

# DR. QU DONGYU

CANDIDATE FOR THE OFFICE OF  
FAO DIRECTOR-GENERAL, SECOND TERM  
27 APRIL 2023

**BUILDING A DYNAMIC FAO  
FOR A BETTER WORLD**

***FROM VISION TO ACTION:***

***BUILDING A MODERN FAO IN LINE WITH ITS CORE  
COMPETENCIES***

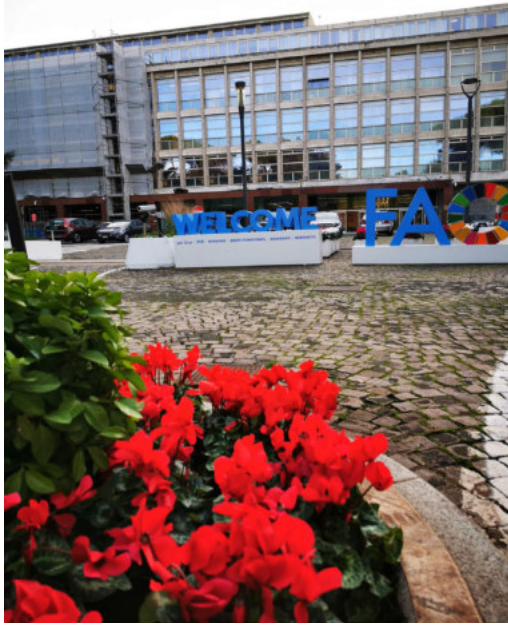
**Dr. QU Dongyu**

**(Candidate for the Office of FAO Director-General, second term)**

**27 April 2023**

I am very pleased to present my manifesto on the occasion of the 172nd Session of the FAO Council, which is not only a key milestone as my first term as FAO Director-General is coming to an end, but also a landmark for my second term.

***Building a dynamic FAO for a better world***



This was my firm commitment in 2019.

It has been an extraordinary and successful four-year journey that we have taken together.

Thank you for your support and collaboration along this voyage, during which we faced so many unexpected challenges, marked by a wave of unprecedented, complex and overlapping crises, each one affecting all of us.

We have spared no efforts to support FAO Members in achieving **the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

We have stood united in laying a solid foundation for a better world and for our future generations.

Now, four years later, a new and dynamic FAO is here to serve you better. A more agile, more efficient, more fit-for-purpose United Nations specialized agency providing professional and scientific expertise to all, and highly respected and appreciated by all.

Under the banner of **One FAO**, we are working tirelessly in the fight against hunger, poverty and inequality, through transparency, innovation, inclusiveness and a new business model.

The **FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31**, together with the overarching **Four Betters - Better Production, Better Nutrition, a Better Environment and a Better Life** for all, leaving no one behind – was endorsed by the FAO Ministerial Conference, and guided the development of our strategies and action plans.

At this time, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all **FAO Members** for their trust, support and collaboration; to all **FAO employees** for their dedicated, efficient, effective and extraordinary work and to all **partners** for their close partnership and cooperation.

My special thanks go to the **Government of Italy** and other **host countries** for their assistance, for the services provided to FAO employees, and for their support to FAO's work at large.

## 1. NEW VISION, NEW STRUCTURES AND NEW INITIATIVES, TO BUILD A NEW FAO

*Confucius said: "If a man keeps cherishing his old knowledge so as continually to be acquiring new, he may be a master of others"*

Allow me to recall my vision for FAO, which I had set out in my **2019 Manifesto**, and share with you what we have achieved together.

New thinking will lead us to a different path. And along this new path we must stand firm with courage, and work hard with persistence and perseverance.

We need to fully understand the underlying trends of our times, and tackle the challenges with a detailed and systematic analysis. We must see advantages when we are at a disadvantage, and not lose hope in times of difficulty.

We must leverage our collective wisdom to help vulnerable populations and stand united to achieve real progress. **Our focus is to attain zero hunger, and our aspiration is to realize the Four Betters**, with the ultimate purpose of ensuring the world's farmers are well supported, and rural areas are made more attractive for the younger generations.

Four years ago, I emphasized the need for FAO to focus on a number of **priorities**:

*1. Responding to major challenges*

*2. Driving agricultural and rural sustainable development through innovation*

*3. Scaling up new partnerships and cooperative mechanisms*

*4. Boosting demand-driven provision of global public goods in food and agriculture*

*5. Forging an international organization with world-class internal governance and organizational culture*

Looking back on our extraordinary journey, we should be proud of the tremendous progress that has been made despite the uncharted

circumstances that have deeply impacted every aspect of our Organization.

There was no roadmap to follow, but we drew it together and marked our own path going forward with steadfast principles, determination and solidarity.

After taking office, I took a holistic and progressive approach to address longstanding issues affecting the Organization, in line with suggestions from FAO employees and Members.

Through tangible outcomes, FAO's global visibility, impact and reputation has greatly increased and improved. Our performance over the past four years has reached a new level of **efficiency** and **effectiveness**, with **extraordinary** results, in pursuit of **excellence**.



#### ● ***A new strategic design for a new narrative***

The FAO Strategic Framework for the next ten years is the fruit of our broad and collective efforts and consultations reflecting our joint commitment to support the transformation of global agrifood systems.

The Framework attaches great importance to the role of **science and innovation**, and identifies **20 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs)** centered on the Four Betters. The Core Leadership Team has been championing the Four Betters and the 20 PPAs to ensure coherence in

our work from the country to the regional and to the global level for improved outcomes and impact.

With the Strategic Framework as our roof design, we have put in place strong pillars to anchor our work, including the key **thematic strategies** on: **Private Sector Engagement; Science and Innovation; Climate Change;** and on **Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors;** as well as the **Framework for Environmental and Social Management** that sets the key performance requirements for FAO's program of work.

In addition, a number of initiatives have been launched to support implementation of the Framework and Strategies, which have been welcomed by Members and partners as they serve as new business models to get them on board.

#### ● ***Innovation as the driving force***

I have always been a strong believer in multilateralism, rules-based governance and innovation.

Only through innovation can we find solutions for global challenges, within limited resources. We must start from innovation if we wish to transform a long-established large institution like FAO into a dynamic, agile and modern international organization.

From mind-set to behaviour, from strategy to action, from governance to administration, from headquarters to the field, each one of us must think innovatively and build a new culture of being open, inclusive, innovative and ambitious.

**Innovation in technology, policy, business model, society and ways of thinking comes from people, and should be at the service of people.**

The **modernization and digital transformation of agrifood systems** has been actively promoted by FAO for enhanced governance, better development and increased economic benefits, through

improved distribution and management of resources, enhanced project processes and delivery of work in a more efficient and effective way.

The **Digital FAO** has made it possible for us to stay connected anytime from anywhere, across time zones and physical distances. For the first time in the history of the Organization, employees from offices around the world, and representatives and delegates in Rome and in the capitals, have been able to participate in meetings in real time.

The modernization and digitalization of FAO's websites, publications and systems has brought a **new visual identity** to FAO, with improved access to our platforms for Members, farmers, consumers, donors and partners. FAO has become a champion in digital management within the UN system.

FAO reconfirmed its role of being a neutral and professional platform to discuss potential benefits of technologies and innovations. I have supported a **new scientific communication agenda** at FAO, including through our regular publications on cutting edge technology, such as gene editing, in agrifood systems.

Through a number of channels and media platforms, FAO's expert and knowledgeable voice is now being heard and transmitted from and in every corner of the world, leading the transformation of global agrifood systems and triggering a profound developmental impact.

I have walked the talk in **communication and outreach**. Over the past four years, I have delivered more than 1000 speeches and provided approximately 500 video messages, published over 100 Op-Eds, 1200 news and web-stories, 250 articles, and issued over 1500 briefings. I have attended approximately 1250 events per year - an average of 100 events per month.

