



REGIONAL PRIORITY FRAMEWORK FOR THE NEAR EAST

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FAO Regional Office for the Near East

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FOREWORD

FAO has gone through some important changes in the past few years, aimed at making FAO's work more effective in implementing its Global Strategic Framework for 2010-2019. Based on the recommendations of the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) in 2007, the roles of the FAO Regional Offices have been renewed, with greater delegation of authority and decision making roles. The Regional Offices have now assumed first-line responsibility and accountability for the development of strategies and programmes in their regions. The Regional Offices have also been given full responsibility for guidance to the Organization on the major food and agricultural issues and concerns in the region, and identifying regional programmes and priorities. The IEE has further called for a structured and consultative process and development of regional areas of priority actions, and identified the Regional Conference as a venue for consultation with member countries.

In accordance with the above developments, the FAO Regional Office for the Near East (RNE) has initiated, since early 2009, a process of formulating a Regional Priority Framework (RPF) for the Near East, with the aim of translating the FAO Strategic Framework 2010-2019 into regional priority areas and actions capturing the priority needs of the countries in the Region. To deal more effectively with priority and emerging issues, which have increasingly become more complex and require an increasingly multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approach, the present RPF emphasizes broad priority areas, moving away from a narrow focus on specific disciplines. This allows for better alignment of regional priorities with FAO's Global Strategic Framework 2010-19, conforming at the same time with the Organization's new integrated results-based approach. Indeed, as presented in Annex 2, almost all regional priority areas are in tandem with FAO's Global Strategic Objectives and corresponding Organizational Results (ORs).

The RPF was formulated in a participatory manner. First, a set of priorities was identified via internal consultations involving all RNE professional staff and country priority notes analyzing opportunities and challenges in agriculture, food security and rural development, prepared in 2009 through consultative processes at the country level. Building on these and the recommendations of the recent sessions of the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC) and regional technical commissions; as well as lessons learned from recent and current FAO operations in the Region led to the formulation of regional priorities. The identified regional priorities have been debated and thoroughly reviewed at a regional consultation meeting held in Cairo during 4 – 8 October 2010, in which 12 countries participated.

After the identification of priorities, a mapping exercise was conducted to identify how regional priorities could best be matched with FAO's Global Strategic Objectives and Organizational Results, with the aim of ensuring practical integration of regional priorities within FAO's existing corporate work planning and resource allocation mechanisms.

The RPF has been endorsed by the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East in its 30th Session organised in Khartoum during 4 - 8 December 2010.

In its implementation, the RPF will be translated into pragmatic and operational action plans contributing to the FAO strategic results hierarchy through the formulation of Regional Results, to be reflected in the Regional/Sub-regional Programme of Work and

Budget starting in 2012. The RPF will inform Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) and the FAO Country Workplans.

In short, the RPF is a road map aimed at maximizing RNE's contribution to FAO's strategic global goals in accordance with its available resources in the next decade. Further work is required to translate the broad framework into a detailed action plan to identify more specific regional and/or country based actions.

The RPF shall be revised each biennium to reflect new developments arising from country programmes, from the changes in the overall FAO Strategic Priorities or at the request of the member countries. The RPF will be used as a dialogue and advocacy tool to strengthen the collaboration with major regional organizations, and will serve as a platform to establish partnerships.

I strongly believe that the RPF will be an important base to address the many challenges in the region, an important road map providing guidance to strategies that will help the countries in the region overcome its challenges and ensure a sustainable development for the future.

This RPF would not have been completed without the valuable contributions of many individuals both within and outside of FAO. I wish to express, on behalf of the FAO Regional Office my sincere gratitude and thanks to all those who contributed and assisted in the formulation of this important document.

Saad Al-Otaibi



Assistant Director-General and
Regional Representative

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFMANENA	Association of Agricultural Research Institution in the Near East and North Africa
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AOAD	Arab Organization for Agricultural Development
CA	Conservation Agriculture
CARDNE	Regional Center on Agric.- Agrarian Reform and Rural Development for the Near East
CC	Climatic Change
CCRF	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CPF	Country Programming Frameworks
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DEA	Dietary Energy Availability
DES	Dietary energy Supply
DO	Decentralized Office
EU	European Union
FAOR	FAO Representation
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
IEE	Independent External Evaluation
LAS	League of Arab States
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NENARACA	Near East and North Africa Regional Agricultural Credit Association
NENARNAP	Near East and North Africa Regional Network for Agricultural Policies
NERAKIN-RAIS	Near East and North Africa Rural &Agricultural Knowledge and Information Network
NERC	Regional Conference for the Near East
NGO	Non Governmental Organizations
NWFP	Non Wood Forest Products
OIC	Organization for Islamic Countries
ORs	Organizational Results
R&D	Research and Development
RECOFI	The Regional Commissions for Fisheries
RNE	Regional Office for the Near East
RPF	Regional Priority Framework for the Near East
SESRTIC	Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries
SNE	Sub-regional Office for North Africa
SNG	Sub-regional Office for Gulf Countries
SNO	Sub-regional Office for the Oriental Near East
TCP	Technical Cooperation Project
TCSR	Resource Mobilization &Operation Support Service
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
WFS	World Food Summit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Setting

The vision and global goals of eliminating hunger, malnutrition and poverty have been given renewed impetus in the FAO Strategic Framework 2010 - 2019. The Framework calls for new direction of efforts towards enhanced food production, rural development, sustainable livelihood and efficient management of natural resources. Nowhere in the world is this more urgently needed than in the Near East region where a diverse set of old and emerging challenges have multiplied the risk of instability in food supply along with degradation of the environment spurred by unawareness of the likely impact of climate change in the intermediate and long run.

The Near East region comprises 18 countries¹ that have a common cultural heritage but are vastly different, in terms of their levels of development as well as their resource endowments, and their agriculture and food production potentials. The Region has extremes of wealth and poverty measured on the basis of per capita income. However, all countries face a common set of problems and challenges that are threatening their development prospects. These include the dwindling water and agricultural land resources, structural imbalance between food needs and food production, increasing difficulties in balancing employment and income generation against a growing population, declining investment in the rural sector, increasing threats from environmental degradation, natural and human-induced disasters including conflicts, as well as a looming Climate Change threat.

The FAO Regional Office for the Near East (RNE) has initiated, since early 2009, a process of formulating a Regional Priority Framework (RPF) for the Near East. The main purpose of the RPF is to translate the FAO Strategic Framework 2010 - 2019 into regional priority areas and actions for achieving Members' Goals and Strategic Objectives in the Region capturing the priority needs of these countries that can be met with FAO assistance. The RPF is also intended to support the establishment of a strong platform of partnership with governments, regional organizations, civil society, UN agencies and donors active in the Region to jointly address the challenges identified and help countries in achieving tangible results in pursuit of their goals of eradicating hunger and promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development.

The present document builds on i) country priority notes analyzing opportunities and challenges in agriculture, food security and rural development, prepared in 2009 through consultative processes at the country level; ii) recommendations of the recent sessions of the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC) and regional technical commissions; and iii) lessons learned from recent and current FAO operations in the Region. The identified regional priorities have been debated and thoroughly reviewed at a regional consultation meeting held in Cairo during 4 - 8 October 2010, in which 12 countries participated. A summary of priority actions discussed during RPF Consultative meeting, organized by subregions, is presented in Annex I.

The Vision and Regional Priority Areas

Consistent with the FAO global vision, the vision of the Regional RPF for the Near East is to achieve a food-secure Near East Region while ensuring sustainable natural resource management. The FAO mission in the Region is to reduce food insecurity, malnutrition and rural poverty for present and future generation by assisting Members to secure sustainable

¹ The region is composed of 18 countries in three sub-regions namely: North Africa (Maghreb) with Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia; Oriental Near East (Mashreq) with Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria; and the Gulf States and Yemen (GCC) with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, UAE, Qatar, Oman and Yemen.

increases in food availability, develop policy and regulatory frameworks in agriculture, fisheries and forestry, protect and enhance natural resources and promote knowledge generations and institutional capacity development. The FAO Regional Office (RNE) will assume a leadership role in coordinating the implementation of the RPF and its monitoring. To this end, RNE will work closely with the FAO subregional and country offices in the Region as well as the FAO technical divisions in Rome and, as appropriate, with partners from governments, civil society and private sector in the region, the UN system and the donor community. The following five priority areas have been identified jointly by the 18 member countries of the Region as targets on which FAO assistance need to be focused in 2010 - 2019.

A. Enhancing food security and nutrition. With a limited and fragile natural resource base, high population growth and an increasing demand for food, the Near East Region is structurally unable to feed itself. In addition, both the prevalence of high poverty rates in some countries and inadequate food consumption patterns are major causes of food insecurity and malnutrition. The Region has wealthy but food-deficit countries as well as poor countries with higher levels of food production, which make the food security challenges of this region somewhat unique. The key objectives of this priority area are to achieve reduction of hunger and malnutrition in the Region in line with the targets of the World Food Summit (WFS) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through support of regional and national food security initiatives. The primary tools to be used include the analysis of the vulnerability for food insecurity, improved means of information gathering and dissemination, including improved and reliable agricultural statistics, assistance to member countries in strengthening capacities in formulating strategies, policies and implementation plans for reducing food insecurity and unemployment, ensuring market stability through market-based risk management measures, and promoting inter-regional collaboration on matters of common interest. Expected results include improved policies and strategies for sustainable crop and animal production, intensification and diversification at national and regional levels, strengthened capacities to formulate and implement coherent policies and programmes that address the root causes of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, and improved capacity of member countries to address specific nutrition concerns.

B. Fostering agricultural production and rural development for improved livelihoods. Agriculture can play a significant role in alleviating food insecurity, rural poverty and unemployment as demonstrated in many countries of the Region. In Iran, Egypt, Morocco and Algeria, for example, the agricultural sector has created nearly one fifth to one half of the new jobs in recent years. Agriculture remains a critical element in the livelihood of the rural population and people in less developed areas. Many parts of the Region have extremely promising potentials for raising production of high value food products, including horticulture, olive oil and fish products for which there is an emerging market, both internal and external.

The key objectives of this priority area are to increase agricultural output and productivity by relying on efficient methods and techniques of food production in areas of comparative advantage and competitiveness, ensure diversification in income generating activities for smallholders, improve market access and promote value addition in the agriculture-food chain, with a view to maximize agriculture's contribution to poverty reduction. The primary tools will be the promotion of new technology and technical assistance for capacity development in primary production and secondary value addition and other agribusiness areas. Expected results include enhanced access to food, social settlement and

improved livelihoods for the rural population, and strengthened institutional and technical capacity for countries to (i) analyse developments in international agricultural markets, trade policies and trade rules; (ii) increase awareness and capacity to identify trade opportunities and to formulate appropriate and effective pro-poor trade policies and strategies; (iii) formulate gender-sensitive, inclusive and participatory policies in agriculture and rural development; and (iv) develop national and regional policies, regulations and institutions to enhance the developmental and poverty reduction impacts of agribusiness and agro-industries.

