

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2014-15

WEB ANNEX 4: REGIONAL DIMENSIONS RESULTS



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Africa

1. The Regional Conference for Africa in 2014 supported three Regional Initiatives as results-based delivery mechanisms to further focus FAO's work for country-level impact and resource mobilization: *Africa's 2025 zero hunger challenge*; *Integrated management of agricultural landscapes in Africa*; and *Building resilience in Africa's drylands*. The regional achievements as a contribution to FAO's corporate outputs are shown in document [ARC/16/5 Web Annex](#).

Regional Initiatives

2. Through *Africa's 2025 zero hunger challenge*, FAO contributed towards the formulation and subsequent adoption by the African Union (AU) of the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Agriculture transformation, and its Implementation Strategy and roadmap. As a result of this partnership with AU and NEPAD,¹ key nutrition and food security indicators have been mainstreamed into the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) results and monitoring and evaluation frameworks to enhance the mutual accountability framework. FAO played a pivotal role in the design and implementation of the ECOWAS² Zero Hunger Initiative, in particular:

- a) Provided substantial assistance to policy formulation processes including CAADP country processes for the formulation of regional and national agriculture investment plans, including to address food security and nutrition issues. FAO has been involved in the design of a total of 95 agriculture and food security investment projects in 40 countries in Africa, mainly financed by the World Bank and IFAD.
- b) Supported awareness raising and development of capacities on the Right to Food legislation and governance of tenure, which resulted in legal frameworks that better address the right to food and food security and nutrition challenges.
- c) Developed capacities for preparing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating evidence-based policies, investments and programmes on food security and nutrition, for example scaling-up of nutrition-sensitive programmes in Niger and Ethiopia.
- d) Significant results were achieved in advancing multi-sectoral governance and partnerships for food security and nutrition at country level through Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) and CAADP processes, with a stronger involvement of various sector and civil society.
- e) Contributed to improved access to data and information by reinforcing food security and nutrition information systems to inform policy-making. A knowledge sharing information platform was established with NEPAD in the SADC³ region to be scaled-up in other subregions, and the first regional State of Food Insecurity (SOFI) in Africa 2015 was published with focus on prospects on food security and nutrition on the continent.

3. Through the Regional Initiative on *Integrated management of agricultural landscapes in Africa*, FAO's interventions focussed on sustainable production intensification and inclusive transformation of the agriculture sector to engage youth as the agro-entrepreneurs of Africa. Key achievements contributing to sustainable production intensification included:

- a) Capacity strengthened to promote quality seeds to smallholders in Southern African countries, technical assistance on management of plant genetic resources, and facilitation of regionally-harmonized seed regulations for enhanced seed trade between countries.
- b) Resources mobilized to support the development of national strategies and plans, as well as a regional strategy of implementation for the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative of the AU.
- c) Country operational capacities developed through supporting national strategies for plant genetics resources for agriculture in the SADC region for sustainable crop production

¹ New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

² Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

³ Southern African Development Community (SADC)

intensification, as well as addressing the impacts of climate change on productivity and production.

- d) Technical assistance provided to 13 countries in West Africa for capacity development and drafting of national action plans towards the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention including sharing the responsibility on pesticides management.
- e) Capacities strengthened on stock assessment of fisheries research and management institutions (12 countries), on fisheries data collection, analysis and dissemination (countries of Regional Fisheries Committee for the Gulf of Guinea), and on the use of aquaculture as a business under the ecosystem approach (16 countries).

4. Concerning inclusive transformation of the agriculture sector, FAO supported efforts of countries in agribusiness and markets development, reduction of food loss and waste, promotion of trade and innovative investment finance, and enhancement of food-safety capacities at various levels. FAO supported *inter alia*:

- a) Through the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF), supported countries in Southern Africa in strengthening their capacities to control food safety threats and better manage transboundary animal and plant pests and diseases, with a view to increasing inter- and intra-regional trade.
- b) Collaborated with the East African Community in the development of an investment strategic framework for agribusiness and agro-industries which led to the endorsement of the East African Agro-industry and Agro-enterprise Development Programme.
- c) Contributed towards improved capacities to undertake food loss assessments through provision of training of hundreds of government staff and other stakeholders in 15 African countries using the FAO food loss methodology.
- d) Supported the elaboration of the implementation plan of the AU-IAPSC⁴ strategy that was endorsed in June 2015, to achieve a robust plant health system in Africa to facilitate vibrant and safe trade.

5. Through the Regional Initiative on *Building resilience in Africa's drylands*, FAO supported the implementation of key resilience-related regional policy processes, such as the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative in the Sahel and West Africa, as well as IGAD's Drought Disaster Resilience Sustainability Initiative in the Horn of Africa, the development of a national drought mitigation strategy in Zimbabwe, and support on El Niño response planning and implementation mainly in Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa and in the Southern Africa subregion. In particular:

- a) FAO stepped up the implementation of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and the Cadre Harmonisé analytical tools that provide decision-makers with evidence on the severity and magnitude of food insecurity. In 2015, over thirty countries in Africa undertook IPC or Cadre Harmonisé analyses with FAO's support. Work on strengthening capacity at national level for resilience measurement was continued through 2014 and 2015 in countries in West and East Africa.
- b) Based on the farmer field schools approach and village savings and loans associations (VSLAs), "Caisses de Résilience", an innovative risk and opportunity-sensitive approach for women and farmers groups has been implemented since 2014 in several countries in East and West Africa. The approach facilitates capacity-development for nutrition, social protection, investment and decision-making.
- c) The Joint FAO-IAEA insect pest control subprogramme assisted countries with area-wide control or eradication of major insect pests of crops and livestock by developing and integrating the sterile insect technique with other methods. One of the main results in Africa is the success in the eradication campaigns of *glossina palpalis gambiensis* from the Niayes in Senegal.

