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Director-General's Foreword

The 2020-21 biennium was marked by the exceptional challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and related overall socio-economic impact. Extreme poverty increased for the first time in a generation and the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity rose more in 2020 than the previous five years combined. Rising food and fertilizer prices, upsurges in desert locusts and other transboundary pests and zoonotic diseases, and increased frequency of extreme climate events, further put the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at risk.

As described in this Programme Implementation Report, FAO rose to the challenge by implementing a global, holistic and multipronged strategy to support Members and regions in containing the effects of the pandemic. Interventions ranged from humanitarian action to longer-term development priorities, including focusing on a "One Health" approach, boosting farmer resilience, and making data available for decision-making. The COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme strengthened the long-term resilience of agrifood systems, leveraging the Organization's mobilization capacity to lead international efforts through a flexible multilateral approach, in a concerted effort to build back better.

The potential of data and space technology for supporting evidence-based decision-making was empowered by the Hand-in-Hand Geospatial Platform, the DataLab, the Emergencies Data Hub and other digital tools providing data on water productivity, food prices, crop production and early warnings on agricultural stress, animal health and zoonotic diseases.

FAO contributed actively to the UN Food Systems Summit and its preparation, and remained engaged and committed to the repositioning of the UN development system. A newly defined framework for engaging with the private sector strategically expands areas of cooperation. New strategies on Climate Change and Science and Innovation are under development, through highly consultative processes, and will further strengthen the quality and relevance of FAO's support.

Results were delivered in line with commitments in the Programme of Work 2020-21 despite the unprecedented constraints and challenges, demonstrating the Organization's flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness. Expenditure reached 99.6 percent of the

Regular Programme and extrabudgetary spending increased by 12 percent compared to 2018-19. Resource mobilization hit an all-time high, with USD 2.7 billion mobilized in 2020-21.

Business continuity was ensured throughout the pandemic lockdowns, while putting duty of care and employees' well-being first and foremost. Major strides were made in FAO becoming truly digital. Virtual meetings in all languages facilitated increased participation in Governing Bodies' discussions, and a more inclusive and transparent process.

The deep reforms rolled-out since my arrival continue to make FAO more agile, participative, transparent, efficient, and fit-for-purpose to tackle the challenges ahead. The Core Leadership supports me in all aspects of FAO's work, thus ensuring transparency and knowledge-sharing at the highest levels. The renewed flat and modular organizational structure optimizes coordination and cooperation among FAO teams, with clear accountability mechanisms including through the A and B reporting lines. A strong system of internal control is in place, which is further enhanced through regular briefings by the Inspector General to senior managers in all locations.

The biennium 2020-21 marked a turning point: as one programming cycle closed, the Strategic Framework 2022-31 was endorsed by Conference. Its compelling narrative of supporting 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 for all, leaving no one behind, will guide our work in the years ahead. I count on the continued effective collaboration with FAO Members, all United Nations entities, and other partners in the journey ahead for the Organization.

QU Dongyu
Director-General

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About this Report

1. The Programme Implementation Report (PIR) informs the membership about the Organization's initiatives, areas of work and results achieved during the 2020-21 biennium as planned in the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21 (PWB) and subsequent adjustments. As part of the established accountability documents¹ and building on the Mid-Term Review Synthesis Report 2020, it reports on key achievements and results under the established results framework, as well as expenditures, resource mobilization and lessons learned with regards to both FAO's technical work serving Members at global, regional and country level, and the internal enabling environment.

2. This PIR informs of key technical achievements of the Organization through the lens of the guiding aspiration to support the implementation of the Agenda 2030 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 – while at the same time ensuring accountability for reporting on Output and Outcome indicators within the framework laid out in the Medium Term Plan 2018-21. The main text of the Report provides a focused narrative around key selected initiatives and achievements, with the full corporate accountability information included in the Annexes.

3. *Chapter I – Accelerating progress towards the SDGs* provides highlights of areas of technical work and key related achievements in support of the implementation of the Agenda 2030. The full breadth of the Organization's results are captured and

communicated through the corporate results framework in *Annex 1*, Chapters 1 through 5.

4. *Chapter II – Renewing FAO* presents highlights in strengthening the Organization to improve its capacity to serve Members, with a focused overview of key developments and achievements in leveraging data and statistics, and technology and innovative approaches, mainstreaming issues related to Small Island Developing States, youth, gender and Indigenous Peoples, implementing a programmatic approach to FAO's work and increasing institutional inclusivity, efficiency and effectiveness so as to leave no one behind. A full account of results in this area is provided through the corporate results framework in *Annex 1*, Chapters 6 through 14.

5. *Chapter III – Resources management* provides highlights on expenditures and mobilization of resources. *Annex 3* provides more detailed reporting on the evolution of total resources, the performance of the Programme of Work, use of the unspent balance of 2018-19, special budgetary chapters and the Multidisciplinary Fund, resource mobilization and cost of the field programme.

6. Other Annexes provide information on resource overview (*Annex 2*), the monitoring methodology (*Annex 4*), progress on FAO Gender Policy Minimum Standards and the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (*Annex 5*), climate change (*Annex 6*), multilingualism and the implementation of FAO language policy (*Annex 7*), unscheduled and cancelled sessions (*Annex 8*), and gender and geographical distribution (*Annex 9*).

I. Accelerating progress towards the SDGs

Response to global context



COVID-19

7. FAO took swift actions to support countries in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, while maintaining continuity and adapting to new working modalities. Through the FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, launched in close consultation with national stakeholders, FAO adopted a flexible and comprehensive approach to demand-driven support for addressing the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic and providing a humanitarian response. The Programme enabled partners to leverage the Organization's convening power, real-time data, early warning systems and technical expertise to direct support where and when it was needed most.



8. FAO addressed the impact of COVID-19 and other pre-existing shocks and stresses in an integrated manner through humanitarian response plans, re-programming resources to reach 24 million people in situations of acute food insecurity. The Organization also addressed direct and secondary effects through increased safety measures at livestock markets, sensitization activities among food workers,

¹ The Tripartite Alliance comprises FAO, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) formally joined the Alliance in early 2022.

dissemination of risk communication and community engagement materials, and contingency planning for pastoralists' safe transhumance to winter pastures.

9. In monitoring the impact of COVID-19, FAO made available quality data and analyses for decision-making through rapid data collection based on the food insecurity experience scale and provided information on the impact of the pandemic in the *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021*. In addition, data collection in 25 Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries assessed recent evolutions of food insecurity at national and subnational levels, and the FAO DataLab's interactive Big Data Tool published daily food prices, tweets and news to analyse the impact on food chains.

10. Through the expansion and scaling-up of social protection policies and measures on tenure rights, FAO promoted inclusive economic recovery and rural employment, and mitigated the impacts of the pandemic on gender and the use of child labour. Cash interventions and training on good agricultural practices for vulnerable households boosted smallholders' resilience.

11. FAO early warning systems and the Tripartite Alliance¹ monitored the global COVID-19 situation at the animal-human interface, sharing information through the GLEWS++² while advancing a comprehensive One Health approach and seeking to prevent the next zoonotic pandemic.

12. The Food Coalition, proposed by the Government of Italy and led by FAO, mobilized

² Joint FAO/OIE/WHO Global Early Warning System for health threats and emerging risks at the human-animal-ecosystems interface.

political, financial and technical assistance in the wake of the pandemic, becoming a vital element of the food security agenda of the G20 under the Italian Presidency. As a global multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral voluntary alliance and flexible coordination mechanism for safeguarding food security and nutrition and promoting sustainable agrifood systems transformation, the Coalition provides innovative ideas, advocacy opportunities, a forum for dialogue, technical experts, and expertise in response to emerging national needs and global priorities.

UN Food Systems Summit



13. The UN Food Systems Summit, convened by the Secretary-General in 2021, called for collective action of global stakeholders to transform the way the world produces, consumes and thinks about food. It launched commitments and proposed bold actions to deliver progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Throughout the 18-month Summit preparation process, FAO advocated for the relevance of agrifood systems in delivering on the 2030 Agenda, succeeding to elevate the political discourse for more sustainable and equitable food systems.

14. Structured around five Action Tracks, the process generated more than 2 200 ideas for accelerated action, consolidated with the support of an Independent Scientific Group, into 52 solution clusters for consideration by countries in relation to their own contexts and priorities. FAO supported the Knowledge and Policy workstream, the facilitation of dialogues, and helped to develop the capacities of food systems stakeholders to identify, design and scale-up coordinated initiatives to catalyse meaningful food systems transformation, appropriate to local contexts.

15. Over 1 500 national and independent dialogues informed the development of transformative food systems pathways. Across all regions, FAO provided technical inputs to, and engaged partners in national and regional dialogues and development of pathways under the leadership of the national conveners and in full coordination with the Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams. Of the 148 countries having led national dialogues, 112 developed a national pathway for food systems transformation to reflect a vision of what governments and stakeholders expect of their agrifood systems by 2030.

16. FAO hosted the Pre-Summit, which convened over 500 delegates from 108 countries and 22 000 citizens from 183 countries. It brought together the insights from the dialogues and the ideas and analyses from the Action Tracks, Levers of Change, Scientific

Group and Constituency Groups, consolidating them into a common vision and setting a tone of bold ambition and commitment to action.

17. At the Food Systems Summit, over 37 000 registered delegates and 165 Members called for international and regional cooperation and COVID-19 recovery, committing to eradicating hunger and improving nutrition, taking action towards climate change mitigation and adaptation, and supporting small-scale and family farmers through investment and technology.

18. The Summit also delivered a portfolio of Areas of Action and Coalitions emerged within these Areas of Action to help countries connect local through to global action. FAO provides technical assistance and raises awareness in support of, *inter alia*, Zero Hunger; Healthy Diets; Food is Never Waste; Agroecology; Sustainable Productivity Growth; Blue and Aquatic Foods; Repurposing Public Support; Halting Deforestation and Conversion; Indigenous Peoples Food Systems; and Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Food Systems.

19. In addition, the UN Secretary-General tasked the Rome-based Agencies to coordinate the UN Food Systems Summit follow-up activities designating FAO as a leading host for the Coordination Hub, on behalf of the UN system, for: (i) coordination and facilitation of UN and others' technical and policy support to countries for national pathway implementation; (ii) strategic thought leadership; (iii) an ecosystem of support and stakeholder engagement; (iv) communications and advocacy, and (v) preparation of a 2023 Stocktaking Process.

Working with the UN at country level

20. In 2020-21, the United Nations Development System (UNDS) repositioning remained core to developments in FAO. The Organization has delivered its strategic priorities in alignment with key UN development agendas, promoting synergies and ensuring that FAO's normative, programmatic and policy support were more integrated to support UN joint efforts to assist Members in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

21. By the end of 2021, the Organization was an active member of 130 UN country teams, contributed to the formulation of 53 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, participated in 119 UN Joint Programmes, and joined 97 percent of the results and functional groups, leading or co-leading more than half of them.

22. Under the leadership of the UN Secretary-General, FAO actively contributed to the UN response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In partnership with the

Rome-based Agencies, FAO successfully advocated for embedding food security and nutrition in the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID and assumed leadership for four programmatic indicators. In addition, agreement to establish a Food Systems Coordination Hub in early 2022, hosted by FAO, in collaboration with UN entities, was reached, also to assist Resident Coordinators and UN country teams in supporting the implementation of food systems national pathways. FAO was also an active player and contributor to all five Regional Fora on Sustainable Development and is forging regional dialogues and consolidating UN regional assets through this platform.

23. FAO supported the Funding Compact, enhancing collaboration at country level and boosting FAO's collaboration with UN multipartner trust funds and climate finance institutions. It also remained highly engaged in the UN Efficiency Agenda, contributing to the development of 114 country-level Business Operation Strategies, expected to lead to quality improvements and efficiencies for FAO over the next five years.

24. FAO's engagement in the UN Efficiency Agenda included active contribution by 118 country offices in the development process and sign off of country level Business Operations Strategies by the end of 2021. During the biennium, FAO also chaired the Operations Management Team in eight countries, and managed approximately 63 common services worldwide. FAO strengthened its internal capacity for engagement in

the Agenda processes through effective collaboration with the UN Development Coordination Office and the Regional Offices. Broadened awareness raising and knowledge sharing, including through a number of briefing sessions delivered to the regions, will be further supported by the establishment of an internal community of practice.

25. Through 11 regional webinars and trainings on selected policy and technical pillars of UNDS reform the capacities of 80 FAO Representatives and 80 country offices to engage in the UN processes were enhanced. In partnership with the UN System Staff College, over 100 FAO employees from 88 offices, including the five regional offices, were trained in UN country planning processes. In addition, a dedicated UN collaboration website provides FAO staff with coordinated policy guidance, tools and resources. During the biennium, the restructuring of regional and subregional offices was launched, with the objective to improve relevance, timeliness, cost-efficiency, technical quality and effectiveness of the support FAO provides through its country offices. As part of the Effectiveness and Efficiency Agenda, the Country Office Transformation initiative aims at better integrating regions, subregions and countries, delivering as One FAO, breaking down silos, adopting a programmatic approach, addressing capacity gaps at country level and leveraging on FAO's global capacities and expertise for maximum impact and contribution to UN collective work on the ground.