In the past four years, I have worked non-stop and with steadfast commitment. With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, I have **travelled** more than 300 000 kilometers to more than 50 countries in all FAO regions, where I met with over 40 Heads of State and Government, more than 200 Ministers and Vice Ministers, and numerous experts, and representatives of private sectors and of farmers' organizations. On each trip, I have established the practice of undertaking **field visits** to meet and talk with local farmers, academics, the private sector and NGOs, and to have first-hand experience through interaction with the local people.

In 2019, during my first participation in the **UN General Assembly**, I participated in approximately 80 events over five days meeting with Heads of State and Government, Ministers and high level government officials, as well as key private sector representatives, and hosted a number of events to showcase FAO and gain support for our work. In 2020 and 2021, due to COVID-19 restrictions, I participated virtually ensuring that FAO's voice continued to be heard as the world fell silent in the face of the pandemic.

In 2022, I once again participated in person in the UN General Assembly and participated in numerous events and held bilateral meetings with Heads of State and Government and Ministers. In total, I participated in more than 230 key meetings and events, both virtually and in person.

In 2022, I delivered keynote statements at the **UN Security Council** and at the **High-Level Political Forum**, providing policy recommendations and solutions to address global food insecurity and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, both of which reflected FAO's visibility, credibility and impact, as well as the trust and recognition of the international community.



● **Structural reform leading to a systemic transformation**

*As I said from the beginning: “FAO needs to develop a new organizational culture to drive progress in its internal governance and capacity building”*

The organizational reform over the past four years has helped FAO emerge from its cocoon like a butterfly ready to soar and respond agilely to evolving challenges.

Internal control can enhance our cohesion and help build a more harmonious working environment. To this end, the **Oversight Advisory Committee (OAC)** was established to strengthen internal control and serve as an independent expert advisory panel, providing reviews and systematic analysis on issues and problems in FAO operations and management, and providing recommendations and guidance for improved performance.

At the same time, we have adopted a **zero-tolerance policy for harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, sexual exploitation and abuse of authority**, and together with my Core Leadership Team, we continue to be fully committed.

We have strengthened internal management, taken and enforced disciplinary and corrective actions, and enhanced compliance mechanisms. Together with relevant senior managers, we have listened regularly to reports and discussed plans for improvement.

Since 1 August 2019, a new **Office of the Ombuds** was established, which has since provided informal conflict resolution services to over 400 employees.

The stand-alone **Ethics Office** was established in 2020, with a direct reporting line to the Director-General, and tasked to enhance our understanding of our obligations as international civil servants, fostering an ethical work environment and ensuring the Organization is in step with best practices.

Through a merit-based competitive selection, a highly qualified **Inspector General** was recruited. I have ensured that he has carried out

his work independently, and have also allocated additional resources to the **Office of the Inspector General (OIG)** to boost capacities.

In 2021, the first **FAO Code of Ethical Conduct** and a revised **Whistleblower Protection Policy** were issued and are now fully implemented.

The analysis reports of case investigations have been regularly communicated to managers at the D-1 and above level to strengthen transparency and accountability.

With the coordination and complementarity of these three offices, the performance of inspection, supervision and audit has been enhanced for the effective resolution of issues, thereby safeguarding the reputation of the Organization, and our workforce.

After taking office, I set up a flat, modular and flexible structure for the Organization.

I have established coordination offices with well-defined functions and settings, and have established a **Core Leadership Team**, comprising the **three Deputy Directors-General**, the **Chief Economist**, the **Chief Scientist** and the **Director of Cabinet**, with a clear and coordinated division of work to provide the direction needed, with dual reporting lines A and B.

In line with FAO’s mandate and business focus, the posts of Chief Economist and Chief Scientist were created for the first time in the history of the Organization.

**The Core Leadership Team reflects a collective leadership model in the Organization that is innovative within the UN system.**

The additional management layer of Assistant Directors-General in its previous form was removed to enhance delegation of authority, break up silos and improve efficiency.

Functions have been integrated to create a more flat and modular management structure consisting of several Centres, Offices and Divisions.

“**Centres**” are the window unit jointly established by FAO and other UN

agencies and have a strong collaboration function led by FAO; “**Offices**” play a cross-cutting function responsible for internal or external coordination; and “**Divisions**” house the expertise of FAO or provide operational and logistic support.

The **Office of Sustainable Development Goals (OSG)** was established to coordinate the corporate engagement in the 2030 Agenda implementation, follow-up and review, working closely with relevant units across the Organization. OSG is also tasked to coordinate the follow-up actions of the **United Nations Food Systems Summit** through the **Coordination Hub**, hosted by FAO on behalf of the UN system.

A new Office for **Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries (OSL)** was set up – the first ever in the UN system – to better serve vulnerable Members and provide technical expertise to help eradicate poverty and safeguard food security.

The **Office of Innovation (OIN)** was created to consolidate and strengthen FAO’s innovative spirit and horizontal support across the Organization, including innovation of policy, science and technology, business and cooperation models, and capacity building.

The capacities and functions of the **Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget (OSP)** and the **Office of Evaluation (OED)**, as well as the **Fisheries and Aquaculture Division** and the **Land and Water Division**, among others, have been strengthened.

FAO’s work on emergencies was significantly strengthened within the **Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER)** with heightened responsibility on emergency leadership, and a new mandate that includes resilience. The results of which are clearly visible in the renewed trust of donors in support of FAO’s work in this key area.

The **FAO Investment Centre**, jointly established by the World Bank and FAO more than 65 years ago, was transformed and repositioned as part of my overall reform to improve its structural setting, enhance its global integrated plan, increase recruitment efforts, expand business lines, strengthen its multiplying and outreach functions, expand the scale of fundraising, and deepen its cooperation with international financial

institutions. The results of these efforts have resulted in the design of hundreds of public investment projects worth billions of dollars, and the implementation of many more, supported by the Investment Centre.

**FAO** has been effectively collaborating with **WHO** on food safety, Codex standards, and on zoonotic diseases and beyond, including One Health and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), among others.

Furthermore, the **Joint FAO/IAEA Centre** was upgraded to strengthen the 60-year-long strategic partnership between FAO and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the application of nuclear science and techniques in the field of sustainable agricultural development and food security.

These three Centres have supported FAO to work more and better on crosscutting themes, and to play a catalytic role with the support of the extended FAO network.

Upon taking office, I immediately responded to the request of Members to strengthen FAO’s normative and standard setting work and allocated additional resources to the Secretariat of the **International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)** and the **Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards and Food Safety Scientific Advice Programme**.

The **Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB)** was consolidated to build up its function for cross-sectoral coordination, and to strengthen its dialogue and cooperation with relevant organizations in the field of environment, health and economic development, thereby increasing FAO’s voice and technical capacity in the field of climate change.

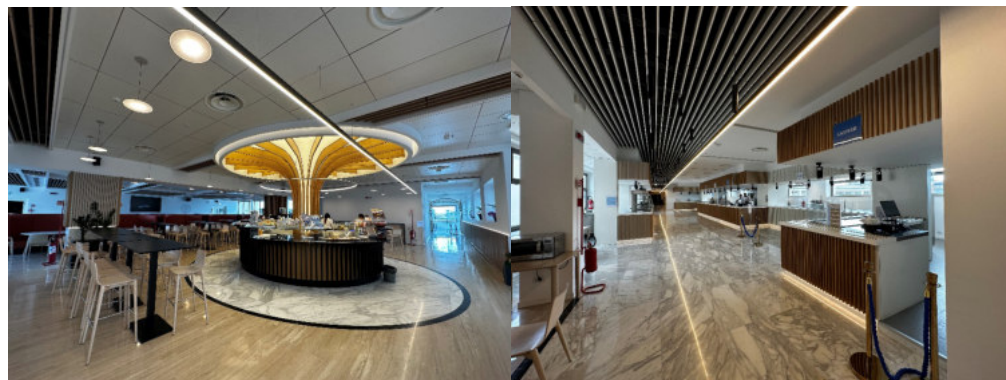
The **Human Resources Division (CSH)** has set up a unified HR management system, leading to the abolishment of the previous Office of Support to Decentralization, and disbandment of the previous five Strategic Programme teams. In this way, its structure was streamlined, with an accountability and quality assurance system in place with increased focus on HR management and service functions, ensuring better integration of services, as well as effective communication with staff representative bodies.

