



## High Level Political Forum 2020

*"Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for s*

### ANNEX 1

#### **Inputs by the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG)**

The Committee on Agriculture (COAG) provides overall policy and regulatory guidance on issues relating to agriculture, livestock, food safety, nutrition, rural development and natural resource management. Established in 1971, the Committee has presently 125 Member Nations and welcomes applications for participation as observers from civil society and other organizations.

As FAO's main technical advisory committee on agriculture, COAG is responsible for:

- Reviewing major agricultural and nutritional problems and proposing concerted action by FAO's Member Nations;
- Advising the FAO Council and the Director General on activities relating to agriculture, livestock, food, nutrition and natural resource management, with particular emphasis on all the social, technical, economic, institutional and structural aspects relating to agricultural and rural development in general;
- Reviewing specific matters relating to agriculture, food and nutrition referred to the Committee.

COAG provides advice and recommendations to the FAO Conference on global agricultural policy and regulatory matters, and to the FAO Council on matters relating to the organization's priorities, programmes and budgets.

COAG, along with other Technical Committees, plays a key role in fulfilling the mandate of the organization, and in promoting integrated approaches across agriculture, forestry and fisheries, food systems, institutions and policies and cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination. COAG's Sessions, held every two years, have aligned the agenda towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and focus on actions to accelerate and scale-up progress, especially to achieve SDG 2 and other related SDGs (SDGs 1, 3, 8, 10,12,13,15 and 17).

The Committee is increasingly covering crosscutting topics such as climate change, food system issues, biodiversity, Antimicrobial resistance (AMR), innovation and others emerging issues. These interdisciplinary activities reflect the crosscutting nature of major global challenges and the need for system thinking and approaches. COAG's broad thematic mandate encompasses areas of work across FAO's technical areas and Regions, and offers a forum for close dialogue and coordination within the organization and with Member Countries, and encourages strategic partnerships to achieve common goals.

#### **I. Key policies and measures to ensure "accelerated action and transformative pathways" for realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development**

##### **a. Critical gaps in implementing the 2030 Agenda within the area of responsibility of the intergovernmental body (bearing in mind interrelations with other goals and targets)**

- COAG offers a forum in which global agreements and non-binding instruments are negotiated. Most recent examples include: endorsement of the International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers; adoption of the Resolution on *Further integration of sustainable agricultural approaches, including agroecology, in the future planning activities of FAO* (resolution 7/2019) and the Resolution on reaffirming the global commitment to addressing the growing global

threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), the adoption of the FAO Strategy on Biodiversity Mainstreaming and of the Ten Elements of Agroecology.

- FAO has scaled up its activities to promote approaches that engage agriculture sectors and their stakeholders in the 2030 Agenda, based on the **Sustainable Food and Agriculture (SFA)** principles and promoting a systemic analysis and approach to constraints and trade-offs across the entire food system. COAG advises on critical policy and technical matters, through a two-stream process: gaining knowledge on main challenges, threats and potential solutions at national, regional and global level and by providing evidence-based guidance for coherent and concerted action, fostering an enabling environment and promoting collaboration across sectors. The COAG Bureau oversees implementation of actions and recommendation and strives to engage its Members for participating in inclusive consultation processes on priority topics, to provide informed and consensus-based technical and police guidance within its mandate and building on synergies with other Technical Committees, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and other bodies.
- At global level, FAO is involved **strengthening strategic partnerships** through platforms and initiatives promoting international cooperation, such as: the Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028); UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030); UN Decade for Action; the Sustainable Food Systems Programme of the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP); UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030; and Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture [within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)].
- At national and regional level, FAO supports countries to build an **enabling policy environment** to accelerate SDG implementation and developing capacities, providing guidance and tools, monitoring progress, promote partnerships, investments and innovative solutions on the ground, aimed primarily at smallholders, the rural poor but extending to all actors in society.
- COAG 26 (2018) discussed the adoption of sustainable food and agriculture and requested to address related **knowledge gaps** and need to define common methodologies, and requested FAO to develop a set of indicators and related statistics and tools relevant to sustainable food and agriculture and encourage their use by countries to measure and report on progress on SDGs implementation, to be submitted to the Committee. FAO has stepped up its work on measurement of SDGs, including training and seminars on FAO's statistics work, focusing on the methodology used for the 21 SDG indicators for which FAO is custodian, including the e-learning course on sustainable agriculture (SDG Indicator 2.4.1).
- Further, COAG 26 discussed **Agroecology** and pathways to move from advocacy to action and the 'Ten Elements of Agroecology' were approved by FAO Council (December 2019). FAO was requested to develop an Action Plan for the Scaling up Agroecology Initiative with partners, taking into account country needs and capacities, for review by COAG 27, including initial achievements at global and national levels. As part of current efforts to operationalize the framework, FAO launched the **Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation (TAPE)** using the Ten Elements of Agroecology along with specific core criteria of performance to assess the multi-dimensional performance of agroecology in July 2019 responding to COAG's request to develop "metrics, tools and protocols to evaluate the contribution of agroecology and other approaches to the transformation of sustainable agriculture and food systems".