Better Production



26. This section provides key highlights of FAO's achievement to accelerate progress toward the SDGs by ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns through efficient and inclusive agrifood supply chains at local, regional and global level and ensuring resilient and sustainable agrifood systems in a changing climate and environment, with specific examples of achievement at country and regional level enabling *better production*.

Agricultural digitalization



27. FAO harnesses the power of digital technologies to pilot, accelerate and scale innovative ideas with high potential for impact in food and agriculture, transforming digital solutions and services into global public goods. It aims to explore the responsible application and adoption of existing and frontier technologies, design and scale new services, tools and approaches to empower rural households and inspire youth entrepreneurship in food and agriculture.

The 1000 Digital Villages Initiative

28. The 1000 Digital Villages Initiative aims to promote the digital transformation of villages and small towns across the world, supporting the transformation of agrifood systems to advance and improve livelihoods, agriculture, nutrition, health and wellbeing by enabling farmers to use digital technologies. The Initiative brings together UN agencies, the private sector, extension systems and local farmers around elements of "e-Agriculture" to: (a) improve agricultural productivity through information and communications technology (ICT) and digital solutions, such as climate-smart, precision and intelligent facility agriculture; (b) "Digital Farmer Services" to increase farmers' access to services,

including financial, social protection and employment; and (c) digital services for rural transformation to enhance the delivery of public services in health, education, jobs, welfare, eco- and agritourism.

29. Launched in 2020, the initiative includes villages in 40 countries across five regions, where FAO is supporting digitalization programmes, e-agriculture structures and Digital Village pilot activities. The Organization boosted ongoing rural tourism initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean by leveraging connectivity, resources and digital solutions for promotion and sales; in Asia and the Pacific, FAO piloted and expanded digitalization programmes and supported e-Agriculture strategies in three countries, improving access to digital services, digital literacy training and the establishment of agri-business incubators; in Africa, a pilot in seven countries led to fine-tuning of digital platforms and mobilization of partnerships for upscaling; and in Europe and Central Asia FAO capitalized on the experiences of smart villages in Europe, seeking to link them with villages in Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe that have the potential of becoming digital hubs.

The International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture

30. On the basis of a request of the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture in 2020, the FAO Council endorsed the proposal for FAO to host the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture, an inclusive multi-stakeholder forum that facilitates dialogue among Members, agribusiness and the private sector, farmers, civil society organizations, academia and international organizations on the digitalization of the food and agriculture sectors, as well as land use planning and change.

31. At the High-level Dialogue on the establishment of the International Platform in December 2020, policymakers, farmers' representatives, senior managers of agribusinesses and digital technology companies discussed opportunities, challenges and risks associated with digitalizing food and agriculture. FAO also developed informational and promotional tools, and hosted several meetings with international organizations to survey and formulate priority areas in digital agriculture for consideration by the Platform's operating mechanisms.

One Country One Priority Product



32. Launched in September 2021 with participation of nearly 1000 Member and stakeholder representatives, the FAO Global Action on Green Development of Special Agriculture Products “One Country One Priority Product” is a five-year programme that facilitates the development of sustainable and inclusive value chains for family farmers and smallholders to support them in reaping the full benefits of a global market.

33. The One Country One Priority Product initiative focuses on the development of special agricultural products with unique qualities in terms of national or cultural heritage, flavour, nutritional content, and production or processing methods, and seeks to address environmental pollution, soil degradation, and climate change challenges, and facilitate enabling conditions including regulatory frameworks. It contributes to the transformation of agrifood systems and the achievement of the SDGs, in line with national priorities agreed in the Country Programming Frameworks by strengthening the technical networks for innovation and technology transformation, market access platforms and coordination mechanisms at global, regional and national levels.



34. Over 30 countries across five regions have expressed interest in joining the programme. Activities on integration and demonstration of ecological development practices for selected products have begun and will be piloted in the next biennium. Discussions on finding FAO synergies with UN global programmes and initiatives are ongoing. Mobilization of financial and human resources with a wide range of donors and partners are also being pursued, including for South-South and Triangular Cooperation arrangements.

Family farming and smallholders



35. Family farming is the predominant form of food and agricultural production in both developed and developing countries, accounting for more than 90 percent of the 600 million farms globally and

producing over 80 percent of the world’s food in value terms. Family farmers, considering their multidimensional nature, play a key role in ensuring food security and nutrition, managing natural resources, generating job opportunities, contributing to the endogenous growth of the rural economy, ensuring the cohesion of rural communities and preserving cultural heritage.

36. The UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028 provides the framework for countries to develop public policies and investments to support family farming. FAO and IFAD, in collaboration with over 1 500 stakeholders, contributed to the design and implementation of national action plans of family farming, ten of which were endorsed in 2020-21, and another 14 are in advanced drafting stage with stakeholders’ mobilization underway in 27 countries.

37. The Organization responded to growing regional and national demands for developing conducive legal frameworks, policies and capacity development initiatives with farmers and policy-makers. Approximately 140 policies, laws and regulations related to family farming and smallholders were approved in the last two years, most of them focusing on mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on smallholders and addressing agrifood systems through family farming approaches.

38. Several family farming and smallholders knowledge products were provided, including on analyses of legislative and regulatory frameworks, methodologies for data collection on the impact of COVID-19 for policy-makers, and training materials for family farmers. The Family Farming Knowledge Platform reached an average of 70 000 visitors per month, with 27 000 documents in its database.

39. Capacity development activities introduced innovative policy solutions for smallholders, promoted

rural financial inclusion, and increased inclusive investments to stimulate the intermediation of financial services and mobilization of investment capital for rural actors, de-risking agrifood value chains. The Farm Business School and Cooperative Business School promoted access to rural services, investment and increased market opportunities for smallholders, agricultural micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, rural youths, women, family farmers and rural cooperatives.

40. Participatory communication plans for family farming were developed in 36 countries across three regions. Overall, more than 200 radio stations and 150 radio programmes and podcasts were involved, with a potential audience of 40 million people, and more than 20 000 users per month were reached via websites and social media.

One Health



41. FAO plays a leading international role in reducing the production loss due to plant and animal diseases and in promoting positive nutrition and health outcomes through improved production, safe food, and reduced antimicrobial resistance and zoonotic diseases.

42. In 2020-21, the Organization fostered international coordination and strengthened country capacities for addressing emerging challenges related to global animal health. The revised Strategy 2021-25 for the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases - a joint FAO and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) initiative - aims to enhance countries' capacities and multisectoral partnerships to reduce the burden of transboundary animal diseases. Global coordination mechanisms for foot-and-mouth disease and African swine fever facilitated information exchange and coordinated actions and encouraged private sector engagement.

43. The global animal disease information system EMPRES-i + was integrated with the Hand-in-Hand geospatial platform, improving capability for

combining intelligence across sectors, rapid information sharing and risk assessment. Timely risk assessments enabled the provision of One Health risk management guidance to address the entry of African swine fever into the Americas and lumpy skin disease in Asia, as well as the spillover of SARS-CoV-2 in minks.

44. Eight of the nine regions targeted by the *Peste des Petit Ruminants* Eradication Programme and 80 percent of infected countries approved strategic plans, while outbreaks decreased following vaccination and almost one-third of infected countries have not reported outbreaks in over 24 months. Seven FAO regional and subregional virtual learning centres provided training at scale to risk managers and front-line animal health workers worldwide on FAO tools, livestock production antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and One Health.

45. In addition, capacity building was provided on sound pesticide and biodiversity management in 90 countries. With FAO's assistance for rapid response in countries affected by desert locusts, over USD 230 million was mobilized to fight upsurges in the Greater Horn of Africa and Yemen, including the promotion of innovative drone surveys and bio-pesticides. Under the Global Action for Fall Armyworm Control, regional integrated pest management packages were distributed, strengthening prevention and management in more than 60 countries in Africa, the Near East and Asia. Similar initiatives addressed outbreaks of red palm weevil, cassava virus diseases, banana fusarium wilt disease and wheat rust diseases.



46. With FAO assistance, 47 countries accelerated the implementation of national action plans on AMR by applying the FAO Progressive Management

Pathway for AMR, legal methodology, and other tools. FAO, OIE and WHO established the Global Leaders Group on AMR, to provide advice and promote global public support on AMR. Approved in 2021, the Tripartite and United Nations Environment Programme AMR plan defines the five-year strategic objectives.

47. Technical assistance was provided through the Secretariats of the International Plant Protection Convention and Rotterdam Convention, enhancing coordination and supporting the development of 900 new international standards and technical guidelines. More than 680 events in 86 countries were organized on the occasion of the International Year of Plant Health 2020, leading to the establishment of the International Day of Plant Health.

Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)



48. FAO's GIAHS Programme fosters an integrated approach combining sustainable agriculture and rural development, with emphasis on traditional knowledge, biodiversity, cultures and landscapes seeking to safeguard the goods and services these

systems provide to family farmers, smallholders, Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The main objective of GIAHS is to accomplish dynamic conservation, and the outcomes provide valuable lessons on actions for contributing to SDG1, SDG2 and SDG15.

49. During the 2020-21 biennium, FAO organized online workshops and training courses across three regions to raise public awareness on the GIAHS concept, including on traditionally nurtured agrifood systems, nature-based solutions and sustainable agriculture. These activities also enhanced the capacity of GIAHS stakeholders to enhance the quality of proposal documents and action plans. Four new GIAHS sites were designated in 2020-21 in Brazil, Tunisia and Korea, bringing the total number to 62.

50. Through webinars and meetings with partners, FAO assembled evidence on GIAHS sites' contribution to addressing sustainability issues. The GIAHS International Conference held in November 2021 offered an opportunity for GIAHS and non-GIAHS agricultural communities to share experiences and lessons learned. Several webinars highlighted the relevance and contribution of GIAHS to ecosystem restoration, family farming, agrotourism, culture-based traditional diets and resilience to the impacts of COVID-19. Findings include the wide variety of genetic



resources that can be maintained by small-scale farmers, contributing to the conservation of biodiversity, as well as the non-economic values produced by family farming. GIAHS contributions will be further enriched by partnerships with various organizations, such as with the United Nations World Tourism Organization to support rural tourism or with SlowFood to enhance the market value of agricultural products.



Mobile applications in support of agricultural production

FAO launched *Ma' Al Muzare'* in Jordan, an app providing farmers with services such as weather predictions, crop calendars, weekly advisory services, harvest and post-harvest guidelines, wholesale market prices and technical information on bee keeping, and camel, goat, and poultry production. In Egypt, FAO added a "Food safety in response to COVID-19 and beyond" functionality to *El Mufeed*, a technical app servicing over 6 000 farmers and rural women. FAO also used these apps to launch the interactive Farmers Forum platform, through which local certified experts respond to questions raised by farmers and rural women. Following their success, these digital tools are being expanded to other countries in the region. In Iraq, for example, the agricultural extension app *El Rafidain* will improve rural population's access to technical knowledge, Agri Market and Farmers Forum services.

In Lao People's Democratic Republic, FAO collaborated with government partners and the Global Environment Facility to develop an agrometeorology advisory and research system. The Lao Climate Service for Agriculture advisory system is driving climate-resilient transformation in the agrifood system. With over 114 000 farmers trained in its use, it provides agrometeorological advice such as seasonal forecasts, crop-specific bulletins and pest and disease advisory services through government websites, social media and a dedicated app. Improved weather and climate information in the field has also strengthened decision-making regarding the uncertainties generated by climate change. Value chain foresight analysis at 30-, 60- and 90-year timescales compares the impact of climate change on potential productivity of a range of key crops. These scenarios are informing policy, planning and land allocation activities at national and village levels.



Water efficiency, productivity and sustainability

In the Near East and North Africa, a region faced with chronic water shortage and an outlook of severe intensification of water scarcity, FAO promoted the use of innovative tools and technologies to inform decision-making for enhancing productivity while ensuring water sustainability. In collaboration with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Organization provided support in Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and West Bank and Gaza Strip for designing tailored water accounting and auditing systems that support science-based decisions on water management and allocation, water availability reviews, policies for food security and energy efficiency, investment plans, participatory water governance and institutional strengthening, accounting for any drop and a more food-per-drop approach through good agricultural practices for producing more with less water.

Satellite remote sensing technology informed on agriculture water needs and options for coping with water scarcity while ensuring food security and improvements to agricultural livelihoods. Water allocation based on water accounting considers the realities of water consumption and enables exploring future trajectories of water use. Combined with water auditing, it facilitates the assessment of the effectiveness of water and irrigation strategies *vis-à-vis* the water-related SDGs. Gender analysis was integrated in the water and agriculture assessments, recognizing that social norms and values affect physical access to, and control over water. Gender disaggregated data, gender-sensitive mapping of stakeholders and targeted interviews and focus groups were among the tools used to review the conditions of women and men in different communities regarding water access, governance and use in agrifood systems.

