of excellence.
51. FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have been working with hundreds of partners, including governments, producers' organizations, and civil society organizations to develop and implement national action plans (NAPs) to support family farming during the UN Decade on Family Farming 2019-2028. Twelve NAPs and over 65 intersectoral coordination mechanisms, including family farming national committees, have been established. To mitigate the effect of COVID-19 on family farmers and promote family farming-based agrifood systems solutions, 186 laws, rules and regulations have been passed. FAO has also created a toolbox to help Members develop family farming-friendly policy frameworks. These include: the Regional

Technical Platform for Family Farming; a legal analysis of existing legislative and regulatory frameworks supporting family farming; and the Family Farming Knowledge Platform (FFKP) which brings together entities to share knowledge, solutions and action-oriented initiatives in support of family farming, reaching an average of 70 000 visitors per month with over 27 000 documents.

52. FAO hosts the G20 Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) Secretariat, which promotes agricultural innovation. Fifty-two organizations – national agricultural research, education, and extension institutes, civil society, farmer organizations, and significant regional and international entities – collaborate with TAP. FAO's TAPedia – a global information system for good capacity development practices, innovation outputs, success stories and lessons learned – facilitates knowledge sharing of agricultural innovation systems.

53. FAO promotes integrated, evidence-based, and behaviourally informed innovation policy labs to co-create policy solutions, remove innovation barriers, and promote sustainable results and agreed-upon trade-offs. Policymakers, stakeholders, and partners can collaborate on science-policy-practice innovation initiatives through ideation, experimentation and capacity development. Co-innovation lets early-stage end-users, notably smallholders, choose the best innovations. It improves accessibility, affordability, acceptance, local relevance and scaling.

54. FAO helps Members find, test and implement solutions for small-scale producers. FAO's new global knowledge product, Agrifood Systems Technologies and Innovations Outlook (ATIO), curates existing information on the current, measurable state, anticipated changes, and transformative potential of science, technology and innovation (STI) to promote evidence-based policy discourse and decisions.

55. FAO supports national social protection systems to expand coverage to rural populations (farmers, fishers, foresters and pastoralists) as well as their capacity building in this regard. By framing social protection as an investment, FAO advocates for increasing finance to expand the coverage of social protection in rural areas.

56. In recent years, FAO has provided technical assistance at national level to the implementation of agriculture censuses, through projects and ad-hoc requests in an average of 30 countries per year.

57. Members are being assisted to monitor SDG indicators. FAO has offered technical assistance to 16 countries on SDG indicator 2.4.1 (Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture). Similar activities are underway on indicators 5.a.1 (i. Percentage of people with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land [out of total agricultural population], by sex; and ii. share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure) and 12.3.1 (Global Food Loss and Waste).

Support to Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

58. FAO boosted its support to SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs through targeted initiatives, such as the HIH Initiative, One Country One Priority Product Initiative, 1000 Digital Villages and the establishment of a dedicated Office for SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs.

59. In executing these initiatives, FAO is collaborating with UN agencies, RCs, IFIs and regional development banks and investors, to apply holistic, integrated approaches to support agrifood systems transformation.

60. FAO mobilized USD 112 million for the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) to support climate change adaptation in the seventh replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-7).

61. Forty-six of the 61 HIH Initiative countries are SIDS, LDCs, or LLDCs. HIH geospatial platforms have enabled SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs in evidence-based decision-making as they developed typologies to identify territories with high poverty and untapped potential for more targeted agriculture and food investments.

62. Through the HIH Initiative, FAO is directly supporting the investment action plans and matchmaking for four of the initial HIH SIDS: Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, and Solomon

Islands. Many of these are in the initial stages and are correlated with potential financing support for investment projects from the European Union, IFAD, Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), Green Climate Fund (GCF), World Bank and Islamic Development Bank (IsDB).

63. FAO actively supported the Fifth United Nations Conference on the LDCs (LDC5 Conference) preparatory processes and UN system Inter-Agency Consultative Group meetings on the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the LDCs.

64. To enhance implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, FAO, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) formed the Global Action Programme for Food Security and Nutrition in SIDS (GAP). The GAP helps communities adopt healthier lifestyles, improve resilience to shocks and strengthen the enabling environment through targeted, integrated, multistakeholder support.

65. FAO also contributed to the successful Fifth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (5-9 March 2023, Doha, Qatar), with its Director-General participating in the UN Secretary-General's high-level event with Principals of the UN System, "A Decade of UN Action to support LDCs, to offer actionable solutions to addressing food insecurity by building resilient agri-food systems, promoting investments and innovations in LDCs".

The COVID-19 pandemic

66. FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme was launched on 14 July 2020 with an appeal for USD 1.32 billion to mitigate the immediate impacts of the pandemic and strengthen the long-term resilience of agrifood systems and livelihoods by implementing projects and activities across seven priority areas: Global humanitarian response plan; Data for decision-making; Economic inclusion and social protection to reduce poverty; Trade and food safety standards; Boosting smallholder resilience for recovery; Preventing the next zoonotic pandemic; and Food systems transformation.