Following the structural reform, a modern organization has been built, with increased coordination and reduced overlapping of work, with clear delegation of authority, and an effective and efficient business model.

The FAO Council approved by consensus all my proposals for structural reform, following in-depth discussions, extensive consultation and timely suggestions.

Here, I wish to once again express my sincere thanks to FAO Members, the FAO Ministerial Conference, the FAO Regional Ministerial Conferences, the FAO Council, the Independent Chairpersons of the Council (ICCs), Chairs and members of the Programme Committee (PC) and Finance Committee (FC), and the Chairs and members of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), the Chairs and members of the FAO Technical Committees, and the FAO Oversight Advisory Committee (OAC) Chair and its members.

Their contributions in the spirit of solidarity and cooperation has always marked our collective work, based on the principle of consensus and compromise in the interest of moving forward to achieve the mandate of the Organization.



### ● **Resource mobilization at an historical high**

*As the Chinese saying goes: “food and fodder should go ahead of troops and horses”*

The establishment of an effective system is the precondition for the effective operation of an organization.

We now have visionary strategies in place and an excellent pool of talents, but we need more resources, especially from voluntary contributions. **This is where the challenge lies, and where the potentials are.**

Guided by the mandate of FAO, we have undertaken reform and innovation, advocated openness, transparency and inclusiveness, pushed forward the implementation of thematic strategies and won the trust, respect and support of our key partners.

Over the past four years, large contributors to the Organization’s **Regular Programme** have paid their contributions on time and in full, while the amount of **Voluntary Contributions** has increased significantly.

In 2022, FAO mobilized over USD 2.1 billion in voluntary contributions, a 51 percent increase over 2021, which was in itself a record-breaking year, and a 61 percent increase over the five-year average.

The new additions mainly came from larger than usual commitments from traditional contributors, relevant International Financial Institutions (IFIs), as well as specialized funds to address the impacts of the climate crisis, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

For instance, we received about USD 300 million additional funding from the members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee, our traditional partner. FAO’s close engagement with IFIs resulted in the provision of 24 percent of all voluntary contributions, equal to USD 514 million, either directly or through triangular cooperation arrangements with FAO Member recipients.



FAO's emergency and resilience work grew significantly both in absolute terms from USD 604 million in 2021 million to USD 1.16 billion in 2022, and as a percentage of the overall FAO portfolio from 43 percent to 57 percent.

- *A new people-centred culture*



Thanks to the pivotal role played by our talented workforce, FAO was able to change its business model and continue to improve its efficiency and impact.

FAO employees come from 184 countries of diverse cultures, religions and backgrounds. To effectively lead such a big multicultural team, I have always adhered to the principle of respect, understanding, inclusiveness, appreciation and mutual growth from **thinking together, learning together and working together.**

From the very first day, I have paid attention to concerns raised by staff, striving to create an inclusive, positive and motivating work environment, with improved working conditions.

In the first week of taking office, I met face-to-face with over 1000 employees – and was informed that I had set a precedent for an FAO Director-General to visit employees upon assuming office. This was a testament to my commitment of respecting and trusting employees, and **recognizing employees as a critical asset of the Organization.**



I have paid much of my attention to best practices to improve delivery and administrative efficiency, as well as the development of people-centered policies.

In the **recruitment process**, opportunities should be given not only to outstanding external candidates, but also to excellent internal candidates, based on merit.

I have dedicated special efforts to ensure that the HR Senior Team is professional, transparent and effective, with a merit-based competitive selection process for all vacancies issued, with due consideration for geographical and gender balance.

Over the past four years, 625 posts have been filled, of which 300 are Trust Fund posts, and 325 are Regular Programme posts. Of the Regular

Programme positions, 51 percent are external recruits; at P-level, 50.2 percent are external recruits; at D-level, 58 percent are external candidates; Women recruited for the Regular Programme posts accounted for 54%.

The **Employee Satisfaction Survey** launched in 2019 served as a catalyst for change across the Organization, and priority areas for concrete action were identified to respond to employee concerns, including internal communication, career development, and new ways of working. The second Survey conducted in 2022 demonstrates the commitment to regularly seek the inputs and opinions of all employees, and provides a way to assess and measure improvements in these and other areas.

**Infrastructure improvements** at headquarters, in the regions and in other offices, have also contributed to fostering a positive working environment.

On **gender parity**, FAO has achieved a score of 94 percent for indicators met or exceeded on the UN Action Plan on Gender Equality, and FAO has recently been recognized for excellence in implementing good practices that advance gender parity in the UN System.

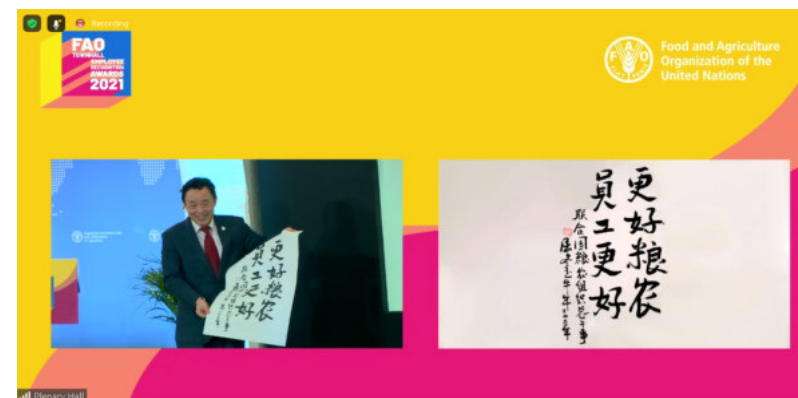
**Women and Youth have always been my priority within my vision of a new FAO.**

Upon taking office in 2019, I established the **FAO Women's Committee** and **FAO Youth Committee** – two firsts in the UN system.

These two committees have become important platforms and outreach for FAO to unite, collaborate and communicate with women and young people around the world.

They have swept in a breath of fresh air and helped to fill FAO with vigor, passion and an innovative spirit, in pursuit of poverty eradication, zero hunger and reduced inequalities through transformation of agrifood systems and rural development.

The committees played a particularly important role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by acting as a cohesive tool for solidarity and togetherness. They have also cultivated a culture of innovation across the Organization, and have contributed to the dynamic preparations and provided inspiring contributions for the successful annual World Food Forum.



We salute the diversity and talent of FAO's global workforce. I was the first FAO Director-General to advocate the convening of Town Hall meetings with all colleagues around the world. Over 2000 employees joined the first virtual Town Hall meeting in May 2021, and more than 4000 employees attended the second virtual meeting in December 2021, as well as in December 2022.

Town Halls provided the opportunity for colleagues to engage in discussions with senior managers, and with their peers and other colleagues from around the globe. They talked about their plans and aspirations, and put forward comments and suggestions. For many employees it was the first time they got to listen to their Director-General after many years of working in FAO. The Town Hall meetings have created a sense of belonging and connection, making all employees feel that they are a valuable member of the **FAO family**.

And for the first time in thirty years, we organized a global meeting with all FAO Representatives around the world. Taking advantage of virtual conferencing technologies, this provided an opportunity to interact with colleagues in the forefront of FAO's work on the ground, and to provide guidance. I have convened these virtual meetings with the FAORs on a bi-annual basis since taking office.