- COAG’s **technical advisory functions** are informed by a range of **flagship publications**, in particular by the FAO State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA), of which recent editions focused on Food Losses and Waste (2019) and on Migration, Agriculture and Rural Development (2018). The State of the Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) issued yearly by FAO jointly with WFP, IFAD, WHO, and UNICEF provides a comprehensive overview on progress made against the key SDG targets to eradicate hunger [i.e. SDG 2.1.1 and 2.1.2) and all forms of malnutrition (SDG 2.2.1 and 2.2.2), which point to the persistence of multiple burdens of malnutrition and increasing trends in overweight and obesity. Recent SOFI reports analyzed the new rise in food insecurity in the world, and its main drivers, in particular the role of conflicts (2017), of climatic shocks and variability in 2018 and of economic downturns (2019).

**b. Priority measures to: accelerate action, and ensure transformative pathways to realize the decade of action for achieving the 2030 Agenda.**

- COAG provides strategic advice on many of the development challenges FAO is facing in assisting its Member Countries. COAG’s contributes to all six **entry points selected for accelerated action** for sustainable development, with a focus on Food systems and nutrition patterns, Global environmental commons and Human well-being and capabilities, as well as Urban and peri-urban development, Sustainable and just economies and Energy decarbonization with universal access. COAG contributes through both its normative functions as well as by increasing knowledge and the sharing of information and tools for sustainable food and agriculture between Member Countries, with the goal of rendering these guidance accessible and used at all levels.
- **Recent highlights**, following COAG 26 (October 2018), include the endorsement by the 41<sup>st</sup> Session of the FAO Conference (June 2019) of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the COAG 26 Report as follows:
  - endorsed the International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers
  - adopted Resolution 7/2019 “Further integration of sustainable agricultural approaches, including agroecology, in the future planning activities of FAO”
  - adopted Resolution 6/2019 reaffirming the global commitment to addressing the growing global threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR)
  - *adopted the following resolutions on the proclamation of international day/years: the Year of Fruits and Vegetables in 2021, Year of Rye in 2025, Year of Millets in 2023 and the annual observance of an International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste on 29 September.*

Subsequently, in its 163<sup>rd</sup> Session, the Council adopted the FAO Strategy on Biodiversity Mainstreaming and approved the revised version of the Ten Elements of Agroecology.

**II. Contribution of the intergovernmental body to accelerated action and transformative pathways and realizing the decade of action and delivery for achieving the 2030 Agenda within its area of responsibility** (including its cooperation with ECOSOC and other intergovernmental bodies).

**Examples of technical guidance and tools:** Two **International Codes of Conduct, on the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers and on pesticide management** were adopted. The

first was designed to assist countries address the multiple and complex issues related to the responsible use and management of fertilizers in agriculture at the farm, ecosystem and national level and was endorsed by FAO Conference in June 2019. The new version of the International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management, developed with WHO, was endorsed in 2014.

