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COUNCIL

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FAO'S WORK IN SOCIAL PROTECTION

Executive Summary

Upon the request by the 38th Session of the Conference, the present document aims to further inform the Council, through the Programme Committee, about FAO's approach to social protection, how it seeks to strengthen its capacity in the coming years and how it will engage with partners to ensure effective support to member countries.

Social protection plays five fundamental roles in the context of FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework by: a) providing direct income support with immediate impact on food security and poverty reduction at the individual and household level; b) supporting farmers and other rural households in overcoming liquidity constraints and managing risks better; c) enhancing human capital; d) stimulating local economic development with positive feedbacks on agricultural production, employment and rural poverty reduction; and e) supporting efforts towards more sustainable management of natural resources and resilient livelihoods. FAO will significantly step up its support to countries by forging links and promoting greater policy coherence and synergies between social protection, food security, agricultural development and rural poverty reduction. These five roles will be central to how FAO, together with strategic partners, will deliver its work on social protection in the coming years.

In order to ensure delivery on all of these fronts and in accordance with the Medium Term Plan 2014-17 and Programme of Work and Budget 2014-15, FAO has: i) allocated incremental resources in the area of social protection; ii) named a division, within the Economic and Social Development Department, the Social Protection Division (ESP); iii) established an inter-departmental working group to increase critical mass and strengthen coordination of analytical work and policy support related to social protection; and iv) is strengthening partnerships with other UN agencies and development partners to increase coherence and effectiveness of interventions.

Suggested action by the Programme Committee and Council

This document is presented to the Programme Committee and Council for information.

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Introduction

1. FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework,¹ endorsed by the FAO Conference of 15 to 22 June 2013, recognizes the key importance of social protection for improving food security and nutrition and reducing rural poverty. Many member countries have already been making active use of social protection policies and programmes with these objectives in mind. In partnership with other UN agencies, FAO is supporting these efforts building on its expertise and comparative advantage, which lie at the interface between social protection and food security, poverty reduction and agricultural and rural development.

2. The proven success of social protection interventions is leading to their greater use and prominence by member countries in their policy response to developmental challenges, in particular those relating to rural poverty, agricultural productivity and food security. Social protection mechanisms provide means to poor and low-income households to better cope with, and manage risks and vulnerabilities they face. When properly designed, they provide a predictable means of existence which helps secure access to food and prevent the most vulnerable from resorting to negative and harmful coping strategies to cover their basic needs and ensure immediate survival during times of distress. Such strategies include: compromising dietary intake, removing children from school, slaughtering core breeding livestock and selling off productive assets. Social protection measures free resources for households to invest more in their farm and rural enterprise activities and thus can be a valuable means to develop, protect and restore resilient and sustainable rural livelihoods.

3. Achieving such developmental impact will require careful design and social policies will need to go hand-in-hand with agricultural and rural development policies. FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework identifies the linkages between these areas of policies and provides a basis for bringing together the relevant expertise to more effectively support countries in their social protection interventions for food and nutrition security, agricultural development, and rural livelihood resilience and wellbeing. In order to be able to respond to increasing demand from member countries, FAO is enhancing its expertise in social protection as set out in the Medium Term Plan 2014-17 and Programme of Work and Budget 2014-15² and is strengthening its partnerships with other UN agencies and development partners.

4. As requested by the FAO Conference in June 2013,³ the present document aims to further inform the Council about FAO's approach to social protection within the areas of its mandate, how it seeks to strengthen its capacity in the coming years and how it will engage with partners to ensure effective support to member countries.⁴

A. FAO's approach to social protection

Social protection, food security and agricultural and rural development

5. Poor households in rural areas of the developing world rely primarily on agriculture for their livelihoods. Almost three quarters of Africa's economically active rural population, for example, are smallholders, most producing a significant share of their own food consumption. Increasing and stabilizing domestic food production is essential for food security and this means improving the productivity, profitability and sustainability of smallholder farming. Farmers and rural households are often constrained by limited access to resources, low agricultural productivity and poorly functioning markets.