Another "first" is the introduction of **Employee Recognition Awards**, which has become an annual event recognizing and celebrating the contributions of FAO employees and teams around the world. In the past four years, we have recognized 400 Young and 400 Young-at-Heart employees, and about 50 Best Teams. It has helped to boost morale, strive for excellence and forge ahead in unity and solidarity.

## 2.EXTRAORDINARY ACHIEVEMENTS

*We have remained true to our original aspiration and to FAO's founding mission, redoubling efforts to turn our vision into reality and contribute to achieving global food security.*

The FAO Basic Texts (2017) and the FAO Constitution are at the core, and provide the over-arching rule-based guidance for the management and governance of the Organization, to address current and future challenges.

Since I took office in 2019, I have adopted a holistic and integrated approach, with science-based analysis, meticulous planning and decisive actions to push forward FAO's transformation with high levels of professionalism, efficiency, innovation and effectiveness leading to new tangible results.

The Four Betters provide the strategic direction to reach consensus, and to promote coordinated and concerted actions across all sectors, actors and interlinked activities across the economic, social and environmental dimensions globally.

The concept of the Four Betters informs FAO's work in supporting the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, especially SDG1 (No Poverty), SDG2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG10 (Reduced Inequalities).



After four years of joint efforts, we have built an Organization that has a systems approach at the core of its Strategic Framework, brings together the strengths of all stakeholders, is transparent and prioritizes teamwork, to better serve its Members and the farmers of the world. We have built a motivated, cohesive and productive workforce with high standards of competency and efficiency, as well as clear accountability and spirit of innovation.

In the face of extraordinary problems and new challenges, FAO has managed to find space for long-term development by optimizing its governance structure, expanding new functions, adopting new business models and bringing about changes. FAO is now better equipped to support the **transformation to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agrifood systems**, and to achieve the Four Betters in support of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, **leaving no one behind**.

### ● **FAO's Flagship Hand-in-Hand Initiative**

FAO's flagship Hand-in-Hand Initiative was first proposed in August 2019 as an evidence-based, country-led and country-owned initiative to consolidate strengths from diverse sources and help the most vulnerable countries and populations to eradicate poverty, hunger and malnutrition, and reduce inequalities internally and between countries.

The initiative currently supports 61 Members to identify and scale up interventions and investment with a new model for reciprocal contribution, so that recipients can access support through multiple channels.

In addition, the award-winning **FAO Hand-in-Hand Geospatial Platform** provides advanced information, including food security indicators and agricultural statistics, as global public goods to help countries and territories carry out research and analysis to identify their comparative advantages in food and agriculture.

This highly commended Platform unlocks millions of data layers from different domains and sources to serve as the key enabling tool for FAO's Hand-in-Hand Initiative, and to support digital agriculture experts, economists, government and non-government agencies, and other stakeholders working in the agrifood sectors.

- **On addressing the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Six months into my term of office, the global COVID-19 pandemic shocked the world in an unprecedented way. I immediately took the decision, together with my Core Leadership Team, to establish the **Crisis Management Team (CMT)** for corporate coordination, and to ensure FAO continued to operate efficiently and effectively, and agilely to adapt to the evolving circumstances based on science, following the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations, as well as relevant host country requirements.

Notwithstanding the difficult and unpredictable situation, we continued to provide professional support to Members when it was needed most, demonstrating the Organization's exceptional capacity and resilience to the crises.

As the **Designated Official for the UN in Italy**, I was responsible not only for the safety and health of FAO employees all over the world, but also for the other UN agencies based in Italy. With the full support of the Government of Italy I managed to fulfil my obligations effectively and in a timely manner.

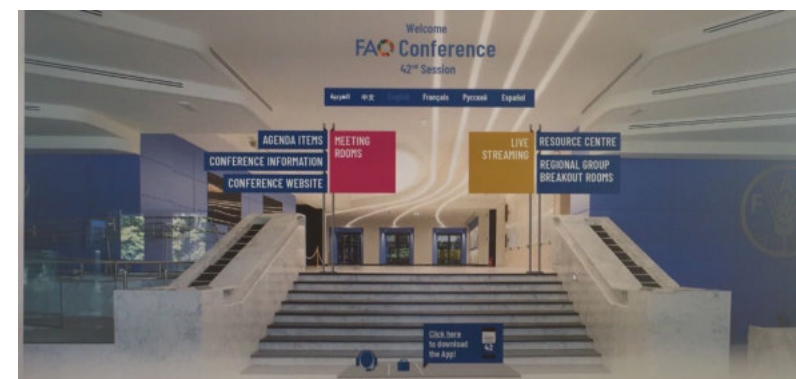
At the global level, FAO successfully demonstrated its capacity and professionalism to cope with the extraordinary emergency and to play a leading role in analysis and assessment, providing technical advice, based on science and evidence-based data, to inform decision making and actions.

*From the start of the pandemic I emphasized: "there is no health without food"*

To this end, FAO proposed a series of policy suggestions and anticipatory analysis reports to address the pandemic, providing a sound science basis for Members to tackle crises and ensure food security by sharing information. The Organization also developed a robust **COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme** to enable donors to leverage FAO's convening power and technical expertise to direct support where and when it was needed most.

FAO was called upon to take urgent actions and provide technical support to identify gaps, propose solutions, coordinate operations and advocate for joint efforts to address the vulnerability of global agrifood systems.

**FAO managed to turn crisis into opportunity.** In April 2020, FAO was the first UN agency to hold an international virtual meeting with simultaneous interpretation provided in all six UN languages.



- **World Food Forum (WFF)**

Four years ago, I presented my idea to create a World Food Forum. Considering that 16 October - **World Food Day** - celebrates the anniversary of the establishment of FAO, I moved to create a week-long WFF event to ensure that issues related **to food security remain high on the international development agenda.**

The WFF is designed by FAO as a global network of partners, and its activities are coordinated by FAO's Youth Committee. It seeks to build an effective platform to share opinions and encourage actions. It supports the global youth to act on their innovations, facilitates the dissemination of science-based ideas, and provides an opportunity for Members to showcase their strengths.

The WFF has seen the active participation by tens of thousands of youth champions, representatives of business, the academic community and research institutes, as well as civil society.



In 2021, the first fully virtual WFF achieved ground-breaking success. In 2022, the WFF was held innovatively around three major pillars of global agrifood systems transformation: **FAO Hand-in-Hand Investment Forum; FAO Science and Innovation Forum; and Global Youth Forum.** The event comprised plenary sessions and over 160 side events, with dozens of Heads of State and Government, nearly 100 Ministers, more than 1000 scientists and entrepreneurs, and over 40 000 global delegates joining the celebration in hybrid mode.

The WFF has spurred actions and cooperation across the globe to **steer agrifood systems transformation.** The three action-oriented

and interconnected forums explored related opportunities from their unique perspectives, and proposed ambitious solutions, while prioritizing the role of cross-generational collaboration in science, technology and innovation.

The WFF's platform received more than 110 000 visits during the week and helped to accelerate the process to **secure needed investment of more than USD 3 billion**, benefiting nearly 15 million people in the first 20 Hand-in-Hand countries participating in the Hand-in-Hand Investment Forum.

**Now, the WFF is on the path to becoming the world's most influential and dynamic comprehensive platform for science and innovation, policy dialogue, as well as investment and financing mobilization in agrifood systems.**

#### ● *Digital Initiatives*

**FAO's "1000 Digital Villages" Initiative (DVI)** is a country-led, user-centred initiative that supports the dissemination and enhanced use of digital tools in agrifood systems and rural areas, enabling farmers to use digital technologies to improve livelihoods and to achieve a sustainable agrifood transformation to meet the 2030 Agenda goals. The Regional Office in Asia Pacific has already established a digital solutions platform to serve value chain development in Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

For agricultural production, we are focusing on **e-Agriculture** for improved productivity through ICT and relevant digital solutions, including: climate smart, precision and intelligent facility agriculture. We promote **Digital Farmer Services** to enhance farmers' accessibility to various digital social, economic and financial services, and to support rural transformation through delivery of public services in health, education, jobs, welfare and tourism.