- C. Sustainable natural resources management.** The Region's critical shortage of water and cultivable land, including the pressure on these resources and their degradation make their efficient management a paramount task. Appropriate management of demand could orient water and land to their best use between crop, livestock, fisheries and forestry. A holistic approach to water and resource management is the first step in addressing the challenges the Region is facing and to identify working solutions. Livestock and fisheries are particularly important food resources in many countries of the Region, which makes preservation and sustainable management of rangelands and marine ecosystems resources an important priority. In several countries, forestry, although limited, plays an important role in the preservation of the natural environment and the mitigation of climate change impacts. Increasing efficiency of water and land use through new technologies could expand production as well as increase the use of these resources for food and poverty alleviation. Opportunities for water harvesting, reutilization of waste water, and enhancement of rangeland have great potential in many countries of the Region. It will be necessary in this regard to promote the engagement and participation of all stakeholders in planning and managing water, land and genetic resources in addition to promoting regional cooperation on trans-boundary water management. The key objectives of this priority area are to ensure availability of quality water and other natural resources to support agriculture and food security for today and the future, extend know-how on resource saving technologies to stakeholders, and to conserving genetic resources and biodiversity. Expected results include regional assessment and monitoring, improved natural resources management, effective approaches to biodiversity protection including establishing partnerships, and enhanced stakeholder participation in the sustainable management of scarce natural resources.
- D. Responding to climate change impacts and developing adaptation strategies.** Climate change is likely to affect agriculture and food security in the Region primarily through changes in temperature, precipitation, extreme climatic events and sea level. These may result in such adverse effects as further deterioration of water scarcity, land degradation, crop failures, loss of rangeland and other vegetation covers, livestock deaths, and fisheries production and quality decline. Governments, public institutions and farmers, particularly the poor producers, need to be supported in their efforts to adapt to climate change. The key objectives of this priority area include improving national and regional capacities to cope with adverse impacts of climate change. The primary tools will be assistance to member countries in policy advice; technical assistance; capacity building; and advocacy for change. Expected results include strengthened policy capacities and improved human and institutional capacities for climate change adaptation.
- E. Preparedness for, and response to, food and agriculture emergencies.** The Region is prone to many types of disasters, both natural and human-induced that add to the chronic poverty and hunger particularly among those with limited coping capacity. A few

countries in the Region, such as Iran, Iraq, Syria and Algeria are quite advanced in adopting proactive steps towards disaster management but others need to speed up efforts in this direction. Improving national capacity to respond to food and agricultural threats and emergencies must become an integral component of the hunger and poverty alleviation efforts of all countries in the Region. The key objectives of this priority are to facilitate a shift in emphasis from purely emergency response towards the more broad-based preparedness for early detection, prevention and response followed by linking up relief and rehabilitation to development for mitigating long-term impact. This is vital on the face of recurrent unanticipated supply shocks caused by natural phenomenon like drought and disease and human-induced phenomenon such as sudden supply and demand shifts that create market failures. The primary tools are efficient information systems, advocacy and technical assistance, collaboration and partnership on regional mechanisms, and regional networking and capacity building. Expected results include well formulated plans and better prepared institutions to deal with agricultural threats and emergencies.

Besides the regional priority areas, the RPF has identified cross-cutting themes, including rural development, knowledge generation and sharing, gender equity, and regional cooperation, which will be promoted as supportive actions to achieve the regional results.

Implementation of the RPF

Within the above regional priorities, the Regional Office for the Near East and the FAO networks in the Region will contribute to Organizational Results (ORs) and Strategic Objectives articulated in the FAO Strategic Framework, following the results-based approach. The FAO Core Functions that will be primarily used include: (a) monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives; (b) assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics; (c) development of international instruments, norms and standards; (d) policy and strategy options and advice; (e) technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity; (f) advocacy and communication; (g) inter-disciplinarity and innovation; (h) partnerships and alliances. Implementation will be facilitated by establishing thematic taskforces around three core areas: (a) agricultural and food systems; (b) economic, social and policy assistance; and (c) natural resources and climate change. Following the endorsement of Member countries, the RPF is to be translated into operational action plans contributing to the FAO strategic results hierarchy, to be reflected in the Regional/Sub-regional Programme of Work and Budget, starting in 2012. The RPF will also inform the Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) and the FAO Country Workplans. Starting in 2012, regular monitoring will identify achievements, success factors, obstacles, lessons learnt and actions required to improve the performance of the programmes, in line with the results-based monitoring and reporting systems currently being developed and deployed by the Organization.

The FAO capacities in the region will be significantly strengthened with the establishment and staffing of the sub-regional offices for the Oriental Near East and the Gulf. The working approaches in the Region will be revised to promote inter-disciplinary work while keeping a focus on achieving the FAO Organizational Results (ORs) identified in the RPF.

As a flexible and responsive tool, the RPF will be revised every two years, to include new development arising from country programmes, from changes in the overall FAO strategic priorities or at the request of member countries in the Region.

1. OVERVIEW OF THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING IN THE NEAR EAST REGION

1.1 Population and Economic Growth

The Near East Region comprises 18 countries that have a common cultural heritage but are vastly different, in terms of their levels of development as well as their resource endowments. With a total population estimated at over 395 million inhabitants in 2008, the Region represents about 6 percent of the world population with a high population growth rate of a yearly average of 2.2 %, a rate among the highest in the world.

With little exception (mostly Gulf countries), rural populations represent between one third and more than a half of the total population in countries in the Region. According to FAO, rural population averaged 33.8% of the total population in North Africa (Morocco 42%, and Algeria 41%), 38% in the Oriental Near East (Egypt 58% and Syria 50%), while only 20.6% in the Gulf sub-region (the only exception being Yemen 71%). Rural population has decreased significantly over the last decades as migration to the cities has intensified.

The Region holds two-thirds of world oil reserves, but the stock of natural resources are unevenly distributed. GDP per capita in the Region varies greatly across countries. In 2007, GDP per capita ranged from USD 842 (Mauritania) to USD 62,451 (Qatar). Between 2001 and 2008, the economic growth across the Region ranged from less than 4% (Algeria, Saudi Arabia) to more than 12% per year (Qatar). Despite the growth performance, the unemployment rate remains very high due to the high population growth rates in the Region.

Despite the immense wealth generated by the oil industry, the economic performance of the region has remained modest during the period 1970 - 2000². Following intense macro-economic and trade reforms, economic growth picked-up significantly since 2001, reaching on average 5.2% during the period 2001 - 2008. The GDP growth rate varied slightly between 2001 and 2008, between the sub-regions. The Gulf sub-region and the Oriental Near East sub-region displayed 5.5 % and 5.4 % of growth respectively, while the North Africa sub-region growth rate averaged 4.7 % during the same period. In spite of these significant improvements, growth performance of the region is still below high performing middle- income countries.

1.2 Major Features and Performance of the Agriculture Sector

Despite natural resource constraints, rapid urbanization, the agriculture sector continues to play an important role in the economy of the region, contributing to production, employment, balance of trade and food security. The share of agriculture in GDP, although on the decline, remains well above 10% in most of the non-oil producing countries. During 2001 - 2008, agriculture contributed to approximately over 10% of the regional GDP and employs, on average, 21% of the active population. In many countries, agriculture is still the primary source of livelihoods for the majority of the population.

The principal sub-sectors of agriculture are crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries. The area of arable land and permanent crops in the Region is estimated at 83 million ha, which

² IMF, Challenges of growth and Globalization in the Middle East and North Africa. 2003

accounts for about 15% of the total agricultural land of the Region.³This percentage varies, with the lowest (less than 3 %) in Saudi Arabia, Mauritania and Yemen (countries with vast range land) to the highest in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia and Iraq, with over 50% of the agricultural land being arable. Only 32% of the arable land is irrigated, but it contributes more than 50% of the total agricultural production in the Region. Cereal crops, mainly wheat and barley, with rice and sorghum in some countries, are the dominant crops in the Region, followed by forage and olives. In value terms, cereals are the most important crops in countries such as Egypt, Iran, Morocco and Syria whereas horticultural crops are relatively more important for countries like Tunisia, Lebanon and Jordan.

The farming systems prevailing in the Region include: irrigated, highland mixed, rain fed mixed, dry, pastoral, sparse coastal artisanal and urban based agriculture. In several countries of the Region, traditional nomadic pastoralism has been replaced by modern mechanized farming. The traditional livestock sector, however, remains relatively important in supporting livelihoods of a large number of people, which include nomadic and sedentary small scale producers. In some countries these populations are supported by subsidies, in some others rangeland improvement programs through range cooperatives and rangelands use regulations are being implemented.

On-farm food production is becoming steadily less important for poor rural households throughout the Region. Small farmers depend heavily on sales of their labor as a major source of family income: even families holding between 1 and 2 hectares get nearly one-third of their income from selling their services as hired labor. Enhancing opportunities for off-farm employment and income is becoming increasingly important for rural development and welfare. On the other hand, urban and peri-urban agriculture is important in supporting food needs of the urban poor.

Livestock⁴ play an important role in the economies of the Region. Excluding poultry, the livestock population in the Region has more than doubled during the last 40 years, while poultry shows more than a 9-fold increase during the same period. The value of livestock products accounts for between 30–50 percent of agricultural output in the Region. This share is expected to continue to increase, the poultry sub-sector being the fastest growing component. Livestock contributes substantially to the livelihoods of the population in the Region, supporting a large portion of the poor landless and marginalized farmers particularly in arid and semi-arid areas, as well as of urban poor in large cities. Livestock contributes significantly to food security and nutrition, providing high quality protein for the diets. In addition, animals represent a substitute to monetary savings, and an insurance against risk, especially during crop failures or following severe drought and in certain environments a source of draught power and transportation. However, the Region's dependence on animal feed imports to meet its needs is rapidly increasing. A number of constraints, including climatic and environmental conditions, low productivity, animal diseases, and poor access to markets, instability of input provisions, conflicts and insecurity are seriously impeding the development of the sector. About 90% of all region's breeds are bred and kept in the drylands, constituting a valuable yet untapped resource for future adaptation to climate change.

³ Agricultural land, as defined in the FAOSTAT, is the sum of areas under a) arable land (b) permanent crops; and (c) permanent meadows and pastures.

⁴ Broadly speaking, livestock could include any domestic or domesticated animal including poultry. Still the terms are often used variously in different texts, and when it is described as 'livestock and poultry', livestock generally refers (for the region) to buffalos, camels, cattle, goats, pigs and sheep while poultry includes chickens, ducks, geese and guinea fowls, pigeons, turkeys and other birds.