6. Poor rural households in developing countries are exposed to frequent economic, man-made and natural risks and shocks that threaten their livelihoods. They are typically ill-equipped to cope

¹ C 2013/7

² C 2013/3

³ C 2013/REP para. 105

⁴ This document further expands on Information Note 10 *FAO's comparative advantage in relation to social protection* <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/028/MG838E.pdf>

with these shocks. In the absence of insurance or other risk sharing arrangements, poor rural families may be forced to cope in ways that further increase their vulnerability and undermine their future income generation capacity. For example, they may sell off their assets (a cow, plough, or piece of land); they may shift to produce less risky, but lower yielding crops, or they may take their children out of school to work to generate an income for the family, but eroding future income earning capacity.

7. In this context, the provision of social protection has become an increasingly prominent policy response. Social protection policies aim at reducing social and economic risk and vulnerability and alleviating extreme poverty and deprivation, taking into account different risks and vulnerabilities throughout the lifecycle. By ensuring predictability and regularity, social protection instruments enable households to better manage risks and engage in more profitable livelihood and agricultural activities. When directed towards women, they are not only empowered, but households' welfare is also improved because of women's priorities for food and nutrition and their children's education and wellbeing.

8. Social protection can take on a variety of forms, from cash transfers to school meals to public works. When targeted at the poorest and most vulnerable, these policies may be seen as social protection interventions in their own right. Policies promoting agricultural production, such as input subsidies, may also have a social protection function to the extent that they help reduce vulnerability of smallholder farm households to price volatility.

9. Social protection measures and policies can be used to strengthen the linkage between humanitarian and development policies and initiatives, mutually reinforcing prevention and mitigation measures of the potential impact of disasters and crises that threaten food and agricultural systems. In after-shock situations or during crises, humanitarian assistance can rely on already existing social protection systems to scale up existing structures and measures to transfer humanitarian assistance to protect or rebuild the livelihoods of the most vulnerable people. When social protection systems are absent or not adequate, external assistance might be provided directly, in the form of in-kind aid or cash transfer for basic agricultural inputs.

10. Social protection can address constraints to both the demand and supply of public services. On the demand side, social protection can help overcome economic as well as social barriers to access and utilization of services, from education and health care to energy and transportation. On the supply side, social protection can include special efforts to make services available to vulnerable populations, such as early childhood development or farmer field schools.

11. However, social protection needs to be considered in line with other factors. Programmes need to be carefully designed; if the focus is just on access to benefits, they may not provide sustainable ways out of poverty and food insecurity. In the case of great adversity, such as the prolonged drought in the Horn of Africa in 2008, social benefits may prove far from sufficient. Among the households affected, there were those that had just slowly managed to build or rebuild their assets through cash transfers they were receiving from the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia or the Hunger Safety Net Programme in Kenya. The drought wiped out these gains. This shows that in rural settings, social protection needs to go hand-in-hand with agricultural and rural development policies that help build greater resilience, improve productivity and support sustainable management of resources. This is where FAO has a key role to play.

Social protection and FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework

12. Social protection interventions are an essential element of both aspects of FAO's "twin track" approach to reducing hunger and poverty. Both short- and long-term interventions are required. Social protection can establish a bridge between the two tracks. First, it helps households to overcome undernourishment by providing them with direct access to food or means to buy food. Second, it can increase agricultural productivity growth, improve livelihoods and nutrition, and promote social inclusion.

13. FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework contains five new Strategic Objectives (SOs) for the future work of the Organization. Three of these relate, respectively, to food security and nutrition

(SO1), rural poverty reduction (SO3) and resilience (SO5). Social protection forms an important component of each one of these Objectives. Social protection can also be instrumental in helping achieve more productive and sustainable use and management of natural resources (SO2) and inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems (SO4). Effective implementation of the reviewed Strategic Framework thus compels broadening and deepening of FAO's work on social protection in the coming years.

14. Social protection plays five fundamental roles in the context of the Strategic Objectives by: a) providing direct income support with immediate impact on food security and poverty reduction at the individual and household level; b) supporting farmers and other rural households in overcoming liquidity constraints and better management of risks; c) enhancing human capital; d) stimulating local economic development with positive feedback on agricultural production, employment and rural poverty reduction; and e) supporting efforts towards more sustainable management of natural resources and resilient livelihoods.