The Organization has also set a leading example within the UN system with its **paperless** operation mode. Members and staff across the world were able to participate in the Organization's Governing Body sessions and operational meetings during the lockdown thanks to

the accelerated progress made through the Digital FAO. It has also developed an internal **Data Protection Policy** to provide legal and policy framework for the Digital FAO, supported by a dedicated unit.



The **International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture**, launched by FAO in December 2020, is an inclusive multi-stakeholder forum for dialogue on the digitalization of food and agriculture to seek solutions, consensus and coordinated actions. The Platform's goal is to maximize the potential from digital innovations for everyone. The platform aims for countries to leapfrog through shared experiences and best practices.

#### ● **One Country One Priority Product (OCOP)**

The One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) initiative supports countries to leverage the unique potential of their special agricultural products, drive sustainable production through innovation, and maximize agricultural profitability, with a priority to build more sustainable value chains.

So far, 50 special products have been proposed by 80 countries to be prioritized for promotion. These products are important examples of under-utilized resources that have received lower attention than other commonly known products, but can significantly contribute to ensuring

food security and healthy diets, supporting a sustainable bio-economy, and improving farmers' livelihoods. OCOP aims to promote these priority products by providing technical support, capacity building, and funding to farmers and other stakeholders involved in producing and marketing the product.

#### ● **Green Cities Initiative**

The Green Cities Initiative aims to support urban transformation and a green economy, ensure food security for urban areas, and develop new business models combining food production, recreation, landscape preservation and health protection.

FAO launched the initiative at the UN General Assembly in 2020 to build future green cities globally, address the impacts of the climate crisis, and the challenges from urbanization and industrialization. The initiative focuses on urban agrifood systems transformation for high-quality development and individual wellbeing. It has now reached 80 cities globally, and we are working with Members and partners to meet the **target of 1000 cities by 2030**.

#### ● **On Science and Innovation**

The first ever **FAO Strategy on Science and Innovation** has instilled science and innovation and related technical instruments as one of the main cross-cutting pillars in FAO's work plan for the next ten years. The strategy brings science, technology and innovation to the fore in FAO's efforts to help create a more equitable world through transformation of agrifood systems.

We also launched a new knowledge product - **Agrifood Technology and Innovation Outlook (ATIO)** - to curate existing information on the current, measurable state of STI and upcoming changes, as well as their transformative potential, to inform evidence-based policy dialogue and decisions, including on investments.

### ● *Data for informed decision-making*

Over the past four years, FAO helped frame the response to the global food, energy and finance crises through a wide range of actions, including frequent briefings that contributed to information sharing, transparency and building a common understanding of the link between global markets, macroeconomic conditions, and the food security situation.

FAO collaborated with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank Group, the World Food Programme and the World Trade Organization on three **Joint Statements on the Global Food Security and Nutrition Crisis**; and plays an active role in the food work stream of the **UN Global Crisis Response Group**. FAO also continues to publish information notes analysing the global food and fertilizer market situation, and the impact of crises on them.

In addition, FAO has developed an innovative **online fertilizer trade tracker** to keep countries informed of fertilizer import needs and export availabilities. The fertilizer priority allocation tool for Africa, also developed by FAO, aims to inform decision-making by Members to support agricultural development. Meanwhile, FAO has been promoting the use of **Soil Nutrients Mapping** to enable more efficient use of fertilizers, increase soil nutrients efficiency and reducing its environmental impact.

FAO has also launched a series of digital maps, such as the **Global Map of Salt-Affected Soils**, to contribute to the control of soil salinity and increase agriculture productivity in those ecosystems.

Enhanced predictability and efficiency of markets requires transparent policy measures that may affect trade for food and agricultural products. In that regard, FAO supports the expansion of the **Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS)** to include fertilizers, oil seeds and logistics capacity, and through modelling capabilities to strengthen the foresight capacity of AMIS.

### ● *On FAO's Technical Work*

To address the impacts of the climate crisis, FAO has worked with Members, experts and partners in a transparent, open, inclusive and science-based approach to develop its new **Strategy on Climate Change**. This Strategy will lead the concerted efforts to build climate resilient and low emission agrifood systems and facilitate the achievement of all the SDGs.

During COP 25, 26 and 27, and in preparation for COP 28 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15), FAO has actively advocated the critical role of agrifood systems in climate solutions, and the centrality of biodiversity in food security and nutrition.

Regarding the criticality of water, FAO has raised Members' awareness to the urgency for improving water efficiency in food production and ensuring sustainable use of natural resources to avoid undue damage to ecosystems. FAO has urged countries to take actions, and organized water dialogues for formulating **National Water Roadmaps**, improving sustainable water management, and achieving the 2030 Agenda through cross-sectoral coordination.

In the context of the **2023 UN Water Conference**, FAO hosted the **Rome Water Dialogue in 2022** to advance the development and implementation of water-related strategies, and support Members to enhance water management, improve food security, and build climate resilience and adaptability. In addition, the main theme of the FAO Ministerial Conference in July 2023 is "**Water Resources Management for the Four Betters**".

Soil is another important source of food production, as 95 percent of food comes from healthy soil, yet 90 percent of the Earth's precious topsoil is likely to be at risk of degradation by 2050. Without changes in management methods and policies, degrading soils will put our ecosystems, climate and food security in jeopardy. Therefore, FAO has called for Members to focus on soil health and to position soil prominently in the global agenda.

In the past decade, **FAO's Global Soil Partnership (GSP)** has been working with countries and over 500 partners to address soil-related issues, including soil carbon sequestration, re-carbonization of soil, mapping global soil, shaping government policies and triggering action.

**Blue Transformation:** Fisheries and aquaculture is a priority for FAO, and part of our core mandate unique within the UN system. The Organization actively contributed to the **2022 United Nations Ocean Conference**, and proposed the **Blue Transformation Roadmap** to boost production of aquatic products, and meet people's dietary needs for healthy food. FAO has also provided science-based guidance on environment protection, sustainable management of resources, and biodiversity conservation.



A number of measurable targets on climate resilience have been established for Blue Transformation to help Members identify and respond to the influence, risks and potential impacts of the climate crisis, and to contribute to effective adaptation and mitigation measures. FAO is implementing adaptation projects on fisheries and aquaculture in more than 30 developing countries, and the participation of local governments and communities has ensured the projects meet specific local needs and benefit residents.

**Forest resources:** To transform agrifood systems and address the climate crisis, halting deforestation and forest degradation is crucial.

FAO is the co-lead agency within the UN system for the **Turning the Tide on Deforestation initiative**. With support from the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the Organization has supported Members to enhance synergy between agriculture and forestry, and strengthen sustainability and resilience of agrifood systems, including through field data collection to better understand the direct and potential drivers of deforestation and land degradation.



FAO has also assisted Members in forest ecosystems recovery to achieve Better Production, and mainstream work on biodiversity. Several large-scale programmes have been implemented to improve livelihood and adaptability, such as support for the Great Green Wall initiative, as well as the Action against Desertification in Africa. With the seventh replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), FAO is implementing the **Sustainable Forest Management Impact Programme on Dryland and the Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism**. FAO has joined forces with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to lead the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)**, to provide even greater support to Members on biodiversity conservation to address the impacts of the climate crisis.

**One Health:** During FAO's Chair of the Tripartite, established by FAO, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), the MoU was signed with UNEP to formally



establish the Quadripartite mechanism, and the first ever **One Health Joint Plan of Action** launched in March 2023.