Better Nutrition



51. This section provides key highlights on FAO's achievement to accelerate progress toward the SDGs in the areas of food security and improved nutrition, including through promoting nutritious and safe foods and increasing access to healthy diets, with specific examples of achievement at country and regional level enabling *better nutrition*.

Nutrition and healthy diets



52. Throughout 2020-21, FAO contributed extensively to the international nutrition architecture and to advancing the global nutrition agenda. The Organization provided crucial technical expertise for drafting and negotiating the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition endorsed in 2021, and provided evidence and tools through a dedicated platform to support their uptake. FAO also contributed to a scoping paper and participated in the CFS Technical Task Team developing the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition. As co-leader of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-25), FAO reported on progress in implementing the Second International Conference on Nutrition commitments and the Nutrition Decade. Throughout the biennium, nutrition was featured on the agenda of all Technical Committees and Regional Conferences.

53. FAO elevated the discourse on agrifood systems transformation for healthy diets, convening dialogues on agrifood system governance for better nutrition during the preparatory process towards the UN Food Systems Summit. The Organization also co-led the Food Systems for Healthy Diets theme of the 2021 Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit, hosted by the Government of Japan, which resulted in an

unprecedented number of financial, policy, and programmatic commitments from governments and stakeholders across the globe. The Organization also supported activities for the International Year of Fruit and Vegetables 2021 and co-led the establishment of UN Nutrition, the UN inter-agency coordination and collaboration mechanism for nutrition.

54. At country level, FAO provided assistance for collecting and using high-quality data on food security and nutrition, including the food insecurity experience scale (FIES) the minimum dietary diversity for women (MDD-W), and the Global Individual Food consumption data Tool (FAO/WHO GIFT), in support of evidence-based policies and monitoring progress towards SDG2. FAO also collaborated with parliamentarians to promote legislative enabling environments for food security and nutrition, through regulation of food security, food labelling and the implementation of the Right to Food.

Food safety and food standards



55. FAO supports Members in decisions and actions to improve food safety. During the biennium, the Organization provided scientific advice to support the setting of food standards and enhanced the capacities of developing countries to participate effectively in Codex standard-setting processes.

56. The Codex Alimentarius Commission convened 16 meetings, and thanks to the virtual modality, participation from low- and middle-income countries doubled, and that of observers tripled. During the biennium Codex adopted over 900 new and revised standards, guidelines and codes of practice. This included new and updated guidance to prevent and minimize foodborne antimicrobial resistance and new guidelines for integrated surveillance. Seven new work items were initiated, three priority lists were approved, and hundreds of requests for scientific evaluation were received. This work was complemented by the development of globally available tools to support surveillance and the provision of direct assistance to Members for implementation.

57. The scientific advice programme provides the basis for the food safety standards of the Codex Alimentarius Commissions and food safety measures applied by its Members. It establishes principles and methods to assess diverse types of hazards with the support of a wide range of expert advice, resources, and tools. Eleven expert meetings, including the Joint

FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) and the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA), informed the Codex standards' setting processes on food additives, food hygiene, and food labelling, among others.

58. FAO continued to assist Members in strengthening national food control systems, food safety capacities and intergovernmental and intersectoral coordination of food safety governance. The Organization enhanced capacity transfer and provided support to policy negotiations. FAO successfully ensured that food safety remained a priority for Members when making operational, governance and financial decisions aimed at transforming agrifood systems. Global and regional webinars, support materials and publications promoted the FAO/WHO food control system assessment tool which allows the identification of priority areas for improvement, plan sequential and coordinated activities and provide a baseline to monitor progress. In addition, with FAO's leadership, over 300 events and activities were organized in more than 90 countries, in observance of the World Food Safety Day 2021. Global events such as the UN Food Systems Summit highlighted a range of emerging and cross-cutting issues to ensure food remains safe in a changing environment and directly influence work priorities. The FAO/WHO paper on *New Food Sources and Production Systems* discussed at the 44th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and FAO's *Thinking about the future of food safety – A foresight report*, pointed to the need to avoid unintended consequences from new production systems, alternative protein sources and new technologies.

Food loss and waste



59. FAO supports countries in improving the efficiency, sustainability, resilience and inclusiveness of their agrifood systems through a multipronged approach which includes diagnostics, raising awareness, sharing knowledge and strengthening capacities, as well as through the development of strategies, policies and legislation, and field level technical assistance.

60. In observance of the first two International Days of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste in 2020 and 2021, FAO further promoted its awareness-raising efforts through high-profile events, such as the 3rd *All Africa Post-Harvest Congress and Exhibition*, the 2nd *Food Loss and Waste Reduction Summit for Latin America and the Caribbean*, the launch of the revamped Technical Platform on the Measurement

and Reduction of Food Loss and Waste, and the *World Food Forum*. As custodian agency for SDG 12.3.1.a, FAO provided training in 35 countries and supported 12 countries in collecting and compiling food loss data. FAO strengthened the methodology for the Food Loss Index and continued consolidating public food loss and waste databases and improving the model with new data.

61. Following the endorsement of the Voluntary Code of Conduct for Food Loss and Waste Reduction, Members have available a framework for developing related policies, strategies and legislation.

62. At country level in all five regions, value-chain stakeholders have improved knowledge of good practices and sustainable actions to reduce food loss and waste in crops, livestock and fisheries as a result of virtual training courses, tailored to the needs of specific groups such as women, youth and vulnerable people, organized by FAO in collaboration with international and local partners.

63. Given the limited number of countries reporting official food loss data in the Corporate Database for Substantive Statistical Data (FAOSTAT), FAO will provide extensive capacity development in sub-Saharan Africa, in collaboration with the 50x2030 Initiative to Close the Agricultural Data Gap and the Global Strategy to Improve Agriculture and Rural Statistics, and will support countries with no prior experience in compiling and reporting the Food Loss Index in Africa, Central Europe and Western Asia.

64. Partnerships for work in food loss and waste with UN entities, the private sector, academia, civil society organizations and others will be further strengthened and broadened. In particular, FAO will continue to play a leading role in the Food is Never Waste Coalition that was created in the framework of the UN Food Systems Summit.

Markets and trade



65. FAO was at the forefront of global efforts to enhance transparency of commodity markets and agricultural trade during the COVID-19 pandemic, fostering the resilience of agrifood systems by supporting open and well-functioning markets and value chains, and highlighting the centrality of international trade for food security and nutrition. From the onset of the pandemic, FAO provided timely and objective data and information on the global supply and demand situation, trade flows, price movements, and policy developments. As host of the G20 Agricultural Market Information System, FAO closely monitored developments in global food

markets and engaged with main producing, exporting and importing countries for a coordinated responses to the pandemic.

66. Under the guidance of the Committee on Commodity Problems, FAO continued to provide up-to-date data and information and evidence-based assessments of global markets and trade, informing decision-making processes. The monthly FAO Food



Price Index measures changes in international food prices, and the biannual *Food Outlook* focuses on developments affecting global commodity markets. FAO continued to report on food supply and demand across the world, including developments affecting developing countries' food security situation through the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture which provided comprehensive market intelligence on food commodities. The *Crop Prospects and Food Situation* reports were issued quarterly to provide forward-looking analyses of the food situation by region. The Agricultural Stress Index System informed early action to mitigate the impact of drought in several countries.

67. The flagship *The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets 2020* provided evidence on global value chains, smallholder farmers and digital innovations, while other events and publications addressed the involvement of youth and women in responsible agricultural investment.

68. FAO focused on market access issues related to fish trade, including food safety, certification and traceability

requirements, and trade agreements. Draft guidance, developed through online public consultation, addressed fisheries traceability systems, and provided comprehensive information on fisheries-related provisions contained in trade agreements, including environment-related disciplines. Through GLOBEFISH, FAO continued to provide information on production and trade flows, market trends, prices, country analysis, and nomenclature support.

69. FAO increased national and regional understanding of the food safety framework also affecting trade, including regional and Codex Alimentarius standards. In collaboration with public and private actors, FAO contributed to strategies for upgrading value chains and promoting access to finance and investment. An innovative loan collateral facility increased investment flows, digital platforms supported traceability systems, and training on risk management and innovative financing mechanisms built capacity.



Reducing food loss and waste in Europe and Central Asia

Under the umbrella of the global SAVE FOOD Initiative, FAO assisted Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, North Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in developing national strategies to prevent and reduce food loss and waste. FAO assessed key national food value chains to identify main loss and waste points and their causes, and analysed legislation and policy frameworks that affect food loss and waste management.

The National Strategy and Action Plan on Prevention, Reduction and Monitoring of Food Loss and Waste in Turkey, currently under implementation in collaboration with national stakeholders and actors, addresses food loss and waste occurring along the whole food value chain and supports the shift to a circular food value chain. It prioritizes preventing food loss and waste over rescue and recovery and finally recycling, to secure and optimize resources invested in food production. The Action Plan includes measures aimed at improving regulation of food loss and waste management, strengthening national capacity to monitor, measure and report on food loss and waste, enhancing efficiency of food supply chains, building of national food recovery and redistribution systems, and raising awareness among food value chain actors and the public for public and private sector actors, academia and civil society to stem the issue.



Addressing food prices

Public food supply and marketing institutions seek to ensure stable food supply, while boosting local economies, supporting family farming, managing strategic food reserves, regulating markets and providing food for social protection and school feeding programs. To support their continued functioning during the shocks to the supply chains caused by the pandemic, FAO monitored, systematized and shared updates on food prices and market behavior in 13 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Throughout the biennium, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua developed policies and programmes with FAO's support that brought together wholesale and retail warehouses, neighborhood stores, mobile stores, public supermarkets and fixed stores offering products from the basic food baskets. This enabled public supply institutions to provide physical access to food at lower costs, encouraging diet diversification and generating opportunities for small producers to market their products with private companies. Family farmers and micro-, small- and medium national food enterprises obtained access to over 20 million consumers at food prices around 10 to 30 percent lower than the local markets.

Better Environment



70. This section provides key highlights on FAO's achievement to accelerate progress toward the SDGs by protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and combating climate change through MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, with specific examples of achievement at country and regional level enabling a *better environment*.

Land and water management



Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture

71. In 2020–21, the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG), hosted and supported by FAO, mobilized external partners to provide technical assistance and facilitate knowledge generation and exchange on topics such as saline agriculture, drought and pandemics, quinoa food



systems, and sustainable agriculture water use. WASAG delivered ten webinars and participated in various international fora, including at the 'Water Pavilion' of the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference COP26. WASAG contributed to a pre-COP26 event dedicated to youth inclusion and hosted a webinar on women and water scarcity in agriculture.

Water productivity for nutrition-sensitive agriculture

72. FAO continued to promote country-level policy dialogue for increased awareness and understanding, as well as coordinated intervention and action, around the linkages between water, agriculture, health and nutrition. In collaboration with IFAD, FAO is implementing a project on increasing water productivity for nutrition-sensitive agriculture and improved food security and nutrition in several countries in Eastern, Southern and West Africa and the Near East. The project aims to coordinate interventions on water, agriculture, health and nutrition, including through the adoption of sustainable water and soil management practices to improve dietary quality and diversity. FAO's advocacy efforts have prompted important national discussions and consultations on the integration of nutrition education in agricultural extension services and on the coordination of interventions in the water, agriculture, health and nutrition sectors.

Global Soil Partnership

73. FAO continued to host the Global Soil Partnership (GSP). Its innovative *Global Soil Doctors Programme* has trained champion farmers around the globe to become 'soil doctors' who assist and train farmers in their communities to promote the practice of sustainable soil management. Global reports and maps were developed through country-driven processes and published by GSP, improving knowledge and national capacities in over 100 countries on soil biodiversity, soil pollution, salt-affected soils and soil organic carbon sequestration potential.

Sustainable land management

74. FAO launched its milestone synthesis report *The State of the World's Land and Water Resources*

for *Food and Agriculture - Systems at Breaking Point*. FAO and the Committee on Food Security prepared a technical guide to integrate the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* into the implementation of the Land Degradation Neutrality, to be launched at the COP15 UN Biodiversity Conference in 2022.

Biodiversity and ecosystems restoration



75. FAO and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity co-organized a Global Dialogue on the Role of Food and Agriculture in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The Dialogue underlined the importance of scaling-up solutions for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of biodiversity. It also reaffirmed that building the science and evidence-base on biodiversity, together with more effective legal governance of biodiversity, increased investment, and greater public awareness are crucial. FAO also contributed to the development of the UN Common Approach to Biodiversity committing the UN system to mainstreaming biodiversity and catalysing collective action to address the drivers of biodiversity loss and restore biodiversity in view of achieving the vision 2050 on biodiversity: living in harmony with nature.

76. FAO adopted the 2021-23 action plan for the implementation of the FAO strategy on mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors, which guides its work in the crop, livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry sectors.

77. In December 2021, the Council endorsed the Global Plan of Action for Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Framework for Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture, which respond to the request of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture for policy instruments that integrate country-driven global assessments of the respective components of biodiversity. Highlighting the key role of producers, including smallholders, especially women, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as custodians of biodiversity, these instruments complement the Commission's global plans of action on plant, forest and animal genetic resources to promote a more inclusive and integrated approach to the management of biodiversity relevant to all agrifood sectors.