A. Social protection provides direct income support with immediate impact on food security and poverty reduction at the individual and household level

15. Well targeted social protection represents an infusion of resources for the poorest of the poor. Such targeted support reduces the extent and intensity of poverty. For example, poverty reduction has been documented for public works/workfare schemes in Argentina, conditional cash transfers (CCTs) in Brazil, Mexico and Nicaragua, unconditional cash transfers (UCTs) in Kenya and old-age pensions in South Africa.

16. Poor households spend most of their income on food and there is broad evidence that social protection interventions improve household food security and child nutrition. A meta review of cash transfer programmes identified 17 out of 20 studies that reported an increase in food intake, diversity and quality, all of which make important contributions to food security.⁵ Cash transfer programmes have also led to reduction in child malnutrition, though impact is mediated by other determinants of child nutritional status, including access to health services and potable water, hygiene practices, and household and parental characteristics. Children benefiting from Brazil's Bolsa Familia programme are 26 percent more likely to avoid malnutrition than non-beneficiaries.⁶ In Colombia, cash transfers to the poor "greatly increased" total food consumption and particularly increased consumption of food rich in proteins: milk, meat and eggs. Beneficiary families of Malawi's cash transfer programme now eat meat or fish three times a week, whereas before they could only afford to do so once every three weeks.⁷

B. Social protection supports farmers and other rural households in overcoming liquidity constraints and better management of risks with positive impacts on food production and farm level investment in agriculture

17. The livelihoods of most beneficiaries in sub-Saharan Africa are predominantly based on subsistence agriculture and rural labour markets, and this will continue to prevail for the foreseeable future. Local labour markets often do not provide many opportunities for overcoming poverty and, as a result, poor households tend to resort to self-employment, whether in or outside agriculture. Moreover, most beneficiaries live in places where markets for credit, insurance, labour, goods and inputs are lacking or functioning poorly. In this context, when social protection is provided in a regular and predictable manner, it helps households to overcome credit constraints and better manage risks. This, in turn, helps induce more productive investments, improve access to markets and stimulate local economic activity and employment creation.

⁵ For a review of the evidence presented in this section, see N. Tirvayi, M. Knowles, and B. Davis (2013), "The interaction between social protection and agriculture. A review of evidence," Rome: FAO.

⁶ Rômulo Paes-Sousa, Leonor Maria Pacheco Santos and Édina Shisue Miazaki (2011), "Effects of a conditional cash transfer programme on child nutrition in Brazil", *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 89:496-503

⁷ See e.g., Joseph Hanlon, Armando Barrientos and David Hulme (2010), "Just Give Money to the Poor" Chapter 4, Page 53-4. Chronic Poverty Research Centre.

18. A growing body of evidence shows that social protection interventions positively impact beneficiaries' livelihoods. The Mexican CCT programme "Oportunidades" led to increased land use, livestock ownership, crop production and agricultural expenditures and a greater likelihood of operating a microenterprise, while the CCT programme in Paraguay and Bolivia's social pension scheme led to increased investment in agricultural production and livestock acquisition. Similar results have been found for CT programmes in Malawi and Kenya, where transfers also led to an increase in the consumption of food from home agricultural production. A public works programme in Ethiopia, combined with complementary agricultural support measures, led to significantly higher grain production and fertilizer use.

19. These impacts are not uniform and outcomes may vary from one context to the next. For instance, cash transfer schemes appear to have had little impact on the supply of labour in Latin America, while in sub-Saharan Africa such programmes have led to a shift from agricultural wage labour of last resort to increased labour allocation to on-farm activities by adults.

20. Qualitative field work from cash transfer programmes in Ghana, Kenya and Zimbabwe has found positive effects on "social capital"; that is, they allowed beneficiaries to "re-enter" existing social networks, and/or to strengthen informal safety nets and risk-sharing arrangements. Moreover, in all three countries the social protection programmes allowed households to reduce debt levels and increase creditworthiness.

C. Social protection enhances the development of human capital with long-term beneficial impacts on livelihoods

21. Higher educational attainment is important for agricultural productivity growth and for improving the employability of rural workers in and outside agriculture. There is robust evidence from numerous countries (in Latin America and increasingly also in sub-Saharan Africa) that cash transfers have leveraged sizeable gains in access to health and education services, as measured by increases in school enrolment (particularly for girls), reduction in child labour and the use of health services.