- The next COAG 27 (September 2020) theme will be “**Sustainable Livestock for SDGs**”. It will examine the crucial role played by livestock in the nutrition, food security and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people, for a diversified diet, as well as the important role of livestock in the economies and development of many countries, and in the life of many communities and providing employment, particularly for rural youth and women. It will review livestock’s potential to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and genetic resources, and, if managed sustainably, contribution to important ecosystem functions, nutrient cycling, soil organic carbon sequestration etc. COAG will review the challenges faced by livestock production, its effects on climate change and the environment, and how it is directly and indirectly affected by the diverse effects of climate change, and the needs for production systems and farmers to adapt and become more resilient. In support the transformation needed in the livestock sector to enhance its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, FAO’s report on ‘World Livestock: Transforming the Livestock Sector through the Sustainable Development Goals (2018)’ analyses the sector’s interaction with each of the 17 Goals, as well as the potential synergies, trade-offs, and complex interlinkages involved.
- COAG 27 will review **High-impact animal diseases and health-related threats**, and the needed prevention and control measures, as well as investment and capacity development programmes to fight these threats. The continuous threats posed by high impact animal diseases and health related threats, undermine efforts to improve livelihoods and food security, thus achieving SDG 1 and SDG 2, and trigger heavy annual losses in production, estimated at 25 to 30 percent globally. This needs to consider the link between humans, animals and the surrounding environment, which is particularly close in developing regions, where poor farming communities raise animals that provide transport, draught power, fuel and clothing, as well as food. Due to the broad reliance on animals, these diseases can have even wider devastating impacts on vulnerable communities. Prevention and control of high impact animal diseases and related health threats is a top priority of FAO, supported by investment and capacity development programmes, with focus on the key measures to fight these threats, and on the policies at national level that can improve access of livestock keepers to the services, information and tools that enable them to participate in managing their immediate animal health risks.

In the preparation of the COAG 27 (September 2020) agenda, the Committee is foreseen to advise on following issues and proposed actions to increase progress on the Sustainable Development Agenda:

- The **Voluntary Code of Conduct on Food Loss and Waste (FLW)**, developed by FAO in collaboration with relevant actors and experts, including regional consultations and multi-stakeholder workshops. The Code of Conduct aims to maximize positive outcomes from actions to reduce FLW while at the same time contributing to the broader 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular to SDG target 12.3 (to halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains) and SDG 2.

- **FAO Rural Youth Action Plan:** the Committee requested FAO in collaboration with the other Rome-based Agencies and the International Labour Organization to develop a rural youth action plan, based on existing instruments. All SDG's are relevant to youth, with specific targets related to employment (e.g. SDGs 4.4 , 8.5, 8.6, 8.b) It will promote tools contributing to accessing educational and training programmes adequate to the work market in their rural areas; accessing decent employment opportunities, with emphasis on rural green jobs through the entire food system; accessing rural finance, investments and credit programmes; and participating in decision-making processes.
- Implementation of **FAO Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)** 2016-2020, and the proposal of the new FAO Strategy on AMR for the next five years (2021-2025). Within its Action Plan on AMR, FAO has guided progress in addressing AMR at global, regional, and country levels, and working at the Tripartite level jointly with WHO and OIE, contributing primarily to SDGs 2, 3,12, and 1). FAO advances global communications on AMR, awareness-raising and evidence and knowledge-based approaches and adoption of a One Health approach. Tools have been developed, based on scientific expertise, to provide assistance and guidance to countries in National Action Plan implementation, surveillance, and good practices.
- **FAO Strategy on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors and Action plan.** During the UN Decade on Biodiversity (2011-2020), FAO strengthened its work to enhance the use of biodiversity to increase the sustainable productivity of the agricultural sectors and to reduce the negative impacts of agricultural practices on biodiversity. In 2019, FAO adopted its Strategy on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors aiming a mainstreaming biodiversity across FAO's work, and to strengthen its capacity to support its Members in integrating biodiversity within their agricultural sectors, and contributing to relevant targets under SDG 15 and SDG 2. An Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy is being developed, for consideration by COAG within its mandate and as contribution to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework,
- Established multi- stakeholder partnerships contribute to COAG such as the **Global Soil Partnership (GSP)**, for which COAG constitutes the parent body for its establishment, in 2012, after endorsement by FAO Council. Since, the GSP is providing a mechanism to develop a strong interactive partnership and enhanced collaboration and synergy of efforts between all stakeholders, from land users through to policy makers, to improve the governance and promote sustainable management of soils; and ii. **The Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG)**, launched at the UNFCCC COP 23 in 2016. It efforts are foreseen to underpin FAO's development of a global programme for Sustainable Drylands agriculture.

COAG 27 aims to further review emerging issues and pathways for accelerated action related to:

- **Operationalizing a food systems approach to accelerate delivery of the 2030 Agenda.** The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development has heightened awareness of the key role that food systems transformation can play as an entry point for accelerating progress to achieve the SDGs. Countries face challenges in eliminating hunger and all other forms of malnutrition by ensuring that sufficient quantities of safe, nutritious and affordable food are available to all, while creating the growth and employment opportunities needed to eradicate poverty, sustain biodiversity and

natural resources, and address the growing pressures of climate change. To advance towards more sustainable food systems there is need for a common framing of the complex choices that affect food systems. COAG is foreseen to review available guidance on the definitions, tools and frameworks for advancing decision making for more sustainable food systems, and how FAO's updated strategies and new initiatives are adopting a more systemic approach, to advance effectively on the interconnected SDGs, such as SDGs 1, 2, 5, 8, 12,13,15 and 17.