⁴ African Union-Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC)

d) Countries in Level-3 emergencies, namely South Sudan and Central African Republic, as well as those affected by Ebola virus in West Africa, were provided with surge capacity to enable an effective response. In addition, support to preparedness and response to high El Niño impacts (droughts, floods, amongst others) in East and Southern Africa were stepped up.

6. FAO continues to place a special emphasis on youth and gender in Africa through an action plan on promoting youth employment and entrepreneurship in agriculture and agribusiness. FAO supported eight countries to formulate and implement policies, strategies and programmes that generate decent employment in rural areas, especially benefitting rural young women and men.

7. FAO contributed towards capacity-building related to women and youth opportunities in inclusive agricultural growth and meeting the zero hunger challenge. About 200 government officials and FAO staff were trained on topics including gender-responsive financial inclusion of women and youth in agribusiness and resilience systems. FAO also carried out country gender assessments in 12 countries in the region.

Lessons learnt

8. In 2014-15, the clarity of regional priorities and the convergence of these with major African regional institutions helped in focussing FAO's work through the Regional Initiatives and facilitated delivery of results related to the Malabo commitments. The importance of creating systematic synergies with global and regional processes (e.g. SDGs, FIRST, ICN2, SUN and REACH) to achieve sustainable and timely results is also highlighted. Mobilization of resources is critical, with good value delivery through South-South Cooperation.

9. Based on experience and lessons learnt in 2014-15, the Regional Initiative on *Integrated management of agricultural landscapes in Africa* has been revamped for 2016-17 to sharpen its focus and be more programmatic. It will focus on sustainable intensification of production and value chain development.

In focus ...

The Africa Solidarity Trust Fund for Food Security was spearheaded by the 27th Regional Conference for Africa, held in April 2012 in Brazzaville, Congo, and officially launched during the 38th Session of the FAO Conference in June 2013.

The ASTF is an innovative Africa-led fund to support Africa-for-Africa development initiatives. Its main goal is to strengthen food security across the continent by assisting countries and their regional organizations to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, eliminate rural poverty and manage natural resources in a sustainable manner.

Since 2013, contributions have reached USD 40 million, with Equatorial Guinea and Angola being major financial contributors. Through its governing structure, the fund allocated USD 34.5 million to 15 regional programmes and national projects which are being implemented in 36 countries to boost efforts to eradicate hunger, and reduce malnutrition and poverty.

One example of a result of the ASTF funding is in Niger, where 160,000 vulnerable households improved their agricultural productivity and food security from quality input distribution while child feeding and nutrition was enhanced through investments in livestock recapitalization for women and development of small-scale irrigation infrastructure. Over 700,000 potential farmers and pastoralists stand to benefit from six farmer warehouse complexes or "*Maison du paysan*", established as integrated input and agricultural service centres to strengthen communities' resilience against drought or other crisis.

Asia and the Pacific

10. The Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific in 2014 supported four Regional Initiatives as a means to further focus FAO's work for country-level impact and for resource mobilization: (i) Zero Hunger Challenge; (ii) Regional Rice Initiative Phase II; (iii) Blue Growth; and (iv) developing local value chains for food security and nutrition in the Pacific Islands countries. The Regional Conference also called attention to work on coconut sector development, restoration of grasslands and forests, control and prevention of transboundary animal diseases and a Save Food campaign. The main achievements and lessons learnt are summarized below. Document APRC/16/7 Web Annex 3 quantifies the contribution of regional results at outcome and Output levels.⁵

Regional Initiatives

11. *Asia and the Pacific's Zero Hunger Challenge (ZHC):* The ZHC gives emphasis to three specific and complementary areas of work identified on the basis of their critical importance for eradicating hunger and malnutrition, as well as FAO's comparative advantage and experience in the region. The three areas are: (i) formulating and operationalizing national food security and nutrition policies and investment plans by drawing lessons from the successful model of the National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme in Bangladesh; (ii) improving capacity for measurement and calculation of undernourishment; and (iii) improving child nutrition and reducing stunting. In 2014-2015, FAO provided support to formulation of National Action Plans for Food and Nutrition Security/Achieving Zero Hunger, including helping some focus countries to set up National Steering Committees and Technical Committees. FAO also built statistical capacity in support of better informed policies in five countries and mainstreamed nutrition into farmer field schools by strengthening home and school gardens.

12. Following the Asia-Pacific launch of the ZHC in April 2013 and the development of a "Regional Guiding Framework for Achieving Zero Hunger in Asia and the Pacific" in December 2013, several countries in Asia and the Pacific (i.e. Myanmar, Nepal, Viet Nam and Timor-Leste) launched their National Zero Hunger Challenges and officially declared their commitment to the eradication of chronic hunger and malnutrition by 2025.

13. *Regional Rice Initiative:* Following the guidance provided by the Regional Rice Strategy, FAO's Regional Rice Initiative focused on the development of National Rice Strategic Action Plans, farmer field schools' programmes based on Save and Grow, and demonstration of an integrated approach involving aquaculture and forest management with rice production in rice-fish and Trees-Outside-Forests (TOF) models. Pilot case studies were promoted in the field and the effectiveness of various management practices and integration of aquatic animals and rice-based production systems was assessed, as well as the environmental and socio-economic benefits from TOF in rice production landscapes. The impact of climate change on rice, corn yields and hydrological resources was assessed, and the rice economy climate change model developed by the Initiative was included in the "OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2014-2023". Finally, a survey on current practices in rice harvest and post-harvest systems was completed for further development of a value chain model to engage more with small farmers.

14. FAO also supported countries to strengthen national governance frameworks for the adoption of sustainable agricultural sector practices through a Regional Consultancy Expert Meeting on Hybrid Rice in Asia to share knowledge and analyse the limitations and potential of hybrid rice in contributing to food security. It helped assessment of the rice sector in Lao PDR, Myanmar and the Philippines and thereby contributed to the development of national rice strategies and action plans.