D. Social protection stimulates local economic development with positive feedback on agricultural production, employment and rural poverty reduction

22. Social protection can lead to multiplier effects through the stimulation of agricultural and non agricultural goods, services and labour markets. For example, when beneficiaries receive a cash transfer they spend it. The transfer's impacts are then transmitted from the beneficiary household to others inside and outside the local economy, more often to households not eligible for the cash transfer, who tend to own most of the local businesses. Empirical models of the local economy developed by FAO, to study the economy-wide impact of cash transfer programmes in Kenya and Lesotho find income multipliers that range from 1.81 to 2.23, respectively, for every Kenyan shilling or Lesotho loti transferred. However, depending on the context, the income effects may be limited by constraints in labour, capital and land markets. The key insight is that non-beneficiaries and the local economy also benefit significantly from a cash transfer programme via trade and production linkages, and that maximizing the income multiplier will require complementary interventions that target both beneficiary and non-beneficiary families. Other social protection mechanisms, such as public works programmes, can also lead to multiplier effects through the creation of public and private goods such as terracing, irrigation and other infrastructures, as well as through the injection of income in the local economy. Brazil's Bolsa Familia programme reaches about 50 million people and for every Brazilian real spent, the economy at large gains an estimated 1.87 Brazilian reais. Since its introduction ten years ago, 36 million Brazilians were lifted out of poverty, with about one fifth solely contributed by the social protection programme.⁸

23. Social protection initiatives supporting local food purchase programmes provide a new perspective on agricultural development and food interventions. The traditional emphasis on food aid is replaced with efforts to secure social and institutional conditions that ensure access to quality food

⁸ ISSA (2013), "Bolsa Família: Brazil's social security cash transfer programme", *Facts and Figures 02*, International Social Security Assiation (www.issa.int).

for populations at risk of food insecurity and participation of smallholder farmers in the market. The FAO-WFP-Brazil supported Purchase from Africans for Africa Programme (PAA), for example, emerged as a joint initiative to promote food and nutrition security and income generation among farmers and vulnerable communities in Africa. Inspired by Brazil's success in carrying out its Food Purchase Programme, the project combines actions for agricultural recovery and food assistance with development strategies to link smallholder farmers to local institutional markets, in particular school meal programmes, enabling farmers to become more involved in producing and marketing food, while helping to supplement and diversify diets. The PAA also contributes to developing the capacity of government staff to support local food purchases from smallholders as a development strategy and tool for preventing future food crises.

E. Social protection may promote sustainable food systems, natural resource management and resilient livelihoods

24. Public works schemes for land conservation and building of terraces, improving water resource management and water harvesting, and afforestation/reforestation targeted at poor households can help address problems of food insecurity, poverty and environmental degradation simultaneously. Accordingly, such programmes would need to be designed to build, strengthen, protect assets and livelihoods in order to lower vulnerability to natural and other hazards and increase resilience and sustainable economic, social and environmental development. To address the complex interconnections between natural resource management, climate change and resilient and sustainable livelihoods, the concept of “adaptive social protection” has been developed to explicitly integrate disaster risk management (DRM) and climate change adaptation with social protection policies.⁹

25. Within this framework, risks implied with social protection interventions stimulating unsustainable patterns of food production would be minimized through integrated approaches that release the positive synergies that can be achieved through environmental and climate-responsive social protection. Policies that recognize and enhance these synergies at the outset, from policy development to programme planning and implementation offer the greatest potential for positive impacts on both social and environmental resilience.

B. FAO's role and ongoing work

26. These positive impacts are neither trivial nor guaranteed outcomes. Careful design of social protection policies, implementation and monitoring is required in alignment with food, nutrition, agriculture and rural development policies. Accordingly, FAO's work in social protection focuses on supporting governments and other partners to maximize synergies between social protection and agricultural policies and in articulating a coordinated strategy for rural development. This involves developing human and institutional capacities to manage policy processes in a more coherent manner, providing policy advice and support to programme implementation, generating actionable knowledge, facilitating and engaging in policy dialogue among stakeholders, and developing and sharing tools for policy analysis.

