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FAO COMMITTEE ON COMMODITY PROBLEMS (CCP)
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“Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”

ANNEX 4

Inputs by FAO Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP)

The Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP) is FAO’s oldest technical committee. It assists in promoting integrated and transformative approaches to accelerate progress towards sustainable agri-food systems by: keeping under constant watch commodity problems of an international character that affect production, trade, distribution, consumption and related economic matters; preparing a factual and interpretative survey of the world commodity situation; and guiding policy decisions by the Members. The CCP reviews specific commodity problems, and discusses and proposes response mechanisms and actions to address them. It deliberates on key issues, debates the effects on global food security, and advances policy recommendations. The work conducted under the CCP is pertinent to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and a number of SDGs, namely Goals 1, 2, 8, 10, 12, 13, and 17, as well as the interlinkages among them.

With the COVID-19 outbreak, FAO’s work under the Committee’s mandate has been prominent in providing timely data and information, analysis and evidence on food markets and trade to inform decisions, and in promoting policy coordination to avoid the pandemic turn into a global food crisis.

(a) Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the SDGs under review in the 2021 HLPF from the vantage point of your intergovernmental body, bearing in mind the interlinkages with other SDGs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had unprecedented effects on all dimensions of human life. The full economic and social impacts continue to unfold as the virus continues to spread in all regions worldwide. Furthermore, it continues to trigger widespread concerns about the potential impacts on agri-food systems and the functioning of food and agricultural markets and supply chains.

Since the onset of COVID-19, work under the mandate of the CCP has been critical in the process of enhancing market transparency, informing policy decisions, and ensuring an enabling environment for more effective and collective action at the global, regional and national levels through an array of tools to support policy analyses and assess the impact of COVID-19 on food and agriculture, value chains, food prices, and food security across the globe. These included reports with timely data and information on market and policy developments, technical papers and policy briefs, information on crop calendars, and lessons from past crises on policy responses to mitigate disruptions to agri-food systems.

(b) Actions, policy guidance, progress, challenges and areas requiring urgent attention in relation to the SDGs and to the theme within the area under the purview of your intergovernmental body.

Agenda 2030 identifies trade as one of the key “means of implementation” of the SDGs, recognizing its essential role in achieving broader public policy goals. SDG 2 on zero hunger recognizes that transparent, non-distorted and properly functioning global markets are essential for ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture. Market transparency and proper functioning, as well as accessibility to market information, are, therefore, crucial for global food security, especially in informing and guiding policy decisions and responses.

This is of particular relevance during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused a global economic recession and increased poverty and acute and chronic food insecurity, rolling back progress made over the last few decades. In this regard, it is imperative to increase efforts to improve the monitoring and assessment of supply, demand, trade and prices of food and agricultural commodities and make the information publicly available to enhance transparency and promote coordination of action. Relevant tools include the following:

- i) **AMIS**: The Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) is an inter-agency platform to enhance food market transparency and coordination of policy responses. AMIS keeps a close watch on global food market developments, assesses food supplies, and provides a platform to coordinate policy action in times of crises and market uncertainty.
- ii) **GIEWS**: The Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS) continuously monitors food supply and demand and other key indicators for assessing the overall food security situation in all countries of the world. Since the beginning of the pandemic, GIEWS *Country Briefs* have provided up to date information on the food security situation of countries. The briefs provided estimates and forecasts of cereal production and imports, with information on food prices and policy developments and assessment of the effects of COVID-19 and related measures to contain the spread of the disease.
- iii) **FPMA**: The Food Price Monitoring and Analysis (FPMA) tool is a database with over 1 400 monthly domestic retail and/or wholesale price series of major foods consumed in almost 100 countries and weekly/monthly prices for 81 internationally traded food commodities. The Tool provides easy access to the data, allowing users to quickly browse and analyse trends of single price series, create comparisons among countries/markets/commodities, and download charts, data and basic statistics such as maximum and minimum levels, averages, percentage changes and standard deviations over different periods.

- (c) ***An assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” at the global, regional and national levels against of background of the COVID-19 pandemic in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, within the respective area addressed by your intergovernmental bodies.***

Against the COVID-19 pandemic background, the importance of not leaving anyone behind has never been more important. The Committee has continued to ensure that the work is carried out and aligned with overarching objective to meet the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The focus on vulnerable people has been at the forefront of reducing the risks caused by the pandemic and building on the progress that has been accomplished through various activities. For instance, under the auspices of the CCP, FAO produced and published a report on [*Trade and Sustainable Development Goal 2 – Policy options and their trade-offs*](#). With trade being one of the key enablers for achieving Agenda 2030, policy-makers need to ensure that trade and the policies that affect trade and markets are taken into consideration in a holistic manner as part of their efforts to achieve SDG 2. It is therefore important that policy-makers identify and recognize areas in which difficult trade-offs may be needed between competing policy objectives, and identify possible ways in which these can be addressed. The report responded to this need by studying the linkages between trade and SDG 2 and suggesting policy options to deal with the trade-offs.