15. *Regional initiative on sustainable intensification of aquaculture for blue growth in Asia-Pacific:* The Regional Blue Growth Initiative is a direct response to the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) Sub-Committee on Aquaculture which requested a regional technical consultation on aquaculture development and intensification. In 2014-2015, at the country level, FAO supported six countries in the region in promoting sustainable growth of aquaculture and responsible fisheries

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mp878e.pdf>

through policy advice, introduction of new technology and innovative aquaculture production and management practices. These measures improved the access of small aquaculture farmers to quality production inputs, markets and technology, enhanced production efficiency and environmental and socio-economic benefits, as well as built resilience and disaster preparedness of aquaculture farmers and fishers. At the regional level, the Initiative focused on developing a regional strategy and action plan for sustainable intensification of aquaculture, identifying and documenting 12 successful practices and developing a set of aquaculture planning and management tools.

16. *Value chains for food security and nutrition in the Pacific Islands:* This Regional Initiative aims at developing efficient and inclusive agrifood systems in the Pacific region by supporting sustainable subsistence farming systems and their linkages to inclusive value chains including local markets, public procurement, tourism and niche trade opportunities. In 2014-2015, the Initiative focused on three countries. Cook Islands continued to be a standout success with TCP projects and extrabudgetary resources from the Netherlands, which led to improved data collection and analysis, a clearer focus on serving domestic and tourist markets, improved public-sector capacity to support commercial and small-scale growers and greater involvement of private-sector bodies in agricultural development. In Fiji and Samoa, good progress has been made. A particular feature in Samoa has been the alignment of FAO's activities to a World Bank agricultural competitiveness project, which has increased the profile and usefulness of FAO's products, such as an analysis of food losses in fresh food chains.

Other priority areas of work

17. *Coconut sector development:* FAO conducted, in collaboration with the Asia and Pacific Coconut Community, a high-level expert consultation on coconut sector development in Asia and the Pacific that brought together 13 coconut-growing countries in the region, with participation from nine Ministers. The major achievement was the development of a regional strategy for the development of the coconut sector in Asia and the Pacific, which has guided government programmes in the region. Upon request from the Timor-Leste, FAO assisted the government to prepare a comprehensive document on "Status and potential of the coconut sector in Timor-Leste". FAO also assisted the Department of Agriculture in Thailand to organize an international conference on coconut oil, in which 18 countries participated and produced concrete recommendations to expand coconut oil production in a sustainable manner.

18. *Restoration of grasslands and forests:* FAO co-organized regional consultations on sustainable grassland management that recommended the establishment of an Asia-Pacific Sustainable Grassland Management Network and a Web platform with updated scientific information facilitating the development of appropriate means and methods for sharing and enhancing the monitoring of ecosystem services, particularly for carbon sequestration. FAO has continued to strongly promote forest restoration in the region through the Forest Landscape Restoration mechanism implemented in Cambodia and the Philippines.

19. *Control and prevention of transboundary animal diseases:* In alignment with the Global Framework for Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TAD), FAO facilitated the formal development of regional coordination mechanisms for various regional economic organizations including ASEAN, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. These mechanisms supported capacity building and networking in key technical areas (e.g. epidemiology) that are required for animal disease prevention and control. In light of regional economic growth and increasing demands for food of animal origins FAO, through the Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD), supported countries to improve their policies and capacities to assess potential risks that may derive from livestock movement, thus facilitating safe international trade.

20. *Save food campaign:* FAO supported the development of evidence-based food loss and waste reduction programmes at national and regional levels by assisting the preparation of study reports on the causes and extent of food losses and food waste in Asian countries. The campaign catalysed public-private partnerships to develop networks, programmes, projects and policy recommendations for post-harvest loss reduction.

21. *Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS)*: FAO promoted regional implementation of GIAHS by supporting countries to progressively designate new GIAHS sites and implement pilot testing of dynamic conservation principles. These efforts helped to preserve globally and locally significant agricultural biodiversity, ecosystem services and cultural heritage harboured in the region.

Lessons learnt

22. The implementation of the Regional Initiatives in 2014-15 highlighted their valuable contribution to focusing FAO programmes in the region and in countries, while leaving flexibility to respond to country priorities and emerging needs. The Regional Initiatives experiences have placed sharp focus on the critical role of policy, governance and institutional dimensions for successful programme implementation, as well as on the need for improved data and statistics. Experience has also highlighted the importance of addressing cross-cutting issues – such as gender, climate change, nutrition and resilience – as an integral part of the Initiatives. In follow-up to the experience gained to date, FAO will:

- a) improve countries' ownership of the Regional Initiatives by applying a more demand-driven approach, focusing more strongly on regional priorities and engaging more stakeholders and partners;
- b) continue to work with countries to sharpen the focus of the CPFs on country needs so that CPFs provide strategic guidance for cooperation between FAO and the countries;
- c) facilitate regional and bilateral cooperation between countries on South-South Cooperation by helping to identify areas of need and expertise within key programmatic aspects as a basis for expanding collaboration across countries in the region;
- d) further strengthen partnership programmes to reverse the declining resource mobilization to meet the needs of countries in the region;
- e) strengthen the focus on nutrition amid the root causes of hunger and malnutrition, including through fostering regional partnerships and collaboration with state and non-state actors for the implementation of the Rome Declaration and the Framework for Action endorsed by ICN2;
- f) help to transfer knowledge and develop capacity for sustainable management of natural resources, adaptation and resilience required for the implementation of the SDGs and for addressing climate change in the region.

In focus ...*FAO's Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) in the Asia-Pacific region*

One of FAO's most important programmes for the Asia-Pacific region is the animal health and transboundary disease work under Strategic Objective 5, which has been high on the agenda of the region since the first outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in 2004. Through intensive and sustained work during the past 12 years, FAO has played a critical role in supporting countries on battling HPAI. The avian influenza programme has since evolved into the emerging pandemic threats programme, providing support in the fight against high impact animal diseases.