27. One key example of FAO's role in policy advice and dialogue is reflected in the From Protection to Production (PtoP) project. The PtoP project analyzes the impact of cash transfer programmes on household economic decision making and the local economy, relating in particular to the social protection roles A, B and D as defined in the previous section. The project provides insights on how social protection interventions can contribute to sustainable poverty reduction and economic growth at household and community-levels. The project uses a mixed method approach, combining econometric analysis of impact evaluation data, general equilibrium “Local Economy Wide Impact Evaluation” (LEWIE) models, and qualitative methods. The project, implemented jointly with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), builds on ongoing impact evaluations of government-led social

⁹ See A. Bonfiglioli and C. Watson (2011), *Bringing social protection down to earth: Integrating climate resilience and social protection for the most vulnerable*, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies (IDS); and M. Davies, J. Leavy, T. Mitchell, and T. Tanner (2008), *Social Protection and Climate Change Adaption*, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies (IDS).

protection programmes in seven countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe). Besides producing analyses, publications and policy briefs for the global development community, the project has a direct impact on the policy debate in each of the seven countries through its collaboration with government and UNICEF. Analyses carried out by the project have fed into discussions on both current programme design, future complementary interventions to maximize the economic impact, as well as larger policy discussions on the link between social protection programmes and rural development initiatives. FAO's focus complements the operational and research support provided by other UN agencies, including UNICEF and the World Bank.

28. Examples of FAO's direct support to social protection schemes in the framework of national food security programmes include:

- a) support to the Government of Niger in the design and implementation of the programme for the eradication of hunger within the context of the 3N Initiative ("les Nigériens nourrissent les Nigériens"), which links a comprehensive social protection programme with an agricultural investment plan and a programme for people's empowerment focused on rural women (the latter aims to improve their access to agricultural inputs as much as to the cash transfer benefits);
- b) in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF, and building on successful cash-for-work and other social protection actions that were part of the interventions that helped Somalia overcome the famine of two years ago, support to the design and implementation of Somalia's resilience strategy, including leading the technical cooperation for the Cash for Work programme;
- c) technical support to the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and Household Asset Building Programme (HABP), critical components of Ethiopia's Food Security Programme targeted at chronically food insecure households in rural areas;
- d) in collaboration with WFP, support to five African countries in linking smallholder production with local procurement for school meal programmes, facilitated through the FAO-Brazil collaboration for South-South Cooperation, through the PAA Africa. The programme simultaneously aims to support the achievement of the human right to adequate food, encourage the consumption of locally-produced food, stimulate local food production of smallholder farmers, many of whom are women, and thus also promote their economic and social inclusion;
- e) support in the formulation of the National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIP), through which roadmaps are designed in the context of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and support to the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program assisting in the implementation of pledges made at L'Aquila Summit of 8 – 10 July 2009, which included social protection among the parameters and the thinking behind the assessment of the food security situation and the strategy to address the food soaring prices. The scope of these social protection components varies, but includes the provision of safety nets for vulnerable groups in the Gambia NAIP; and financing of social protection for resource poor and food insecure farmers as part of the Sierra Leone NAIP;
- f) support in the design and implementation of social protection programmes closely related to FAO's comparative advantage, such as cash for work programmes with a strong agricultural component, or junior and adult farmer field and life schools.

29. Examples of FAO's production of internationally-shared knowledge products include:

- a) a *policy on cash-based transfers* to address hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity and as a tool for social protection initiatives (2012) which reflects FAO's increasing engagement in cash-transfer interventions. This was followed in 2013 by two specific guidelines – *Guidelines on Public Works (cash-food- and voucher-for-work)* and *Guidelines for Input Trade Fairs and Voucher Schemes* that provide practical guidance on the design and implementation of selected cash transfer modalities that can be used as short-term humanitarian responses, as well as longer-term social protection interventions;

an *online tool for tracking policy decisions* (FAPDA),¹⁰ which includes social protection measures and has provided the basis for policy assessments of the short-term effects of safety nets and protection programmes;

- b) in addition FAO, in partnership with the World Bank, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme and other agencies, is contributing to the harmonization and standardization of indicators and methodologies for social protection analysis and monitoring.

C. Moving forward: strengthening FAO's work in social protection

Priority areas of work

30. FAO is committed to *significantly strengthening its work and capacity* to be able to better support governments, regional initiatives and partners to address the main challenge of designing the right mix of social protection measures that will achieve the five roles of social protection and their *corresponding outcomes, as described above. Accordingly, FAO will significantly step up its support to countries in forging links and promoting greater policy coherence and synergies* between social protection, food security, agricultural development and rural poverty reduction. The five roles and outcomes will provide the framework within which FAO will deliver its work on social protection in the coming years, consistently, with its core functions and comparative strengths, and jointly with relevant international, regional and national partners.