The Near East region encompasses wide and dispersed geographical areas of different marine and freshwater ecosystems and fisheries with different characteristics and complexity. The productivity of fisheries and aquaculture in the Region rely upon ecosystem and natural resources that are often shared with other coastal countries. The landing of marine capture fisheries in the Region has been growing since the 1950s, from less than 500,000 tonnes to about 3,000,000 tonnes in 2007. Aquaculture production, which was almost non-existent till the 1980s, shows a significant increase that was particularly remarkable from the late 1990s. Per capita fish consumption in the Region is well below the world average (16.4kg). The overall trade figures in 2007 indicated a positive trade balance in fish and fishery products.

In terms of agricultural productivity, there is wide diversity across countries and over time, which suggests potential for improvement. Measured in agriculture value added per worker, productivity more than doubled in Egypt and Morocco in the last 40 years, while it has remained the same in Yemen and Mauritania. While some countries in the Region have made sizeable progress in increasing their agricultural productivity and overall agriculture sector growth, agriculture performance in many countries still lags behind other regions.

Increased investment in agriculture is crucial to improve productivity. Data on capital stock show that in many countries, capital stock is largely in land and livestock and relatively less in infrastructure, implements/machinery and buildings. Comparing capital intensity in the region shows wide differences across countries. Measured as capital stock per worker, capital intensity has not shown remarkable improvement in the region except for countries like Saudi Arabia.

The degree of economic integration in the Region remains extremely low. This is, in part, explained by the absence of incentives, the continuity of barriers to trade, the poor performance of some sectors as well as by the relatively limited diversification of production and exports and the lack of complementarities between agricultural sectors. Despite the many trade and investment cooperation agreements adopted and implemented in the Region, the share of intra-regional agricultural trade in total agricultural trade has remained below 15% and concentrated across a few countries⁵. The commodity pattern of intra-regional agricultural trade is also characterized by its concentration in a narrow range of items. For the last 20 years, live animals, meat, fish and fish products were predominantly directed to regional markets, while vegetables, fruit and agricultural raw materials such as cotton reveal a clear extra-regional orientation.

1.3 Poverty and Food Insecurity

Poverty remains widespread as about one quarter of the population of the Region live below the poverty line with, however, wide variations across the Region. Poverty is far less prevalent in countries where their economy is dominated by the oil sector, due to large public budget that allows for relatively higher level of public spending and transfers. In general, poverty remains highly correlated with availability of employment, access to education and health as well as basic infrastructure.

⁵ Algeria, for instance, is Tunisia's most important partner within the region for both exports and imports. Oman, on the other hand, imported the bulk of its regional agricultural products from two neighboring countries, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Such concentration can be explained by proximity and geographical considerations.

Due to the high population growth rates, unemployment, particularly among the urban youth, has been a major factor driving urban poverty in the Region. The share of unemployed workforce in total is among the highest in the world, and long term projections for the labor market remains dire: one in two individuals of working age will experience difficulty in finding a job according to some studies. To meet its labor force growth and absorb the large pool of currently unemployed, nearly 5 million jobs per year need to be created up to 2020. At the moment, job creation is barely keeping up with the growing labor force, and even though overall unemployment rates may fall, they remain excessively high among the young educated population. The increased migration of males to the cities, feminization of agriculture has become an emerging important issue in the Region, leaving rural women without adequate access to productive assets.

Rural poverty is a major feature of poverty in the Near East where about 76 % of the poor live in rural areas. In most countries, the incidence of poverty is twice as high in rural areas compared to urban poverty. Extreme poverty is also highly prevalent in the rural areas, often associated with certain types of production systems, like the highland mixed system of Yemen and Morocco, and the dry-land mixed system and pastoral systems of other countries of the Region. For all countries, moderate to low poverty is found in irrigated areas; coastal artisanal fishing systems; the small scale cereal-livestock system; the rain-fed mixed system of Algeria, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia; and the sparse (arid) system of most countries.

In many countries, wide segments of the population live below or close to the poverty line and do not have access to balanced food consumption. This translates into under-nutrition and micronutrient deficiencies among the most vulnerable population groups. In countries affected by conflict undernourishment rates have witnessed a sharp increase; stunting among the under five-year old children now exceeds 50% in these countries. Undernourishment has also significantly increased in low income countries such as Yemen and Mauritania, and even in low and high middle income countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Undernourishment in the Near East, however, exists along with the prevalence of over-nutrition related chronic diseases that are affecting the lives of people to varying degrees in all countries and national health systems of the Region. Overall, the Near East region is passing through a “nutritional transition” in which problems of under-nutrition coexist with food-related chronic diseases, imposing a burden on health systems, public finance and household budgets.

Despite its increasing food deficit, the Region has dealt with the availability dimension of food security successfully in the past decades. Indeed, the per capita Dietary Energy Availability⁶ (DEA), a yardstick for measuring undernourishment, shows that all countries in the Region have achieved noticeable improvements in food availability, and that available energy in 2005-2007 in each country was much higher than the minimum energy requirements⁷.

Supply of major food groups per capita has also seen an increase in the last decades, which was more pronounced in some countries of the Region than others. Countries identified as low income have witnessed the lowest increase in food supply per capita. The relatively high availability of food, despite limited local food supply, is in part explained by the high

⁶ Previously referred to as Dietary Energy Supply (DES)

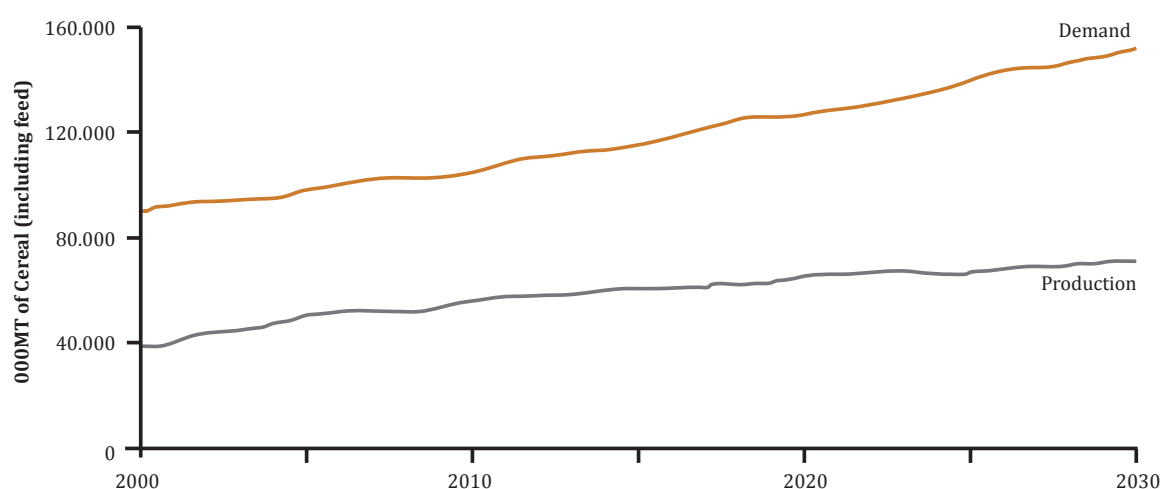
⁷ FAOSTAT 2010

level of the food subsidies and safety nets. The food subsidy policies, introduced mostly in 1960s, were widespread in the Region⁸. Food subsidies have succeeded in some countries in keeping the prices of strategic food items within the reach of the poor and vulnerable populations. They, however, impose a huge burden on public finance which may not be sustainable in the long term. Recent studies⁹ also point to their high opportunity costs due to poor targeting and huge losses and leakages. In addition, in some countries, food subsidies have contributed to skewing consumption especially of the most vulnerable towards high energy low nutrient-density commodities, such as bread, oil and sugar, thus, aggravating the nutritional problem.

2. CHALLENGES TO FOOD SECURITY AND TO SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Region faces immense challenges in achieving the goals of its member countries to eradicate hunger, eliminate poverty and enhance rural development while managing and using its natural resources in an environmentally sustainable manner. Both the persistence of high population growth rates and the improvement in economic prosperity will put a heavy pressure on the demand for a wide range of food products. At the same time, the narrow natural resources base (declining water tables, soil degradation and desertification) and the declining rate of productivity growth constitute major limitations to the supply of food. Given current trends, it is estimated that the deficit in cereals will more than double between 2000 and 2030 (see Figure 1). This growing food deficit makes the majority of countries in the Region more dependent on imports and, therefore, vulnerable to international markets and to possible food quantity and price shocks. In addition, to cope with the increase in the labor force, and to reduce poverty and rural-urban migration, the region need to address the challenge of promoting an accelerated rural development.

Figure 1 Cereal demand versus projected production in Arab countries¹⁰



⁸ Some countries have recently reformed their Food subsidy Systems, introducing cash transfer instead

⁹ UN Interagency Assessment Mission of the impact of the soaring food prices on Egypt. FAO. 2008.

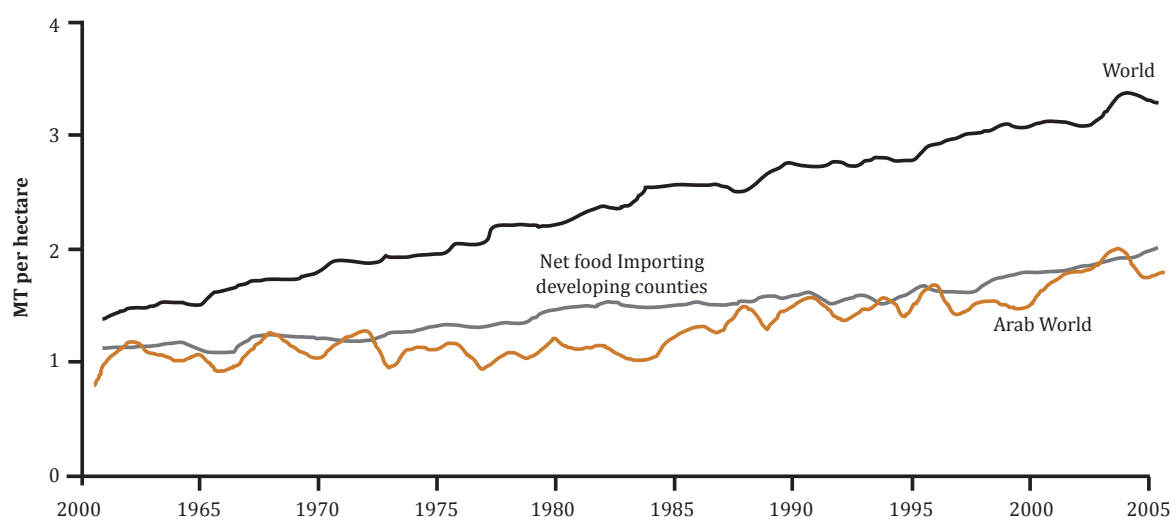
¹⁰ World Bank and FAO (2009) Improving food security in Arab countries

2.1 Sustainable Availability of Safe and Nutritious Food

Increasing food supply

Ensuring sustainable availability of adequate food supplies remains the most important challenge in the Region. Increasing domestic food supply in an efficient and sustainable manner requires addressing a wide range of factors that underpin the currently low and stagnant food production in the Region, key among which is the lagging productivity growth. Productivity in countries of the Region lingered behind other food-importing developing countries and world averages (see Figure 2). Cereal yields are currently at half the world average, and the gap is growing¹¹. In addition, countries need to secure necessary foreign exchange to finance food import requirements and reduce exposure to market volatility by improving supply chain efficiency and by more effectively using financial instruments to hedge risk.