67. The Programme's portfolio consisted of 308 approved projects with a total budget of USD 435.8 million. USD 409.3 million originated from voluntary contributions, with the remaining USD 26 million provided by FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme.

68. FAO's knowledge products and platforms such as the Novel Coronavirus Portal helped to highlight the implications of COVID-19 on food security. Similarly, international awareness campaigns and a series of policy briefs were developed to avoid the health crisis from escalating into a food catastrophe.

69. FAO's COVID-19 programme also contributed to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) led Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19, laying the foundation to strengthen the resilience of smallholder farmers for post-COVID-19 recovery, with an emphasis on anticipatory action and emergency livelihood support.

70. FAO's focused data and analytical work helped to guide and advise for action. FAO has developed a suite of indicators that capture the resilience capacity of agrifood systems at country level, to measure the robustness of primary production, the extent of food availability and the degree of people's physical and economic access to food in countries worldwide. These indicators helped to assess the capacity of national agrifood systems to absorb the impact of any shock, which is a key aspect of resilience.

71. The Programme's evaluations found that FAO's humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups, its support to its Members' data-driven decision-making and smallholder resilience helped mitigate the pandemic's effects and promote recovery. It showed that FAO's COVID-19 Programme response was relevant, timely and adaptive to country pandemic priorities. FAO's internal and external relationships allowed the Organization to advise government stakeholders and partners in a timely fashion. The evaluation further revealed that FAO actively mainstreamed UN normative norms and principles.

Climate- and environment-responsive approach in programmes and strategic plans

72. In support of the FAO Strategic Framework's *better environment*, new thematic strategies on climate change and biodiversity mainstreaming were approved in 2022 and 2021, respectively.

73. In this regard, FAO is mainstreaming climate, biodiversity and environment into its policies and programmes, led by its Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, working closely with headquarter-based units, Decentralized Offices, Members and partners to stimulate global dialogue, mobilize environmental and climate funding, and advocate for sustainable agriculture and food security within the global sustainability agenda.

74. FAO assisted over 90 countries in identifying, integrating and implementing agriculture, forestry and other land use initiatives into climate change planning and budgeting. FAO supported Members in reviewing and implementing nationally determined contributions (NDCs), long-term low-carbon policies and national adaptation plans (NAPs). FAO also reported on the Enhanced Transparency Framework and launched the Climate Change Knowledge Hub, which gathers existing knowledge and resources to address climate change in agriculture and land use.

75. Ecosystem restoration is essential for the attainment of the SDGs. FAO promotes sustainable natural resource management, including assessments that support evidence-based decision-making, policy and technical guidance and collaborations. As co-leader of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 with UNEP, FAO led a global capacity needs assessment on best practices and identified key priority areas to achieve and sustain restoration goals at scale, including strengthening financing, stakeholder engagement, technical capacities and supportive policies.

76. FAO assisted countries to access climate financing with over 130 countries receiving USD 1.3 billion to fund 289 approved projects. GEF is one of FAO's major resource partners, while FAO is the fourth largest GEF certified agency, securing almost 15 percent of GEF cumulative programming funds across GEF-7 work programmes. In 2021, FAO's GCF portfolio supported 15 transformative initiatives and 61 preparedness programmes in 50 countries, totalling USD 937 million.

77. A new Corporate Environmental Responsibility Strategy 2020-2030, published in 2021 in line with UN-wide "Greening the Blue" commitments, sets FAO on the path towards climate neutrality. Similarly, FAO launched updated safeguards guidelines – the Framework for Environmental and Social Management – applicable to all FAO projects and in line with international best practices. FAO participates in the UN Environmental Management Group, among other key external partnerships.

Disaggregated data collection and analysis

78. FAO continues to assist Members to prioritize collection of agriculture and food security data while improving efficiency and cost-effectiveness by applying modern methods and technologies.

79. Through the 50 by 2030 Initiative, a multi-partner effort to end the agricultural data gap by 2030, FAO supports the transformation of country data systems. The Initiative builds strong nationally representative survey programmes from existing statistical activities and provides extensive technical assistance to sampling and data gathering, processing and dissemination using advanced technology. It draws on the Living Standard Measurement Study and works with the World Bank and IFAD to survey farms. The Initiative currently engages 18 countries and aims to engage an additional 34 by 2024.

80. The Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics provides a framework for national and international statistical systems, enabling developing countries to produce and use data for transformational change. Building on its successful first phase (2012-2018), the second phase applies and utilizes existing methodology and approaches to boost Members' statistical capacities through training and technical assistance. It helps 25 African countries with master sampling frames, dissemination, SDG indicator computation, national agricultural statistics plans and farm surveys.