78. Ecosystems restoration is fundamental for achieving the SDGs. FAO promotes sustainable approaches to natural resource management,

including through assessments that provide a basis for evidence-based decision-making, guidance on relevant policy and technical matters, and promoting and facilitating cooperation and the development of policy responses at international level.

79. As co-leader with UN Environment Programme of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, 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 the development of supportive policies.

Climate change



80. Agrifood systems are heavily affected by climate change, and they also have an impact on atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions. Through action in agrifood systems, including in crops, livestock, forests, fisheries and aquaculture, and related value chains, FAO has been contributing to climate action at global, regional, national and local levels.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 26th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

81. Throughout 2020-21, FAO successfully placed agrifood systems at the center of the international climate change agenda. The Organization hosted technical and high-level events for COP26 and was recognized as a key facilitator in the discussions of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture, acknowledging the importance of food security dimensions when dealing with climate change in agriculture and food systems.

FAO's new Strategy on Climate Change

82. The development of a new Strategy on Climate Change was launched in 2021, through an inclusive consultative process with Members and stakeholders to collect their views on climate change priorities for the FAO leading to the approval of an annotated outline in 2021. The draft Strategy provides a guiding vision for transformed agrifood systems that are climate-resilient and adaptive to the impacts of climate change, contribute to low-carbon economies while providing nutritious food for healthy diets, feed, fibre and fuel through innovative solutions, for present and future generations. The proposed Strategy goes beyond 'business as usual', addressing the root causes of climate change as relates to

agrifood systems and toward adopting ecological and innovative climate-resilient solutions.

Climate change related policies and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

83. Over 90 countries received FAO's support for the identification, integration and implementation of agriculture, forestry and other land use measures into national climate change planning and budgeting processes. With FAO's assistance, countries revised and continued implementation of NDCs, long-term, low-carbon strategies and National Adaptation Plans. 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, including global and regional analysis of NDCs, and it aims to launch a set of tools to support countries in monitoring the implementation of NDCs.

Climate finance

84. FAO has successfully supported countries in accessing climate finance. As of December 2021, over 130 countries benefited from a cumulative grant of USD 1.3 billion to fund a total of 289 approved projects, an increase of USD 330 million compared to 2019, making the Global Environment Facility (GEF) one of FAO's top resource partners. The Organization secured over 15 percent of GEF cumulative programming funds across GEF-7 work programmes, becoming the fourth largest GEF accredited Agency. FAO mobilized USD 112 million in the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) to support climate change adaptation in GEF-7. In 2021, the total value of FAO's Green Climate Fund (GCF) portfolio reached USD 937 million, supporting transformative projects in 15 countries and 61 readiness projects in 50 countries. The latest include 6 rapid readiness grants for climate-resilient recovery strategies from the COVID-19 pandemic, and 7 projects with FAO as an implementing partner. FAO became accredited to the Adaptation Fund in 2020 as 13th multilateral implementing entity. It has since supported 11 countries across all five regions in developing a portfolio worth USD 75 million, currently at varying pipeline stages.

Urban food systems



85. Approximately 70 percent of food consumption takes place in urban areas. During the COVID-19 pandemic, FAO increased its support to city, local and subnational governments, which played an important role in mitigating disruptions in agrifood systems and negative consequences on vulnerable populations, by

contributing to the development of policies, plans and actions to strengthen urban food systems.

86. During the lead-up to the UN Food Systems Summit, FAO, in partnership with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition acted as Secretariat to the informal Working Group on Urban Food Systems, comprising 26 organizations, including UN-Habitat, the United Nations Environment Programme and several city networks, and ensured that cities were fully engaged in the Summit process. The Working Group submitted game-changing solutions, ensured city representatives were included in the multi-actor Food Systems Champions Network, organized a Global Summit Dialogue and a Pre-Summit plenary session in partnership with the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, and participated actively at the Committee on World Food Security and the Nutrition for Growth Summit.

87. FAO partnered with the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives network to facilitate UN Food Systems Summit independent dialogues in 26 metropolitan, intermediary and small cities. Over 1 000 participants from local and regional governments, civil society organizations, private sector, researchers and academic institutions identified key critical actions for transforming urban food systems.

88. The Summit acknowledged the key role of local and subnational governments in accelerating sustainable agrifood systems transformation through integrating food systems in urban and territorial planning, promoting urban and peri-urban agriculture, improving market infrastructures and food environment, and promoting, preventing, reducing and managing food waste. The Urban Food Systems Coalition which emerged from the Summit will continue to support the engagement of cities in global fora.

89. In response to the Committee on Agriculture's request, FAO supported local governments in small and intermediary cities in Senegal, Rwanda and Ecuador, in analysing the agrifood systems gaps and facilitating multi-stakeholder consultation processes that identified key entry points for initiating the integration of agrifood systems in local policy and plans, such as public food procurement, urban and peri-urban agriculture, and improving food retail markets. Multi-actor food governance mechanisms have been established as municipal advisory boards in cities in Kenya, Rwanda, Madagascar, Peru and Bangladesh to support local governments in integrating food systems in their planning and actions.

90. The FAO Green Cities Initiative, launched in September 2020, is a corporate flagship programme that brings together actions and engagements already

being implemented, including work of the FAO Urban Food Agenda, under one umbrella for more impact, consistency and coherence. In 2021, FAO, working with partners, began developing criteria for a monitoring framework to allow cities and other stakeholders to track progress towards the objectives of the Initiative, identify gaps and support the planning process and the identification of priority actions. Work also began on a city recognition scheme

and a Community of Practice. Quick-win actions were implemented in six African cities, as well as a replicable training package on integrating urban and peri-urban agriculture, forestry and agrifood systems into urban planning. In June 2021, the Initiative launched the Regional Action Programme for Africa involving 25 countries in the region with plans to develop similar programmes in other regions.



Protecting biodiversity by rebuilding seed systems

In sub-Saharan Africa, around 80 percent of seeds used by smallholder farmers come from seed systems managed by farmers. Such precious local seed diversity is kept in peoples' households, community seed banks and farmers' fields, and is also conserved through use and exchange of seeds. Local seeds have adapted over centuries to local growing conditions. They provide small-scale farmers with most of their seed supply for growing crops to eat and sell, while helping to preserve agricultural biodiversity.

FAO supported Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe in the aftermath of the cyclone Idai. Heavy rains, floods and landslides destroyed nearly 800 000 ha of standing crops. Farmers lost local seed reserves and crops that were ready for harvest. FAO, supported by Germany, worked with the three governments, gene banks and farmers to rebuild seed systems. FAO both leveraged and reinforced the international conservation and exchange system supported by the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The Organization identified seeds of local and lost varieties, regenerated them and returned them to communities for future use and safeguarding.

With FAO's support, cowpea, finger millet and sorghum have been restored in affected areas, national strategies in the three countries now address disaster management for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and Mozambique has since become a Contracting Party of the International Treaty.



Mediterranean and Black Sea: protecting the ecosystem

The Mediterranean and the Black Sea ecosystem counts over 10 000 marine species, representing 7 percent of all those known in the world. Its fisheries resources are under high pressure due to high demand for seafood. Traditional resources and particular species such as the European eel, rapa whelk and red coral have been particularly threatened together with their ecosystems. FAO, through the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, is working towards enhancing the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture, in line with the Blue Transformation roadmap, applying ecosystem approaches to deliver healthy stocks, protect vulnerable ecosystems and secure equitable livelihoods. While bottom trawling beyond 1 000 mt has been banned for some time, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean recently approved nine fisheries management plans and three Fisheries Restricted Areas.

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean also hosts the Small-Scale Fishers Forum, which is a dedicated platform for small-scale fishers and fish workers to exchange ideas on including on gender, conservation and sustainable use, participatory management and livelihood protection.

After decades of increasing human pressures, recent data show reductions in overexploitation of the region's fish stocks. Stock assessments in 2021 showed the highest-ever number of stocks sustainably exploited, proving that management can be the best conservation measure.



Indigenous Peoples as guardians of forests

In Latin America and the Caribbean, indigenous and tribal territories represent about one-fifth of the total area and contain close to one-third of the continent's forests. They are also home to an enormous diversity of wild fauna and flora and play a key role in stabilizing the local and regional climate.

In Venezuela, FAO worked with authorities to grant the Kariña indigenous community's Tukupu Indigenous Forest Company, the management of 7 000 hectares of forest reserve degraded by mining. FAO conducted consultations that ensured compliance with Free Prior and Informed Consent and provided the company with training in forest management and restoration. Ancestral knowledge enabled the Kariña to protect and revitalize the forest, ensuring sustainable use of its resources and promoting inclusion. Tukupu, composed mostly by women, is the main indigenous forestry company in the country today. With FAO's assistance, it has succeeded in managing logging by regulating timber and non-timber products and in determining stock and flow of greenhouse gases by conducting plot assessments. FAO also contributed to the establishment of community and family nurseries, as well as to diversifying small family farms, the Kariña's main source of livelihood. In selected areas, trees and agricultural crops were combined to strengthen food security. Previously degraded land now produces cocoa, coffee, guava, oranges and tangerines.



Healthy soils, the basis for sustainable agrifood systems

The Global Soil Organic Carbon Sequestration Potential Map, launched by FAO through the Global Soil Partnership, is the first country-driven global estimation of soil organic carbon sequestration potential around the world. It applies modelling and digital soil mapping techniques to the best available national datasets to illustrate how much and where CO₂ can be sequestered by soil. Healthy soils can contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation and decarbonize the atmosphere. In a process known as carbon sequestration, carbon dioxide removed from the atmosphere can be captured in the soil and stored in its most stable forms, providing nutritious food and reducing greenhouse gases. Because soil rich in carbon is also healthier and more fertile, it can benefit farmers while helping meet the targets of the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The map demonstrates that soils sustainably managed can potentially sequester sufficient carbon to offset yearly as much as 34 percent of agricultural global greenhouse gas emissions. It allows users to identify regions, soil types and farming systems with the greatest potential to increase soil organic carbon stocks, informing prioritization of areas for adopting sustainable soil management in contribution to the achievement of SDGs 2, 13 and 15. A compendium of good practices complements these efforts by providing practical solutions for all kinds of terrains and situations, including crop rotation methods refined over thousands of years, to modern nutrient management techniques. The result of three years of collective effort by more than 400 specialists from around the world, it is the first attempt to collect good soil management practices supported by sound scientific data on the impacts of these practices on soil organic carbon content in a wide array of environments and land uses.



Better Life



91. This section provides key highlights on FAO's achievement to accelerate progress toward the SDGs by promoting inclusive economic growth by reducing inequalities, with specific examples of achievement at country and regional level enabling a *better life*.

Emergency and resilience



92. FAO's work on emergency and resilience is aligned with the humanitarian, development and peace nexus (HDPN) and contributes to supporting the agricultural livelihoods and agrifood systems of acutely food insecure and vulnerable populations through strengthening the capabilities of agrifood systems to prevent, anticipate, absorb, adapt and transform in the face of disasters and crises to ensuring sufficient, safe and nutritious food is available and accessible to all.

93. FAO supported the resilience of agrifood systems through a multirisk and crisis management approach by bringing together complementary interventions that are context-relevant, conflict- and risk-sensitive and people-centred, respect knowledge and contribute to addressing the root causes of risks and vulnerabilities.

94. With FAO's assistance, 35 countries developed, adopted and implemented sectoral multihazard policies, strategies and plans and 18 countries established

coordination mechanisms and resource mobilization strategies, enhancing multiple risk governance. This work included the development of disaster risk reduction (DRR) plans specific for agrifood systems, the integration of DRR in agriculture development plans, support for policy dialogue and advocacy, and setting up coordination mechanisms and partnerships supported by guidelines, normative work and global, regional and national advocacy efforts.

95. In 2021, FAO's humanitarian and resilience programme reached over 30 million people, to provide immediate relief and resilience building support, including critical inputs alongside cash to rapidly increase local food production, availability and access, as well as vaccination or treatment of almost 70 million livestock. In Africa, almost 20 million people received emergency livelihoods assistance and benefited from resilience building interventions. In Afghanistan, FAO scaled up operations reaching more than 2.6 million people with emergency livelihoods assistance, including supporting the winter wheat campaign allowing the year's harvest supply of cereals for over 1.3 million people and ensuring protection of over 700 000 livestock. In South Sudan, affected by acute hunger levels, FAO was able to secure cereal, vegetable and fisheries production for about 3.6 million people and protect over 6.4 million animals. In Yemen, almost 1 million people received critically-needed inputs and livelihoods support to continue producing and accessing food. FAO, as coordinator of the Food Security



and Agriculture Cluster and in close relationship with regional line ministries, supported the humanitarian programme in the Ethiopia's Tigray region, contributing to

local farmers' production of over 900 000 tonnes of food during the 2021 "Belg" season.