Figure 2 Cereal yield in Arab countries in comparison to the world averages¹²



Despite past investments in agriculture, productivity in the sector remains low, particularly in rain-fed agriculture, a sector which offers a sustainable alternative for the future given the severe limitations on water resources. Rain-fed agriculture is practiced by almost 18 % of the agricultural population in the Region but occupies only 2 % of the land area¹³. Yield improvements and prospects for higher income generation in rain-fed areas are crucial for marginalized and impoverished farmers, who rely mostly on rain-fed farming. Policies that support water management, such supplementary irrigation through water harvesting in semi-arid areas, which targets short dry spells during the growing season can increase yields significantly. In addition, technology to improve predictability of variables such as rainfall could enhance the contribution of rain-fed agriculture to agricultural production and improved livelihoods.

¹¹ Cereals include barley, maize, millet, oats, rice, rye, sorghum, triticale, wheat, and cereals not specified elsewhere.

¹² World Bank and FAO (2009) Improving food security in Arab countries

¹³ Dixon, John et al (2001) *Farming systems and poverty: Improving farmers' livelihoods in a changing world*. FAO and World Bank, Rome and Washington D.C.

To increase productivity in a sustainable manner, the Region will have to i) significantly increase its investment in R&D, which is only, on average, one tenth of the developed countries below high Middle Income countries; and ii) strengthen extension and education of male and female small farmers and agricultural institutions, including producer organizations on the benefits and practical implementation of sustainable agronomic and animal husbandry technologies; and (iii) tap the potential for regional/subregional cooperation in the area of R&D, and knowledge sharing and dissemination, through pooling of resources and the optimal use of the existing infrastructures

In addition to the low productivity, losses and waste severely affect the availability of food in many countries in the Region. It is estimated that 10-15% of non-perishables (such as grains) and up to 60% of perishables are lost during the whole production chain. In addition, post-cooking losses are also significant. The very significant post-harvest losses are due to many reasons, inter alia, extreme environmental conditions in some countries, unavailability of adequate handling infrastructure and know-how (adequate storage, transport, packaging, marketing, etc.), research, and education, and often weak or unavailable extension systems.

The countries in the Region will need to address the issue of their exposure to cereal import volatility in a comprehensive manner, making best use of the existing international financial instruments to hedge against sudden and unpredictable international market price hikes. Investing in agricultural production abroad is one strategy that is being used by some countries to reduce exposure to the quantity risk and give them a priority access to available production in the recipient countries. While it is too early to assess the impact of these strategies, recent studies have pointed to the need to improve the policy and regulatory environment and the terms of these investments to increase their return on both the investing and the recipient countries and to ensure their sustainability. Intensified investments in rural infrastructure, in access to education and health, in access to credit and in appropriate policy regulations, could contribute to boosting agriculture production in poor but agriculture resource-abundant countries, reducing poverty and making more food available for exports¹⁴.

Improving nutrition

In many countries, wide segments of the population live below or close to the poverty line and do not have access to balanced food consumption. This translates into the prevalence of under-nutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. In countries affected by conflicts undernourishment rates have witnessed a sharp increase and stunting among the under five children now exceeds 50% in these countries. Undernourishment has also significantly increased in the low income countries such as Yemen and Mauritania, and even in low and high middle income countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Undernourishment in the Near East, however, exists along with the prevalence of over-nutrition related chronic diseases that are affecting the lives of people to varying degrees in all countries and national health systems of the Near East. Overall, the Near East region is passing through a “nutritional transition” in which problems of under-nutrition coexist with food-related chronic diseases, imposing burdens on health systems, public finance and household budgets.

¹⁴ FDI in the form of land purchases poses several socioeconomic and policy issues that need to be addressed.

Enhancing food quality and safety

Countries in the Region still face major challenges in guaranteeing a safe food supply to their population. Many countries are facing a challenge to respond in the most appropriate way to the demands of their citizens for the provision of safe and healthy foods from local production and imports as well as to meet recognized international standards to access foreign markets. Despite efforts made during the last few years by several countries of the region to strengthen their food safety systems and the significant progress made in this field, the situation is still unsatisfactory. As a result, a major challenge in the Near East is to raise the sanitary and phytosanitary standards. On the other hand, as net food importers, it is essential for the countries of the Near East to have a systematic approach with effective and appropriate food control systems to ensure the quality and safety of imported foods as well as locally produced foods. Institutional and technical capacities of plant and animal quarantine laboratories and centers need to be improved.

Diversifying the food supply and harnessing the Region's comparative advantages

For both higher-income generation and risk management, diversifying food production and consumption is an important challenge for rural poverty reduction in the Region. The horticulture industry, in particular, which comprises fruit, vegetables, root and tubers, flowers, mushrooms and condiments offers considerable potential for job creation and income generation. It can significantly contribute to poverty alleviation and to reducing hunger in the Region. Fruit and vegetables are grown in several countries and success stories of exports are many in the Region. But, local consumption of fruit and vegetables at individual country level is still weak and below the recommended level. One of the challenges for the countries of the Region will be to formulate and implement strategies to expand the local production and consumption of high value/high return horticultural products while meeting the international food safety standards and strengthening their exports position. Horticulture production can also be expanded around large urban areas; thus contributing to the revival of the local economy and the mitigation of air pollution and climate change impacts.

2.2 Agriculture as an Engine for Poverty Reduction

Unemployment is a major determinant of poverty in the region. According to the World Bank's estimates, the economy of the region will have to grow at a sustained rate of 6.7% over 20 years to create enough new jobs to absorb the new entrants on the labor market. In the last seven years, however, real GDP growth amounted to only 5.2 % suggesting that the fundamental problem facing the region in terms of job creation and poverty has not significantly eased. The growth performance has been in part driven by the increase in oil prices that has boosted oil exports revenues, government expenditures, investment and remittances to non oil labor resources rich countries. Because however of its high capital intensity and negative impact on the competitiveness of the economy the overall impact of the oil sector on poverty alleviation has been limited. Reducing oil dependency and diversifying the sources of economic growth to address the challenge of unemployment, are major aims in the region.

The Agriculture sector can play an important role in fostering economic growth, slowing down migrations from rural to peri-urban areas, thus, reducing both rural and urban poverty. Studies conducted in various contexts show that the reduction in poverty headcount induced by a 1% growth rate in the agriculture sector is significantly higher than in any other sector, thanks to the sector's high labor intensity and to its broader intersectoral impacts. In addition, the expansion of the agriculture sector is often associated with a relative decrease in food prices that improve the real wages and paves the way for the increase in labor productivity in the overall economy. In most countries of the region, the sector is operating below its potential, because of a number of constraints, including: i) insufficient access to international markets, often due to weak linkage between the small growers and exporters, (ii) quasi-absence of privately-run associations of farmers and local marketing or processing cooperatives, (iii) poor storage and transport infrastructure; iv) weak farmers organizations and local market institutions; v) fragmented landholding; vi) insufficient incentives to private investments and to exports; vii) poor linkage between R&D institutions and farmers; and viii) weak vocational training for sustainable crop production, animal husbandry and veterinary care.

Access of farmers to international markets remains one of the major pathways out of poverty for rural poor. Agricultural exports in the region still represent a limited but growing share of the Region's total exports. The major agricultural exports of the region include fruit, vegetables, olive oil and pulses. In last decade, the region has lost ground in several of its traditional agricultural markets, including in cotton and citrus but this overall performance, conceals considerable variation among individual countries and sub-regions. Most of the countries derive a substantial share of their merchandise exports from only a few categories. On average, the top three agricultural commodity exports account for more than 50% for several countries in the region.

The Region has significant comparative advantages in exports of high value added products (EU market¹⁵, and other countries in the Region). To really tackle such new markets several issues have to be addressed. They are: i) the fragmented landholding; ii) the insufficient incentives or disincentives to private investments and to exports; iii) the weak linkage between R&D institutions and farmers; iv) the need for vocational training for sustainable crop and animal production and care at the level of primary and secondary education (with a special attention paid to the training of women in rural areas); v) the weak linkage between the small growers and the international market, often due to the weak institutional framework (quasi-absence of privately-run associations of farmers and local marketing or processing cooperatives); vi) missing elements in public or private infrastructure. All the above constraints are major obstacles to overcome¹⁶. Exports of high value added and labor intensive products may be one of the quickest pathways out of poverty. It is still important to note that the promotion of exports of the high value added crops in the countries of the Region, especially those depending mainly on irrigation like Egypt, needs to be carefully developed.

To address the constraints facing agricultural growth in the region and to significantly increase job creation and enhance small farmer incomes in rural areas, the countries of

¹⁵ Several countries in the region are granted export quotas to EU as part of trade agreements that are not as yet fully used. These include Citrus, Apples, Potatoes, Tomatoes, Molasses, Table grapes, Olive oil, Artichoke, Asparagus. The demand for organically produced fruits and vegetables are also expanding offering additional opportunity.

¹⁶ Maroc Plan Vert 2009 and Egypt Agriculture Strategy 2009

the region will have to adopt integrated rural development strategies that bring together the reforms needed in various areas, including investment in physical infrastructure and human development, implement reforms in farmer and market institutions, and extension and R&D services. Effective coordination of all concerned stakeholders, including the various Ministries and Public entities, and the integration of agriculture reform in the overall government strategy is crucial for success.

2.3 Sustainable Management of the Limited and Fragile Natural Resources

Water and Land

The scarcity of arable land and water resources combined with human pressure on existing resources has led to important environmental problems in the Region. Deteriorating environmental conditions have included and, often continue to include: i) the improper and excessive use of chemical fertilizers, ii) soil and water salinization and aquifer pollution, and iii) aquifer depletion (e.g. the Nile Valley). Expanding agricultural land at the expense of marginalized fertile land has aggravated water erosion and land degradation. Water pollution, habitat degradation and massive water withdrawals had profound impacts not only on crop production but also on the fishing communities and their livelihoods. Moreover, climate change will worsen the environmental situation, unless urgent mitigation and adaptation measures are adopted.

