



Expert Consultation

Strengthening FAO-Academia Partnerships

Final Report



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

5-6 June 2014, Rome, Italy



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Executive Summary

Strategic partnerships can support Member countries more effectively in eradicating hunger, malnutrition and achievement of food security. To develop FAO's strategy for collaborating with Academia, an Expert Consultation on 'Strengthening FAO-Academia Partnerships' was organized at FAO Headquarters on 5-6 June 2014. The main objectives of the consultation were to review the '*FAO-Partnership Strategy with Academia and Research Organizations*' and develop a road map for its implementation in support of the Strategic Objectives (SO). The consultation brought together 17 experts from a wide range of disciplines and regionally diverse academic and research organizations. They were joined by members of SO delivery teams. Background documents included the *Strategy* and five briefs on SO which identify the major work areas and the regional initiatives.

The experts commended FAO for preparing the integrated and inter-connected Strategic Framework to provide a clear direction for FAO's work and welcomed the academia partnership initiative, recognizing the need for keeping knowledge updated to address food and agriculture challenges. The experts agreed that the *Strategy* with its Focus Areas provides a good framework for expanding partnerships and looked forward for joint implementation of the road map. They recognized that teaching was not enough, rather the triple actions of teaching, research and extension through community services are required to ensure sustainable food production, resource conservation and social-ecological well-being. Academia plays a critical role in skill enhancement, interdisciplinary knowledge production and sharing and bringing new opportunities for the next generation.

The main recommendations are as follows:

- The Strategy provides a good framework to institutionalize collective efforts. FAO should keep it updated with a focus on strategic alliances; keep the road map under review to identify and develop opportunities and deepen partnerships,
- Regular consultations should be undertaken at the regional level to identify gaps and match to academic resources to support the implementation of SO and their regional initiatives. A joint map is required to identify the knowledge gaps and match them to existing available academic resources,
- Strong communications must be maintained with the academia. More outreach and advocacy at the local level will promote engagement of academia on the ground,
- FAO should work with member governments to shape research agenda to support the SO and address the challenging issues of hunger and poverty. FAO should take advantage of the existing hubs, networks and initiatives of the academia and research community for this and for the promotion and dissemination of knowledge and expertise,
- Resources are essential for expanding the role of academia to increase participation in policy processes. FAO should actively promote resource mobilization to support academic engagement in intergovernmental processes and in FAO projects and programmes,
- FAO should provide an open space for dialogue and work together to create a venue in which FAO and academia can provide long-term critical thinking and foresight on agriculture food systems. Simple propositions such as exchange of staff and, sabbaticals should be encouraged,
- FAO should work with Centers of Excellence, align them to SO-led initiatives to close the knowledge gaps, exchange latest information and innovations, build capacities and demonstrate transformative approaches. Ph.D. students could be linked to provide various analyses, market information, quality data based on academia research,

- FAO can better support academia's role in food security by promoting South-South-North academic exchanges, supporting regional meetings, promoting fellowships, sharing lessons learnt and latest policy information,
- Academic curriculum for food sector needs to be updated. FAO expertise should be utilized for academic curriculum development, particularly for promoting practical, multidisciplinary approaches to food and agriculture topics,
- Academia and FAO need to make agriculture a profession more attractive to youth. FAO and academia should develop innovation clusters, including incubators to support local knowledge, sensitizing youth through joint FAO-academia programmes.

I. Introduction

As knowledge and solutions are spread across a vast array of institutions, FAO recognizes that through strategic partnerships it can support Member countries more effectively in eradicating hunger, malnutrition and achieving food security. As discussed in its Reviewed Strategic Framework, the Strategic Objectives (SO)¹ that are the main areas of work for the Organization, emphasize partnerships with governments as well as with the non-state actors including the civil society, private sector and the academia, to mobilize the best available knowledge, capacities, services and resources to meet global goals and deliver on the ground. With FAO strategies for partnership with the private sector and the civil society in place, opportunities are being expanded with these entities for maximizing benefits through a more inclusive engagement.

The SO promote an integrated approach to combat hunger. One of the mainstays is that they cut across traditional academic disciplines with the aim of harnessing knowledge from multiple channels for supporting policy processes and technical interventions. Although FAO has a close relationship with numerous universities and research organizations - the Academia, the SO provide a fresh opportunity to strengthen linkages at an institutional level and increase value-proposition to jointly address the complexities and challenges of food and agriculture systems. By leveraging mutually beneficial partnerships and by capitalizing on comparative advantages, FAO can better support Member States to stay ahead on knowledge advances, promote evidence-based decision-making and enhance skills of the next generation of agriculture practitioners.

These opportunities and possible future options have been elaborated in the '*FAO Partnership Strategy with Academia and Research Organizations*' which describes the principles, objectives and tools for building partnerships with the Academia. It identifies a set of focus areas for initiating strategic partnerships at the global and local levels to support FAO's SO and global goals. The strategy proposes establishing an *ad hoc* Academia Advisory Group to assist and advise on furthering FAO's approach for partnering with the Academia.

To discuss FAO's approach and main substantive areas for strengthening collaboration with the Academia, an Expert Consultation on 'Strengthening FAO-Academia Partnerships' was organized at FAO Headquarters on 5-6 June 2014. The main objectives of the consultation were to review the '*FAO-Partnership Strategy with Academia and Research Organizations*' and develop a road map for its implementation in support of the Strategic Objectives.

