



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



High Level Political Forum 2020

"Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development "

Inputs by Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO)

This document summarizes policy deliberations related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of FAO Technical and Governing bodies notably the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG), the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO), the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), the FAO Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP) and other intergovernmental bodies hosted in FAO, notably, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), the Governing body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), and the Codex Alimentarius.

According to their respective mandates, bodies analyzed progress, key challenges and opportunities and provided policy guidance to ensure integrated approaches to food security, nutrition, and sustainable agriculture and food systems are adopted at country level in support to nationally agreed Sustainable Development Plans, Strategies, and Programmes, to ensure accelerated actions and transformative pathways for achieving SDGs.

The inputs of the above bodies are included as Annexes to this contribution.

I. Critical gaps in implementing the 2030 Agenda

Food security and Nutrition

For the fourth consecutive year the absolute number of people in the world affected by undernourishment, or chronic food deprivation, is estimated to have increased to over 820 million in 2019. Evidence shows that also moderate food insecurity is on the rise. Hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition disproportionately affect the poor, particularly the extreme poor, largely concentrated in rural areas, who depend on agriculture for living. **Addressing the needs of the rural sector, is therefore key in ensuring rapid and equally shared progress towards the achievement of the SDGs.**

No region is exempt from the epidemic of overweight and obesity, with undernutrition, overweight and obesity often coexisting in the same household. Results of the first analysis of country-level indicators show that, if one focuses attention on countries of similar levels of undernourishment and poverty, obesity rates are higher in those countries where moderate food insecurity is also high. In contrast, **the impact of economic slowdowns and downturns on food security and nutrition cannot be separated from the root causes of hunger and malnutrition:**

poverty, inequality and marginalization, and national efforts are not yet sufficiently integrated and coordinated.¹

Food safety is also of global concern with almost one in ten people in the world falling ill after consuming contaminated food.

Unsafe food takes a huge toll on human health and the economy. Estimates show that more than 600 million fall ill and 420 000 die every year from consuming food contaminated with bacteria, viruses, parasites, toxins or chemicals. This is especially impacting vulnerable segments of the population with lower access to safe and nutritious food. As for the economic price tag, unsafe food costs low-and middle-income economies alone about US\$ 95 billion in lost productivity annually. Unsafe food also limits trade. **Lack of knowledge and national capacity to enforce food safety standards emerge as a critical gap, particularly in developing countries.**

Unsustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems also challenges the achievement of the SDGs worldwide.

The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture² and **The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture**³ clearly show that biodiversity for food and agriculture (BFA) is indispensable to food security, sustainable development and the supply of many vital ecosystem services. **Both reports point to a continued decline in BFA and the ecosystem services that food production depend upon.** Drivers mentioned by reporting countries as having negative effects on BFA include changes in land and water use and management, pollution and overuse of external inputs, overexploitation and overharvesting, and the proliferation of invasive alien species. Loss and degradation of ecosystems and transitions to more intensive production relying on a limited range of species, varieties and breeds remain major drivers of loss of BFA and ecosystem services. The management of genetic resources used in aquaculture has major implications for food security and nutrition, as production from aquaculture now surpasses production from capture fisheries.

The expansion of protected areas for marine biodiversity and existing policies and treaties that encourage responsible use of ocean resources are still insufficient to combat the adverse effects of overfishing, growing ocean acidification due to climate change and worsening coastal eutrophication. **As billions of people depend on oceans for their livelihood and food source and on the transboundary nature of oceans, increased efforts and interventions are needed to conserve and sustainably use ocean resources at all levels.**

Small-scale food producers, family farmers, indigenous peoples, particularly women and youth remain vulnerable, and the current measures and policy decisions are not robust enough to unlock the potential of these players to be critical agents of change.

¹ The State of Food Insecurity and Nutrition in the World 2019 <http://www.fao.org/state-of-food-security-nutrition>

² The State of Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture, 2019 issued under the auspices of the Commission for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture <http://www.fao.org/3/CA3129EN/ca3129en.pdf>

³ The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture 2019, <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5256en/CA5256EN.pdf>

Small-scale food producers provide almost 80% of food produced and consumed, particularly by the poor. Smallscale and artisanal fisheries account for more than half of total production, in terms of both quantity and value. To promote small-scale producers' access to productive resources, services and markets, most countries have developed targeted regulatory and institutional frameworks and programmes, including for development of sustainable national and global value chains. **However, a limited number of countries have a low to medium level of implementation of such frameworks and programmes, due to lack of resources and institutional capacity to enforce decisions.**

1 billion people depend to some extent on wild foods, and forests are particularly relevant for livelihoods and safety nets for the extreme rural poor, given that around 40 percent of the extreme rural poor – some 250 million people – live in forest and savannah areas. There is a particular **urgency of taking decisive action to halt deforestation, restore degraded forests, substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.** The Agriculture, Forestry and Land Use (AFOLU) sector is responsible for 23% of anthropogenic GHG emissions, mainly from deforestation and agricultural emissions from livestock, soil and nutrient management. Acting as carbon sinks, they absorb the equivalent of roughly 2 billion tons of carbon dioxide each year.