Agricultural water management remains one of the most formidable challenges facing the Region. Per capita availability of renewable water resources in the Region is currently around 1,050 m³ per person per year and is projected to drop by half by 2050, compared to a global average of 8,900 m³ per person per year¹⁷. Agriculture share in water use is already extremely high. Overall irrigation efficiency in the Region is less than 50%, when assessed on some surface irrigation schemes, and traditional irrigation methods (surface/gravitation) and traditional management are still predominant. Despite the progress made in some countries, the adoption and development of modern irrigation techniques and systems remain slow. In addition, evaporation and water losses remain high due to lack of maintenance of dams and water channels. Appropriate irrigation scheduling and water pricing policies that could help improve water saving and reduce water consumption are rarely in place. In most countries water is often priced far below its real cost. In addition, alternative water sources such as water desalination and treated wastewater are insufficiently developed and R&D in this area is still limited. .

The success of water management initiatives will require strengthening of the water institutions and capacities including training, enacting, enforcing and monitoring policies and regulatory measures. Policy incentives for water saving and waste water treatment, increased involvement of private institutions as well as investment in infrastructure are also urgently needed in the Region. Groundwater governance in particular is weak in most countries in the Region. Assessments of storage and recharge, and appropriate institutional reforms are needed.

Continuous land degradation from extreme climatic conditions, overgrazing and unsuitable cropping patterns is a major issue. Consecutive accumulation of salts, due to poor drainage and excessive irrigation practices, has degraded soils and rendered them unproductive,

¹⁷ World Bank (2006) *Making the Most of Scarcity: How Water Can Contribute to Growth and Development in the Middle East and North Africa*.

leading to abandonment of farms in several countries. Soil fertility in the Region could be improved with better use of inputs. The fertilizer use average for the Region is 70 kg/ha in comparison to the global average of 120 kg/ha. Low water holding capacity and soil nutrient levels in the Region also need to be improved. Fragmented land holdings and loss of biodiversity as a result of abandoned rangeland and loss of wild species, have, among others, degraded soil quality. Urbanization encroachment on the high quality agricultural soils has further reduced the size of quality land.

Conservation Agriculture (CA), which represents a concept to achieve improved soil health and better soil, crop, nutrient and water management leading to ecological and economically sustainable agriculture, recognizes the need for a productive and remunerative agriculture which at the same time safeguards natural resources. The CA principles are certainly key to sustainable crop productivity and preservation of natural resources as well as biodiversity above and in soil. However, its application should be tailored to the prevailing local conditions and crops. Fostering CA in the Region would require socio-economic assessment studies and an adaptive research to demonstrate benefits of CA in selected cropping systems. Mechanization policies will need to be reviewed and be coherent with CA practices. Weed competition problems raised by the use of crop residue for livestock feeds also requires careful land use management.

Preserving the Potential of Fisheries

The large increase in the total production from capture fisheries has already led to the overexploitation of most of the vulnerable stocks. Changes in the ecosystem structure and decrease in fisheries productivity are reported in several areas of the Region. Many fisheries have *de facto* an open-access regime. Fisheries subsidies are common practice in some countries in the Region, leading therefore to excessive fishing capacity. The effect of fish trade globalization on the national fishing sectors including the risk of overexploitation and depletion of fishery stocks, and food security, should be taken into consideration. Fisheries and aquaculture management objectives are often inadequately formulated in country policies, and performance indicators are not used. As a result, many countries are not in position to sustainably manage their fisheries as well as to assess the state of their fisheries and aquaculture sector.

Poverty in some fishing communities calls for specific action plans to effectively develop and manage such fisheries, particularly the small-scale fisheries. The establishment of sustainable fisheries livelihoods, including the stakeholders' involvement and income diversification, in these often remote communities remains a challenge.

Protection and Sustainable Use of Forestry Resources

With 39.3 million hectares of forests and other forms of forestry vegetation (3.2% of the total land area), the Region is characterized by a low forest cover compared to the rest of the world. 70% of the forestry vegetation is found in Algeria, Iran, Morocco and Tunisia. Around 70% of the total land area of the Near East is classified as rangeland. Forests, trees and rangelands in the Region play also very important role in i) soil and water conservation; ii) control of erosion, landslide, flood and drought; iii) climate change mitigation and adaptation; iv) biodiversity and genetic resources preservation and v) control of insect and pests diseases. Forests and trees outside the forests provide an array of non wood forest products (NWFP) to the local consumers and even for export, fuel wood, pastures

for livestock and contribute to livelihoods and employment of many people in the Region, and generate food, energy and cash, in addition to other social roles.

Forest and rangeland resources are under growing pressure by an increasingly dense and poorer rural population. Since 1950, the Region has lost over 20% of its forest area, leading to a widespread ecosystem degradation and desertification. Countries in the Region will have to adopt and implement long term comprehensive strategies, to preserve the unique environmental role of the forestry and range land in the Region. Particular emphasis should be put on investment, policies and institutions that involve the participation of the communities.

2.4 Climate Change

The Near East region is one of the most vulnerable regions to climate change. The series of threats posed by climate change are foreseen to degrade regional food security significantly and to deteriorate the livelihoods of a large segment of the regional population. Water shortage, already a problem in most countries of the Region, will be further exacerbated by climate change. Agriculture in the Near East is likely to suffer major losses because of high temperature, droughts, floods and soil degradation threatening the food security of many countries. In Egypt alone, climate change could decrease the national production of rice by 11% and soybeans by 28% by the year of 2050, compared with their production under current conditions. As for the other crops, it is estimated that climate change could decrease maize production by about 19% and barley grain by around 20%. In the entire Near East region, rangelands and livestock are likely to be vulnerable to climate change as they are located mostly in marginal areas, impacting nomadic systems and dynamic livestock pest and disease distribution and their transmission patterns with increased probability of epidemic outbreaks. Soil moisture depletion will likely affect the productivity of major forestry species and lead to decline and the extinction of sensitive species, to increase fire risks, and change the spread patterns of pests and diseases. The resulting changes in habitats will induce changes in wildlife population. The combined effects of human actions, nature, and climate change are likely to lead to further degradation and desertification in many parts of the Region, thereby further reducing the low production potential.

2.5 Emergency Preparedness and Response

Recovery and Rehabilitation

Many political conflicts and natural disasters have afflicted a number of countries in the Near East. Countries that have been subject to conflicts and disasters are usually characterized by crises in governance, weakened institutional capacity and a tendency towards a prolonged transition period from conflict to peace. These conflicts and natural disasters constitute major sources of vulnerability and food insecurity in the Region. The effect of conflicts on agriculture and food security depends on the nature of the conflict and on the relative importance of agriculture in the economy. In a conflict country, due to the prevailing insecurity and the diversion of scarce resources away from agricultural services and other productive sectors, the impact on food production translates significantly into a lower Dietary Energy Availability (DEA) and serious food insecurity. Conflicts can particularly cause substantial damage to physical and human infrastructure

that support farming, e.g., extension services, crop and animal production and protection, forestry, fisheries, range management, agricultural research and private food marketing and processing industries.

The Region has also suffered from natural disasters. These include droughts, floods, and outbreak of plant and animal pests, e.g., desert locust, and trans-boundary animal diseases and other disasters. Natural disasters cause much suffering, deplete the natural resource base, damage the infrastructure and increase poverty. Drought, the most frequent and damaging disaster in the Region, causes serious water scarcity, crop failures, undernourishment, land degradation, depletion of forage, large-scale mortality of livestock and other problems. The consequent unemployment, desperate sale of productive assets and out-migration strain the agricultural sector's capacity for sustainable agriculture and rural development. During the past decade, consecutive multiyear droughts have occurred in several countries of the Region.

Transboundary diseases

Transboundary animal diseases and plant pests have for long affected livestock and crops production in the Near East region, reducing the availability of food and affecting quality. Historically, animal diseases and plant pest introduction, establishment, re-emergence and outbreaks have resulted in major food problems either directly through yield reductions of food crops and losses in animals (or spill over into humans), or indirectly through the reduction of yields of cash crops, inefficient feed conversion, and loss of consumer confidence. Climate change factors have further aggravated the situation. Several transboundary animal diseases such as foot-and-mouth Disease, Rift Valley fever, West Nile, peste des petits ruminants, brucellosis, rabies, tuberculosis, and hydatidosis are endemic in certain countries of the Region. Highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1 strain of HPAI) is endemic in Egypt and poses significant threats to poultry industry and human lives. Desert Locust continues to be a threat to food production and security in the Region. Epidemics of wheat rust diseases have caused serious losses in the past 2-3 years in several countries of the Region and are becoming a threat due to the emergence of new highly aggressive pathogene races with a wide range of climate adaptation.

3. MAIN PRIORITIES OF THE REGION

The constraints and challenges presented in the foregoing analysis provide a broad picture of the critical needs of the Region and suggest the priority framework within which the underlying issues could be addressed. Based on a thorough discussion during the consultation meeting of 4 -7 October 2010 in Cairo, these needs are condensed into five regional priority areas that are linked to several key areas of intervention including policy, institutions, regulation, capacity development, trade, investment, and information management.

The five priority areas listed below are priorities for countries where FAO assistance is needed the most.

- A. Enhancing food security and nutrition
- B. Fostering agricultural production and rural development for improved livelihoods

-
- C. Sustainable management of natural resources
 - D. Responding to climate change impacts and developing adaptation strategies
 - E. Preparedness for, and response to, food and agriculture emergencies

In what follows, each regional priority is presented by providing a rationale and a summary of issues and challenges to be addressed. Annex I shows a summary of the key actions identified under the five priorities for each of the three sub-regions of North Africa, Oriental Near East, and the Gulf States and Yemen. The five regional priorities have also been mapped with FAO Strategic Objectives and Organizational Results (ORs) (see Annex II). A more complete description of how FAO will intervene in the region during the 2012 - 13 biennium to address the identified priority areas is found in NERC 105/. To ensure full integration of regional priorities within FAO's existing corporate work planning and resource allocation mechanisms, thirty ORs have been identified. In addition, a number of ORs of cross-cutting nature such as in gender (Strategic Objective K), policy (Strategic Objective X), statistics and exchange of knowledge (H04 & H05) apply to all the five regional priorities.

3.1 Regional Priority Area A: Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition

Objectives of Regional Priority Area A

- Contributing to the eradication of food insecurity at individual, national and regional levels in line with World Food Summit (WFS) targets and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
- Strengthening national capacities for policy development aimed at achieving food security and nutrition objectives, and the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of actions taken, supported by an efficient information system.