The consultation brought together 17 experts from a wide range of disciplines and regionally diverse academic and research organizations. They were joined by members of SO delivery teams. The Agenda and the List of Participants are in Annex 1 and 2 respectively. The background documents for the consultation, including the Strategy and five SO Briefs identifying the major work areas and the regional initiatives and the power point presentations, are available separately.

¹The Strategic Objectives (SO) discussed in the Reviewed Strategic Framework are
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/027/mg015e.pdf>

SO1: Eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition

SO2 : Increase and improve provision of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner

SO3: Reduce rural poverty

SO4: Enable more inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems

SO5: Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises

II. Opening Plenary Session

At the opening plenary session, Mr. José Graziano da Silva, Director-General, welcomed the experts through a pre-recorded video message where he underlined the importance of FAO-academia relationships for technical support and for continuous intellectual discourse on the future of food in meeting the needs of a world that will be over 9 billion people. Mr. Graziano stated that there were many areas need support from academia and he looks forward to working together to meet the global challenges.

Mr. Dan Gustafson, Deputy Director-General-Operations, delivered the opening remarks. He extended a warm welcome to the experts and colleagues and thanked the academia partners for their long-standing engagement with the Organization. He emphasized the importance of their contributions to food security and development and highlighted the new opportunities arising from the adoption of the multi-disciplinary, integrated approach to delivery on the ground as envisioned under the SO. He noted that the academia was already advanced in inter-disciplinary research and innovations and that by working together these could be applied in the field level with greater impact.

Ms. Marcela Villarreal, Director, Office of Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development (OPC), joined in welcoming all the participants and thanked colleagues from the various regional offices for participating via video. Ms. Villarreal highlighted the need for building inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships and promoting innovative modalities for collaboration with the academia, civil society and the private sector including farmer organizations. She stressed that the academia are the incubators of new ideas and knowledge. They must play their role in addressing the present challenges by developing the necessary skills and capabilities of the next generation of agricultural practitioners, especially at the regional and national levels.

Mr. Rodrigo Casteñeda, Chief, Partnership Unit (OPCP), in his welcome also stressed the role and contributions of the academia sector. He urged academia to participate in multi-stakeholder dialogues to share their views with private sector and the non-governmental organizations. He looked forward to the road map for addressing the knowledge needs.

Following the introductory remarks, Ms. Villarreal invited Prof. Walter Belik, University of Campinas, Brazil, to deliver a presentation on the 'Role of Academia in Food Security and Development'. Mr. Belik highlighted both the complementarities and differences between the missions, goals and targets of the Academia and FAO as well as the challenges and opportunities to develop joint efforts for food security. He also identified several successful examples of collaborations in the area of education, research and community services.

In the discussion that followed, participants agreed that there were many avenues for deepening partnerships particularly at the regional level not only for research and technical training but also to promote awareness about pertinent food security issues among students. The need for keeping knowledge updated and participative was also emphasized. Although academia has always been at the forefront of knowledge, much more needs to be achieved in addressing food and agriculture challenges, particularly through raising awareness and expanding outreach. As many participants noted, academia was in a unique position to be able to shape the future of food security through its influence over students - the prospective food and agriculture practitioners. By providing the proper education, academia can leverage its knowledge to steer the future of food security.

III. FAO-Academia Partnership Strategy

Prof. Carlos Mielitz and Kakoli Ghosh (OPCP) presented a brief overview of the document '*FAO Partnership Strategy with Academia and Research Organizations*' that provides a corporate approach for building these partnerships. They highlighted the main areas including the aims and objectives, focus areas, challenges, opportunities and provided some recent examples of ongoing partnerships with academia. In the discussion chaired by Ms. Villarreal, the experts welcomed the preparation of the strategy document as it provides a good broad framework for guiding partnerships with the academic sector. They commended FAO on its leadership for preparing the integrated and inter-connected SO and recognized that they not only provide a clear direction for FAO's work but also open up new areas for critical thought and research in the food and agriculture domain. Building strong integrated multidisciplinary work requires high-level of commitment and necessary resources, and without adequate long term support, the level of academic engagement in these areas are selective and variable. The higher-education curriculum for food and agriculture sector in many countries need to be updated to broaden scope and promote integrated problem analyses from scientific, social, economic and environmental aspects. Special focus is required to attract and retain youth in the food and agriculture sector. There was also a need for reflection how best to link theoretical models for knowledge integration with practical realities.

A substantive discussion took place on the Focus Areas as proposed in the Strategy – Science Innovation Forum, Triangular Academic Collaborations, Direct Point Academic hubs, and Engagement campaign. The experts agreed that the proposed forum for intellectual debate is important for gathering critical thinking on policies and on food systems issues such as the 'Future of Food', however, all efforts must be made to utilize existing fora and avoid duplications. The Triangular Academic Collaborations, they felt, offer strong opportunities for twinning north-south exchanges, however more specific modalities and adequate resources are required to leverage and utilize local, lateral and triangular support of academia with the national programmes in developing countries. South–South academic cooperation should be further emphasized. The representative from GFAR noted that FAO and academia should take advantage of the existing hubs, networks and initiatives of the academia and research community, for the promotion and dissemination of knowledge and expertise. The proposal for 'academic hubs' for specific thematics should also include opportunities for resource mobilization and participation of youth. Advocacy and communication are extremely important and should be inclusive. Other options for engagement through joint publications, peer review etc. should be considered. There was a strong support for developing a "'living' road map" so that academia could engage dynamically in multi-sectoral dialogues, platforms and relevant processes. The proposal for establishing an advisory group to guide the way forward was well-received.