- (d) ***Cooperation, measures and commitments at all levels in promoting sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.***

The COVID-19 pandemic has confirmed the critical importance of policy coordination to keep supply chains alive and avoid the health crisis transforms into a food crisis. Multi-stakeholder cooperation has been demonstrated as imperative in promoting recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and building back better. Examples under the mandate of the CCP include:

- i) ***[FAO Regional Initiative for Europe and Central Asia](#)***: The primary goal of the Regional Initiative on transforming food systems and facilitating market access and integration is to support member countries in enhancing the agri-food trade policy environment for small- and medium-sized agricultural enterprises in pursuit of more inclusive and efficient agri-food systems. This is achieved through empowering smallholders, family farms and youth, facilitating rural livelihoods and promoting poverty reduction actions. The initiative provides an integrated approach to addressing priority issues and guides the implementation of country programmes, including projects related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ii) ***[World Banana Forum](#)***: The WBF, which is a multistakeholder platform, has been working to address the impacts of COVID-19 on the entire banana supply chain. As part of its efforts, the Forum has produced occupational health and safety (OHS) audio-visual materials to support workers and farmers operating in the banana industry under the pandemic.
- iii) ***[FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme - Trade and food safety standards](#)***: Facilitating and accelerating food and agricultural trade during COVID-19 and beyond will be imperative, therefore, the programme aims to address both the immediate challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the structural constraints affecting trade. For instance, the regional

project tailored for *Asia and the Pacific* aims to support trade policies and trade facilitation measures to enable resilient food systems transformations for secure, safe and nutritious food for all. This includes harnessing the technologies, procedures and regulations of digitalized trade, promote mechanisms for deeper intraregional trade linkages, including through establishing context-specific trade and market information systems (for example, for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, (ASEAN)), providing periodic monitoring of critical agrifood trade flows and stocks for specific value chains, as well as changes in policy and administrative procedure. The programme will also focus on technical support to streamline administrative procedures and implement harmonized food safety standards, including the promotion of digital innovations along specific borders, for example, among South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation countries.

(e) Various measures and policy recommendations on building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.

The Committee recognizes the importance of providing concise and timely information through various instruments and initiatives. They serve as critical instruments to accelerate the process and guide policy-makers, especially in bridging gaps across SDGs, while responding to the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts.

- i) ***The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets 2020:*** The SOCO 2020 edition focussed on the important theme of “Agricultural markets and sustainable development”. Addressed topics included the evolution of trade and markets, the emergence of global value chains in food and agriculture, the extent to which smallholder farmers in developing countries participate in value chains and markets, and the transformative impacts of digital technology on markets. The report also looks at policy responses to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on food value chains, both globally and nationally.
- ii) ***OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2020-2029:*** The 2020 edition of the *OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook* provided market projections up to 2029 for the major agricultural commodities, biofuels and fish. This edition also included an initial scenario analysis on the impact of COVID-19 on the agri-food system.
- iii) ***Food Outlook – Biannual Report on Global Food Markets:*** Food Outlook is published by the FAO Markets and Trade under the terms of reference of the CCP. It is a biannual publication focusing on developments affecting global food and feed markets. Each report provides comprehensive assessments and short-term forecasts for production, utilization, trade, stocks and prices and includes feature articles on topical issues. The November 2020 included a study on the trends in food import bills and export earnings in the face of the COVID-19 challenge.

Selected recommendations for accelerating progress towards achievement of specific SDGs under review in 2021, namely SDGs 1 on no poverty, 2 on zero hunger, 3 on good health and well-being, 8 on decent work and economic growth, 10 on reduced inequalities, 12 on responsible consumption and production, 13 on climate action, 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and 17 on partnerships.

Recommendations by the Committee (Reference: Report of the 73rd Extraordinary Session of the Committee on Commodity Problems, 22 January 2021)

The Committee:

- recognized the crucial role of markets and trade in contributing to healthy diets and ending food insecurity and malnutrition in all of its forms, especially for the poor and vulnerable, including through the generation of employment and income;
- acknowledged the importance of trade for contributing to the availability, accessibility and affordability of food, including nutritious food, as well as the stability of markets and the limitation of extreme food price volatility, and recalled and underlined the importance that, in line with the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules and in keeping with their commitments under the WTO agreements, Members correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions as well as eliminate and do not create unnecessary and unjustified barriers to trade in agricultural markets;
- highlighted the importance of transparency on market conditions and policies in food and agriculture, through the provision of up-to-date and credible data and information;
- underlined the importance of a freer, fairer, predictable, and non-discriminatory, rules-based multilateral trading system, under the WTO and consistent with its rules, for promoting agricultural and rural development and contributing to achieving food security and improved nutrition for all;
- recognized that there is ‘no one size fits all’ solution, highlighting the diverse contextual realities of national circumstances and the large diversity of food systems;
- stressed the importance of data, analysis and evidence, including on the relationship between trade and nutrition, in guiding interventions and policies;
- stressed the importance of food safety and plant and animal health to positive nutrition outcomes, and in particular highlighted the work of Codex Alimentarius Commission and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) in this regard;
- highlighted the increasing importance of digitalization and innovation, including technology to enhance productivity;
- appreciated south-south and triangular cooperation as part of evidence generation, knowledge sharing and capacity development;
- emphasized the importance and value of including indigenous peoples and local communities, smallholders and family farmers in food value chains and in strategies to combat hunger and malnutrition;
- recognized the importance to address youth, gender, including rural and indigenous women as well as women in local communities, social inequalities, and poverty in the work on nutrition in the context of trade.