96. The locust outbreak of 2020-2021 was brought under control by early 2022 with the timely support of FAO's resource partners, enabling FAO to provide technical and operational assistance for surveillance and control operations, provide livelihood support for affected farmers and herders, and build and sustain the capacity of national and regional actors to cope with similar outbreaks in the future. Through ground and aerial operations, FAO treated 2.3 million ha affected by the Desert Locust in the Horn of Africa and Yemen from January 2020 to December 2021. Up to 20 aircrafts were deployed simultaneously, supported by hundreds of ground teams, and more than 1.4 million locations were surveyed. These collective efforts averted 4.5 million metric tonnes of crop losses, saved 900 million litres of milk production (with an estimated commercial value of USD 1.77 billion) and secured food for nearly 42 million people. FAO collaborated with multiple academic, research and private sector partners to further improve Desert Locust monitoring and early warning.

97. The Global Network Against Food Crises coordinated the work to promote sustainable solutions to food crises through shared analysis and collective efforts across the humanitarian-development nexus and its contribution to-peace. During the biennium, the *Global Report on Food Crises 2021* and the Financing Flows analysis were published.

98. Seizing the momentum created by the UN Food Systems Summit, FAO mobilized partners to identify and address policy and investments gaps to support countries in achieving sustainable solutions to food crises. FAO also provided improved measuring and understanding of multiple risks through the [Data in Emergencies Hub](#) which was launched in 2021. The Hub supports risk profiling, monitoring of the impact of shocks on agricultural livelihoods, including through the use of technology for remote assessment; provides a picture of food insecurity in fragile environments and *ex post* impact assessment; and granular and rapid understanding of the impact of sudden-onset natural disasters and conflicts on agrifood systems and agricultural livelihoods. The Hub was crucial in understanding the impact of COVID-19 and other emergencies in 26 food-crisis countries.

99. With FAO's support, 34 countries established information and monitoring systems and early warning systems that triggered anticipatory action to reduce the impacts of imminent threats, and in 24 countries FAO enhanced national capacities for assessing vulnerabilities and measured resilience through the resilience index measurement and analysis and Integrated Food Security Phase Classification assessments, among others.

100. Together with its partners, the *2021 Global Report on Food Crises* was published which includes data, analyses and research on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on food security.

101. The Organization also contributed to emergency preparedness actions and supported informed emergency response and recovery interventions in over 28 countries that faced various and often colliding disasters and crises, including by distributing agricultural inputs, animal feed, supplies and vaccines for animal health and production, fishing gears, tools, and Cash+ interventions, facilitating the restoration of agrifood systems of the most vulnerable and at-risk populations.

Hand-in-Hand Initiative



102. Through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, FAO facilitates collaborative action by diverse actors to support implementation of ambitious, nationally-led and owned agrifood systems transformation programmes. The Initiative prioritizes countries in special situations, including Least Developed Countries (LDCs), LDC Small Island Developing States and LDC Landlocked Developing Countries, food crisis countries, and countries with large poor populations.

103. The Initiative supported 49 countries in applying a market-based agrifood systems lens and a territorial approach to identify areas where agrifood systems transformation can be a driver of accelerated progress towards achievement of the SDGs. Areas included review of value chains for priority commodities, agro-industries and efficient water management systems, introduction of digital services and precision agriculture, reduction of food loss and waste, and addressing climate challenges and weather risks.

104. A multi-dimensional Geospatial Platform visualizes economic, statistical, and geospatial analyses to improve targeting and effectiveness of programming for rural transformation. Linked to the FAO DataLab, the Platform leverages the most advanced tools for big data management and processing, including Artificial Intelligence. With over 2 million data and information layers, the Platform provides tools, analytics, models and mechanisms in support of the Initiative's programmes, fully respecting internationally-agreed standards and privacy and information security. Content of the Platform was further enriched thanks to partnerships with data and research platforms and institutions, such as Geodata and WorldPop, University of Stanford, Google, Marcura, the International Telecommunication Union and the International Food Policy Research Institute. Following training to 65 institutions, countries and regions, the Initiative's technical tools were successfully used for

evidence-based policy-making by governments, financing institutions and the private sector.

105. In addition to bilateral and multilateral formal stakeholder engagement under national government leadership, FAO has also supported informal engagement with stakeholders from the development community including the private sector in many beneficiary countries. Through the Initiative, FAO also developed a strategy to scale-up finance and investment, supported by strengthened partnerships with national and international financing institutions, multilateral financing mechanisms and non-traditional financing sources that enable private sector investment.

106. A state-of-the-art dashboard owned by participating countries enables near real-time monitoring and evaluation of the Initiatives' programmes, including impact assessment in terms of their contributions to SDG1, SDG2 and SDG10.

Territorial development



107. FAO's approach to territorial development promotes participatory systemic, multilevel and cross-sectoral interventions to address the complexity of economic, social and environmental challenges, including power imbalances, trade-offs and synergies. FAO applies this approach to programmes at all levels to strengthen a coherent governance architecture for transforming agrifood systems, with focus on youth engagement and employment.

108. In 2020-21, FAO supported many countries in implementing this approach. For example, the Organization led a pilot in support of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries Food Security and Nutrition Council Initiative in São Tomé e Príncipe and Cabo Verde, including a participatory food systems assessment with policy and programme recommendations; in Ethiopia, the territorial approach was adopted within the Hand-in-Hand Initiative to provide policy recommendations on inclusivity in the Agro-Commodity Procurement Zone investments; and in Georgia and North Macedonia, FAO supported ministerial staff to improve their capacities for gender-sensitive and socially-inclusive rural development policy and community development.

109. FAO and partners took stock and analysed experiences in integrating territorial development and landscape management approaches in five countries and

identified key enablers and obstacles to integrating spatial approaches. In addition, the findings of a review of 15 case studies led by the German Agency for International Cooperation were discussed at the Territorial and Landscape Days, jointly organized with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany. The review evidenced the importance of coherence and coordination, the key role of the private sector, and the importance of institutionalizing interventions through national policies and programmes to secure long-term and coordinated financing.

110. Furthermore, through FAO's *Integrated country approach for boosting decent jobs for youth in the agrifood system*, the Organization supported five countries and multiple regional processes in Africa and Latin American and the Caribbean. Models for youth access to finance, training and mentorship were successfully piloted and scaled up, including a pilot in Guatemala with local financial cooperatives and youth cooperatives of youth-friendly loans and saving system, as well as through the ChispaRural digital platform.

Investment support



111. FAO provides Members with solutions and innovations to guide investments and finance in agrifood systems. During the biennium, FAO assisted 62 countries with the design of 80 public investment projects, financed by International Financial Institutions (IFIs), for a total of USD 13.8 billion. Major IFIs include the World Bank, IFAD, GCF, GAFSP and AfDB.³ FAO also supported the implementation of investment projects in 113 countries and provided policy assistance to 85, leading to 51 agricultural strategies, 44 policy studies, 70 sector studies, and 45 policy dialogue events.

112. FAO also stepped up its catalytic support to private investments, reviewing 122 proposals to the AgrIntel Facility with the European Union (EU). Since 2018, FAO provided finance advisory services to almost 180 private investment projects submitted by four different blended investment vehicles with EU concessional capital, resulting in more than 30 investments worth over EUR 110 million.

113. Targeted investment and policy support included corporate policy briefs to guide SIDS on mitigating COVID-19 impacts on agrifood systems, COVID-19 impact assessments in five Pacific countries, and support under the Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

³ International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); Green Climate Fund (GCF); Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP); African Development Bank (AfDB).

114. The Organization launched such as AgrIntel and AgrInvest, which combined public-private blended financing with value chain analysis, evidence-based policy dialogue and big data analytics. FAO also collaborated with partners in multi-agency financing activities. For example, following a joint initiative with the World Bank, Green Climate Fund and the Rome-based Agencies, 13 million people in the Sahel stand to benefit from harmonized animal vaccination and disease surveillance activities and the introduction of innovations for healthier animal ecosystems, more resilient livelihoods and greater social and economic inclusion, including access to technical and vocational trainings for women and young people from pastoral households.

115. FAO supported investments and policies addressing climate change, including projects funded by the GCF and IFIs, and knowledge publications. With FAO's assistance, IFIs approved 21 projects for a budget of USD 4 billion. Furthermore, FAO and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development provided private and public stakeholders with technical assistance on climate change and accelerating carbon-neutral investments within the agrifood systems. A COVID-19 technical cooperation package developed to accelerate recovery and build resilience of agrifood value chains, includes interventions targeting e-commerce and decarbonizing value chains.

116. In collaboration with the European Union and the International Cooperation Centre of Agricultural Research for Development, FAO partnered with governments, national experts and institutions and other stakeholders, to initiate food systems assessments and consultations in over 50 countries. The results informed the dialogues of the UN Food System Summit and continue to inform national investment and policy agendas.

117. FAO provided information in support of evidence-based policy-making for investments. The global study on Investing in Agricultural Human Capital, published in collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute, includes nine country case studies showcasing the effects of investments, including through private-public partnerships, in youth vocational training, women livestock advisers, rural households, market access and market-orientation of farmers and smallholder producers, capacity building of farmer organizations and institutionalization of farmer field schools. Accompanying investment briefs on digital agriculture, economic analysis, private sector and youth, guide investors on strengthening farmers' capacities. The Digital Agriculture Profiles series launched in 2021 provides country-level analysis of challenges, opportunities and risks for e-agriculture.

World Food Forum



118. The World Food Forum (WFF), an initiative proposed by FAO's Youth Committee, was launched at the United Nations Economic and Social Council Youth Forum in 2021. It is an independent, global network of partners, created for youth and led by youth to spark a movement to transform agrifood systems and 'Empowering Youth for a Better Food Future,' the WFF aims to inform, engage and transform. It serves as the main platform to engage and harness the passion of youth to gather action to identify solutions to the many challenges facing agrifood systems. Since its launch, it has gathered over 190 volunteers from FAO, the Rome-based Agencies, the wider UN system, youth groups, young entrepreneurs, scientists, artists, musicians and influencers from around the world, and mobilized over 75 partners within the private sector, academia, UN entities, youth groups, cooperatives and more.

119. Activities are organized around four thematic tracks: Youth action, Innovation, Education and Culture. The WFF hosted over 100 events which reached a wide range of stakeholders and brought together more than 40 000 young and young-at-heart people from more than 200 countries to raise awareness and engagement, as well as mobilize resources in support of agrifood systems transformation. Among the events organized were educational activities and concerts; roundtables and assemblies with youth and indigenous groups; a G20 side event on youth involvement in circular economy; 20 master classes where experts and youth leaders shared stories of actionable solutions to facilitate agrifood systems transformation; three labs for teachers and pupils; and a youth forum on behavioural change.

120. WFF launched a number of initiatives, such as the Transformative Research Challenge, inspiring 88 teams of young researchers from around the world to submit innovative, science-based solutions, aligned to the *four betters*; the Startup Innovation Awards, highlighting innovations to transform our agrifood systems; and the WFF Champions Programme, which mobilized nine influential youth leaders to increase WFF visibility and expand the reach of the global movement.

121. Importantly, the WFF supported youth voices at high-level global meetings, through side events at the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) and at the Committee on World Food Security, and contributed to discussions at the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit in Tokyo, Japan.

122. As the culmination of a year of activities and action, the WFF 2021 Flagship Event followed the UN Food Systems Summit and mobilized thousands of young people worldwide. During the Flagship's Youth Action Assembly, which included a young farmers roundtable

and an Indigenous Peoples youth forum, national delegations discussed the establishment of bodies that would provide a dedicated and sustained space for youth to engage in policy discussions on agrifood systems.



Working along the humanitarian-development nexus and its contribution to peace

FAO addresses underlying root causes of risk, vulnerabilities and inequalities, while fostering deliberate contributions to localized peace and reduction of future conflicts and risks, informed by a context analysis.

In Somalia, FAO supported water access, management and efficient use with funding from the European Union. FAO initially planned to rehabilitate irrigation canals, following the participatory context analysis conducted with Interpeace and involving the different stakeholders of the area which revealed the potential impact on pastoralists, agropastoralists and agriculturalists in a contested area. Consequently, FAO widened the intervention to include the establishment of water points for livestock owners, formalization of agreements governing livestock routes and crossing points, and strengthening of water governance mechanisms, aiming to reduce the likeliness of future conflicts around the management of natural resources.

Key stakeholders report that this conflict- and risk-sensitive approach led to an estimated 90 percent reduction in water conflicts. FAO rehabilitated 246 km of irrigation canals serving over 30 000 ha of agricultural land, constructed water points in crossing points along the agreed livestock routes, strengthened farmers' groups to jointly plan, aggregate and market their production, and developed the capacity of ministry staff on land and water resources monitoring and management.



Hand-in-Hand Initiative: Supporting policies that enable investments

The Hand-in-Hand Initiative offers the world's largest and most capable platform for data and information exchange and analysis in support of ambitious national programmes for agrifood systems transformation. By applying analytical methods, it enables the identification of territories and populations where market-oriented opportunities for inclusive and sustainable growth have potential to eradicate poverty, end malnutrition and measurably reduce inequality.