Ms. Villarreal and Prof. Mielitz thanked the participants for their rich substantive inputs and informed that the Strategy will be finalized with the inputs received from the consultation.

IV. Working Group Sessions

These sessions provided the experts an opportunity to discuss with the SO team members the knowledge gaps of each of the SO and deliberate on the specific ways and means for academia to support them. The sessions were highly interactive and led to sharing of experiences, identification of specific opportunities through value-added collaborations for a road map. The five SO briefs provided a summary of the major areas of work, expected outputs and regional initiatives, and allowed the discussions to probe into technical details. The sessions started with a brief presentation of the SO by the team representative, followed by a facilitated discussion on the knowledge needs, key challenges and opportunities for academia partnerships in the long and short term. The outcomes of the deliberations were presented in the plenary session.



A. Partnerships for SO1: Eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition

Mr. Mark Smulders, on behalf of the Strategic Objective 1 (SO1) team, presented an overview of SO1 and its four pillars: policy environment, stakeholder commitment, effective coordination and evidence-based decision-making and outlined the main areas of work under each of them. The goal of SO1 team is to create the necessary enabling conditions for governance and decision-making at all levels. This includes strengthened political will and commitment, appropriate accountability mechanisms and more purposeful action. SO1 team members Ms. Cordelia Salter, Mr. Carlo Cafiero and Mr. Paul MunroFaure also pointed out that academia support can help achieve the goals by promoting more evidence-based research approach, expanding geographical outreach and dissemination of existing knowledge through developing innovative tools, building capacities and jointly mobilizing funding resources.

What can be done together: Experts agreed that thematic issues covered by SO1 offer new possibilities to pursue research and teaching in multiple areas on nutrition and food security governance. In a wide ranging discussion, they elaborated on some of ways to expand academic support, including through establishing an inter-disciplinary work force for curriculum development using FAO knowledge products, co-grant led establishment of essential resource bases and research agendas and development of innovation methodologies. Such initiatives could also help in promoting uniform interpretations of the terms like ‘food security’ or ‘right to food’ within the academic community.

What are the challenges: Some of the key challenges as identified were the limited engagement of the academia with national policy-making processes, existing knowledge-gaps at regional levels in the areas of policy-setting and monitoring and lack of information on FAO projects and programmes at the country level. Experts felt that through improved information flow and participation, academia could assist in regional initiatives, establish mechanisms to mobilize data, local knowledge and lessons learnt and could update teaching courses by integrating multi-disciplinary dimensions. Further, FAO and academia must work together to improve donor awareness of funding needs to support multi-disciplinary projects.

Joint road map activities: To support regional capacities, FAO and academia must consider the following areas for the road map:

- identify additional resources to support activities and programmes at country level,
- improve the geographic diversity of partnerships and build capacities at local universities, develop networks and platforms to raise awareness at government levels for improving policies,
- link agendas to ensure that the knowledge gaps are filled and properly integrated in curricula,
- widen information dissemination by increasing the use of academic fora to address research topics and needs, and
- Joint development of food security map.



B. Partnerships for SO2: Increase and improve provision of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner

Ms. Ruth Charrondiere provided an overview of the context and rationale for SO2 and noted that sustainable nutritious food production through ‘more with less’ required innovations and systems approach that addressed agronomic, environmental, economic and social issues concomitantly. She described the major areas of work, regional initiatives, and provided examples of ongoing collaborations with academia partners and discussed the challenges in establishing dialogue among multiple partners, keeping knowledge updated and linking academic research, technologies and innovations with needs on the ground for operationalisation of SO2 at national levels. The SO2 team presentation was supported by Ms. Manuela Allara, Ms. Boitshepo Giyose, Ms. Magdalena Blum and Ms. Karin Nichterlien and Mr. Chikelu Mba and Mr. Kevin Helps.

What can be done together: The wide ranging discussion touched upon several aspects of SO2 and the challenges to implementing the proposed integrated approach at local country level. From the academic standpoint, the scope and coverage of SO2 provides a grand opportunity for analyses on tradeoffs, impacts, interfaces and linkages within sectors as well as in cross-cutting themes. However, there was a need for a shared vision for developing the ‘Systems’ approach. FAO-academia partnership should foster joint work to strengthen capacities, promote interdisciplinary studies and participatory technology transfer where knowledge and tools already exist. Academic input can enrich FAO’s thematic networks to develop socio-economic research programmes that promote de-intensification. New extension systems/models (i.e. innovation platforms/clusters) and triangulations have to be designed to strengthen multi-partner collaborations (South-South-North), for knowledge/ideas exchange to “produce better with less”, support scientific, evidence-based data and to bring about institutional change issues for

sustainable development. Furthermore, academia can play a pivotal role in influencing knowledge and vision of the future generations, those who will work in government and corporate sectors and bring in sustainable development approach into new generation thinking.