A lot still needs to be done to ensure that there is full recognition by all countries and stakeholders that poverty alleviation, hunger eradication, food systems, addressing climate change and biodiversity loss and ending poverty are closely interlinked and that forests and trees play an important role in achieving the related SDGs.

A further issue to be addressed is the lack of data, information and analysis to support informed and evidence-based decision-making. This includes better sectoral data and analysis of critical interlinkages, both synergies and trade-offs, between forests, fishery, aquaculture, oceans management, and food security and nutrition, biodiversity, the water cycle, soil conservation, carbon sequestration, habitat protection, poverty and livelihoods, and the interrelation between sustainable management and use of resources and economic growth, trade and market related data. **Data, evidence, and policy analysis on pathways to address issues related to sustainability and trade-offs remain scattered and are often not available when and where needed.**

II. Priority measures to accelerate action, and ensure transformative pathways to realize the decade of action for implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the SDGs.

Increase political commitment and support the implementation of the international agreements, so as to allow for a coordinated, timely and effective response to short, midium, and long term effects of issues impacting people, planet, and the economy. This includes providing technical and policy assistance **support to countries to integrate their work across sectors,** including through implementation of binding and voluntary agreements, and policy instruments. **A list of key instruments and data available on food, agriculture, natural resources management and sustainable use, trade and commodities is available in the individual**

contributions of COFO, COFI, COAG, CCP, CFS, Codex Alimentarius, ITPGRFA, CGRFA.

Improve quality and availability of data and analysis.

Support livelihood of vulnerable segments of the population, particularly small scale producers, family farmers, rural women and youth.

Improve integration across sectors, and transformative systemic approaches. From a food and agriculture perspective, **Sustainable Food Systems** are an ideal approach to allow for institutional and policy integration, addressing all dimensions of sustainability, ensuring poverty and hunger eradication measures take into account impacts on climate, as well as natural resources, biodiversity sustainable management and use, while sustaining economies and inclusive growth, provided data and analysis for mapping interconnections and trade-offs are made available for informed policy decisions.

Enhance innovation and technology, and facilitate access to innovation and innovative ways of working, digitalization and technology as well as strengthen capacities of governments and national institutions, particularly in developing countries, and of small scale food producers, family farmers and rural actors, particularly women and youth, to unlock possibilities for inclusive growth.

Strengthen trade and market based solutions. **Market transparency and accessibility to market information** is crucial for global food security and nutrition, especially towards informed and evidence-based policy decisions. There is a need 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 in a timely manner to enhance transparency and promote coordination of action. It is key to strengthen universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory, equitable and predictable bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral trading system that is conducive to world food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agricultural development. Policies and strategies to support **smallholders' integration into markets and value chains** need to be developed and formulated to promote **inclusiveness and equality**.

Agricultural Trade can play an important role as an enabler to achieve the SDGs, particularly SDG 1 on ending all forms of poverty everywhere and SDG 2 on ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture.

Agricultural trade can play a role in climate change adaptation and mitigation and contribute towards ensuring world food security, promoting agricultural productivity growth globally, and potentially reducing global greenhouse gas emissions. It is crucial to **enhance and facilitate policy dialogue** at global, regional and national levels at the juncture of trade and climate change.

Mobilize investments for food and agricultural sectors to allow for integrated approaches at scale. Enabling environment, ensuring sustainability of investments and inclusive and shared benefits across the segments of the population is of essence. Blended finance and innovative mechanisms should be explored.

Strengthen participation of all relevant actors and ,stakeholders in national decision making processes, planning and implementation of measures towards sustainable development. Engagement of Private Sector will unlock investments, facilitate access to technology and innovation, data, information and research. Participation of civil society, producers and farmers organizations, women, youth, consumers associations will improve inclusiveness, as well as ownership and effectiveness of national policies, programmes, strategies and investment plans.