- To underpin these efforts, COAG is foreseen to advise on:
  - FAO's new strategy and vision for its **work on nutrition** to address increasingly complex challenges of persistently high levels of undernutrition coinciding with rapidly rising levels of overweight and obesity, and to ensure that its direct and indirect impact on nutrition are better understood and reflected in FAO's provision of policy and regulatory guidance to Member States on issues related to agriculture, livestock, food safety, rural development and natural resource management.
  - The need for updating FAO's Strategy on **Food Safety**. The pressing need to produce more food for a growing global population has driven changes in food systems that impact the safety of food supply, with foodborne illnesses affecting 600 million people, causing 420,000 deaths each year and having serious implications for international trade. Enhanced food safety efforts are an integral part of FAO's support on food systems transformation, and to address more systematically issues of growing importance, including antimicrobial resistance, zoonotic diseases, climate change, new technologies and innovation, food fraud, and the digitalization of food systems.
  - Agricultural transformation and FAO Framework for the **Urban Food Agenda**. With the projected trends in urbanization, the evolution and management of food systems in urban and peri-urban areas will play a key role in shaping the structure of demand for food, and in what is produced, how it is processed, transported, stored and distributed including its nutritional value and environmental footprint. An emerging issue linking urban areas to agricultural transformation is the role of small cities and rural towns for the evolution of the food systems. COAG is foreseen to review how those dynamics affect the transformation of agriculture, rural poverty and food security; and how urban-local and national government policies can be better linked to improve efficiency in promoting sustainable agricultural and food systems.
  - Increase knowledge and promote Indigenous Food Systems, through the Launch of a Global Hub on Indigenous Food Systems. Indigenous peoples' livelihoods and food systems, are among the most affected by climate change, extractive industries and land-use changes, resulting in a mounting loss of biodiversity.
  - FAO's contributions towards the United Nations Secretary-General's **Food Systems Summit** in 2021, as opportunity to further support Member State and stakeholder consultation to affirm the centrality of food systems to the sustainable development agenda; align stakeholders around a common definition of a practical food systems framework as a foundation for concerted action; develop strengthened evidence and tools for improved measurement, analysis and management of trade-offs in specific contexts by providing open data sharing platforms for modelling and analysis; strengthen the science/policy interface to allow for the identification of realistic, inclusive and innovative solutions; and catalyse and accelerate multi-stakeholder action for the transformation of food systems.

### **III. Selected recommendations for accelerating progress and moving on transformative pathways for realizing the decade of action, for possible use in drafting the HLPF declaration.**

Main recommendations from COAG for HLPF consideration:

- FAO advocates for and supports efforts underlining the crucial role agriculture has in tackling both food insecurity and malnutrition and climate change, and on the interlinkages between agricultural production and biodiversity, sustainable use of natural resources, as well as the social and economic sustainability. Accelerating Sustainable Food and Agriculture and moving to more sustainable food systems requires actions in terms of policies, investments, skills, innovations, and the development of methods and tools to identify priorities, synergies as well as mapping and addressing trade-offs. Alliances across sectors are instrumental to strengthen impact, with appropriate innovative approaches to accelerate results. Greater awareness is needed among key stakeholders to ensure that Sustainable Food and Agriculture is reflected in policies, with adequate resources and investments supporting national planning on SDGs. At international level, there is a need to increase knowledge and broaden consensus about sustainable agriculture and food systems, ensuring inclusiveness and equity, with a focus on small farmers, rural youth and women, and vulnerable groups.
- A concerted effort is needed for a system approach to transform food systems, that deliver food security and nutrition for all and end poverty, in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generation is not compromised. The resilience of food systems to climate change and variability and other threats, such as increasing Transboundary Animal Diseases and plant pests, needs to be strengthened, to tackle the increasing risks faced by the agriculture sector and protect the most vulnerable population. This calls for greater efforts and investments for increasing knowledge and innovation for sustainable food systems, promoting inclusive access to technical and policy tools and guidance at all levels, and critical resources.