The Plan of Action provides a framework to integrate systems and capacity so that we can collectively better prevent, predict, detect, and respond to health threats. This initiative seeks to improve the health of humans, animals, plants, and the environment, while contributing to sustainable development.

FAO has been designated as one of the few implementing agencies for the **Pandemic Fund**, and after WHO, we have received the highest number of expressions of interest from countries. During 2024, we will focus on the formulation and delivery of high quality and transformative projects.

The **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Platform** was also launched to catalyse a global movement for action against AMR. The Platform helped to ensure the success of the High-level Ministerial Conference on AMR in Muscat and the outcome Declaration, as well as the Sixth Meeting of the Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance held in person in Barbados.

#### ● **On Emergency Assistance**

**Afghanistan** is one of the countries with the highest reliance on agriculture. FAO has delivered livelihood assistance to 9 million Afghan people, covering 50 percent of the rural population who are facing severe food insecurity (IPC 3 and above levels). In particular, FAO sent wheat production toolkits to local farmers for winter wheat planting. Each package includes not only certified premium seeds that are sourced locally, but also a technical training programme to ensure the best possible harvest to meet year-round demand for cereal for a family of six.



Between 2019 and 2020, when an unprecedented upsurge of **desert locust** plagued the **Horn of Africa** and spread to other regions, FAO stood at the forefront to step up resource mobilization and emergency actions to control the desert locust across more than 365 000 hectares of land, covering Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Kenya, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen, and the Sahel Region in West Africa.

FAO's efforts have saved 720 000 tonnes of cereal from being destroyed, enough to feed 5 million people for a year. In addition, another 350 000 pastoral households have been spared from distress, avoiding a three-dimension calamity due to the locust plague, the COVID-19 pandemic and severe drought.

Faced with the urgent threat of **Fall Armyworm (FAW)**, FAO has established a global coordination mechanism for open and collaborative dialogue to identify damages to farmland, produce science-based and targeted solutions, mobilize needed technologies and resources, and roll out global actions for control and prevention. Since 2019, the spread of FAW has been contained effectively, reducing loss of crops by 5-10 percent.

In order to assist countries facing crises, FAO has strengthened its support by focusing on preparedness and prevention to mitigate

impacts. The Organization has provided emergency assistance to nearly 4 million rural populations in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, and ensured over 4 million children have access to milk every day. FAO has also distributed cash transfers to help over 1.5 million people meet their immediate needs for at least three months, as well as farming inputs for almost 400 000 people to meet their annual cereal need.

When the **Horn of Africa** was devastated by a **severe drought** unseen in decades, FAO launched a rapid response plan to provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance. The efforts included: delivery of feed, clean water and veterinary services for the survival of livestock and to restore productivity; distribution of drought-tolerant and early-maturing varieties of sorghum, maize, cowpea and other beans and vegetables; and cash transfers and cash-for-work programmes to ensure food access for the most vulnerable population.

In **Ukraine**, FAO has leveraged its unique technical expertise to address the grain storage deficit. Facilities supplied by FAO can store up to 6 million tons of grain, equal to 30 percent of the grain storage needs. In addition, FAO has also provided emergency assistance to more than 80 000 Ukrainian rural people, delivering potato and vegetable seeds, and cash transfers.

### 3.A COMMON UNDERSTANDING FOR A BETTER FAO

Driven by an unprecedented series of interconnected crises and complex challenges the world of today is very different to the one four years ago. Pressures on the environment, economy and humanity continued to rise.

The global climate crisis continues to affect millions, jeopardizing lives and livelihoods.

A catastrophic pandemic of global proportions brought the world to a halt, causing a historic global economic slowdown.

The number of people affected by chronic hunger continued to grow and severe food insecurity increased over the last four years in all regions of the world.

Even with the first signs of global recovery from the pandemic, the world's food and agricultural markets were exacerbated by the high prices of energy and fertilizer, and currency devaluation, and were further shaken by the war in Ukraine, coupled with other protracted conflicts in many parts of the world.

FAO adapted and evolved to answer the international call for support and solidarity.

*I am proud to state that FAO is ready to face the challenges of the next four years together with you.*

I am confident that the rigorous preparatory work that went into designing FAO's Strategic Framework, together with the joint in-depth thinking by a multitude of contributors, makes the Strategic Framework fully adequate to guide FAO's work in the next four years, and beyond.

*The past four years that have written a new chapter in FAO's history.*

A chapter that points to profound transformation. Our experience should be cherished as it reflects our common aspiration to think, learn and contribute together.



● ***Informed by the past, my reflections going forward:***

**First:** and above all, that the success of FAO relies on the **ownership, trust and support of FAO Members.**

**Second:** the governance of FAO must follow a **rules-based approach**, in accordance with the Organization's Basic Texts (2017).

**Third:** the importance of having created a **common FAO visual identity**, integrating the SDGs in the Organization's culture, and to build an open, bright, and inspiring workforce and workplace to deepen our sense of pride and purpose.

**Fourth:** the need to recruit **global talents**. FAO has undertaken a transparent and open recruitment process for all vacancies to select the best candidates, forging a professional team that comprises a sound knowledge structure, gender balance, and diverse expertise, and is cross-generational.

**Fifth:** the need to place **full trust in colleagues**, and relying on employees for **effective delivery**, while stressing mutual learning, support and respect. Divisions and field offices have focused on their core businesses and strengths to implement key projects at the global level, creating a **mutually motivating working culture.**

**Sixth: promoting integrity and rewarding excellence** to create positive dynamism. The Employee Recognition Awards recognize the contributions of excellent individuals and teams, firmly establishing the ONE FAO culture of teamwork, and creating a common institutional memory.

**Seventh:** prioritizing **key projects and important donors**, while leveraging multilateral financial institutions' focus on agriculture, food, biodiversity, climate change and the environment, with a view to exploring channels for a substantial **increase in resource mobilization.**

**Eighth: focusing on ethics and principles by strengthening internal control mechanisms**, and upholding rules and regulations and workspace integrity to form a multi-level management system with clear accountabilities. FAO unwaveringly rejects nepotism and cronyism, and has ensured all cases are handled in line with the prevailing rules and regulations;

**Ninth:** addressing problems and challenges with **determination and courage**, as well as with innovative approaches to seek science and evidence-based solutions. FAO has always sought to maximize outputs

in a cost efficient manner by **doing more with less.**

**Tenth:** practicing true **multilateralism** and building ONE FAO through inclusive and balanced consultations to reach **consensus**, in line with FAO's mandate and functions as a UN specialized agency and making every effort to obtain the understanding and support of all Members.

#### 4.PERSPECTIVE: HOW FAO CAN BETTER CONTRIBUTE FOR A BETTER WORLD



*Cited from FAO CONSTITUTION*

##### *Preamble*

*The Nations accepting this Constitution, being determined to promote the common welfare by furthering separate and collective action on their part for the purpose of:*

- *raising levels of nutrition and standards of living of the peoples under their respective jurisdictions;*
- *securing improvements in the efficiency of the production and distribution of all food and agricultural products;*
- *bettering the condition of rural populations;*
- *and thus contributing towards an expanding world economy and ensuring humanity's freedom from hunger;*

*hereby establish the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*

Fully committed to global food and agriculture, I have maintained a humble approach, learning through best practices from colleagues in the frontline, and from Members, to forge consensus and press ahead with solidarity under FAO Basic Texts (2017).

Looking to the future, guided by the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, I will lead FAO, with a rules-based ethic, treating and recognizing all employees as the most important asset of the Organization, and valuing the trust and support of Members.

An Organization that will continue playing an active role within the UN family promoting greater collaboration across the UN for improved tangible results.