The Initiative enabled FAO to develop value chains studies and investment analyses to guide public and private investments into production, aggregation, value-addition and commercialization through Ethiopia's agro-commodity procurement zones policy. In Ethiopia, FAO informs Investment Plans by providing an analytical base for improved understanding of poverty and territorial dynamics, identifying concrete cases for further investments and ensuring linkages with related policies and programmes. The Initiative also provides a platform for stakeholders to overcome value chain bottlenecks, ensuring inclusion of poor farmers and groups in situation of vulnerability in value chains and income-generating activities. As a result, investments mobilized in support of the Investment Plans exceeded their five-year estimated costs within three years.

In Tajikistan, FAO helped to develop a National Investment Plan for agriculture that maps priority issues and investments needed. Leveraging the Initiative's advanced geospatial information and data, the Organization identified territories where investments would generate the greatest economic and social payoffs and created a geospatial analytical portal for the country. The dairy sector was identified as having the greatest potential for improving income and nutrition of the poorest sectors of the population, while offering opportunities for value chain development. Matchmaking efforts seeking to bring potential public and private investors have already led to World Bank and IFAD financing.



Fostering youth entrepreneurship

Throughout 2020-21, FAO supported youth entrepreneurship, helping to generate inclusive and decent employment opportunities for youth. In Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, equipment, technical services and mentoring supported innovative initiatives promoting food security and combatting rural poverty developed by university students and implemented by them in their communities. The initiatives offered compelling solutions to complex problems, such as electronic pest repellents for palm weevil, locally manufactured, sustainable, and nutrient-rich animal feed, and low-cost, high-quality building materials using agriculture waste. FAO also launched Youth in Arab Agrifood Systems, a regional network connecting youth interested in agriculture and food systems and foster greater engagement, learning and inspiration.

The Guidelines for Investment in Youth in Agriculture and Agribusiness in Africa, developed with the African Union Commission, aim to accelerate investments in agrifood systems for and by youth, taking into consideration the diversity of their constraints, needs and aspirations. In addition, with the African Union Commission and UNIDO, FAO published baseline reports and action plans supporting youth entrepreneurship and agribusiness projects in Cabo Verde, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Tunisia and Zambia. In Madagascar, young farmers developed fruit and forestry production activities and adopted organic techniques for pest control. FAO also supported government-led initiatives to promote youth rural entrepreneurship in Senegal and Uganda, successfully piloting and scaling up models for youth access to training, mentoring, incubation, and finance and rural services.



AgriInvest: leveraging public funds to attract sustainable private investments in agrifood

FAO helped the Uganda Development Bank to expand its lending portfolio to smallholder farmers, particularly for women and young agripreneurs, by strengthening the Bank's capacity on digital finance, pipeline building, environmental, climate and social risk management, and impact assessment.

The Organization enhanced the Bank's knowledge of agriculture's environmental impact, as well as its capacity to use FAO's Ex-ante Carbon Balance Tool and Global Livestock Environmental Assessment Model-interactive for assessing greenhouse gas emissions and carbon balance of loan applications in food and agriculture. In collaboration with the UN Capital Development Fund, the Bank applied digital technologies – from profiling clients and assessing risks based on geodata, to rolling out digital loans, increasing outreach to smallscale farmers in underserved rural areas.

Evidence-based policy dialogues and technical assistance help decrease risk and enhance the viability of agricultural investments by generating enabling policy environments. Value chain analyses, developed in partnership with the Dairy Development Authority and the Uganda Agribusiness Alliance, identified bottlenecks and policy distortions affecting Uganda's beef and dairy value chains, making these industries more appealing to investors. Use of big data analytics was piloted in collaboration with Dalberg Data Insights to assess the effects of the Bank's loans on poverty reduction.

Lessons learned

Science, technology, innovation and digitalization are vital to ensuring efficiency and resilience of agrifood systems. The FAO Science and Innovation Strategy will provide corporate guidance to strengthen the use of science and innovation in the Organization's technical and programmatic interventions, and to enhance coherence and alignment for impact at country level. FAO will further focus its efforts in support of initiatives such as the Digital Villages.

Data, information and evidence, including expanded cross-disciplinary data and information for evidence-based policies in support of agrifood systems, sustainable natural resources management and food security, are essential to closing data and information gaps; making informed decisions based on real-time data and analysis; and facilitating dialogue on science. FAO will continue to step up its efforts toward enhanced access to, and use of data, information and evidence, including by leveraging the Hand-in-Hand Geospatial Platform and DataLab, and by supporting data collection and processing, especially in relation to the SDGs under the Organization's custodianship.

Policy coherence and multi-level food governance mechanisms are crucial for effective agrifood systems approaches. FAO will further strengthen its efforts to foster coherence and coordination through multipartner coalitions and initiatives (such as the Hand-in-Hand Initiative), as well as multistakeholder and youth-inclusive partnerships, to enable the transformation towards more resilient and sustainable agrifood systems.

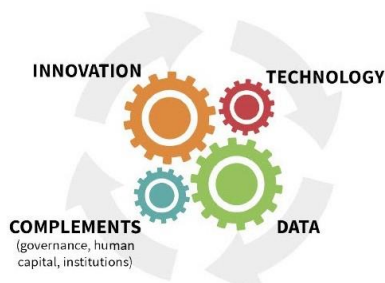
Innovation is a driving force that will help transform agrifood systems, lift millions of people out of poverty and help the world to achieve food security. The Organization is committed to continuing to actively contribute to important processes and initiatives such as the World Food Forum and the Innovation Lab; the International Symposium on Agricultural Innovation for Family Farmers; accelerated action for the development of innovative and transformative food systems pathways arising from the UN Food Systems Summit process; support to governments in developing strategies that foster sustainable agricultural practices; and support to small-scale enterprises, cooperatives and local organizations to ensure smallholder farmers' access to mechanized services.

Continued **close coordination and alignment with the rest of the UN system** is imperative particularly in the context of the repositioning of the United Nations development system. FAO is committed to: leveraging complementary resources and capacity to achieving results that are sustainable and at scale vis-à-vis the ambition of the 2030 Agenda; advocating for food security and nutrition and rural development to be put at the top of national agendas; ensuring the Organization and its mandate are well reflected in national agendas through coordinated efforts of UN entities, and the recognition of the UN Resident Coordinators' empowerment in advocating for specialized entities' mandates more systematically; catalysing a shift from fragmented project management to integrated SDG policy support; emphasizing more flexible and less-earmarked pooled funding mechanisms; contributing to increased UN efficiencies through joint business operations and active participation in the UN Efficiency Agenda efforts; and supporting the critical role of UN regional mechanisms in gathering policy expertise and system-wide knowledge and experiences for evidence-based solutions.

The **response to the COVID-19** pandemic has put under the spotlight the **importance of open, transparent and well-functioning global commodity markets and value chains** for food security and nutrition and reduced inequalities in access to food. FAO will be further strengthening its work on inclusive trade and markets and scaling up successful models developed under initiatives such as the One Country One Priority Product. Plans are already in place to replicate and scale up successful models developed under this initiative and to expand its scope from plant and forest products to livestock and fishery products. The pandemic gravely exacerbated the **vulnerability of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)**, requiring even more attention than before. FAO is working to further increase its efforts on SIDS, including through scaled-up climate financing, the restoration of degraded landscapes and development of aquatic food systems value chains.

II. Renewing FAO: Strengthening the Organization and improving its capacity to serve Members

Maximising impact



123. This section provides key highlights on FAO's improved capacity to serve Members by facilitating the management of trade-offs with the use of innovative technologies, data and statistics; and addressing critical areas with cross-country interdependencies.

Data and statistics

124. In 2020-21, FAO's efforts to support normative work on statistics and improve the quality and use of FAO's statistics to support evidence-based decision-making led to an increased reporting on the 21 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators from 43 to 54 percent and, thanks to the roll out of a comprehensive capacity development programme, there was an overall increase in the quality of statistics. Trainings ranged from mass online courses on statistical methods with focus on under-reported SDG indicators, targeting 150 countries, to in-country workshops and on-the-job training on harmonization of dietary data, survey methodology for Data in Emergencies Monitoring and use of an integrated statistics management system for fisheries and aquaculture. FAO also provided technical assistance to national statistics institutions in over 90 countries on SDG monitoring, agricultural censuses and the use of technology for data production.

125. FAOSTAT, the FAO Statistics page and the FAO SDG portal enlarged their user base, FAO databases and statistical products and publications were updated regularly, and new ones produced, such as the domain for SDG indicators. The restrictions and disruptions caused by the pandemic accelerated the adoption of innovative methods for data collection and alternative data sources for agricultural statistics, supported by the newly created FAO DataLab for

Statistical Innovation and the related FAO COVID-19 big data platform on food prices and value chains.

126. FAO developed a roadmap for modernization and delivery of its statistical programme. The roadmap's implementation plan identifies priority actions to support the Strategic Framework 2022-31; address the recommendations of the 2019 Evaluation of FAO's Statistical Work;⁴ and roll out the System-wide Road Map for Innovating UN Data and Statistics; and the Secretary-General's UN Data Strategy. It outlines concrete steps for increased integration and improved FAO data and statistics governance, optimized and increased resources for FAO data and statistics, improved quality of data and IT infrastructure, and strengthened statistical capacity in Decentralized Offices, especially as regards positioning statistics and SDG monitoring within national programming processes.

Science, technology and innovation

127. Science, technology and innovation are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and they are essential in finding solutions to complex problems. In 2020-21, FAO elaborated the outline and roadmap of the Organization's first Science and Innovation Strategy which was endorsed by the Governing Bodies. The Strategy will be a critical tool for strengthening science and evidence-based decision-making and enhancing innovation and technology at regional and country levels to support Members.

128. In preparation for the UN Food Systems Summit, FAO hosted and facilitated the Scientific Group's Science Days, which brought together over 2 000 participants from research, policy, civil society, and industry communities highlighting that policy, institutional, and technology innovations are closely interconnected and need to be pursued in an integrated manner.

129. In achieving the commitments of the World Summit on the Information Society to facilitate the adoption of digital technologies in the agrifood sector, FAO organized the Action Line on e-Agriculture facilitation and launched the *Digital agriculture report: Rural e-commerce development experience from China*.

⁴ PC 128/5

130. Through the Global AgrilInno Challenge in 2020 and 2021, FAO recognized over 300 innovations and technologies in agrifood systems led by women and youth from 50 countries. These innovations are being applied in agrifood e-commerce, complementing the 1000 Digital Villages Initiatives. The Digital Agriculture Forum held in parallel convened stakeholders from over 80 countries to discuss opportunities and challenges in digital agriculture and enhance policy dialogue.



131. FAO and the International Telecommunication Union joined efforts to develop guidelines for formulating national digital agriculture strategies and programmes in over 20 countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Eastern Europe, as well as joint publications of two reports showcasing more than 170 impactful innovative solutions for advancing the digital transformation of agriculture in Europe and Central Asia and the status of digital agriculture in 47 sub-Saharan African countries.

132. With FAO's support, over 50 countries enhanced their agricultural research and extension systems. The Organization developed policy briefs, guidelines, comprehensive assessments, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks and provided strategic guidance and technical support to improve the efficiency and functional capacity of national agriculture research systems. Furthermore, over 30 multistakeholder innovation approaches, such as innovation hubs, living labs, and science-technology backyards, were promoted to support access to

knowledge and innovation services by farmers and rural communities.

SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs

133. In 2020-21, FAO prioritized strengthening its support of the national priorities of SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs. The newly established Office of SIDS, LDCs, and LLDCs (OSL),⁵ together with the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, coordinates efforts across the Organization to support these vulnerable populations and countries meet their special needs, including for securing climate funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and other instruments, such as the Adaptation Fund.

134. Of the 49 countries that participate in the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, 38 are SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs. Many of them have already developed typologies to identify territories with high poverty and high untapped potential for more targeted investments, and trainings offered on the Hand-in-Hand platform have contributed to building capacity on the use of geospatial information in evidence-based decision-making.

135. In collaboration with academic institutions and other partners, a methodology is under development for assessing climate change vulnerability and capacity, improving understanding of the role of investments in protecting coastal communities, livelihoods and infrastructure from extreme weather events in SIDS, and strengthening the capacity to use high-resolution population data and related data for agricultural vulnerability and risk reduction applications.

Inclusion

136. FAO promotes systematic mainstreaming and operationalization of inclusive approaches across all areas of work in order to ensure that the Organization leaves no one behind.

137. Throughout the biennium, FAO assisted governments in designing policies and interventions addressing the needs of people in situations of poverty, vulnerability, exclusion and marginalization, considering possible trade-offs or unintended

⁵ Office of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)

consequences, furthering the availability of disaggregated data and statistics around livelihoods, analysing barriers and constraints faced, and enhancing knowledge and evidence. The Organization also furthered the application of Free, Prior and Informed Consent that pertains to the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

138. Guidance on inclusivity and the integration of poverty reduction in project formulation, promoted pre-project assessments for a thorough understanding of local contexts and the identification of situations of vulnerability, exclusion and marginalization, strengthening the internal capacity to provide targeted interventions.