81. Application of food security statistics promotes country ownership of FAO's methodologies and standards, and it supports the use of suitable tools to inform food security and nutrition policies.

FAO provides technical assistance to national institutions and training on applying the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) in national surveys, providing a global reference to compare food insecurity rates across countries and monitor hunger dynamics at household level, including disaggregation by gender. FAO advises partners on data collection and processing to improve food security and nutrient consumption statistics. Since 2020, 55 countries have received assistance.

Resilience, Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus

82. The COVID-19 pandemic, cost of living crisis and numerous conflicts have furthered the understanding of the relationship between food insecurity and peace.

83. To minimize new risks and vulnerabilities, FAO invests in risk- and conflict-sensitive initiatives. FAO analyses the numerous shocks and pressures that can create disasters, conflicts, crises and the loss of development gains in its interventions to prevent additional harm and address their root causes.

84. FAO understands that resilience building transcends risk management because humanitarian, development and peace actors must: (i) respond to the emergency needs of multiple disasters, conflicts and crises that often collide and cascade; and (ii) address the root causes of vulnerabilities and risks by promoting development pathways that are risk, conflict and nutrition sensitive to prevent future disasters, conflicts and crises.

85. FAO's work on climate, peace and security exemplifies how it embodies the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach. It applies nexus approaches to address climate, peace and security issues, and as part of long-term solutions for displaced people. FAO is an active member of the interagency UN Climate and Security Mechanism that brings together humanitarian, climate, development and peace actors to address the growing interplay between conflicts and climate risks and crises at the regional, national and local levels.

86. At headquarters level, the conflict and peace unit in the Office for Emergencies and Resilience (OER), in collaboration with Decentralized Offices, will foster conflict-sensitive programming and identify ways FAO may contribute to peace. FAO also supports fragile and conflict-affected countries through subregional conflict analyst/conflict sensitivity specialist roles.

87. Through the Global Network against Food Crises, FAO and the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Coalition, which emerged from the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, are committed to addressing food emergencies through greater humanitarian, development and peace collaboration.

V. Trends emerging from the 2020 QCPR

88. Halfway to 2030, the midpoint in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, one thing is clear: the world is not delivering progress towards all SDGs at the necessary pace and scale. Despite widespread awareness of the SDG framework and increased commitments, institutional mechanisms and partnerships, there has been a reversal of years of progress made to achieve the SDGs. This is in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its lingering effects, further exacerbated by protracted conflicts, the climate crisis, economic downturns and rising food insecurity. In 2021, between 702 and 828 million people – an increase of almost 150 million since the pandemic – suffered from hunger, with a prevalence of malnutrition of 9.8 percent.

89. Business-as-usual approaches are no longer an option. The world must redouble efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and to achieve the SDGs.

90. Recent projections indicate that nearly 670 million people, or eight percent of the world's population, will still be facing hunger in 2030, making eliminating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition elusive. This is a similar number to 2015, when the goal of ending hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition by the end of this decade was launched under the 2030 Agenda.

91. The reversal in women's rights across many countries presents an alarming threat to the eradication of poverty and hunger and sets back the attainment of all SDGs. A cost-of-living crisis

coupled with an unequal economic recovery continue to adversely impact many economies and drive poverty rates, particularly among women and rural populations.

92. Game-changing interventions, clear commitments and mobilizing global action are urgently needed to rescue the SDGs and get the world back on track.

93. Transformative partnerships are also fundamental to accelerate progress to achieve the SDGs and catalyse change. FAO's partnerships are transformative when they deliver sustainable outcomes through systemic, long-term and disruptive action; when they catalyse impact at scale; and when all partners invest complementary resources (technical, financial, human, or knowledge) to create value beyond what FAO could achieve operating alone. The transformation of agrifood systems provides a unique opportunity to address other major development challenges that are interlinked, such as the climate crisis, hunger, gender inequality and ensuring that no one is left behind.

94. The Secretary-General's Our Common Agenda (OCA) is set to shape the work of the UN development system in accelerating progress towards the SDGs. FAO is represented by a Deputy Director-General in the UNSDG Working Group on Our Common Agenda and is actively supporting this global effort by contributing to OCA policy briefs within the area of its mandate and core competence¹.

95. The upcoming SDG Summit (19-20 September 2023) during the UNGA High-level week will serve as a pivotal moment for SDG acceleration by launching transformational and forward-looking actions leading up to 2030. FAO – working in coalition with sister UN organizations – is committed to mobilizing its knowledge and resources to support agrifood systems transformation, revitalizing the commitment to leave no one behind.

¹ Policy briefs under Our Common Agenda include: Future Generations, Emergency Platform, Meaningful youth Engagement, Beyond GDP, Integrity in Public Information, Outer Space, International Financial Architecture, New Agenda for Peace, Education and UN 2.0.