31. Specifically, FAO will continue its existing work and further enhance its support to governments in four priority areas during 2014-15.

32. *Development and implementation of analytical and policy tools for informing the design and assess the effectiveness of social protection systems for poverty reduction and food and nutrition security.* By the end of the biennium, improved and new analytical and policy tools will be available to support the key areas of knowledge generation, policy support and monitoring in the interface between social protection, agriculture, rural development and food security, at global, regional and local levels. These will include the following:

- a) A conceptual framework and guidelines for policy analysis and value chain approach to social protection, as well as an adapted version of the existing LEWIE model, which – drawing on the experience of the pilot Programmatic Regional Initiative in Ghana - will allow the simulation of the *ex ante* impact of different social protection and agricultural policy scenarios on household production, welfare and food security at the local and the national economy.
- b) New conceptual frameworks for supporting impact evaluations in connection with FAO mandate, including for assessing the impact of:
 - i) social protection instruments on natural resource management, fisheries and forestry and on the adoption of agricultural technologies for climate change adaptation;
 - ii) cash-for-work programmes on agriculture and food security and nutrition;
 - iii) agricultural interventions, such as input subsidies on risk management and human capital accumulation.
- c) Contributions to global initiatives to strengthen and harmonize social protection indicators and analytical tools, including a new social protection diagnostics tool (poverty mapping and assessment) from the perspective of FAO's comparative advantage.

33. *Capacity development for strengthened capacities for designing and analysing social protection and agricultural policies and programmes.* By the end of the biennium, staff working on social protection and agriculture in government agencies, development partners and FAO (at headquarters and decentralized offices) will have an increased understanding of the linkages and potential synergies between social protection and agriculture and access to related guidance material. The increased understanding of these linkages and synergies will strengthen the relevance and

¹⁰ Food and Agriculture Policy Decision Analysis (FAPDA)

effectiveness of staff's contribution to national policy and programming processes, including the provision of related policy advice.

34. *Increased knowledge on the linkages between social protection, agriculture and food security which can be applied.* This will involve *inter alia*:

- a) completing ongoing work on impact evaluations in seven sub-Saharan countries and expanding coverage to include a total of ten to 15 countries across Asia, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. This knowledge will be generated through a mix of analytical work undertaken by FAO alone or jointly, with other partners, in countries where adequate capacities are available;
- b) organizing events to share knowledge, experience, and good practices, as well as strengthening South-South Cooperation and other partnerships, at international, regional and national levels;
- c) preparation of policy reports, technical notes and briefs on the basis of the analytical work conducted by FAO and other partners. A strong emphasis will be placed on policy outreach and advocacy so as to ensure that key findings and messages reach and influence the broad range of state and non-state actors involved in social protection, and in agricultural and rural development policy making.

35. *Improved policy support and programming outreach.* By the end of the biennium, policy and programming support using the integrated approach to rural poverty reduction and food security in the context of the programmatic regional initiatives under FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework (SO3, in particular) will have been extended to at least ten countries. This will include facilitating policy dialogues among multiple stakeholders and capacity development in the use of relevant policy tools aiming to support countries in strengthening the linkages between social protection and agriculture and rural development.

36. In order to ensure delivery on all of these fronts, FAO has: i) allocated incremental resources to reinforce SO3 in the area of social protection; ii) named a division within the Economic and Social Development Department, the Social Protection Division (ESP); and iii) established an inter-departmental working group to increase critical mass and strengthen coordination of analytical work and policy support related to social protection, as relevant to all SOs.

Not alone, but with partners

37. FAO's work is premised on partnerships. This stems from the fact that FAO and its conventional partners at the country level (Ministries of Agriculture and line Ministries) typically are not key players in the decision-making related to social protection policies and programmes. FAO's expanded role in social protection will seek to enhance the dialogue with national stakeholders, as well as partnerships with other international agencies, in particular with the other Rome-based agencies, ILO and UNICEF.