Working with countries and subregional bodies such as ASEAN and SAARC, FAO has become a key player in these fields. FAO's support is provided in large part through its network of Emergency Centres for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD). Over the past biennium (2014-15), voluntary contributions of over USD 15 million have poured into this work from resource partners, especially USAID and the EU, who are quick to recognize FAO's unique capacities in this area.

Countries currently being directly supported by FAO on emerging threats to animal health include: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand in ASEAN; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in the SAARC subregion; and China.

Europe and Central Asia

23. FAO has responded to the challenges identified by the 2014 Regional Conference⁶ by focusing its work on the following five priority areas and their contribution to the Strategic Objectives:

- a) strengthening food security and nutrition in a sustainable manner (contributing to Strategic Objective (SO1);
- b) policy advice to governments in support of sustainable agricultural production intensification for smallholders (contributing to SO2, SO3, SO4);
- c) natural resources management, including climate change adaptation and mitigation (contributing to SO2, SO3, SO5);
- d) control of animal disease, plant pests and food safety hazards (contributing to SO2, SO4, SO5);
- e) policy and institutional support for entry of Member States into regional and global organizations for trade, standard-setting and economic cooperation (contributing to SO4).

24. FAO's support to these priorities centred around two Regional Initiatives and other areas of work, as endorsed by the 2014 Regional Conference. The results achieved and lessons learned are described below. The regional achievements as a contribution to FAO's corporate outputs are shown in document [ERC/16/6 Web Annex](#).

Regional Initiatives

25. The Regional Initiative on *Empowering smallholders and family farms in Europe and Central Asia* (RI-1), linked to Regional Priority 2 and 3, aims to empower smallholders to strengthen their livelihoods, thereby reducing rural poverty, with particular emphasis on inclusiveness. It contributes to sustainable agriculture⁷ production (SO2), rural poverty reduction (SO3) and inclusive agrifood chains (SO4).

26. Work focus regarding natural resource management involved the dissemination and adoption of innovative practices Strategic Objective Output 2.1.1 (2.1.1) and integrated, multi-sectoral approaches for ecosystem management (2.1.2), as well as strengthening governance frameworks that foster sustainable natural resources management (2.2.2). Regional contributions to global targets have been particularly significant related to innovative practices and ecosystem management during the biennium.

27. Related to rural areas, RI-1 aimed to strengthen rural organizations (3.1.1), enhance access to natural resources (3.1.2) and provide policy advice on gender-equitable rural development strategies (3.1.5). Rural organizations have been strengthened by capacity-building programmes and policy advice. Regional contribution to global targets has been the highest related to rural development strategies (3.1.5).

28. Improved access to natural resources was promoted by supporting land consolidation programmes and seven national awareness-raising workshops about the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of national food security (VGGT) and at regional level within the framework of FAO's LANDNET (an international network on land tenure) conferences.⁸

29. Inclusive and efficient agrifood chains were promoted through capacity-building programmes, data and information products (4.2.1 and 4.2.3). International workshops provided guidance and opportunity to exchange experiences on agro-industrial strategies among countries in the region.

30. The Regional Initiative on *Agrifood trade and regional integration in Europe and Central Asia* (RI-2), linked to Regional Priority 5, aims to increase regional and national capacities to deal

⁶ ERC/14/REP/ Rev 1

⁷ Agriculture includes crop production, livestock, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries

⁸ <http://www.fao.org/europe/resources/land-tenure-workshops/en/>

effectively with the challenges posed by greater trade integration. It does this by developing better evidence on trade implications, improving countries' capacity to use this evidence, facilitating neutral fora and dialogues on trade agreements, and supporting the design and implementation of appropriate policies at country level.

31. Through RI-2, FAO focused on efficient and inclusive agrifood systems (SO4). Emphasis was placed on building capacities on international trade agreements (4.1.2), particularly on WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) considering the recent accession of numerous countries in the region to the WTO. In addition FAO strengthened national regulatory frameworks and public capacity concerning food safety (4.1.4.) by supporting the practical application of risk analysis in national food control and governance frameworks and more effective participation of countries in the international standard-setting work of the Codex Alimentarius. Furthermore, FAO promoted the application of internationally-recommended food safety management approaches. High number of contribution to global targets, particularly in 4.1.4, refer to information provision through workshops, assessments and trainings, and to more in-depth support provided to a subset of these countries.

Other priority areas of work

32. *Strengthening food security and nutrition* (linked to Regional Priority 1). In 2015, Europe and Central Asia as a region achieved Millennium Development Goal 1C, to halve the proportion of undernourished people.⁹ Nevertheless, food security remained important in FAO's work, especially in the Central Asian subregion, focusing on: the development and management of governance mechanisms, such as food security strategies, policies and programmes both at national and regional levels (1.1.1 and 1.1.3); and supporting evidence-based decision-making through assistance in developing or maintaining national capacities for policy analysis, as well as in gathering food security related data and information (1.3.1). Regional contribution to global targets was the highest in the field of governance mechanisms and related capacity developments (1.1.1 and 1.1.3).

33. *Natural resources management*, including fisheries and forestry, climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as conservation and sustainable use of plant and animal genetic resources (linked to Regional Priority 3) focused on three areas. First, work related to climate change (2.1.1 and 5.3.1) supporting the development of more resilient production systems through capacity-building in natural resources management, particularly in water management. Second, support to the implementation of international instruments related to sustainable agricultural production systems (2.3.3). Finally, support to building evidence related to natural resources management by developing monitoring, assessment and analysis capacities (2.4.3). Regional contributions to outputs 2.3.3 and 2.4.3 showed low levels in relative terms due to the relatively small size of the region.