Food security implies providing access for all people at all times to sufficient, nutritious and safe food. The main objective of this priority is to move the countries towards the WFS target of reducing the number of chronically undernourished people to half its 1991- 92 level by 2015. The measures needed to accomplish this starts with strengthening national capacities for policy development, including gender-sensitive policy development, aimed at achieving food security and nutrition objectives, as well as the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of actions taken, supported by an efficient information system.

FAO adopts a systemic and holistic vision of food security, which promotes integrated strategies to enable food security at all levels. This means increasing productivity of staple crops, strengthening market and trade mechanisms and infrastructure, reducing waste and losses, while improving diets and strengthening measures to address dietary deficiencies.

Urgent areas of action under this priority include targeted investments, which address the major deficiencies in agricultural production and the overall food system, including, sustainable increases in food production, reduction of food losses, improvement in diets through safer and more nutritious food, and safety-nets for short term assistance to the poor.

Issues and Challenges

The inability of the Region to feed itself poses an important challenge to overcome at both national and individual levels. Enhancing availability of food, based on comparative advantages in the Region, supplemented by imports or investment abroad and due attention to reducing losses at all stages of the value chain for agriculture and food commodities are key areas for action. Food availability can be enhanced through improved research and extension, and targeted investment in agriculture to improve productivity. While all countries in the Region cannot meet their cereal needs through domestic production, many of these countries have great potential for intensifying their cereal production and diversifying into products such as livestock and horticulture production. The reduction of losses in the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food will help significantly in improving the availability of food.

While improving productivity and minimizing losses in the food chain are priorities, without decisive investment into rural markets and infrastructure, efforts will not be translated into real success on the ground. Most of the food insecure live in rural areas without sufficient market access, and their food security and adequate levels of nutrition depend on a well functioning food system. Enhancement in food security and improvement in diets cannot be realized without targeted investments which address the many deficiencies in the food systems.

The high level of import dependency also creates the need to develop effective mechanisms to cope with uncertainties in external markets, including price instability. Stabilizing food supply and prices through market-based risk management approaches and diversification programmes are important elements of policies to address vulnerability. Enhancing food access for the most vulnerable populations should be achieved through community-based interventions, non-distortive social safety nets and public awareness programs. In this context, urban and peri-urban agriculture should be recognized as an important support activity for the production of food as well as its role as a safety-net. It is also important for the public awareness programs to emphasize food safety, nutritional value and waste reduction in preparation and consumption to move the Region towards enhanced food security. Specific nutrition and food programmes addressed to women can play a key role.

To maintain adequate nutritional standards, more efforts are needed in the Region to ensure proper quality and safety of food. Keeping quality and safety alongside the food chain requires rules and procedures, and methods of monitoring to ensure proper implementation. Improved capacity to implement food safety, quality and nutritional standards, enhancement of national capacities in food control systems as well as Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) are areas for priority action. Promoting inter-regional exchange of knowledge and technology on agriculture and food can also help increase domestic productivity and conservation of food, which would further help reduce the food gap.

The availability and quality of basic data on food and agriculture has been declining in many countries of the Region as in other developing countries. In order to design and implement effective food security policies and programmes in the countries in the region, relevant and reliable statistical information is needed to measure the extent, location and causes of food insecurity and to monitor and evaluate the impact of policies.

3.2 Regional Priority Area B: Fostering Agricultural Production and Rural Development for Improved Livelihoods

Objectives of Regional Priority Area B

- Unleashing the potential of agriculture as a major contributor to poverty reduction and maximizing its role in income generation and support to livelihoods
- Promoting the commercialization of agriculture
- Diversifying agriculture into high value added activities

Agriculture has an important role in reducing food insecurity through its contribution to income generation and food availability. Rural households generate income from agricultural activities and/or from employment in rural non-farm activities which are in most cases linked to the agriculture sector (including the production of inputs, repairs of agricultural implements and output processing). In addition, income earned from agricultural activities is spent on locally produced goods, and this demand is essential for the survival of the rural non-farm sector. Given the high dependence of the poor people's livelihoods on agriculture, growth in this sector is an essential component of poverty reduction and food security strategies. Agriculture also has an important role in mitigating food or income shocks for people.

Agriculture's role in supporting livelihoods and food security is not fully realized in many of the countries in the Region, where it employs more than 70% of the workforce in poor countries, but its growth remains stagnant in most of the countries. The majority of the poor are concentrated in rural areas (84% in Yemen, 75% in Tunisia, 62% in Syria). There are many issues and challenges to be addressed in order to tap agriculture's full potential in rural areas and enhance its contribution to poverty eradication and food security in the Region.

Immediate areas of action in the region are: (i) reinforcing competitiveness and market access, (ii) developing comprehensive strategies and policies for sustainable integrated agriculture and rural development (iii) ensuring inclusion of women in all aspects of the food system (iv) promoting investment to all key areas and ensure an enabling environment for investments, including addressing key policy challenges related to private international investments to agriculture such as land use and tenure.

Issues and Challenges

The targeting of agriculture from a systemic and holistic perspective to achieve food security, employment generation, health, and poverty reduction is a key element to the promotion and commercialization of rural agriculture and to maximize its contribution to overall economic growth. However, in most countries, the rural sphere has remained isolated with weak linkages to markets outside the local areas. Reinforcing access to markets and developing competitive farms and businesses are a challenge that needs to be addressed. Extension services, enhancement of entrepreneurial skills, and developing exports to niche markets within the Region and outside would contribute to sustainable employment creation and capacity development.

Although the growth rates of agricultural value added has been erratic in most countries of the Region due to the absence of comprehensive and integrative policies, the transformation of agriculture towards an efficient and effective production-processing-marketing orientation is very promising for the Region. Already some of the major fish and horticulture exporting countries like Oman, Morocco and Tunisia have shifted their attention towards quality and value conscious European markets and that is also likely to happen in many livestock surplus countries as well.

Women are actively involved in agriculture in rural areas, as farmers, providers of food and entrepreneurs often operating with little resources and capacity. Ensuring inclusion of women in extension, skill development and other areas for capacity development should be part of the strategies for the enhancement of rural agriculture. The resources needed to address the challenges will have to come from increased investment, both public and private. In sharp contrast with the period between the 1970s and 1980s, public expenditures on agriculture for the region have been very low in the past ten years, particularly in relation to the contribution of agriculture to GDP. The share of agriculture to GDP is about 12% on the average for the region while the share of agriculture expenditure in total expenditure does not exceed 5% on average. In recent years however, the region has seen an increase in intra-regional investments in agriculture which are growing amidst the global financial crisis and the expected lower levels of foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows from developed countries. Many countries in the region are investing in primary agriculture (mostly in the form of land purchases/leases) in resource-rich countries in order to increase their food supplies. While there are issues to be addressed (optimal scale, water and land use and land tenure) regarding sustainability and food security impacts of these international investments to agriculture, they potentially constitute an important element in improving the performance of agriculture in the region.

Development of strategies, programmes and policies for sustainable integrated rural development is also important. In addition, countries can benefit from the promotion of intra-regional cooperation in trade and investment in food and agriculture as well as intra-regional harmonization of agricultural, food and trade policies with due consideration of relative comparative advantages of countries. Improvement of productivity research and extension and strengthening linkages among research, development and extension in collaboration with stakeholders and relevant partners need to be given more attention. This includes strengthening human and institutional capacities and regulatory policies in all areas of agriculture and food. In addition, establishing an internationally integrated and efficient national agricultural information system is considered vital for the Region.

3.3 Regional Priority Area C: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources

Objectives of Regional Priority C

- Ensuring improved management and increased supply of water to support agriculture and food security for today and the future
- Ensuring sustainable management of forest, trees and range land resources in contribution to food security, climate change mitigation and water conservation
- Protecting soils and preventing desertification
- Increasing fisheries and aquaculture production in a sustainable manner
- Conserving genetic resources and biodiversity

The limited availability of natural resources, particularly of water is the most limiting factor in the fight to overcome food insecurity in the Region, at both national and regional levels. Agriculture is the largest user of water (89% compared to 6% for domestic/urban use and 5% for industry).

Sustainable management of natural resources has assumed significant importance due to increased demand on these resources brought on mostly by population pressure. The direct effect of this pressure is observable on the decreasing availability and quality of water and land. In addition fisheries, forestry, and range resources are shrinking both in quantitative and qualitative terms due to over-exploitation and encroachment. It has thus become an urgent priority of the Region to develop and implement policies for effective and sustainable land and water management as well as improved management of fisheries, rangeland and forestry. Another priority that has emerged from such needs is the adoption of appropriate technology to extract as much productivity as possible from available resources in a sustainable manner and to obtain incremental increase through conservation, reuse and rationalization of consumption. Opportunities for water harvesting, re-use of waste water, enhancement of rangeland, development of fisheries and aquaculture have great potential in many countries of the Region. It will be necessary in this regard to promote the engagement and participation of all stakeholders in planning and managing water, land and genetic resources in addition to promoting regional cooperation on trans-boundary water management.

Issues and Challenges

The Region needs a progressive move toward water and natural resource saving systems reflected through policies, best practices, investment, education, information, and research. A holistic approach to water and resource management is the first step in addressing the challenges the Region faces and to identify solutions

The irregularity of available water and the fragile nature of lands in the Region also necessitate an effective approach toward conservation of these resources, both at country and regional levels. These issues severely threaten food security in the Region not only at present but also for the future where demands on these resources will keep growing. For sustainable management of fisheries, the majority of the countries in the Region will need to optimize and rationalize the exploitation of fisheries and aquaculture resources

and implementing product valorization throughout the fish chain. Conservation of genetic resources and traditional knowledge is an important aspect of natural resources conservation. Developing capacities for policies and educational and awareness efforts at country level are also crucial.

In this regard, information and alert systems at country and regional level need to be developed to help better manage risks, control pollution, and facilitate exchange of information. Intra-regional cooperation is also essential to better utilize and conserve natural resources.

3.4 Regional Priority Area D: Responding to Climate Change Impacts and Developing Adaptation Strategies

Objectives of Regional Priority Area D

- Improving national and regional capacities to cope with adverse impacts of climate change
- Identifying practices for adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts
- Reducing the contribution of agriculture to climate change

Climate Change (CC) is expected to have major impacts on agriculture and food security in the Region. CC is likely to adversely affect agriculture through changes in temperature, precipitation, extreme climatic events, and rising sea levels. These may result in such adverse effects as further deterioration of water scarcity, land degradation, crop failures, loss of rangeland and other vegetation covers, livestock deaths, and decline of fisheries production and deterioration of fish quality.