What are the challenges: Given the breadth of SO2, one of the main challenges is to increase dialogue and regular information exchanges between FAO and academia and practitioners to build a better understanding of the ongoing initiatives. Although multidisciplinary initiatives are underway, there is limited data and tools for large scale deployment. Mapping these projects at least at a regional level, could be a starting point. Extension systems are weak or non-existent in most countries and must be enhanced or recreated to support capacity building and create jobs in rural areas. Adequate mechanisms are also required to reach policy makers and donors at national and regional levels. The development of curriculum, training and certification programmes through licensed institutions should be based on local need. In its role as a broker and facilitator, FAO should provide technical guidelines and disseminate success stories in sustainability to build up knowledge and skills to ensure good practices are applied at local, national and regional levels.

Where much of the technologies or knowledge is already available, their wider diffusion and uptake by farmers remains a key challenge. Extension systems need to be thoroughly upgraded and re-established to realize SO2. On the other end there are still significant knowledge and technology gaps, especially in addressing methodological questions and measurements related to climate change or sustainable intensification. There is an urgent need for co-innovation and building multidisciplinary networks among research and knowledge institutions so that good practices can be spread around the globe. Strong political will is essential for successful implementation of economic, social and environmental policies and to nurture an enabling environment in the nations. Academia needs to participate in this process with all other stakeholders.

Joint road map activities: The participants recognized the issues related to sustainable livestock, fisheries or forestry production were not discussed due to lack of time. However, FAO should promote science-based dialogue for SO2 and provide the linkage between government and academia through use of academic clusters/platforms for capacity development and training, particularly of future policy makers. Specific areas for inputs a Road Map for SO2 collaborations include:

- support rebuilding extension services capacities in developing countries for knowledge dissemination and linking national research to extension systems, education and practice and developing new models linking extension and research,
- undertake joint scientific assessment, base line measurements, development of methodologies. Keep up intellectual discourse to continuously updated knowledge and share success and failure as a learning experience,
- engage youth by creating more interdisciplinary education opportunities, curricula that includes practice based, experiential training and new skill enhancements,
- develop policies to attract farming and agriculture as potential careers,
- design mechanisms for engaging academia at local government level,
- support formation of panels to review existing agricultural policies to promote innovative cluster systems to bring together government, farmers and industry.



C. Partnerships for SO3: Reduce rural poverty

Ms. Susan Kaaria, of the SO3 team gave a presentation outlining facts on rural poverty and the work being undertaken through SO3 in overcoming the challenges facing rural populations through empowerment by access to services, employment and social protection. She noted that social protection is a new area of work in FAO and there was a huge need for support from academia and research community. SO3 team members Ms. Carol Djeddah, Mr. Salomon Salcedo, Ms. Samia Metwally and Ms. Katinka DeBalogh provided examples of specific activities such as development of tools and methodologies to support evidence-based strategies, strengthening linkages between research and policy design, conducting research to build on lessons learnt and evaluation with local stakeholders, monitoring current activities and trends at country level, and advancing gender issues.

What can be done together: The group agreed that FAO and academia can best work together on the SO3 priorities through an inclusive process, by enhancing academia's inclusion in research and related activities from the planning phase. Academia could agree to conduct the targeted research as per SO3 priorities but advised that research themes and skill needs from universities should be as specific as possible. University departments could act as 'hubs' and knowledge centres for focus countries. Developing study programmes, internships, pilot projects and joint communications (newsletters, journals, publications) must be considered to raise visibility and for expanding engagement with academic and research community and improve coordination between research and needs on the ground, and make research findings more accessible at all levels.

What are the challenges: Poverty is multi-dimensional and requires a trans-disciplinary approach for linking nutrition and diets to income generation and employment; demand-driven, evidence-based research is crucial to support informed policy-making to reduce rural poverty, improve nutrition of diets, address areas of conflict and ensure gender-empowerment for household decision-making. To ensure that this relevant, demand-driven research is undertaken, FAO and academia must work together to garner institutional support for the establishment of resources (*i.e.*, financial and human) and identify the on-the-ground needs and gaps of information to shape the research agenda.

Joint road map activities:

Providing opportunities of capacity building and knowledge transfer through

- curriculum development to improve social and productive policies,
- creation of social sciences Ph.D. programmes in Africa,
- holding national and regional meetings to exchange lessons learnt,
- linking academia to regional and smallholder initiatives,
- using triangular knowledge networks (FAO regional offices, local and research universities).

Advocacy activities promoting uptake on research should be undertaken by

- reframing research with a gender focus to create mechanisms to strengthen women's role in management, value chains, social protection, resilience and vulnerability,
- Showcasing poverty reduction results to governments.

Utilization of Networks

- partner organizations for evidence-based strategies,
- for identification of regional resources, work themes, as a means to reach policymakers/governments.