38. The partnership with WFP will be strengthened. FAO's focus on the interface between social protection and agricultural, food security and rural development policies will build on WFP's strengths in logistics and implementation of food-based safety nets, interventions and delivery of humanitarian aid. The two agencies will seek to join forces on: i) collecting, analyzing and disseminating data on risk, vulnerability, food security and nutrition; ii) designing safety nets that provide food assistance for food and nutrition security; iii) operationalizing and implementing safety nets; iv) evaluating and generating evidence on safety nets; v) strengthening local purchase initiatives linking smallholders' production to social food assistance programmes; and vi) undertaking cross-cutting technical and analytical studies. FAO and WFP have already developed a Joint Strategy on Information Systems for Food Security and Nutrition.

39. FAO's technical expertise and projects are frequently combined with financing and grants from IFAD. Social protection does not emerge as a priority area in IFAD's strategy. There is scope, therefore, for FAO to complement and support IFAD in mainstreaming social protection policies and programmes in its rural development programmes. Examples of collaboration already exist. In Ethiopia, for instance, FAO and IFAD are developing jointly an index-linked weather insurance

scheme to reach the poorest livestock producers, and plan to strengthen collaboration in rural employment with a focus on youth and decent work.

40. ILO and FAO signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2004 which, under the 'Decent Work' programmes of both agencies, includes the four strategic goals of employment promotion, social protection, rights at work and social dialogue. Moreover, FAO has endorsed the Social Protection Floor Initiative and is intensively working together with ILO to extend its provisions to rural areas. FAO's comparative advantage with ILO lies in the presence of FAO offices in almost all member countries and in its extensive knowledge of rural areas, where most of the people do not have access to social protection. Collaboration will be strengthened in policy support to member countries and in expanding social protection to rural areas.

41. FAO will work with UNICEF at the global, regional and country level to incorporate the agriculture, food security and rural development dimension into social protection policy and programme design and implementation. Similarly, FAO will continue to work with the Department for International Development (DFID) in sub-Saharan Africa. The current main means for collaboration with both UNICEF and DFID are the PtoP Project and the Transfer Project. The latter is a learning initiative which uses ongoing rigorous impact evaluations to improve knowledge and practice on cash transfer programmes in sub-Saharan Africa.

42. FAO is also strengthening South-South Cooperation initiatives, some of which have already been launched, such as the Brazil-FAO Programme for International Cooperation, which is channelling more than USD 36 million in support of South-South Cooperation in Africa and in Latin America, in support of the 2025 Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative. In the coming biennium FAO will seek to expand South-South Cooperation in the area of social protection in the context of Brazil's international cooperation programme and also explore the facilitation of knowledge sharing and cooperation building on the expertise and experience in India and South Africa.

43. Opportunities to strengthen other partnerships on social protection will also be sought through the global and regional initiatives, global governance mechanisms, policy and programmatic frameworks where FAO plays a prominent role. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) had a report prepared on "Social protection for food security" which was the basis for part of its deliberations in 2012. With Biodiversity International, IFAD, the World Bank and WFP, FAO was one of the conveners that led to the launching of the UN Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge initiative, which recognizes the important role to be played by social protection systems. Together with UNICEF, WFP, and WHO of the UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN), as well as through its support to REACH and SUN¹¹ coordination and partnerships mechanisms, FAO will advocate for strengthening social protection. Within this context, FAO, jointly with WHO, in 2014, will convene the Second International Conference on Nutrition ICN (ICN2), which will also include a side event on social protection and nutrition during the Preparatory Technical Meeting to be held on 13-15 in November 2013.

44. At the regional level, aside from the support through the programmatic regional initiatives mentioned above, FAO is supporting implementation of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program, a mechanism set up in 2010 to channel part of the funds pledged for agriculture and food security by world leaders at the G8 Summit in L'Aquila in 2009. It is also fully engaged in supporting implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, the strategic agricultural framework of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), as well as the 2025 Hunger Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative. FAO is also a key player in the Horn of Africa Initiative, which originated from the European Union (EU) regional political partnership for peace and security strategy for the Horn of Africa, as well as in the Sahel Initiative. In line with the above, FAO launched, in January 2013, the African Regional Initiative, which will explore and provide options and tools to maximize the impact generated from the use of alternative social protection measures to enhance rural productivity to maximize the impact of social protection programmes and to allow creation of decent rural employment opportunities.

¹¹ Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition (REACH); Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)