It is therefore a high priority for the Region to plan national policies of adaptation strategies, including the development of early warning systems, the establishment of unified national frameworks and the enhancement of cross-sectoral coordination. Enhancing institutional and technical capacities in monitoring and assessment of climate change impacts is another area of urgent action. Regional cooperation in data collection, exchange of information, and monitoring and assessment of climate change impacts is an important element in implementing these priority areas of action.

Issues and challenges

The Region suffers from highly irregular and limited availability of natural resources, a situation expected to be exacerbated by CC impacts. An important challenge for the Region will be to reduce the impacts of CC while maintaining adequate levels of food production and developing best practices for adaptation to CC. The impacts of CC need to be tackled at multi-dimensional levels: micro, meso, and macro as well as regional level and adaptation strategies need to be developed with stakeholders

An important component of the work related to CC is the support to policy planning of adaptation strategies. In addition, capacity development, including the assessment of CC impacts and vulnerability, observation and monitoring, communication and networking, and the identification and implementation of adaptation and mitigation activities, are needed.

Financial limitations to meet necessary investments for addressing CC agendas pose an important challenge. Global financial mechanisms for CC adaptation and mitigation which may provide additional resources need to be tapped, as along with intra-regional financial resources.

3.5 Regional Priority Area E: Preparedness for, and Response to, Food and Agriculture Emergencies

Objectives of Regional Priority Area E

- Enhancing capacities for disaster response and risk reduction
- Linking relief efforts with long term sustainable development
- Mitigating long term impacts of disasters

The Region has long experienced a host of frequent and persistent natural disasters such as droughts, animal and plant pest infestations and diseases as well as some recent human induced disasters such as war and displacement of population. Vulnerability to price shocks due to high levels of food import dependency is an important cause for human suffering in the Region, as demonstrated by the recent surge in staple food prices of 2007 - 2008. These shocks have increased chronic poverty and hunger particularly among the very poor with limited coping capacity. Increasing the capacity to forecast and prepare for such disasters well ahead of their occurrence should mitigate their impact to a large extent.

It is a high priority of the Region to install early warning systems for impending disasters and to develop disaster preparedness plans for meeting any threat to food supplies and agriculture output. It is also of equivalent importance to enhance capacity for prevention and mitigation of disasters including trans-boundary plant and animal diseases.

Issues and Challenges

Most countries in the Region have limited capacities to address emergency shocks, and the threat they impose on the livelihoods of the most vulnerable. The inability to respond to shocks throws most of the vulnerable poor into dire situations which threaten their food security. Reducing the vulnerability both in the short and long terms is an important priority for the Region.

An important factor in the Region which exacerbates the impacts of emergencies is the high levels of population density in some areas as well as the large numbers of young children. Women and children often bear a disproportionate share of the devastating impacts of emergencies. The fragile nature of the natural resources create an additional burden which hinders the ability for countries to cope with the negative impacts of disasters. Emergencies of a regional nature include trans-boundary animal diseases and plant pests which necessitate coordinated effort at the regional level.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RPF

The FAO Decentralized Offices (DOs) network in the Region includes the FAO Regional Office (RNE), three sub-regional offices (North Africa, Oriental Near East and the Gulf States and Yemen), and twelve FAO Representations (FAORs)¹⁸, including nine fully fledged representations.

The FAO Decentralized Offices in the Region include high level expertise for carrying out the regional and sub-regional inter-disciplinary work focusing on the RPF's priority areas. The FAO capacity in the Region will be significantly enhanced following the establishment of the sub-regional offices in the Oriental Near East, and the Gulf States and Yemen. With these new sub-regional offices, the decentralized expertise in the Region will reach 37 technical staff covering the following disciplines: food systems; nutrition and food safety; irrigation and water resources; land tenure; plant production; plant protection; controlling the desert locust; animal production and health; forestry; fisheries; environment; agro-industries; information technology; knowledge and information management for development; policy analysis and assistance; trade policies; regional and country project operations and field programme development.

The FAO core functions through which FAO assistance will primarily be delivered include: (a) monitoring and assessment of long-term and medium-term trends and perspectives; (b) assembly and provision of information, knowledge and statistics; (c) development of international instruments, norms and standards; (d) policy and strategy options and advice; (e) technical support to promote technology transfer and build capacity; (f) advocacy and communication; (g) inter-disciplinarity and innovation; (h) partnerships and alliances. For an effective implementation of the RPF, the mix of expertise in the Region will be organized and streamlined across the Region focusing on the identified priorities and building synergies between technical areas in a highly participatory manner to address the various facets of the inter-disciplinary nature of these priorities and their expected results. The implementation will be facilitated by establishing thematic taskforces of experts around three core areas: agricultural and food systems; economic, social and policy assistance; and natural resources and climate change. In addition, the technical and operational linkages among the Regional Office, sub-regional offices and country offices will be strengthened and made more coherent guided by the ongoing FAO reform on decentralization.

4.1 Field Programme Development and Mobilization of Resources

The field programme development and implementation in the Region incorporates a substantive portfolio of projects spanning a wide spectrum including agriculture, fisheries, forestry, nutrition and food safety, food security and others. The experience gained and lessons learned in the formulation and implementation of these projects and related operational support represents a valuable service to member countries in the Region. In particular, the regional Technical Cooperation Projects (TCP) will be made coherent with the RPF while continuing to be based on individual country needs/requests as reflected in country programme frameworks.

¹⁸ The FAO Regional Network includes the Regional Office for the Near East (RNE) based in Cairo, and three sub-regional offices, namely, the Sub-regional Office for the Oriental Near East (SNO) based in Cairo with FAORs in Syria, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt; the Sub-regional Office for North Africa (SNE) in Tunis with FAORs in Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya; and the Sub-regional Office for the Gulf Countries (SNG) in Abu Dhabi with an FAOR in Yemen.

The resources needed for the implementation of the RPF will be funded through both FAO regular programme and extra-budgetary resources, allocated to various FAO programmes. The Regional Office will assess the funding gap and reach out to donors in and outside the Region to promote cooperative programmes to address regional needs and priorities in areas of mutual benefit. Resource mobilization for extra-budgetary resources will be carried out in close collaboration with the FAO Technical Cooperation Department to align the strategy of resource mobilization at the regional level with the institutional strategy of FAO. Close collaboration with the FAO Resource Mobilization and Operations Support Service (TCSR) will ensure a streamlined approach and process for resource mobilization effort.

4.2 Partnerships

In the framework of the FAO Partnership Strategy, the RPF will be used as a platform for building partnerships with key players in the Region, including Regional Organizations, UN agencies and networks, technical organizations, Civil Society (CSO) and non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and private sector. To this aim, the RPF will be presented to the regional Organization, the UN agencies and the donors active in the Region after its adoption by the regional conference.

A high priority will be given to Partnerships for advocacy on major FAO goals and for knowledge and experience sharing in support of regional cooperation. The role of the regional commissions and existing active regional thematic networks¹⁹ covering major themes for the region, including water, policy, and knowledge dissemination will be strengthened. RNE will promote partnerships with NGOs and CSOs in the Region within the framework of the newly reformed CFS and in support of the objective of eradicating hunger in the region. Recognizing their role in agricultural development, RNE will seek opportunities to work in partnership with the farmers' associations and the private sector to promote sustainable management of natural resources and to alleviate poverty, including through knowledge sharing and investment.

Already established UN frameworks provide an excellent basis to work with partners. The FAO regional office aims at strategically positioning FAO in the UN wide system in the region, in pursuit of the achievement of the World Food Summit and the MDGs in the region. In this context, it is worth noting that over the last two years the FAO Regional Office has significantly strengthened its relations with the UN agencies, IFAD and the World Bank. This has led to several common initiatives, including the publication of major reports on Food security and agriculture Investment in the region. The FAO Regional Office is actively collaborating with its UN partners within the Regional /UNDG framework to raise awareness on issues of strategic importance, such as Food Security and Climate change and to provide guidance to the UNCTs with regard to the UNDAFs. The FAO Regional Office also heads the Task Force on Food Security within the Regional Coordination Mechanism established in the framework of the ESCWA.

¹⁹ They include, inter alia: the Agricultural Food Marketing Association for the Near East and North Africa Region (AFMANENA), AARINENA (Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa), NENARACA (Near East and North Africa Regional agric credit Association), CARDNE (Regional Centre on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development for the Near East), Inter-Islamic Network on Water Resources Development and Management NENARNAP (Near East and North Africa Regional Network for Agricultural Policies), NERAKIN-RAIS (Near East and North Africa Rural & Agricultural Knowledge and Information Network), RADCON (Rural and Agricultural Development Communication Network), SESRTCIC (Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries).

The RPF will be used as a dialogue and advocacy tool to strengthen the collaboration with major regional organizations, including the League of Arab States (LAS), AOAD (Arab Organization for Agricultural Development), Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and the Organization for Islamic Countries (OIC), in the areas of food security, agricultural development and natural resources management, the RPF will also be used to strengthen the technical collaboration with technical agencies based in the region, such as ICARDA and ACSAD.

4.3 Follow-up, Monitoring and Evaluation

Following the endorsement of Member countries, the RPF is to be translated into pragmatic and operational action plans contributing to the FAO strategic results hierarchy through the formulation of Regional Results, to be reflected in the Regional/Sub-regional Programme of Work and Budget starting in 2012. The RPF will inform Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) and the FAO Country Workplans.

Starting in 2012, regular monitoring will identify achievements, success factors, obstacles, lessons learnt and actions required to improve the performance of the programmes, in line with the results-based monitoring and reporting systems currently being developed and deployed by the Organization. This will provide critical feedback for further refinement and adjustments in the action programmes. To this end, information will be continuously collated within the context of the Regional/Sub-regional Programme of Work and Budget mechanisms. In addition, particular thematic evaluations will also need to be periodically conducted for specific purposes such as advocacy, raising awareness and resource mobilization. The RPF is, therefore, a living document that evolves over time.

Within the FAO Strategic Framework, and in close collaboration with member countries and partners in development, the decentralized network in the Region is fully committed to the implementation of the RPF.

The RPF shall be revised each biennium to reflect new development arising from country programmes, from the changes in the overall FAO Strategic Priorities or at the request of the member countries.