139. The Gender Action Plan was adopted to guide the implementation of the FAO Policy on Gender Equality which promotes the use of gender transformative approaches and addresses pervasive inequalities in agrifood systems with focus on the potential of rural women and girls. A compendium, jointly published with the Rome-based Agencies, presents 15 good practices of gender transformative approaches to raise awareness and provide guidance that contributes to food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture and rural development, as well as on formulating gender-sensitive social norms indicators.

140. The Rural Youth Action Plan seeks to ensure equal empowerment of rural young women and men and protection of children and other excluded youth groups in FAO's contribution to the SDGs. Since its inception in 2021, the Action Plan has enabled reporting on youth-specific activities in the Organization and targeted support has helped drive a rapid increase in the inclusion of youth in programmatic work.

141. Key milestones regarding FAO's work with Indigenous Peoples included the recognition by the Scientific Group of the UN Food Systems Summit of Indigenous Peoples' Food and Knowledge systems as 'game-changers.' The Rome Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples was consolidated, enabling 31 Members to improve coordination on Indigenous Peoples' issues. Hosted by FAO, the UN Global Forum on Indigenous Youth facilitated the participation of

indigenous youth from the seven sociocultural regions, Members and UN partners, to inform the UN Food Systems Summit and the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 and established a space for future exchanges.

Complements (governance, human capital, institutions)

142. Agrifood systems transformation requires – as a precondition and as priority trigger – stronger, more transparent and accountable institutions, governance and human capital. In 2020-21 biennium, FAO continued to exercise a leadership role in global governance processes that focus on supporting Members' implementation of the SDGs, the repositioning of the UN development system, and the coordination of UN response efforts to address the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the biennium, FAO provided support to frame and prioritize discussion of SDGs in all Technical Committees and Regional Conferences, with dedicated discussions on the COVID-19 response efforts and updates on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

143. FAO also developed a flexible four-phased framework for governance analysis, to serve as a key support to strengthen collective action to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. By scaling up the use of the methodological framework for governance analysis in the context of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, FAO also enhanced its ability to support national policy implementation capacities, enhance the science-policy interface, and reinforce national ownership of the development process. In preparation for the UN Food Systems Summit, FAO promoted the relevance of governance, institutions and human capital in transforming agrifood systems, and contributed to the work of the Governance Working Area resulting in the publication of a policy brief on Governance of Food Systems Transformation, submitted to the Summit.

144. FAO's Corporate Policy Gateway was upgraded and expanded to better reflect ongoing work on policy and governance. The Gateway now includes a policy tools repository, links to the COVID-19 corporate site, as well as featuring of ongoing policy and governance work in the five regions.



Fostering international cooperation and knowledge exchange in SIDS

The first Small Island Developing States Solutions Forum, organized by FAO in partnership with International Telecommunications Union, and co-hosted by the Government of Fiji, convened public policy makers, private sector leaders, development partners, local communities, and other key stakeholders to discuss and enable locally grown and imported innovations and digital solutions for enhancing food security, improving nutrition and health, combatting climate change, adding value to products and reaching local and global markets. The Forum provided the opportunity to ignite entrepreneurship along the food systems value chain, in support of accelerated progress towards the SDGs related to agriculture, food and nutrition in SIDS. It was also the occasion for launching the SIDS Solutions Platform, a uniquely innovative intra- and inter-regional knowledge exchange platform to incubate, promote, scale up and replicate locally grown and imported science, technology and innovation initiatives. Highlighted innovations include mobile apps promoting healthy diets based on locally available foods, providing farming information and collating data on available health resources. Expanding from the Pacific to other SIDS in Africa, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and South China Sea and the Caribbean region, the Platform enables SIDS to replicate good practices from other countries and benefit their populations significantly through knowledge exchange.

Enhancing operational modalities

145. This section provides key highlights on FAO's achievement to support Members through an improved programmatic approach, enhanced transformative and expanded partnerships, innovative financing mechanisms and sources to complement traditional funding modalities, as well as the Organization's readiness to operate under increasing risk and uncertainty.

Partnerships

146. In 2020-21, 48 strategic partnerships with non-state actors and UN agencies contributed to FAO's strategic programmes and to the SDGs, including the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme. Within the UN system, FAO developed nine new partnerships and facilitated, led or co-led five large advocacy initiatives to build synergies and mainstream UN-wide strategies and policies. In partnership with the Rome-based Agencies, FAO collaborated with the Joint Programme for the Sahel in Response to the Challenges of COVID-19, Conflict and Climate Change (SD3C). FAO also partnered with 40 academic and research institutions to develop innovative tools and platforms for monitoring and early warning on pests and diseases, predictive satellite modeling, capacity development on sustainable agriculture, and technical support on food security and nutrition, sustainable resources management, landscape restoration and smallscale fisheries. Partnerships with civil society organizations led to enhanced conflict-sensitive programming, responsible investment in agriculture programmes, and support for climate resilience in agrifood systems.

147. Partnerships with private sector entities were expanded during the biennium as the Organization strengthened its capacity for engaging with them. The new Strategy for Private Sector Engagement 2021-25

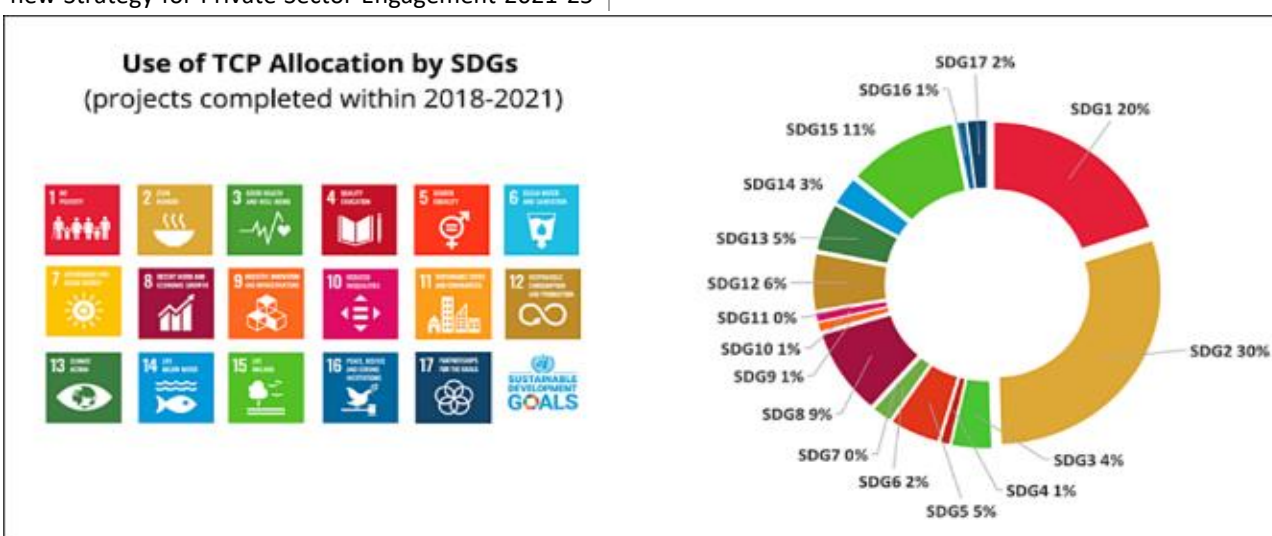
and a new framework for due diligence and risk assessment/management for engagements with the private sector and other non-state actors provide "fit-for-purpose" approaches. The [CONNECT](#) portal and a newly-established Engagements and Partnerships Committee enhance transparency and accountability for FAO's work with the private sector, in alignment to technical priorities. Since May 2021, the Committee has reviewed 69 proposed engagements. Throughout the biennium, USD 65 million were mobilized from private sector partners, and FAO signed its first South-South and triangular cooperation agreement with the private sector.

148. In collaboration with the World Rural Forum, FAO facilitated the integration of COVID-19 emergency measures into 85 national laws, policies and regulations. High-level events involving around 80 parliamentarians from 50 countries and 9 regional and global parliamentary networks informed legislation on family farming in the context of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019–2028) with commitments to mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic on agrifood systems.

Technical Cooperation Programme

149. The Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) facilitates access by countries to FAO's knowledge and technical expertise in all priority areas covered by the FAO Strategic Framework, and priorities defined in the Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) guide the use of TCP resources for demand-driven technical assistance.

150. During 2020-21, FAO reviewed and streamlined operations enabling country offices to reprogramme their TCP allocations to address the challenges associated with COVID-19, with USD 31 million



invested in the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, fully achieving the targets for approval and delivery rates. The [TCP](#) during 2020-21 supported the mobilization of USD 1.7 billion worth of financing from an investment of USD 100 million. In response to the 2020 TCP Evaluation, a strategic exercise was initiated to review the Programme. The application of the new set of criteria suggested by the 166th Session of the Council to the regional TCP resource allocation was discussed in two informal consultations with Members. In addition, headquarters and decentralized offices are jointly streamlining TCP procedures, enhancing the TCP's catalytic and strategic alignment, and strengthening regional offices' role in quality control. The TCP is now fully aligned with the repositioned UN development system, the *four betters* and the Sustainable Development Goal targets in the Strategic Framework 2022-31.

Resources mobilized

151. FAO mobilized USD 2.7 billion in voluntary contributions, an increase of over 11 percent compared to 2018-19, exceeding the target of USD 1.7 billion, and setting a record for annual resources mobilization at USD 1.42 billion in 2021. FAO reinforced its capacity to generate and disseminate timely information about donors and held strategic dialogues to develop framework agreements. Effective outreach regarding FAO's work and impact increased visibility and transparency to partners, gaining greater trust in the Organization. Institutional capacity was further enhanced through revised internal procedures and improved communication across the Organization, including through a dedicated website, and capacity development activities such as trainings, workshops and webinars.

152. The resource partner base continued to expand, reaching around 150 partners, including Members, development banks, private sector and climate and environment funds. The top 20 resource partners accounted for around 84 percent of all resources mobilized, with 51 percent coming from the top five (Green Climate Fund, European Union, United States of America, Global Environment Facility and Germany). Compared to 2018-19, resources from vertical funds and international financial institutions increased by over 180 percent and private sector contributions increased by almost twelve-fold, exceeding USD 65 million.

153. Several new partners joined the Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism (FMM), FAO's main pooled, flexible and less-earmarked funding mechanism. Contributions to the FMM for 2020-21 reached

USD 44.5 million. Through the FMM, FAO supports the development of innovative agrifood solutions for farmers and food producers, uptake of new practices, adoption of policies and strategies and set-up of cross-sectoral policy platforms.

154. FAO responded quickly to the pandemic crisis through the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, mobilizing over 35 percent of the initial investment call of USD 1.32 billion.

Risk management

155. Good risk management is a fundamental component of effective results based management, identifying risks potentially affecting the achievement of objectives and taking action where necessary to manage the impact on activities and programmes. FAO is committed to strengthening enterprise risk management (ERM) throughout the Organization and embedding it at all stages of the organizational management processes, from strategic thinking to detailed work plans.

156. Significant progress has been made towards greater risk management maturity in the Organization. Risk analysis accompanied the development of the Strategic Framework 2022-31 and the Medium Term Plan 2022-25, which considered risks influencing the process itself and risks affecting the achievement of the objectives and programmes. Analyzing assumptions and dependencies was integral to the PPA formulation process. Each PPA includes mitigation actions to address key risks emerging from external context and internal constraints, and detailed work plans include risk analyses and mitigation plans. Risk management has also become integral to Organizational governance and decision-making at the highest levels, with the Core Leadership team discussing risk management processes and specific risks requiring cross-functional collaboration and Senior Management support at regular meetings specifically established for this purpose.

157. The Organization strengthened its capacity on risk management principles and processes across all locations. As a result, by the end of 2021, all FAO offices had risk management action plans in place, supporting rational decision-making, informing resource prioritization, and facilitating dialogue with partners. Building a shared understanding of risks and of how to ensure risk management contributes to the success of programmes and projects is a challenging process, and efforts to strengthen the capacity to manage risks and uncertainties in the rapidly evolving and volatile context will continue at process, unit and global levels.



Enhancing project management

The Project Cycle sets corporate standards and procedures for project management by enhancing accountability and quality through results-based management principles, while improving the strategic focus of all FAO's projects. It is essential to support FAO funding agreements and facilitate cooperation with resource partners.

In 2020-21, FAO streamlined the Project Cycle by realigning to the International Aid Transparency Initiative gender policy marker and scaling up the use of "formulation funding" procedures for small trust funds. Simplified procedures for projects in response to COVID-19 gave way to innovative project-to-programme pilots. New policies for vouchers and beneficiary grants enhanced operational modalities. The Organization also strengthened its approach within the field programme with guidance on Accountability to Affected Populations, mainstreaming poverty reduction, including people with disabilities, and sexual exploitation and abuse.

Organizational inclusivity, efficiency and effectiveness

158. This section provides key highlights on FAO's achievement to improve the Organization's capacity to serve Members by ensuring organizational inclusivity, efficiency and effectiveness, including through revised human resource guidelines and procedures to adapt to the changing environment, the transformation to Digital FAO and the launch of internal initiatives such as the Women and Youth Committees.