An Organization that continues supporting the UN reforms towards repositioning the UN development system so that it is best able to make progress on the SDGs and to better meet current challenges.

Under my leadership, FAO will continue to optimize resources and maximize outputs.

The Organization will operate as ONE FAO to provide professional service, mobilize resources, and build an open, transparent, efficient and effective operating environment.

We will respect talents, innovation and best practices, and speed up the process to become a world-class modern organization.

#### ● **Four Betters**

Our work will focus on the 20 Priority Programme Areas under the Four Betters to implement multidisciplinary and action-oriented plans. The identified Value-Added Impact Areas (VAIAs) will prioritize key actions and initiatives for the benefit of all Members, and for a greater contribution to sustainable development.

#### **On Better Production:**

**Seed Value Chain:** will promote greater incorporation of innovative and efficiency-enhancing mechanization and digitalization processes to enhance farmers' access to, and use of, quality seeds and planting

materials in sustainable cropping systems.

Through the **One Country One Priority Product (OCOP)**, modern technologies and facilities and equipment will be introduced in the segments of the product's value chain which need further strengthening. This initiative will support Members to leverage the unique potentials of their special agricultural products for inclusive economic growth and mutual complementarity, and development of international agricultural trade.

**BLUEWaves Spearheading Blue Transformation:** To support Members in developing national plans for aquaculture, promote the uptake of best practices and advance digital development, and sustainable management of aquaculture.

**Modernizing the Farmer Field School (FFS):** Further promotion of this approach would highlight local experience and expertise and could be further scaled and modernized through digital transformation and innovative thinking, so that farmers are fully empowered by technologies for extensive engagement in business. Capacity building for young farmers, rural women and producers' organizations will improve their technical capacity and business operations, develop inclusive and sustainable value chains, create decent jobs and increase income generation.



### ***On Better Nutrition:***

**Making Healthy Diets Affordable to All:** FAO will work with WHO and other agencies for joint actions, seek consensus on agreed indicators and composition of healthy diets, and track progress in healthy diets in various global contexts. FAO will further strengthen work on food safety through the Joint FAO/WHO Centre.

We will use the new **Cost and Affordability of a Healthy Diet (CoAHD) indicators**, to provide a global operational measure of people's economic access to locally available foods in the proportions needed for health.

With its sphere of influence across agrifood systems and the positioning of nutrition as central to its mandate, FAO is uniquely placed to contribute to **global efforts to reduce the prevalence of overweight, obesity and non-communicable diseases** through the support it provides to countries in transforming their agrifood systems, as well as with other UN agencies and development partners.

**Nuclear science has multiple food safety applications:** Through the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre on Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture we will continue to make available to Members analytical methods and tools for detecting and managing residues and contaminants in food.

**FAO Data for Healthy Diets Expansion Project:** FAO will leverage existing data platforms to link national, household, and individual consumption data that can be used to identify agrifood systems priorities to ensure healthy diets, and fill in data gaps.

**Increasing food availability by reducing food loss and waste:** FAO will continue to engage in the food loss and waste global agenda, building on the consensus and commitment by the G7 and the G20 to continue to address FLW to achieve the SDGs. FAO will introduce innovative technologies to improve efficiency in the value chain, as well as innovations in institutional arrangements, and data collection will be enhanced to inform intervention packages.

This work will benefit from **FAO's Food Loss and Waste database**, the largest online collection of data on both food loss and food waste

and causes reported in scientific journals, academic publications, and grey literature, among others. Leading the **Technical Platform on the Measurement and Reduction of Food Loss and Waste**, FAO will continue facilitating information-sharing and in-depth discussion through its community of practice.

FAO together with partners has provided significant evidence that the current crisis reinforces the growing call for **repurposing agricultural and food policy support** from national governments, which is currently not targeted at meeting challenges related to sustainability objectives, such as climate change, nutrition, and future preparedness. Redirecting these resources to support the sustainability transition can address multiple challenges in high- and middle-income countries, and low-income countries will need access to additional concessional resources to implement their transition.



### ***On a Better Environment:***

**Green Cities:** FAO will scale up measures and actions under the Green Cities Initiative, to promote urban-rural integrated development and future cities, reaching the target of 1000 cities by 2030.

**Addressing Water Scarcity for Agriculture and Environment:** FAO will facilitate the promotion of investment, policies, governance and best practices for sustainable increase in water productivity. Tools will be

provided for strategic planning of optimal and sustainable allocation of scarce water resources. A water-reform agenda will be implemented and technical support will be rolled out to facilitate access to financial resources and investment. FAO will also strengthen integrated water management, including by supporting Members to develop National Water Roadmaps, ensuring inclusion of agriculture, integrated water management and land use into national policies and plans, and convene a Rome Water Dialogue.

**Climate Action for Resilient Agriculture Transformation (CARAT):** FAO will fully implement its new Strategy on Climate Change, including by establishing a global climate action platform for greater delivery, and coordination of enhanced policy and technical support to countries, regions and partners globally. An ambitious increase in climate finance and investments estimated at a total of USD 300 million per year is foreseen to support climate adaptation and mitigation action in production systems.

**Restoring the Environment for Productive Agriculture, Investment and Resilience (REPAIR):** FAO will focus on sustainable management and use of natural resources to scale up land restoration, improve productivity, ecosystem services, agricultural production systems and landscape resilience. FAO will establish a global digital information system on water and land resources for crops, further develop soil nutrients mapping, and guide irrigation investment and governance through global irrigation demand and potential mapping. FAO will also support Members to implement the new Global Biodiversity Framework and develop a second action plan for the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors.

### ***On a Better Life:***

**Leaving no one behind:** A Better Life for all places the concept of leaving no one behind at the centre of FAO's work, to ensure everyone has access to enough and nutritious food for their health and wellbeing. Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) will continue to be a priority for FAO.

**Hand-in-Hand Initiative:** FAO will continue to implement the Hand-in-Hand Initiative to converge strengths from all stakeholders, and further build the South-North and South-South Cooperation Platform for developing countries to achieve mutual complementarity on agriculture resources, technologies and market. The platform will facilitate knowledge sharing and investment mobilization to help the most vulnerable countries reduce poverty, eliminate hunger and malnutrition, and reduce inequalities.



**Resilient and Inclusive Rural Transformation (RIRT):** Efforts will continue to support inclusive and resilient rural development. Policies, programming and investment focus will be prioritized to support this objective and contribute to the eradication of inequalities in gender; urban and rural areas; development and wealth. FAO will also continue to focus on the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples as an important source of innovation for targeted promotion to meet specific needs. FAO will remain a key contributor to the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus supporting lasting peace, in all its interventions.

FAO will assist with **reversing the trend of acute food insecurity**, ensuring future-proof livelihoods for the most vulnerable groups and rural populations. Real-time monitoring and assessment will be carried on food security, crisis severity and disaster situations in countries affected by food crisis, to support swift emergency **response and**

**recovery.** FAO will also leverage its experience to support **disaster prevention and resilience**, as well as **recovery and rehabilitation** at the country level. We will expand the coverage of families receiving aid during acute food insecurity, and endeavour to deliver on targets regarding **famine prevention and climate adaptation.**

To **ensure agriculture remains the most important element in emergency humanitarian assistance**, we must reposition the goals, scale and priorities; build connections between urgent emergency response and resilience investment; support national development priorities and strategies of countries; and give full play to FAO's strengths for a comparative advantageous position within the UN system.

There is a fundamental role for **collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) to transform agrifood systems.** RBA collaboration is needed to continue to transition from crises interventions to longer-term development. To be more flexible and fit for purpose, we must continue to **strive to increase our efficiency in collective delivery on the ground** and within our organizations.

We need closer coordination at all levels in our headquarters in Rome, but also more importantly to have a **holistic joint design for better production and rural development at the country level.**

Working together with the other UN agencies to support Members in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, each of us has our own unique contributions to make, yet working together as ONE UN.