34. *Control of animal disease and plant pests* (linked to Regional Priority 4) is supported by FAO's work on plant and animal health (4.1.4. and 2.1.3). As part of this area of work, FAO supports public sector institutions to improve their capacity for designing and implementing better policies and regulatory frameworks in line with international standards. FAO also supported the participation of countries in the standard-setting work of the International Plant Protection Convention. Regional contributions in the field of animal and plant health are moderate, in line with contributions of other regions.

35. In terms of resilience, FAO provided multidisciplinary technical and operational support and expertise under Strategic Objective 5 to assist member countries in crisis response (5.4.3) and implementation of governance mechanisms (5.1.1) e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Ukraine, and to reduce multi-hazard risks (5.3.1) and improve crisis management capacities (5.4.1) e.g. in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. FAO's response focused on reducing risks and the vulnerability of local communities and farmers through the strengthening of preparedness and response to natural hazards and disasters such as frosts, droughts, floods, and locusts (5.3.1 and 5.4.1). The regional contribution to global targets was highest in the area of information provision and early warning systems as a result of regional work on locust control operations and the Global Information

⁹ FAO Regional Overview of Food Insecurity: Europe and Central Asia, 2015

and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS) in the Caucasus and Central Asia subregion (5.2.1).

36. During the biennium work related to statistics focused on: a) assisting countries (Armenia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan) in the preparation and/or conducting of agricultural censuses; b) strengthening national capacities for production and analysis of sex-disaggregated data in the region (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey); c) assisting Georgia in the preparation of its Strategic Plan for Agricultural, Environmental and Rural Statistics; d) translation of the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 into Russian; and e) publication of the regional statistical yearbook and preparation of the regional statistical pocketbook.

37. FAO has been pursuing gender equality goals in the region by providing policy support and technical guidance. In Albania, Georgia and Tajikistan support was provided for developing gender-responsive national strategies and action plans on agriculture and forestry development. Policy support went hand-in-hand with capacity-building of national partners and included awareness raising and training for representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and heads of rural cooperatives in Georgia, and training of farmers' trainers in Tajikistan.

38. Ensuring mainstreaming of gender considerations in FAO's technical cooperation was a main focus, by ensuring inclusion in country programming frameworks and direct technical assistance to FAO's initiatives in conservation agriculture, sustainable pasture management, and women's economic empowerment, and support to the extension services.

39. FAO supported the preparation of country nutrition papers and the participation of representatives from the region at the ICN2. As a follow-up, a regional synthesis study was prepared and presented as a background policy paper "Addressing the social and economic burden of malnutrition through nutrition-sensitive agricultural and food policies in the region of Europe and Central Asia" at the 39th session of the European Commission on Agriculture.

Lessons learnt

40. The corporate monitoring and reporting framework facilitated a closer cooperation between country and regional offices and headquarters. Reporting and planning at the country level provided a good opportunity to focus work related to the demand of the country.

41. The Regional Initiative *Empowering smallholders and family farms* has been incorporating different areas of work that increased its complexity. During 2016-17 the initiative will streamline its activities around more focused areas.

42. The Regional Initiative *Agri-food trade and regional integration* included targeted areas of work that increased its focus. During 2016-17 it will be strengthened by adding further areas related to its overall focus on trade, including international standards related to plant and animal health, as well as export-oriented value chain work.

In focus ...

By supporting the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG), an inter-governmental organization in South-Eastern Europe, FAO's regional Technical Cooperation Project (TCP/RER/3403) provided efficient technical assistance and policy advice to five countries in the subregion to streamline their agricultural and rural development policies on their way to EU accession. Technical inputs have been provided to the SWG assembly meetings, agriculture policy fora and annual ministerial meetings. In addition, FAO supported networking and partnership both among the countries and with key stakeholders from academia and ministries of agriculture in order to support informed policy-making at country level.

Latin America and the Caribbean

43. FAO has focused its work in the region on the main challenges identified by the 2014 Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean:

- a) The eradication of hunger, food insecurity, malnutrition and extreme poverty;
- b) The sustainable production of goods and services in agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries; reducing risks and improving livelihood resilience to threats and crises in a context of climate change;
- c) The establishment of more inclusive and efficient agriculture and food systems at the local, national and international levels.

44. The Conference also underlined the importance of promoting policies on gender equality to enhance the status of rural women, by improving their access to productive assets and to credit and finance mechanisms; and of supporting Member Nations in the design, strengthening and implementation of strategies and initiatives for South-South Cooperation.

45. To address these challenges, FAO implemented three regional initiatives (RIs) to ensure an impact at the country level. These are: *Support to the Hunger-free Latin America and Caribbean Initiative*; *Family farming and rural territorial development*; and *Improving national and regional food and feed systems*.

46. Each Regional Initiative aims to focus FAO's work so as to achieve concrete results in core countries through strengthening government policy, institutional and legal frameworks, including multi-stakeholder participation, and promoting gender and the rights of indigenous peoples. The Regional Initiatives build upon the expertise of the countries by strengthening South-South Cooperation (SSC) and in particular, recognizing the significant progress made and experiences in the region that must form part of the solution to common challenges.

47. The actions taken in the context of these Regional Initiatives helped to achieve the outputs planned under FAO's five Strategic Objectives. The regional achievements as a contribution to the SO Outputs are shown in LARC/16/5 Web Annex.

Regional Initiatives

48. In order to support the *Hunger Free Latin America and Caribbean Initiative*, FAO provided technical assistance to Costa Rica and Ecuador, as CELAC President Pro-Tempore, to develop and implement the CELAC FSN¹⁰ Plan, which was developed with support from the Latin American Integration Association and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Under this Plan, FAO collaborated in promoting analysis and regional exchange of experiences in various areas. It also provided technical cooperation to countries to promote national dialogues enabling better understanding of the plan, improved coordination and reporting of the government agencies involved, and the identification of policy areas posing challenges for the near future.