Transforming FAO

159. During 2020-21, FAO instituted transformational changes to ensure top-level internal governance and an Organization that is modern, fit-for-purpose, efficient and impactful in tackling the challenges of achieving food security and improving livelihoods through *better production, better nutrition, a better environment* and a *better life*, leaving no one behind.

160. FAO's new modular structure and reporting lines enabled the Organization to be more dynamic, efficient, inclusive and agile, allowing maximum cross-sectoral collaboration and the flexibility required to respond to emerging needs and priorities.

161. Moving away from rigid departmental structures and hierarchies, the Core Leadership team facilitates coordinated action and decision-making. Consisting of the three Deputy Directors-General, Chief Economist, Chief Scientist and Director of Cabinet, the Core Leadership team supports the Director-General in all areas of the Organization's mandate. The new management structure also resulted in USD 2.3 million efficiency savings per biennium.

162. Accountability of Heads of Offices, Centres and Divisions was strengthened in line with best practice for the implementation of agreed activities in their areas of expertise and enhanced cross-divisional collaboration. Three new Offices were established: the Office of Innovation to consolidate and strengthen FAO's innovation thrust, including innovation of mindset, cooperation models, and application of digitalization; the Office of SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs to ensure coordination of FAO's work in support of the special needs of these vulnerable countries; and the Office of SDGs to coordinate corporate engagement in the 2030 Agenda follow-up and review. In line with best practice, the Ethics and Ombuds Offices were established as stand-alone offices.

163. Collaboration with other UN agencies and with International Financing Institutions was enhanced through the Centres, with two new ones established: the Joint FAO/WHO Centre to support joint efforts on

Codex Alimentarius and zoonotic diseases, in close collaboration with other global partners including the World Organisation for Animal Health and the International Atomic Energy Agency; and the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre reflecting the long-standing strategic partnership for the use of nuclear science and technology for sustainable agricultural development and food security.

164. FAO's technical and operational support were enhanced, including through: the new division on Food Systems and Food Safety to provide strategic leadership in the development of more sustainable agrifood systems; better distribution of responsibilities for UN collaboration and private sector engagement; the new Project Support Division; consolidation of human resources management and servicing functions; abolishment of the Office of Support to Decentralized Offices and related redistribution of functions; and disbanding of the Strategic Programme Management Teams which allowed a reduction of costs and leveraging of the technical expertise of staff formerly seconded to those teams.

165. Additional resources to support the Office of the Inspector General, coupled with the recentralization of four outposted auditor positions, enabled strengthened oversight. FAO's work on food safety scientific advice and standard-setting was strengthened through additional allocations of USD 1 million each to the IPPC and the Joint FAO/WHO food safety scientific advice programme. The new Women's and Youth Committees provided a platform for young and female employees across the Organization to share experiences and promote innovative ideas.

166. The establishment of the COVID-19 Crisis Management Team in early 2020 provided a coordination mechanism involving key senior management in all relevant areas, to manage the Organization during the crisis in a collective and consultative way. The Crisis Management Team regular consultative mechanism was enlarged, when required, to the Core Leadership, staff representative bodies and Rome-based Agencies to allow informed decision-making in a rapid and agile manner, enabling the Organization to continue to deliver while protecting the health and safety of its personnel.

Human resources

167. FAO responded to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, providing expertise and guidance for managing employees during the crisis, ensuring duty of care for their health and wellbeing. Exceptional efforts were made to keep employees safe, healthy

and engaged. Human Resource management guidelines and procedures were regularly updated and adapted to rapidly changing situations and enabling more flexible ways of working. The Organization designed new ways forward, while keeping up with day-to-day operations in support of staffing, learning, diversity and inclusion at headquarters and country offices for over 13 000 employees.

168. FAO took significant steps towards putting in place people-centred HR strategies and policies that drive a culture of integrity, innovation, collaboration and excellence, in line with the Human Resources Strategic Action Plan 2020-2021. New recruitment practices include testing, use of the clear check database and enhanced reviews of background checks. Newly recruited FAO Representatives were supported by a comprehensive and innovative briefing programme and enhanced online training and learning.

169. Following the Employment Satisfaction Survey, a comprehensive action plan was developed and policy changes have been implemented to improve the workplace environment. Following the recommendation of the FAO Oversight Advisory Committee, a Committee on Workplace Conduct and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse was established in 2021.

170. The volume of recruitment was extremely high, resulting in an increase of days compared to the previous biennium in the time required to fill posts and a vacancy rate of 20 percent. In 2021 the Young Professional Officers programme was re-launched, targeting talented young professionals who are mainly from non- and under-represented developing countries through extensive outreach to Members and other channels. In the next biennium, focus will be maintained on improving recruitment policies, enhancing workforce planning and voluntary mobility practices. Based on lessons learned, flexible working arrangements will be institutionalized and procedures for affiliate employees streamlined.

Digital FAO

171. The digital revolution offers unique potential for enhancing FAO's contributions to the SDGs by transforming the way the Organization works and delivers against its mandate – both internally and in partnership with others. A number of digital public goods tools have been launched, such as the Hand-in-Hand Geospatial Platform, for creating interactive data maps, analysing trends and identifying real-time gaps and opportunities in the agrifood systems and guiding impactful investments. The first release of the FAO Digital Portfolio provided a consolidated view of digital products used in the field, and was key in

improving internal utilization of FAO digital public goods.

172. Information technology (IT) supports the work of the Organization worldwide, including implementing secure digital solutions (Digital for Impact) and ensuring a fit-for-purpose IT environment through a portfolio of services and tools that support global operations (Digital Workplace).

173. In 2020-21, FAO stepped up to another level to future-proof the Organization, providing solutions for FAO to continue operating during the global pandemic while at the same time continuing to provide digital products. Digitalization of the workspace proved to have a profound impact on the office culture, dramatically improving access to information and decision-making. New capabilities include hybrid and virtual ways of working, and further automation of processes in support of the Digital Workplace.

174. Two key flagship systems supporting FAO operations worldwide were upgraded ensuring continuing vendor support and providing enhanced functionalities to the Organization, and a number of legacy systems were migrated to new digital platforms, improving the overall warranty and utility.

175. Support to the “new normal” will require continued transformation, with fit-for-purpose digital solutions and increased digital capabilities of FAO employees, coupled with guidance and assistance towards capacity building and implementation of digital public goods.

Women and Youth Committees

176. The two internal committees established by the Director-General provide a space to share experiences and innovative thinking and are composed of FAO employees who, on a voluntary basis, represent an array of expertise from FAO offices worldwide. Their Joint Mentorship Programme facilitates an exchange of professional experience and advice to assist young employees, and promotes excellence in the workplace and in career development.

177. **The Women's Committee** addresses organizational culture change and creation of a safe space; advocacy, communication, innovation and outreach; and accountability of senior managers on gender. It provides a safe, inclusive space for women to express themselves and identify opportunities for training, mentoring and development. Among its achievements are the contribution to the corporate policy on Accountability and Commitment to Gender Equality and the Employee Satisfaction Survey follow-up task force, successfully advocating for inclusivity as a criterion for employee recognition. Twenty-five

global and regional “VirtualiTeas” were organized as informal gatherings where employees and external personalities share experiences and celebrate women’s diversity and achievements. In collaboration with FAO’s communications and human resources management teams, the Committee launched the “21 women leaders for 2021” campaign, drawing attention to FAO’s diverse female workforce. It also raised awareness on incentives and rewards for gender mainstreaming, contributed to UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women2.0 reporting, participated in the UN Rome-based Agencies’ International Women’s Day events and supported a World Food Day event. The collaboration with the Mountain Partnership and Stella Jean to improve

livelihoods for women and communities was featured in Vogue Italia, Milan Fashion Week and Expo Dubai.

178. **The Youth Committee** seeks to empower youth and improve their professional experience in the Organization by fostering innovation and youth engagement, addressing organizational bottlenecks and challenges for young employees, and promoting career development activities. Thirteen “Innovation Wednesdays” enabled exchanges to spark change and make FAO a better and more productive workplace; five “InnoVenture Labs” featured external experts on innovation and technology in sustainable development; and 15 “Progress@FAO” sessions fostered inter-departmental communication and peer-to-peer knowledge sharing.

Lessons learned

Insufficient non-earmarked funding makes it difficult for the Organization to direct resources where they are most needed and generate the greatest benefit in accordance with agreed priorities. Voluntary contributions to emergency response plans and other interventions are currently channelled by individual resource partners mainly through earmarked and country-specific activities. Unearmarked or lightly earmarked voluntary funding allows for more agility and rapid adaptation to changing circumstances or priorities, which is particularly important in an increasingly volatile environment. It is therefore fundamental that Members and other resource partners consider increasing their unearmarked contributions for achieving greater impact.

The Youth and Women's Committees' Joint Mentorship Programme helped in addressing challenges and enhancing the **visibility of the work of female and young employees** by promoting exchanges and building relations. As it strives to become a more inclusive Organization, FAO will reinforce its support to mentors and mentees, in particular in decentralized offices, and give increased attention to female and young employees' concerns across the globe.

The new agile and flexible structure, which breaks down silos and encourages collaboration, allowed the Organization to better respond to emerging needs and evolving priorities in a biennium characterized by rapid changes. Service delivery mechanisms and methods of collaboration effectively adopted **virtual tools and increased digitalization** to address lockdowns and disruptions, allowing the Organization to continue providing capacity building, supporting knowledge transfer, convening policy dialogues and fulfilling its technical advisory role.

III. Resources management



179. In 2020-21, the Organization spent 99.6 percent of the net appropriation of USD 1 005.6 million, or just over USD 1 billion, which is similar to the previous biennium. Total expenditure reached USD 3.2 billion, 12 percent higher than in 2018-19, driven by extrabudgetary spending which accounted for 68 percent of the total at USD 2.2 billion, as shown in Table 3 of *Annex 3*.

180. Despite the challenges and constraints to delivery posed by the pandemic, FAO was able to flexibly adapt and respond to emerging needs and priorities. Technical Cooperation Programme expenditures amounted to USD 132.5 million, a slight increase compared to 2018-19. With the increase in extrabudgetary spending (18.4 percent higher than in 2018-19), FAO responded to a wide range of priorities in the context of emergencies (53 percent), other field and country-level work (31 percent), and global and inter-regional endeavours (16 percent).

181. The Organization swiftly shifted resources to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Funds were directed to the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme through the Technical Cooperation Programme and from the Multidisciplinary Fund to support smallholder resilience, economic inclusion and social protection in the wake of the pandemic.

182. Full proportional recovery of project costs is now well under way with the new cost recovery policy put into practice from 2018, which has improved transparency, equitability and accountability in project charges. As roll-out of the new model

gradually progressed, USD 126 million were recovered in 2020-21 due to the increasing numbers of projects falling under the new policy, more than three times the level of 2018-19. Simultaneously, under-recovery decreased with the reduced weight of projects under the legacy policy, and, as implementation continues, gaps in recovery are expected to close further.

183. FAO mobilized USD 2.7 billion in voluntary contributions, over 10 percent more than in 2018-19, and exceeding the target of USD 1.7 billion. USD 1.42 billion was mobilized in 2021 alone, setting a historic record in resources mobilized in a year, reflecting Members' and resource partners' continued confidence in the Organization's ability to support progress towards the 2030 Agenda. In addition, the Organization assisted 62 countries in designing public investment projects financed by international financing institutions for a total of USD 13.8 billion and catalysed USD 1.7 billion in financing through the Technical Cooperation Programme.

184. Voluntary and less-earmarked contributions channelled through the Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism reached USD 44.5 million, which the Organization could flexibly deploy in support of areas of the Programme of Work where the resources were needed most. The importance of this flexibility for addressing complex issues related to food and agriculture became particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, as FAO sought to respond quickly and holistically to immediate and longer-term challenges, highlighting the importance of further strengthening such mechanisms, also stressed by Members.

185. A more detailed overview of resources management and financial performance is available in *Annex 3*.

List of Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
AMR	Antimicrobial resistance
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CPF	Country Programming Frameworks
DDR	Disaster risk reduction
ERM	Enterprise risk management
FAOSTAT	Corporate Database for Substantive Statistical Data
FIES	Food insecurity experience scale
FMM	Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism
GAFSF	Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFFA	Global Forum for Food and Agriculture
GGW	Great Green Wall
GIFT	Global Individual Food consumption data Tool
GLEWS++	Joint FAO/OIE/WHO Global Early Warning System for health threats and emerging risks at the human-animal-ecosystems interface
GSP	Global Soil Partnership
HDPN	Humanitarian, development and peace nexus
ICT	information and communications technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
JEFCA	FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives
JEMRA	FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Microbiological Risk Assessment
LDC	Least developed country
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
LLDC	Land-locked developing countries
MDD-W	Minimum dietary diversity for women
N4G	Nutrition for Growth
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
PWB	Programme of Work and Budget
SIDS	Small island developing states
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDS	United Nations Development System
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UN-SWAP	UN System-wide Action Plan Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WASAG	Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture
WFF	World Food Forum
WHO	World Health Organization