### Five key dimensions for the next four years:

- **First: Further increasing resource mobilization and scaling-up both traditional and new partnerships**

FAO must transform its approach and dare to try and innovate. **Resource mobilization can no longer be simply transactional for FAO.** We must build lasting partnerships with donors; further leverage strategic partnerships with the private sector; strengthen collaboration

and alignment of efforts to support the transformation of agrifood systems; and achieve the Four Betters.

We must also take proactive actions for innovative use of the huge potential of investment from IFIs and accelerate the establishment of **transformative partnerships** with the public sector, private sector, international financial institutions and civil society.

We must take strategic initiatives to demonstrate the value and long-term impact that FAO can create with donor investment; we will also call for more flexible and un-earmarked funding to address most urgent crises; and we will facilitate to increase investment and financing for agricultural commodities, services, infrastructure, and technology.

- **Second: Fully leveraging FAO's potential and advancing innovation-driven transformation**

We will focus on strengthening our work on data through **FAO's global public goods**, including the use of geospatial data in agricultural statistics; we will continue to develop normative products to strengthen the interface between science and policy, and improve science-based decision-making in agrifood systems. FAO will actively be promoting exchanges and cooperation with the world's leading research institutions and universities at regional and global levels, and build regional knowledge hubs with distinctive features and complementary functions.

FAO will create a **Center of Excellence in Digital Agriculture** to support Members in adopting digital technology, improving data governance, and strengthening relevant regulations and capacity building.

The **FAO Innovation Fund and Incubator** will be set up to identify, cultivate and pilot innovation proposals with promising prospect, and improve FAO's strategic capability to lead innovation in agrifood systems.

FAO will also establish the **Global Food and Agriculture Museum and Network** to celebrate traditional heritages of food and agriculture, and systematically plan the work of **Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS).**



The new **Digital FAO** will fully support Members in closing digital gaps. We will also raise awareness to the potentials of global agrifood systems in addressing the impacts of the climate crisis.

*Innovative financing will continue to be a key driving force for implementation of thematic strategies and we will continue to rely on science and innovation for effective measures to eradicate hunger and promote transformation of agrifood systems for more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development.*

● **Third: The World Food Forum will assist in promoting tailored investment plans of Hand-in-Hand countries to provide solid support for less developed countries**

The Forum will also call for global youth to contribute to the transformation of agrifood systems, and it will provide a platform of exchange and collaboration for the private sector, academic community and research institutions.

*At FAO, you will hear the strongest voices and manifestations of science and innovation, and the World Food Forum will be one of the most influential, open, inclusive, effective and distinctive global platforms.*

● **Fourth: Strengthening FAO's capacity and capability to serve Members.**

FAO will further strengthen its work related to technical and policy support, youth and women and set up related functions serving Members and the general public. Delivering at scale on larger country-focused and programmatic investments is imperative. Business and operational practices must be evaluated and streamlined. This will ensure that country offices are strengthened with optimized and modernized work procedures to become the window of service needed by Members. Regional and sub-regional offices will improve coordination and set up task forces as necessary. FAO headquarters will operate in a transparent, efficient, science-based and professional manner, providing a holistic design and overall coordination, striving towards making FAO the world's most authoritative food and agriculture knowledge centre.

*We should be the first entry point providing solutions for Members and partners in the face of challenges.*

● **Fifth: Improving human resources development and attracting talents from all corners of the world**

FAO staff will be motivated to forge a professional team of excellence with appropriate expertise and a strong sense of commitment. The Organization will endeavour to create a harmonious and inspiring workspace, providing a motivating platform for career development, and improving performance evaluation and incentive mechanisms. Jointly, we will implement FAO's mandate by learning together, working together and contributing together for more and better delivery and transformative development.





*As FAO approaches its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we will strive to make it a more dynamic and reinvigorated organization.*

#### **Five critical entry points:**

**1.FAO will increase its support for SIDS, LLDCs and LDCs by building adaptive capacities and responding to specific needs of vulnerable groups in those countries through resource mobilization.** FAO will host a global collaboration network of SIDS and LDCs, and ensure support for SIDS, LLDCs and LDCs is well-coordinated. This support will be further enhanced through increased RBA and other UN partner collaboration at the country level, in particular for the most vulnerable countries.

**2.FAO will set up a global sustainable value chain collaboration network for research and development, investment and production on tropical agriculture to facilitate investment in tropical and subtropical ecosystems for agriculture and forestry.** Through OCOP and other supportive programming, we will improve conservation and sustainable use of agricultural resources and biodiversity and seek new opportunities for agrifood systems transformation.

**3.FAO will develop a global strategy for healthy and low carbon animal protein production reducing stress on resources and the**

**environment through improved efficiencies at all levels, from land and herd management to feed conversion.** It will support animal health and breeding improvements and core technology innovation in poultry and aquaculture sectors, enhance scale-up, standardization and smart development, and ensure global livestock and fisheries/aquaculture systems are economically viable, environmentally friendly, diverse and distinctive.

**4.FAO will respond to the climate crisis by prioritizing agroforestry systems that are adaptive and resilient, and implementing integrated land restoration and water management solutions to rehabilitate productivity, improve food security and create employment opportunities through mitigation and adaptation efforts.**

**5.FAO will also fully respect the recommendations of the Oversight Advisory Committee and professional evaluation agencies to enhance its internal management,** and enable harmonious, smooth and efficient operations, including through inspection, auditing, workplace ethics and conflict resolution. FAO will continue to be fully committed to a zero-tolerance policy for harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, sexual exploitation and abuse of authority.

#### ***In Conclusion:***

*Looking back, what FAO has achieved over the past four years is built on your collective efforts.*

*What FAO aspires to deliver in the next four years requires us to gather our joint strengths and forge ahead together.*

*I reaffirm that in the next four years I will work closely with you, partners, my leadership team and staff to translate FAO's strategies into actions, and initiatives into outcomes, and our global network will be better positioned to make even greater contributions.*

*Let us join hands and make sure that FAO achieves more and better in the new era.*

*I continue to believe that food and agriculture is critical for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and all the SDGs,*

*And that agriculture provides the most inclusive solution to eradicate poverty and hunger, and reduce inequalities.*

*Over the past four years, the global economy has suffered major setbacks due to multiple and overlapping crises, and our agrifood systems have become more fragile, and vulnerable groups have to endure even more severe hardship.*

*I am therefore convinced that the world needs FAO more than ever before to play a greater and better role in supporting Members to transform their agrifood systems and achieve all the SDGs, especially SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).*

*It has now become even more urgent to further integrate and coordinate the Four Betters in our work of developing all agrifood sectors.*

*In 2019, I said “we do not have much time left”.*

*Now, four years later, I am saying: “we have even less time available to deliver on our mandate”.*

*Over the next four years, we must continue to work tirelessly and not lose time,*

*And we must not shy away from challenges, no matter how big or how complex.*

*It is our mission to strive for excellence, as we provide the answers that befit our history and provide a better future for the generations to come.*

*Over the next four years, FAO will continue on its journey towards becoming a modern and innovative organization, which is digital, open, transparent, and trusted for win-win cooperation.*

*We will strive to be even prouder to be a part of FAO, and we will continue to collectively contribute to make this Organization even more dynamic, dedicated and harmonious family.*

*Let us unite as ONE FAO focused on providing service to the world’s*

*farmers, ensuring global transformative development, and effective support for the most vulnerable populations.*

*Let us embrace innovation, strengthen internal management, and improve delivery, accountability and transparency.*

*I believe we can continue to build an excellent and professional FAO,*

*And I am convinced of FAO’s central and critical contribution to ending poverty and hunger, and to creating a better world for all, leaving no one behind.*

*Thank you.*