D. Partnerships for SO4: Enable more inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems

As food and agricultural systems are undergoing changes around the world, FAO focuses its attention and work through SO4 to make agricultural systems inclusive and operate in a safe and sustainable manner. Ms. Pilar Santacoloma gave an overview of SO4, its major areas of work and regional initiatives that focus on assisting governments for enhancing policy making, capacity development and for developing effective strategies that support smallholders in sustainable agro-industry and food systems. SO4 team members Ms. Marlo Rankin and Mr. Guenter Hemrich identified several knowledge needs for strengthening SO4 work themes including through evidence-based research, raising-awareness, mapping, strengthening good practices for creating market incentives in agri-food systems and supporting global initiatives on food loss and waste among others. A strong emphasis is required on development and use of norms and standards at the global and national level.

What can be done together: The participants covered several themes including promotion of small scale agribusiness, creation of evidence-based information platforms for research, use of ‘value chain incubators’, and mobilization of resources. There is a need to make reliable and readily available knowledge on market information, prices, quality data, etc. and FAO should work closely with academia to support this. Development of capacities within governments for agribusiness is essential and must be facilitated through partnerships with associations and platforms as well as through sharing experiences and best practices. Agricultural graduates may be encouraged to take up farming by providing some incentives by the governments through programmes like special subsidies for farm equipment and irrigation equipment. The issues around public–private partnership models, transparency, and return of investment, market, tradeoffs and economic development were discussed. Open dialogue to strengthen critical thinking and influencing research agenda linking them to rural poverty issues under SO4 is needed with more weight to be given to geographical areas based on need.

What are the challenges: The experts agreed that in the fast changing global environments, academia needs to move away from ‘silos of knowledge’ to a holistic multi-disciplinary perspective that covers local contexts and issues. Despite advances, there is a lack of international standards for supporting value chain/agribusiness and that FAO and academia should work with national organizations and the private sector to encourage governments for adoption of standard setting practices. Together with capacity building, lobbying–power is needed to influence government policies and standards in support of small holders and for creating enabling environments. Resources and new promotions are necessary to develop knowledge incubators for viable business opportunities.

Joint road map activities:

- mapping of existing platforms relevant to SO4 initiatives, identify initiatives that support agribusiness incubators, identify in-country initiatives to promote value chain development,

- developing and setting research agenda on SO4 topics (food need evolution, agriculture production, need for cross-fertilization of disciplines),
- advocacy - use of innovation platforms at international level, forums bringing together science, sociology and policy developers; maximize role of FAO to lobby governments for evidence-based policy changes,
- youth engagement: fellowships, training, student work in the field,
- promoting curriculum for Participatory Agricultural Management Programmes.



E. Partnerships for SO5: Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises

Resilience is the first - and sometimes the only - line of defense for vulnerable smallholders when threats become crises, such as when natural hazards (e.g. hurricanes, droughts, locust infestations) overwhelm a society's capacities to cope, transforming the threat into disaster. Mr. Neil Marsland described that the scope of work under SO5 is to support resilient livelihoods systems that can withstand threats or adapt to new pathways in times of crisis. He described how resilience requires a multi-disciplinary approach to bring together risk reduction and crisis management across all sectors. SO5 team members Mr. Luca Russo, Ms. Martina Caruso and Ms. Lavinia Antonaci identified potential areas of collaboration with the academia, including joint research, developing warning systems, lateral regional capacity building activities, use of youth knowledge and expertise, and curricula development. The SO5 team further discussed the need for in-depth research and linkage of research in the developing world.

What can be done together: The experts elaborated on resilience building themes for research and education and identified areas including development early warning systems, use of models and mapping relating to animal disease assessments, One Health, epidemic geographic models (Asia to Africa), existing institutional expertise, action plans, market resilience, programmes for conflict and reconstruction, delivery mechanisms (logistics), corporate monitoring for a cross-cutting approach, environmental impact, and climate impact on disaster. Many countries do not have the requisite institutional knowledge and expertise to collect proper data and focus should be given to institutional and regional development in a three-part framework: research, teaching and capacity building.

What are the challenges: Continuing challenges include policy setting and development of a framework for an interdisciplinary, systematic approach to emergency responses. There is also a limited research being carried out on 'resilience'. There is an absence of a strong curriculum on resilience and related issues. While funding for emergency measures is available, there are hardly any resources for developing capacities for a long term disaster and risk management. There are several areas where academia could provide direction to strengthen resilience in particular in those countries which frequently face emergency situations due to natural or manmade calamities.

Joint road map activities:

- mapping of institutional expertise capacities for use of experts, fellowships, faculty sabbaticals, students in the field, risk management institutions, networks of universities with relevant expertise for proactive response plans,

- development of Ph.D. resilience programmes: Creation of courses and curricula on understanding the socio-economic dimensions of resilience, technical topics, risk management and conflict management,
- development of a platform for resilience alliance for food and livelihood,
- capacity building using technically advanced academia for support in the field and common framework on resilience, response plans,
- advocacy; supporting governments for evidence-based policy development and emergency response mechanisms.

V. Final Plenary Session

The options and opportunities for developing a road map presented by the SO teams in the plenary led to the discussion for developing a broad framework of academic coalition that would share the intellectual capital to respond to global needs for eliminating hunger. Experts recognized that it was clear that for the academia mere teaching was not enough, rather the triple actions of teaching, research and extension through community services have to be reinforced simultaneously to ensure increased food production, resource conservation and social-ecological well-being.