49. At the regional level, support was provided for exchange and SSC on FSN through the Petrocaribe-Alba Hunger Eradication Plan, the Hunger-free Meso-America Programme promoted by the Mexican International Development Cooperation Agency, and other initiatives with Brazil, Chile and Cuba, among others.

50. Working to strengthen *family farming and rural territorial development*, FAO has developed a series of activities to position the family farming agenda in a variety of domains, including CELAC. In the context of the International Year of Family Farming (2014), support was provided for the creation of 17 national committees and one regional committee on family farming, as inclusive mechanisms for policy discussion on family farming. In addition, the First Ministerial Meeting on Family Farming was held in Brasília, Brazil, which created the CELAC Family Farming Working Group and approved its Plan of Action. In 2015, the Second Ministerial Meeting on Family Farming was held in San José,

¹⁰ Food security and nutrition (FSN)

Costa Rica, in which member countries undertook to contribute to fulfilment of the CELAC FNS Plan through the Family Farming Working Group. The Declaration and Plan of Action for 2016 defining priority work areas was also approved.

51. At the regional level, support was provided for the work of the Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger (PFH), promoting the development of national laws on this issue, highlighting the passing of the Family Farming Law in Peru. At the subregional level, work with the MERCOSUR¹¹ Specialized Meeting on Family Farming was consolidated. In the CAC/SICA¹² framework, in 2015 the Regional Meeting on Dialogue and Public Policy Instruments for Family Farming was held, linking the Central American Territorial Rural Development Strategy with the family farming agenda for the subregion. Lastly, at the regional level the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO) supported the preparation and approval of a parliamentary statement on family farming that paves the way for a new framework law governing this activity.

52. In the context of reducing risks and improving livelihood resilience to threats and crises in a context of climate change, FAO, in coordination with the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS), has launched a process for the “Strengthening of national systems for managing risks affecting FSN in CAS member countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay)”. At the same time it is working with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency of CARICOM¹³ to define a roadmap for preparing an SSC strategy among CAS countries and to strengthen risk management capacities for agriculture and FSN in the Caribbean and in CAS countries.

53. For *improving national and regional food and feed systems*, FAO has promoted three strategy thrusts: (i) dynamism of trade and regional integration; (ii) inclusive business models through value chains, including strategies for reducing food losses and waste; (iii) policies and mechanisms to promote public-private investment for food supply, which were incorporated in the CELAC FSN Plan.

54. The network of public food marketing and supply systems in Latin America and the Caribbean was set up, as a mechanism in which the public sector can stimulate local economies, create food stocks, promote family farming and supply their social protection and school meal programs. A regional strategy was defined for reducing food losses and waste in Latin America and the Caribbean, which includes a regional network of experts in food losses and waste, national committees on training in Central America and South America, a training programme on post-harvest losses in the Caribbean, and the issuing of guidelines for forming a regional alliance on the subject.

55. Haiti continues to be a priority country for the region and for FAO. For this reason, the three Regional Initiatives converge on Haiti, along with SSC efforts. In this regard, SSC exchanges have been promoted to strengthen Haiti’s technical capacities. Peru will sign a cooperation agreement with Haiti which FAO has articulated and promoted. Official Haitian delegations have undertaken study trips to both Peru and Ecuador.

56. Results planned at country and regional level have sought to support the visibility of women and indigenous peoples and the particular issues relating to their situation at the regional and national level. An example of this regionally is the work carried out on in support of the special women’s group of the CELAC “Adelanto Mujeres” led by El Salvador. Gender specific data is also provided in the Panorama publications and the Plataforma for FSN. Gender and the inclusion of indigenous peoples have also been essential to activities carried out under the Regional Initiatives, for example ensuring fully inclusive involvement in activities in Guatemala regarding local authority FSN Plans and the corresponding budget, as well as with the Declaration on Family Farming and the work of the PFH. Another important result from the region has been the Brasilia Declaration in 2014, as the first regional consensus between governments and civil society organizations which recognizes the social and political inequalities faced by rural women and the need for actions to counter these.

¹¹ Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR)

¹² Central American Agricultural Council (CAC); Central American Integration System (SICA)

¹³ Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM)

Lessons learnt

57. The main lessons learned on the development of the RIs and the FAO planning process are as follows:

- a) The political commitment, public policies and strategies for eradicating hunger were widely discussed in the different national and regional mechanisms, particularly during the CELAC Summit. This work made it possible to achieve a high-level regional perspective on SSC and mobilization of resources in favour of a group of countries that are the focus of the RIs.
- b) The planning process undertaken by the RLC has launched the various concepts proposed within the SOs, facilitating greater leadership and capacity to cope with the dilemmas for which the region's countries are seeking solutions. This process has made it possible to internalize the concept of results-based management, aligning the technical support and mobilization of RLC resources through the CFPs and RIs.
- c) The strengthening of relations between the regional and subregional teams, and the updating and organization of their technical staff around the strategic objectives and the Regional Initiatives has resulted in more efficient technical support from the decentralized offices. The areas proposed by the Regional Initiatives are focused on a group of countries, thereby enabling FAO to connect directly with the efforts being made by these countries to cope with priority problems such as hunger, rural poverty and measures in response to climate change.

In focus ...

Recognizing that fully-inclusive processes for evidence-based decisions can result in sustainable effective policies, FAO has strengthened actors (PFH, parliamentarians, academics and civil society) and generated spaces of dialogue with support to related institutions (PARLATINO, PARLACEN, PARLANDINO, FOPREL and CSO). This facilitates a necessary exchange of ideas and experiences between diverse groups and political, economic and societal actors (the executive, parliamentarians, private sector, political parties, academia, civil society etc.), interacting in different formal and informal settings, generating understanding, technical knowledge and consensus. In this way political processes linked to the struggle against hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in the region are strengthened. An example of this can be seen in coordinated FAO's support to PFH, academics and civil society organizations which has led to the consolidation of 21 national chapters of the PFH and the production of more than 25 academic studies¹⁴ on the application of the Right to Food in public policies, providing a wealth of information based on evidence from a diverse range of countries of the region including Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia, as well as collaborative work with civil society organizations such as Consumers International, among others. All of these achievements enabled the generation of political processes linked to the development of legislation and FSN policies in the countries and in the region, and have led over the last two years to the approval or review of more than 10 laws or legislative instruments linked to food security and nutrition.