Annex I. Summary of Key Actions Proposed Under Each Regional Priority: by Sub-regions

(Based on outcome of a Consultative Meeting organized in Cairo, 4 – 7 October 2010)

Subregional Group for North Africa (SNE)		Subregional Group for Oriental Near East (SNO)		Subregional Group for the Gulf States and Yemen (SNG)	
Priority A: Food and Nutrition					
1. Reinforcing capacities for effective elaboration and implementation of policies, and their monitoring and evaluation	1. Reducing /preventing losses and improving quality and safety at all stages of the food chain	1. Promoting community-based interventions, non-distortive social safety nets, and policy measures and awareness programmes and campaigns.	1. Promoting community-based interventions, non-distortive social safety nets, and policy measures and awareness programmes and campaigns.		
2. Assisting in the identification, preparation of investment projects and reinforcement of national capacities	2. Promoting demand driven agriculture and developing the agricultural value chain.	2. Improve food safety, quality and nutritional standards	2. Improve food safety, quality and nutritional standards		
3. Reinforcing linkages among research development and extension	3. Harnessing potential of rainfed agriculture and promote diversification while assuring optimal use of water and land	3. Stabilize food supply and prices through market-based risk management approaches and diversification programmes.	3. Stabilize food supply and prices through market-based risk management approaches and diversification programmes.		
4. Improving information systems	4. Improving Research and Extension, and promoting Investment for enhancing agriculture productivity	4. Promote food availability based on comparative advantages, imports, or investment abroad while reducing losses at all stages of the value chain	4. Promote food availability based on comparative advantages, imports, or investment abroad while reducing losses at all stages of the value chain		
5. Promoting integration among countries					
6. Education programmes to enhance understanding of food related issues					
Priority B: Role of Agriculture in Poverty Reduction and Food Security					
1. Support actions to involve women in all areas and reinforce capacities in these areas	1. Holistic approach to agriculture as the main drivers of growth in consideration of employment generation and poverty reduction	1. Enhancing Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration of Food and Agriculture Policies and Trade Regulations	1. Enhancing Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration of Food and Agriculture Policies and Trade Regulations		
2. Adopt of integrated, multidisciplinary and participatory approaches	2. Promoting regional cooperation in consideration of comparative advantages and food security.	2. Integrate agriculture investment with social service sectors for the benefit of small farmers to ensure highest return and impact on rural livelihood.	2. Integrate agriculture investment with social service sectors for the benefit of small farmers to ensure highest return and impact on rural livelihood.		
3. Support commercialization and valuation of local and traditional products	3. Promote agriculture investment through improvement of markets and rural finance and credit	3. Capacity building through the whole value-chain	3. Capacity building through the whole value-chain		
4. Reinforce support activities in urban and peri-urban agriculture recognizing the role of urban/peri-urban agriculture	4. Good information systems for agriculture and food management				
Priority C: Natural Resource Management					
1. Integrated water management approach- policies, investment, training	1. Appropriate policies for effective land and water management	1. Adopting modern irrigation systems and water-saving techniques	1. Adopting modern irrigation systems and water-saving techniques		
2. Water and natural resources saving systems	2. Appropriate technologies for increasing availability (including treated water) and rationalizing use of water	2. Enact rules and regulations for sustainable water use, particularly ground water	2. Enact rules and regulations for sustainable water use, particularly ground water		
3. Conservation of genetic resources and/or rehabilitation of traditional knowledge	3. Developing comprehensive plan for Land use	3. Consider reforming incentive structure and policies for higher water use efficiency	3. Consider reforming incentive structure and policies for higher water use efficiency		
4. Improved management of emergency risks	4. Encourage participation of all stakeholders in planning and management of water resources	4. Develop national plans for the re-use of treated waste water for agriculture	4. Develop national plans for the re-use of treated waste water for agriculture		
5. Better cooperation among the countries in the region					

Annex I (continued)

SNE		SNO		SNG
Priority C: Natural Resource Management (continued)				
6. Management and conservation of fisheries (Research, data , training, etc.)	5. Promoting Regional Cooperation in utilization of transboundary water	5. Consider the use of brackish water for some salt-tolerant crops, when economically feasible		
7. Planning and policies for fisheries and aquaculture, infrastructure, marketing	6. Formulating policies and strengthening capacities (Institutional and human) of countries in Fisheries & Aquaculture management, monitoring and conservation	6. Enhance the capacity of national cadre leading the irrigation extension service, including a strong link to NARS, as well as regulating and coordinating the private sector extension activities		
8. Improving the contribution of fishing and aquaculture to food security and sustainable livelihoods for the most vulnerable populations	7. Adopting and implementing the FAO code of conduct for responsible fisheries	7. Support capacities for strict compliance to the Code of Conduct to protect fisheries resources		
9. Develop approaches to address aquaculture as a separate entity recognizing its differences in terms of issues, expertise and needs for capacity building.	8. Supporting the role of fisheries in food security, nutrition and poverty reduction through promotion of micro enterprises, better marketing, post harvest handling and awareness-raising	8. Provide more support to RECOFI to address pressing needs and challenges in member countries		
10. Regeneration of vegetation and importance of forests in combating climate change, poverty and desertification.	9. Support regional exchange of knowledge and technology in the field of aquaculture	9. Enhance existing fisheries databases		
	10. Protection, recovery and community-based management of rangeland	10. Encourage the multiple use of water from aquaculture		
Priority D: Climate Change				
1. Supporting policy planning of adaptation strategies to build unified national frameworks and enhance effective cross-sectoral and intra regional coordination	1. Enhancing capacities for monitoring and assessment of CC impacts	1. Address adaptation to Climate Change as a Regional and Global issue of major concern.		
2. Capacity development (including the assessment of CC impacts and vulnerability, observation and monitoring, communication and networking, and the identification and implementation of adaptation and mitigation activities)	2. Planning adaptation policies including hazard risk management and early warning systems, and integrating them with other national plans	2. Use early warning systems as effective tool to identify adaptation activities		
3. Improving capacity to access easily the financial resources available for CC	3. Regional cooperation in data collection, exchange of information, monitoring and assessment of CC impacts	3. Enhance institutional and technical capacities in monitoring and evaluation of climate change impacts.		
4. Promoting best practice for CC adaptation and mitigation at multi levels across the region	4. Enhancing public information and awareness	4. Need to approach donors/funding agencies on a Regional scale to address the problem.		
	5. Mitigation and adaptation programmes in agriculture, forestry and fisheries			
Priority E: Preparedness for, and Response to Emergencies				
1. Forecasting and providing early warning of adverse conditions in the food and agricultural sector				
2. Need assessment and formulation and implementation of programmes for relief and rehabilitation				
3. Enhancing capacity for monitoring, detection, prevention and mitigation of disasters including transboundary plant and animal diseases, and pest infestation				

[illegible]

Annex II (continued)

	A Sustainable intensification of crop production				B Increased sustainable livestock production				C Sustainable management and use of fisheries and aquaculture resources				D Improved quality and safety of food at all stages of the food chain				E Sustainable management of forests and tress				F Sustainable mgmt of land, water & genetic resources & improved environmental challenges affecting food & agriculture				G Enabling environment for markets to improve livelihoods and rural development				H Improved food security and better nutrition				I Improved preparedness for, and effective response to food and agricultural threats and emergencies				K Gender Equity in access to resources, goods, services, and decision making in the rural areas				L Increased and more effective public and private investment in agriculture and rural develop-ment			
	01	02	03	04	01	02	03	04	01	02	03	04	05	06	01	02	03	04	01	02	03	04	05	01	02	03	04	01	02	03	04	01	02	03	04	01	02	03	04	01	02	03	04	
Regional Priorities																																												
E. Preparedness for and Response to Food and Agriculture Emergencies		x																																										
Total 30 ORs	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

*Detailed list of Organizational Results is presented in Annex III. A number of ORs of cross-cutting nature such as in gender (Strategic Objective K), policy (Strategic Objective X), statistics and exchange of knowledge (H04 & H05) apply to all the five regional priorities.

Annex III. List of FAO Organizational Results (ORs)

- A01 Policies and strategies on sustainable crop production intensification and diversification at national and regional levels
- A03 Risks from pesticides are sustainably reduced at national, regional and global levels
- A04 Effective policies and enabled capacities for a better management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) including seed systems at the national and regional levels
- B01 The livestock sector effectively and efficiently contributes to food security, poverty alleviation and economic development
- B02 Reduced animal disease and associated human health risks
- B03 Better management of natural resources, including animal genetic resources, in livestock production
- C01 Members and other stakeholders have improved formulation of policies and standards that facilitate the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and other international instruments, as well as response to emerging issues
- C02 Governance of fisheries and aquaculture has improved through the establishment or strengthening of national and regional institutions, including RFBs
- C03 More effective management of marine and inland capture fisheries by FAO Members and other stakeholders has contributed to the improved state fisheries resources, ecosystems and their sustainable use
- C04 Members and other stakeholders have benefited from increased production of fish and fish products from sustainable expansion and intensification aquaculture
- C06 Members and other stakeholders have achieved more responsible post-harvest utilization and trade of fisheries and aquaculture products, including more and harmonized market access requirements
- D03 National/regional authorities are effectively designing and implementing programmes of food safety and quality management, control, according to norms
- E02 Policy and practice affecting forests and forestry are reinforced by international cooperation and debate

- E03 Institutions governing forests are strengthened and decision-making improved, including involvement of forest stakeholders in the development of forest policies and legislation, thereby enhancing an enabling environment for investment in forestry and forest industries. Forestry is better integrated into development plans and processes, considering interfaces between forests and other land uses
- E06 Environmental values of forests, trees outside forests and forestry are better realized; strategies for conservation of forest biodiversity and genetic resources, climate change mitigation and adaptation, rehabilitation of degraded lands, and water and wildlife management are effectively implemented
- F01 Countries promoting and developing sustainable land management
- F02 Countries address water scarcity in agriculture and strengthen their capacities to improve water productivity of agricultural systems at national and -basin levels including transboundary water systems
- F06 Improved access to and sharing knowledge for natural resource management
- G03 National and regional policies, regulations and institutions enhance the developmental and poverty reduction impacts of agribusiness and agro-industries
- G04 Countries have increased awareness of and capacity to analyse developments in international agricultural markets, trade policies and trade rules to identify trade opportunities and to formulate appropriate and effective pro-poor trade policies and strategies
- H01 Countries and other stakeholders have strengthened capacity to formulate and implement coherent policies and programmes that address the root causes of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition
- H03 Strengthened capacity of member countries and other stakeholders to address specific nutrition concerns in food and agriculture
- H04 Strengthened capacity of member countries and other stakeholders to generate, manage, analyse and access data and statistics for improved food security better nutrition
- I01 Countries' vulnerability to crisis, threats and emergencies is reduced through better preparedness and integration of risk prevention and mitigation into, programmes and interventions
- I02 Countries and partners respond more effectively to crises and emergencies with food and agriculture-related interventions
- I03 Countries and partners have improved transition and linkages between emergency, rehabilitation and development

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- K03 Governments are formulating gender-sensitive, inclusive and participatory policies in agriculture and rural development
- L01 Greater inclusion of food and sustainable agriculture and rural development investment strategies and policies into national and regional development and frameworks
- L02 Improved public and private sector organizations' capacity to plan, implement and enhance the sustainability of food and agriculture and rural development investment operations