The teaching landscape itself needs to be better integrated with the fast pace of technological advances. Furthermore, a more participatory approach in academic exchanges and capacity development is needed to increase engagement and shape the intellectual discourse on the future of food. Farmers, rural workers, local indigenous groups and community leaders should participate in innovation. Academia must strive to build the bridge for private-sector led initiatives where universities are already working together both in north-south and south-south initiatives.

Academia needs effective avenues to better engage with the ongoing international policy-making processes linked to food and agriculture sector. This could be due to a lack of interest from academia or communication between different fora. They should better utilize existing academia platforms, such as GFAR, GCHERA and RUFORUM, to lobby at the international and regional level on pertinent issues. Several regional networks have also been established to provide coordinating roles. FAO should support this process.

There is an immense need for capacity development on the ground through use of innovations and strategic country level interventions. Academia must design environments conducive to higher learning and critical thinking through knowledge incubators, including fora for open dialogue to strengthen critical thinking. FAO should promote South-South-North triangulation and use existing platforms to motivate youth and mobilize resources for research, expertise, technology. Participation is the key.

The gap between research agenda and research needs must be overcome. Closer links between research, education and extension are vital for a proper application of research results. At the same time, existing outputs of research must be better applied. Where academia has developed a repertoire of tools and techniques which can be of direct benefit to the farming community, FAO could facilitate uptake by increasing engagement of local academia. Existing platforms and networks for research must be utilized in a more integrated holistic manner. An example is the CIRAD facilitated platform in partnership for research and training in developing countries.

A particularly strong plea is for expanding opportunities for youth engagement - particularly in rural areas. More investment, peer-to-peer learning opportunities, incentives for innovations,

scholarships and internships at local institutions should be expanded to address food security and related issues. A more inclusive approach is necessary to make a substantial impact at ground level.

Access to resources is very important. Much of academia works within the confines high performance pressure and limited budget that restricts wider collaboration and inter disciplinary interactions. FAO and other partners should support academia, especially those from developing countries through resource mobilization for expanding contribution to SO.

The open consultative process initiated by FAO should be expanded and continued on a regular basis for raising awareness and expanding partnerships. More consultations at the regional and local level are needed to identify academia partnership opportunities within the specific regional initiatives of FAO's strategic program of work. Mapping of the ongoing programmes can help pinpoint natural partnership opportunities at country level.

VI. Summary of Recommendations for FAO

The experts called upon FAO and developmental partners to engage more with the academic sector. Academia is particularly keen to open new opportunities for students to build a strong next generation of agriculture practitioners. They gave a number of recommendations of FAO actions as summarized below:

- The Strategy provides a good framework to institutionalize collective efforts. FAO should keep it updated with a focus on strategic alliances; keep the road map under review to identify and develop opportunities and deepen partnerships,
- Regular consultations should be undertaken at the regional level to identify gaps and match to academic resources to support the implementation of SO and their regional initiatives. A joint map is required to identify the knowledge gaps and match them to existing available academic resources,
- Strong communications must be maintained with the academia. More outreach and advocacy at the local level will promote engagement of academia on the ground,
- FAO should work with member governments to shape research agenda to support the SO and address the challenging issues of hunger and poverty. FAO should take advantage of the existing hubs, networks and initiatives of the academia and research community for this and for the promotion and dissemination of knowledge and expertise,
- Resources are essential for expanding the role of academia to increase participation. FAO should actively promote resource mobilization to support academic engagement in intergovernmental processes and in FAO projects and programmes,
- FAO should provide an open space for dialogue and work together to create a venue in which FAO and academia can provide long-term critical thinking and foresight on agriculture food systems. Simple propositions such as exchange of staff and sabbaticals should be encouraged,
- FAO should work with Centers of Excellence, align them to SO-led initiatives to close the knowledge gaps, exchange latest information and innovations, build capacities and demonstrate transformative approaches. Ph.D. students could be linked to provide various analyses, market information, quality data based on academia research,
- FAO can better support academia's role in food security by promoting South-South-North academic exchanges, supporting regional meetings, promoting fellowships, sharing lessons learnt and latest policy information,
- Academic curriculum for food sector needs to be updated. FAO expertise should be utilized for academia curriculum development, particularly for promoting practical, multidisciplinary approaches to food and agriculture topics,

- Academia and FAO need to contribute to agriculture a profession more attractive to youth. FAO and academia should develop innovation clusters, including incubators to support local knowledge, sensitizing youth through joint FAO-academia programmes.

VII. Conclusion and Next Steps

In his closing remarks Mr. Rolf Hackbart, Deputy Director, OPC, thanked the experts for their time and dedication to the consultation. He reiterated that partnership, particularly with academia, is crucial for the success of enabling the livelihoods of the disadvantaged populations. He reiterated to all that academic input is essential for opening the minds of governments and is catalytic to the support of local projects. Mr. Casteñeda also thanked the experts and noted that this Consultation is an important step towards broader information sharing process and interaction between partners. Bold steps are required to address the enormous challenges ahead.

The experts thanked FAO for reaching out to the academia and for the inclusive process of developing the strategy and a road map. All acknowledged academia's important role in food security and welcomed the opportunity to participate in the consultation as a way of sharing knowledge and resources to serve the cause of eliminating hunger.