¹⁴ University members of the Right to Food Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean

Near East and North Africa

58. FAO has focused its work on the challenges identified by the 2014 Regional Conference for the Near East:

- a) Enhancing food security and nutrition and strengthening capacity to address vulnerability;
- b) Protecting and managing natural resources and adapting to climate change;
- c) Fostering sustainable and inclusive agricultural production;
- d) Enhancing livelihoods of rural people, smallholders and vulnerable populations;
- e) Developing efficient, sustainable and competitive food systems and reducing food losses and waste;
- f) Increasing resilience of livelihood systems of communities and ecosystems to threats and crises.

59. The Conference underlined the importance of data, information and knowledge sharing on food security and nutrition; addressing the gender gap in agriculture and rural sector; promoting regional cooperation to harness resilience to conflicts and improve the state of food insecurity and malnutrition; addressing climate change and combating droughts and desertification; supporting investment in food chain efficiency; and reducing food losses and wastes.

60. To address these challenges and further focus FAO's work for country-level impact and mobilize resources, the Regional Conference endorsed three Regional Initiatives: Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition; Small-scale Agriculture for Inclusive Development; and Water Scarcity Initiative.

61. FAO's interventions under the three Regional Initiatives (RIs) have been supported by the technical teams at Headquarters and decentralized offices, as well as strategic use of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). Actions taken under these RIs contributed to the achievement of outputs under the five Strategic Objectives and to reach the established targets. The regional achievements as a contribution to FAO's corporate outputs are shown in document NERC/16/2 Web Annex 2.¹⁵

Regional Initiatives

62. *Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition*: This RI has been designed to coordinate and reinforce the efforts of FAO and partners to assist member countries in reducing food insecurity, improving nutrition and strengthening resilience at regional, country, community and household level. The programme is guided by the Regional Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition, which was endorsed by the 32nd session of the Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC). Focus countries are: (i) countries affected by the Syria crisis (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria); (ii) crisis-prone countries (Libya, Sudan and Yemen)¹⁶ in addition to the West Bank and Gaza Strip; and (iii) countries in transition (Egypt and Mauritania).

63. The overall objective of the Regional Initiative on *Small-scale Agriculture for Inclusive Development* is to reduce rural poverty by promoting and supporting inclusive small-scale agricultural development, with special attention to governance and institutions, including, access of smallholders to social protection, rural services and markets, strengthening the capacities of producers' organizations and promoting youth employment and sustainable value chain development.

64. The *Water Scarcity Initiative* addresses key regional problems of water scarcity, unsustainable groundwater use, growing risks from climate change and the need to obtain the maximum benefit from every drop of water in order to boost incomes and improve food security. The Initiative comprises a range of interventions to protect and sustainably manage scarce water resources, improve efficiency

¹⁵ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mq012e.pdf>

¹⁶ Libya has been added in 2016/17

and productivity of water use, promote equitable allocation and use of water and manage effectively disaster risks, including droughts.

Achievements

65. The Regional Initiative on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition follows a regional approach to strengthening resilience to crises and shocks through: (i) building the evidence base to support policy and strategy; (ii) promoting strategies to build resilience of countries, communities and institutions to shocks and crises; (iii) supporting approaches to address underlying long-term factors driving risk, disasters and crises; and (iv) promoting regional cooperation to collectively address crises and shocks.
66. Country-specific plans of action with a strong resilience component were developed and implemented for Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, West Bank and Gaza Strip and Yemen. The subregional strategy and action plan for “Resilient livelihoods for agriculture and food and nutrition security in areas affected by the Syria Crisis” and the respective country action plans have been under implementation since 2013 and are regularly updated and revised. Under the Initiative, programmes for preventing transboundary animal and plant pests and diseases, including improving preparedness for the desert locust and avian influenza control, have been supported in Egypt, Lebanon, Sudan and Yemen.
67. On the policy dialogue and regional collaboration, through the Initiative FAO facilitated a regional dialogue among member countries, civil society, the League of Arab States and development partners on food security and nutrition issues, including the effects of conflicts and protracted crises on the region. A regional multi-stakeholder workshop on food security and nutrition was organized jointly with the Committee on World Food Security and the World Food Programme. FAO also supported the preparation and implementation of food security strategies in Mauritania, Sudan and Yemen.
68. The Initiative gave priority to developing reliable food and nutrition security data and information and knowledge exchange for decision support systems. A regional-level food security information network (Regional Food Security Analysis Network) has been established to strengthen emergency food security and livelihood support interventions in countries affected by the Syria crisis. At the national level, FAO supported the strengthening of food security and early warning information systems in Sudan and Yemen. Support in assessments (food security and livelihoods, crop and food supply, damage and loss) were provided to Syria, Sudan, Yemen and Palestine. In addition, support was provided in vulnerability analysis and resilience measurement in Palestine, Mauritania and Jordan.
69. FAO is supporting implementation of the regional strategic framework for food loss and waste reduction, endorsed by the 32nd session of NERC. A regional network for exchange of knowledge and experience on food loss and waste reduction has been established. Capacity building interventions for food loss reduction and risk analysis in import inspection and for national food standard setting have been initiated in Egypt, Iran, Jordan and Lebanon.
70. On nutrition, through the Initiative FAO supported countries (including Egypt, Iran and Sudan) in setting up national multi-stakeholder committees to follow-up on the Second International Conference on Nutrition. FAO supported interventions in Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen, promoting sustainable access of households and communities to safe, nutritious and diversified food, in particular by integrating nutrition education to food production decisions.
71. The Regional Initiative on *Small-scale Agriculture* was piloted during the 2014-15 biennium in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia. In this context, a baseline study was conducted to identify and analyse the typology of smallholders in the Near East and North Africa (NENA) region, identify the constraints and barriers they are facing and build the evidence base to support policies and strategies for sustainable and inclusive development of the small scale agriculture sector in the region. In addition, FAO piloted interventions that address key areas of emphasis: governance and institutions, capacities of producer organizations and youth employment.
72. On governance and institutions, major achievements include the harmonization of the legal and institutional frameworks governing producer organizations in livestock and fisheries in the Arab

