

A photograph showing a woman in a red shirt from the side, her hands immersed in a large pile of green leafy vegetables like collard greens or chard. In the background, another woman in a patterned top is also working with vegetables. A young child is visible behind them. The scene is set outdoors, likely at a market.

PARTNERING FOR RESULTS



FAO's experience and expertise are increasingly crucial for enabling strategic action in the fight against hunger.



Looking towards a future of expanding populations and decreasing resources, the importance of FAO's experience and know-how in the drive to end hunger increases even further.

FAO shares its expertise by working with farmers, scientists and governments in seeking to improve agricultural production and the lives of rural people. The overall goal is to ensure that everyone has enough nutritious food to eat.

Lessons learned stand as a further rich source of knowledge that FAO can draw upon and share.

Of course, we cannot do this work alone. It is vital that we act in tandem with partners from the international community, the private sector and foundations to overcome food insecurity and malnutrition, increase agricultural production while protecting the environment, reduce rural poverty, support inclusive and efficient food systems, and increase communities' resilience to threats and crises.

The stories in this package show what can be achieved when FAO swings into action. They describe what FAO has introduced, what it has improved and, most of all, what it has left behind in working with its partners and contributing to food and nutrition security and sustainable resource management.

Here are just five of the many ways in which FAO has made, and will continue to make, a difference.



PROTECTING smallholders' access to land – and more

In May 2012, representatives of more than 100 countries approved the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*. This vote came at the end of a three-year process led by FAO and the Committee on World Food Security, that included more than 1 000 experts from governments, academia, civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector, representing 133 countries. They worked together in a series of consultations, workshops, drafting committees and intergovernmental negotiations. Hailed as a landmark decision, there is no doubt that setting global standards for tenure policy will have an enormous impact around the world, but it is especially important for helping smallholders participate in modern food systems – growing and providing food for their families but also for markets. To maintain momentum, FAO initiated a series of regional workshops to introduce countries to the Guidelines' standards and best practices, and will support them as they begin the process of turning those words on paper into concrete actions on the ground. Already, several sub-Saharan countries report that they are using the Guidelines to harmonize overlapping tenure frameworks and to reform forest tenure policies. They are even initiating university courses to imbue their students with awareness of the Guidelines' value.

Approval of the Guidelines is recognized as an enormous step forward in setting fair standards for tenure in all countries.



INCREASING sustainable production through greener cities

What used to be considered wasteland – patches alongside roads and streams or between houses – has become a new food basket for cities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is thanks to an FAO programme, in conjunction with its partners, that shows how urban and peri-urban horticulture can have a profoundly positive effect on national food security, empower the poor and help cities cope with a host of social and environmental challenges.

Many of the thousands of gardeners who participate in the FAO “Growing Greener Cities” programme in five cities were once considered “squatters”, using land they did not own to grow vegetables for their families. But a decade of expanding support from FAO has helped them legalize their activities and improve their farming techniques. In addition, FAO has worked with the DR Congo Ministry of Rural Development and a host of national support services. Work has included installing irrigation and drainage, in order to avoid use of wastewater that had the potential to contaminate the produce. Participants have not only improved family nutrition and made money from selling their surpluses at local markets, but they also now supply urban supermarkets, restaurants and hotels. In the capital city of Kinshasa alone, 80 000 to 100 000 tonnes of vegetables a year – 70 percent of the leafy vegetables consumed in Kinshasa – are supplied from gardens in and around the city.

IMPROVING yields through quality seeds

Some two million small family farms of one hectare or less dot the agricultural landscapes of Central America, where farmers usually plant two main staple crops – beans and maize. Previously however, these fields rarely produced the yields they could have, because the farmers had no access to a crucial input – quality seed. Seed is one of the least expensive but most important factors influencing yields. Working with ministries of agriculture and national research institutes in all Central American countries, FAO supported a project to improve farmers’ access to quality seed. The project has improved the situation greatly, by aiding the farmers in establishing seed-growers’ associations, and providing them with training in production, quality control, enterprise management and marketing. As a result, 29 local businesses now supply improved seeds, and as quality has improved, so have farmers’ yields. Not only did the farmers increase the amount of quality bean and maize seed they produced, but the farmers who planted those seeds also doubled their yields.





HARMONIZING safety standards benefits smallholder tea producers

Tea began its journey towards becoming the most widely consumed beverage in the world, after water, some 5 000 years ago. According to folklore, a few tea leaves accidentally wafted into a pot of water that a Chinese emperor was boiling, giving off a rich aroma and enticing the emperor to drink it. Thus was born the tea culture that began in Asia and spread to Europe in the 1600s, with European countries then setting up enormous tea plantations in their tropical colonies. Today, it takes more than four million tonnes of tea to satisfy annual consumer demand, a number that increases every year. Most of the large tea estates have been replaced by smallholder producers, who often have difficulty complying with a host of safety standards on use of pesticides. In 2012, after a decade of concerted work, the FAO Intergovernmental Group (IGG) on Tea, a subsidiary body of the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP), spearheaded an agreement that harmonized pesticide standards, making tea production safer for consumers and protecting the livelihoods of millions of smallholder producers worldwide.

BUILDING resilience in drought-prone countries

The calendar of the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) is booked well in advance. CILSS, the technical arm of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), monitors the food security of 17 West African and Sahelian countries, runs a large satellite data centre, and has established a proven protocol that countries follow in collecting their food-security data. At the beginning, middle and end of each cropping season, CILSS member countries and partners meet at regional workshops and use the data to analyse the agriculture and food-security situation. The resulting "cereal balance-sheets" produced for each member country are respected for their accuracy in predicting and explaining the results of each cropping season. FAO supported the founding of CILSS in 1973, in the midst of a prolonged and devastating drought, and has continued working as a partner, providing capacity-development support ever since. In its four decades of work, CILSS has continuously mobilized Sahelian countries and the international community to work together towards drought resilience in the region, while maintaining national autonomy and reducing reliance on external aid.





To learn more about how FAO and its resource partners make the difference, visit:

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