Annex 1

Strengthening FAO–Academia Partnerships Expert Consultation 5-6 June 2014 FAO Headquarters, Rome, Agenda

Day 1: German Room C229

Time	Session I – Setting the Scene	Lead
08:30-09:00	Registration	
09:00- 09:30	Welcome and Opening remarks	D.Gustafson, DDO M. Villarreal, Director, OPC
09:30-10:00	Role of academia in food security and development	W. Belik, University of Campinas, Brazil
10:00-10:30	FAO-Academia partnership strategy: Opportunities and Challenges	C.Mielitz, K.Ghosh, OPCP
10:30-11:00	Coffee break	
Time	Session II - Leveraging Academic Knowledge	Lead
11:00-13:00	Working Group A: Eliminating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition Venue: German Room (C229)	FAO Strategic Objective 1 Team Members
	Working Group B: Enabling more inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems Venue: Philippines Room (C223)	FAO Strategic Objective 4 Team Members
13:00-14:15	Lunch	
14:15-15:45	Working Group A: Reducing rural poverty Venue: German Room (C229)	FAO Strategic Objective 3 Team Members
	Working Group B: Increasing resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises Venue: Philippines Room (C223)	FAO Strategic Objective 5 Team Members

Time	Session III: Knowledge for Action	Lead
09:00-09:30	FARA and its role on capacity development in Africa	Irene Annor-Frempong, Director, Capacity Development, FARA
09:30-10:30	Roadmap for FAO-Academia partnerships Working Group presentations and discussion	R. Castañeda, Chief, OPCP SO1 and SO3 Teams
10:30-11:00	Coffee break	
11:00-12:30	Working Group presentations and discussion	SO2, SO4, SO5 Teams
12:30- 13:00	General Discussion and Next Steps	C. Mielitz, OPCP
13:00 13:15	Closing remarks	M.H Semedo, DDN

Annex 2

<p>STRENGTHENING FAO-ACADEMIA PARTNERSHIPS EXPERT CONSULTATION Provisional Participant List 5-6 June, 2014</p>
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Ms. Irene ANNOR-FREMPONG
Forum for Agricultural in Africa
FARA Secretariat
PMB CT 173 Cantonments
Accra, Ghana
Email: ifrempong@fara-africa.org
Tel: 233 302 772823

Mr. Walter BELIK
University of Campinas
Campus Universitário Zeferino Vaz
Barão Geraldo, Campinas
Sao Paulo, 13083-970, Brazil
Email: belik@eco.unicamp.br
Tel: 55 19 3521 2121

Mr. Elsiddig A. E. ELSEIKH
University of Khartoum
Gamma Ave
Khartoum 11111, Sudan
Email: shayatti@uofk.edu
Tel: 249183772601

Ms. Isabel GUTIÉRREZ-MONTES
CATIE 7170, Sede Central
Cartago, Turrialba, Costa Rica
Email: igutie@catie.ac.cr
Tel: 506 558 2639

Mr. Mark HOLDERNESS
Global Forum on Agricultural Research
Viale dell Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy
Email: mark.holderness@fao.org
Tel: 39 0657053989

Ms. Nahla HOUALLA
American University of Beirut
P.O. Box 11-0236, Riad El Solh
Beirut 1107-2020, Lebanon
Email: nahla@aub.edu.lb
Tel: 961 1 343002

Mr. Timothy JOHNS
McGill University
845 Rue Sherbrooke Ouest
Montréal, QC H3A 0G4, Canada
Email: tim.johns@mcgill.ca

Tel: 514 398 7847
Ms. Gerdien MEIJERINK
Wageningen University
Droevendaalsesteeg 4, 6708 PB
Wageningen, The Netherlands
Email: gerdien.meijerink@wur.nl
Tel: 30653935022

Ms. Debra OLSON
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455
United States of America
Email: Olson002@umn.edu
Tel: 1 612 625 0476

Mr. Jacques PAGES
French Permanent Representation to FAO
Corso del Rinascimento, 52
00186 Rome, Italy
Email: Jacques.pages@cirad.fr
Tel: 33 4 67 61 75 21

Mr. Enrico PORCEDDU
University of Tuscia, Viterbo
Via San Camillo de Lellis,
01100 Viterbo, Italy
Email: porceddu@unitus.it
Tel: 39 0761 3571

Mr. Fabrice RENAUD
United Nations University
5-53-70 Jingumae, Shibuya,
Tokyo 150-8925, Japan
Email: renaud@ehs.unu.edu
Tel: 62 21 5255179

Mr. T.V. SATYANARAYANA
Acharya N G Ranga Agricultural University
Rajendra Nagar, Hyderabad
Andhra Pradesh 500030, India
Email: tvsatyanarayana@hotmail.com
Tel: 8008943336

Mr. David SHAW
Mississippi State University
Mississippi State, MS 39762
United States of America
Email: dshaw@research.msstate.edu
Tel: 662 325 3570

Mr. Bendantunguka TIISEKWA
Sokoine University of Agriculture
P.O. Box 3000, Chuo Kikuu,
Morogoro, Tanzania
Email: tiisekwa@suanet.ac.tz
Tel: 255 23260 4649

Mr. Tong YAN-AN
Northwest A&F University
No.3 Taicheng Road, Yangling,
Shaanxi, 712100, China
Email: tongyanan@nwsuaf.edu.cn
Tel: 86 0 29 87081213