Maghreb Union. FAO is supporting the Government of Egypt in the reform of the cooperatives legal and institutional framework. Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of national food security were promoted in Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia.

73. Through the Initiative, FAO conducted several training and capacity building interventions in Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia aiming at strengthening the managerial capacities and the professionalization of producer organizations. An e-learning platform for producer organizations in the Maghreb countries was established with the aim to facilitate their access to knowledge and promote experience sharing among the various stakeholders. FAO also supported projects in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia aimed at improving smallholders' productivity through improved extension systems and support to access to markets. As part of the subregional youth employment programme in Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, diagnostics on the situation of rural youth employment, challenges and opportunities has been initiated. The generated knowledge will provide the basis for the development and implementation of a decent rural youth employment strategy in the agricultural sector in the target countries.

74. The *Water Scarcity* Initiative supported the implementation of the “Regional Collaborative Strategy on Sustainable Agricultural Water Management and Food Security” endorsed by the 32nd session of NERC.

75. In this context FAO provided support to the Arab Water Security Strategy which was officially endorsed in June 2015 by the Arab Ministerial Council for Water of the League of Arab States. A regional partnership including the Near East and North Africa countries and regional and international organizations active in water management is functional, and a “Regional Collaborative Platform” for sharing knowledge, information and data has been established.

76. Assessments of agriculture water productivity using food production and supply cost curves to determine the comparative advantage in food production have been conducted in five countries (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Oman and Tunisia). In order to support countries in tracking and monitoring water efficiency and productivity, FAO has initiated actions to develop systems for benchmarking, monitoring and reporting on water use, including through remote sensing.

77. Responding to NERC-32 recommendations, FAO partnered with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) under the framework of the Initiative to support the introduction of new techniques to improve water efficiency in pilot sites in rainfed and dryland systems in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

78. In the framework of the initiative, FAO has also partnered with the International Centre for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) and other research partners to initiate a pilot project to support a regional platform on drought management and climate change and to support national drought policies and programmes in Egypt Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco

79. Through the Initiative FAO has supported the introduction of solar energy to reduce irrigation costs in Egypt and Yemen. Similar interventions are contemplated in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria during the 2016-17 biennium. At the same time, FAO is working with partners on guidance to optimize the use of solar energy in irrigation and reduce its potential negative impacts on ground water.

80. FAO supported the decentralization of water governance in Yemen and the strengthening of the role and capacities of the water users associations and of the Sanaa basin authority. The project is expected to be scaled-up to other water basins in the future.

81. Under the framework of the initiative, FAO is partnering with ICBA and ICARDA to support the establishment of the Agricultural Innovation Center of the United Arab Emirates as a regional centre of excellence for the research and development on the potential of protected agriculture to cut water consumption in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

82. The regional office produced two major knowledge products during the biennium: “Towards a collaborative regional strategy for sustainable of agriculture water in the NENA” and the “Overview

of Food security and nutrition in the NENA”. The publications have been disseminated and served widely for the advocacy around the water and food security and nutrition issues.

Lessons learnt

83. Three key lessons emerged from the implementation of the three Regional Initiatives in 2014-15: (i) the prioritization of goals set by NERC helped focus FAO activities around strategic targets and results, and has dramatically improved the work planning and efficiency in resource allocation; (ii) the organization of the work of the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa under the three RIs has improved synergy and integration among activities and led to a better understanding of FAO’s work across partners and member countries, strengthened regional networking around programmes and issues and improved monitoring and reporting of results; (iii) going forward, country ownership and resources mobilization will be critical in scaling-up the interventions under the regional initiatives to achieve long-lasting impacts.

In focus ...

The TCP project “Strengthening of food security information and early warning systems for effective resilience-based response in countries affected by the protracted Syrian crisis” was developed as part of a broader programme aimed at establishing evidence-based food security information platform in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which encompasses the Regional Food Security Analysis Network (RFSAN) funded by USAID and jointly implemented by FAO and partners. RFSAN provides an information platform for improved food security situation analysis, through assessment, analysis and dissemination of information on food security and nutrition.

A Cash for Work (CFW) programme was implemented by FAO in Iraq from November 2014 to June 2015 as a part of the large scale UN emergency response in Iraq funded by Saudi Arabia. The project, implemented in the framework of the Regional Initiative on Food Security and Nutrition, assisted those mostly affected by the crisis particularly where employment, income, livelihood or economic production opportunities had been lost. The programme targeted Internally Displaced Populations, host communities and returnees in South, Central and North Governorates of Iraq by providing temporary employment opportunities through rehabilitation and improvement of agriculture related infrastructure and communal productive assets. Reintroducing cash flows into beneficiary communities, revitalizing local markets, and restoring basic economic functions were among the primary results of the program. Results extended beyond the end of programme activities. Employment opportunities generated by CFW programming enabled many individuals who would have otherwise been forced into multiple displacements by conflict to sustain their livelihoods. Cash for Work can be a powerful instrument for positive change: it provides assistance not only in the form of restoration of livelihoods through creating economic opportunities, but it promotes social cohesion between all affected Members within the community.