Ms. Renata YANBYKH
All-Russian Institute of Agrarian Problems and
Informatics
342 POB, 21 B.Kharitoniyevesky Lane,
Moscow, 103064, Russia
Email: Yanbykh@mail.ru
Tel: 79165974813

FAO Strategic Objectives Team Participants

Mr. Mark SMULDERS
Senior Economist, Agricultural Development
Economics Division
Economic and Social Development Department
Email: Mark.Smulders@fao.org

Mr. Paul MUNRO FAURE
Deputy Director, Climate, Energy and Tenure
Division
Natural Resources Department
Email: Paul.MunroFaure@fao.org

Mr. Carlo CAFIERO
Project Manager, Statistics Division
Economic and Social Development Department
Email: Carlo.Cafiero@fao.org

Ms. Cordelia SALTER
Communications Coordinator
Committee on World Food Security
Email: Cordelia.Salter@fao.org

Ms. Ruth CHARRONDIERE
Nutrition Officer, Nutrition Division
Economic and Social Development Department
Email: Ruth.Carrondiere@fao.org

Ms. Magdalena BLUM
Agricultural Training, Natural Resources Research
Division
Natural Resources Department
Email: Magdalena.Blum@fao.org
Tel: 39 06 570 56098

Ms. Samia METWALLY
Senior Animal Health Officer, Animal Health
Division
Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department
Email: Samia.Metwally@fao.org

Ms. Karin NICTERLEIN
Agricultural Research Officer, Natural Resources
Research Division
Natural Resources Department
Email: Karin.Nichterlein@fao.org

Ms. Katinka DEBALOGH
Senior Officer, Animal Production and Health
Division
Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department
Email: Katinka.DeBalogh@fao.org

Mr. Salomon SALCEDO
Senior Strategy and Planning Officer

Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources
Management
Email: Salomon.Salcedo@fao.org
Ms. Susan KAARIA
Senior Officer, Social Protection Division
Economic and Social Development Department
Email: Susan.Kaaria@fao.org

Mr. Harry JOHNSTONE
Programme Coordinator, Social Protection
Division
Economic and Social Development Department
Email: Harry.Johnstone@fao.org

Ms. Pilar SANTACOLOMA
Agribusiness Economist, Rural Infrastructure and
Agro-Industries Division
Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department
Email: Pilar.Santacoloma@fao.org

Ms. Eva GALVEZNOGALES
Agribusiness Economist, Agribusiness Officer,
Rural Infrastructure and Agro-Industries Division
Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department
Email: Eva.GalvezNogales@fao.org

Ms. Marlo RANKIN
Agribusiness Officer, Rural Infrastructure and
Agro-Industries Division
Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department
Email: Marlo.Rankin@fao.org

Mr. Neil MARS LAND
Senior Technical Officer, Emergency and
Rehabilitation Division
Technical Cooperation Department
Email: Neil.Marsland@fao.org

Mr. Guenter HEMRICH
Senior Strategy and Planning
Office of Strategy, Planning
Email: Guenter.Hemrich@fao.org

Mr. Luca RUSSO
Programme Coordinator, Agricultural
Development Economics Division
Economic and Social Development Department
Email: Luca.Russo@fao.org

Mr. Chikelu MBA
Agricultural Officer
Plant Production and Protection Division
Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department
Email: Chikelu.Mba@fao.org

Mr. Kevin HELPS
Senior Officer
Plant Production and Protection Division
Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department
Email: Kevin.Helps@fao.org

Ms. Manuela ALLARA
Programme Specialist
Plant Production and Protection Division
Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department
Email: Manuela.Allara@fao.org

Mr. Jaff KAYAN
Senior Policy Officer
FAO Regional Office Near East
Email: Jaff.Kayan@fao.org

Ms. Ginna GEAL
Partnership Officer
FAO Regional Office, Asia & the Pacific
Email: Ginna.Geal@fao.org

Office of Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development, Partnerships Division (OPC)

Mr. Rodrigo CASTAÑEDA
Chief, Partnerships Unit (OPCP)
OPC, FAO
Email: Rodrigo.Castaneda@fao.org

Ms. Kakoli GHOSH
Coordinator, Academia Partnerships
OPCP
Email: Kakoli.Ghosh@fao.org

Mr. Franz MARTIN
Partnership Officer, Academia,
OPCP
Email: Franz.Martin@fao.org

Ms. Rosana FRATTINI
Partnership Officer, Academia,
OPCP
Email: Rosana.Frattini@fao.org

Mr. Yon FERNANDEZLARRINOA
Advocacy Officer,
OPCA
Email: Yon.FernandezLarrinoa@fao.org

Mr. Carlos G.A.M. NETTO
Consultant,
Professor, Faculty of Economics
UFRGS, Brazil
Email: mielitz@ufrgs.br

Ms. Vanessa PASSAFARO
Consultant, Academia, OPCP
Email: Vanessa.Passafaro@fao.org

Ms. Joelle KIMENGA
Junior Consultant, Academia, OPCP
Email: Joelle.Kimenga@fao.org

Ms. Sally DICKINSON
Clerk, OPCP
Email: Sally.Dickinson@fao.org

