



NOW from NORTH AMERICA



20 May is World Bee Day - One third of food produced in the world depends on pollination.

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“Biodiversity is among the earth’s most important resource. Biodiversity is key for food security and nutrition, as food production depends largely on the services provided by ecosystems. Pollinator dependent crops contribute 35 % of the global crop production volume.”

José Graziano da Silva
Director-General, FAO

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dear Reader,

Many of us may not know what it is like to be hungry, to regularly miss meals, or to consume a diet void of essential nutrients to live a healthy life. With the involvement and support of every individual imperative for effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal to end hunger (SDG 2), our roundtable in April, during the national poetry month, discussed poetry as a medium for advocating for a hunger free world, with renowned local poets sharing their ideas and poems on hunger.

Congressional briefings that we hosted on timely issues further strengthened our outreach activities on Capitol Hill.

This included an event on the key findings and messages of the *2018 Global Report on Food Crises* that was jointly organized with WFP and the Senate and House Hunger Caucuses. The other focused on the Progressive Management Pathway for Aquaculture Biosecurity, organized in collaboration with Mississippi State University and the World Bank.

The month of May promises to be equally exciting as we look forward to the Symposium on Geographical Indications for Foods and a high-level speaker series event on how to advance investments in sustainable landscapes. Our roundtable of the month, being organized on World Bee Day, will explore the significant role of pollinators for food security.

I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter. For our latest activities and to share your thoughts with us, visit our newly launched [website](#) and follow us on twitter [@FAONorthAmerica](#).

Thank you,

Vimlendra Sharan
Director, FAO Liaison Office for North America

“.. let us spread great tablecloths,
put salt in the lakes of the world,
set up planetary bakeries,
tables with strawberries in snow,
and a plate like the moon itself
from which we can all eat.
for now I ask for no more
than the justice of eating.”
- Excerpt from “The Great
Tablecloth,” by Pablo Neruda

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

Building Resilience to Save Lives and Livelihoods

27 April, Washington, DC - FAO North America and the World Food Programme (WFP), in conjunction with the House and Senate Hunger Caucuses of the United States, hosted a congressional briefing on the alarming findings of [the 2018 Global Report on Food Crises](#) at the Rayburn House Office Building.

Vimlendra Sharan, Director of FAO North America, gave opening remarks highlighting the worrisome increase in the number of people facing crises levels of food insecurity. The Report reveals that there has been an 11% rise in the number of people across the world who require urgent humanitarian action, with an estimated 124 million people in 51 countries that are currently facing crises levels of food insecurity or worse. An analysis of the report and situation was provided by **Dominique Burgeon**, FAO's Director of the Emergency and Rehabilitation Division, and **Arif Husain**, WFP's Chief Economist. More than 60 people attended the briefing, including policy advisors and staff from House and Senate member offices, private sector and industry groups, nonprofits, and other U.S. government agencies, making for a robust discussion following the speakers' presentations.

Earlier in the day, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) hosted a Washington, DC launch event for the report that featured **Dominique Burgeon** and **Luca Russo**, Senior Strategic Advisor on Resilience, FAO and Steering Committee Member, Food Security Information Network (FSIN). Read more about FAO's work on [Resilience](#) and in [Emergencies](#).



Improving Aquaculture Biosecurity



10 - 12 April, Washington, DC - Aquaculture is a significant contributor to global fish supplies, producing 80 million tons of fish valued at USD \$231.6 billion in 2016. However, diseases in aquaculture production can have detrimental impacts on the future of fisheries while causing significant revenue losses.

To map out approaches to manage aquatic animal disease, FAO, in partnership with Mississippi State University (MSU) and the World Bank, convened a multi-stakeholder workshop with 45 participants from government, industry and academia. The consultation produced consensus to support the Progressive Management Pathway for Aquaculture Biosecurity (PMP-AB) as a framework to promote, develop, and monitor national strategies for aquatic diseases.

The two and half day consultation at the World Bank was followed by a congressional briefing in the Capitol Building on the importance of biosecurity for aquaculture production hosted in partnership with Senator Roger Wicker (R-Mississippi) and MSU. Read [full article](#).

INARC Highlights U.S. and Canadian Priorities for FAO

18 - 19 April, Washington, DC - Canadian and U.S. Government representatives gathered for the Fifth Informal North American Regional Conference (iNARC) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Over the two day event, iNARC discussed FAO's initiatives in integrating the priorities identified at the Fourth iNARC held in 2016 into its program of work and elaborated upon their strategic priorities for the coming biennium.

Doug Forsyth, Acting Director General, Trade Agreements and Negotiations, Market and Industry Services Branch, Agriculture and Agri-Canada, and **Robert Macke**, Deputy Administrator, Office of Agreements and Scientific Affairs, FAS-USDA, co-chaired the conference. **Daniel Gustafson**, FAO Deputy-Director General, and representatives from the concerned technical divisions briefed officials on the agenda items from FAO headquarters. **Vimlendra Sharan**, FAO North America Director, informed attendees on the priorities and activities of the Liaison Office.



Food

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

Using Digital Storytelling to Push the Planet Forward



Frank Sesno and Vimlendra Sharan.

5 - 6 April, Washington, DC - The 2018 Planet Forward Summit gathered 400 participants and students from 40 universities around the world, with thousands more watching online, at the George Washington University School of Media and Public Affairs.

The two day Summit featured inspiring storytellers and dynamic sessions on how to convey solutions to the 21st century challenges facing our planet. Speakers included guests from National Geographic, The New York Times, Discovery, Lindblad Expeditions, and The Washington Post, among others.

Vimlendra Sharan, Director of FAO North America, participated in the panel, "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - How Do We Tell the Story?" where he emphasized the importance of using creative forms of storytelling to communicate the aims of the SDGs that resonates with the public and inspires them to get involved in achieving the goals. "Stories are powerful mediums through which you can take complex ideas and convey them in simple forms," he added.



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Partner Corner: Planet Forward

In this section, FAO's Liaison Office for North America invites a different partner organization each month to comment on how the partnership has benefitted both organizations.

Planet Forward, a project of the Center for Innovative Media at the George Washington University School of Media and Public Affairs, teaches, celebrates, and rewards environmental storytelling by college students. Emmy Award-winning journalist **Frank Sesno** formed Planet Forward in 2009 to empower new voices and lead a global conversation on the planet's future. Engaging a diverse audience of college students from across the country, Planet Forward uses storytelling, media, and educational events to tell the stories of invention and innovation that can move the planet forward.

The project partners with a consortium of 20 colleges, whose students contribute to PlanetForward.org, join events in person or online, and participate in experiential learning opportunities, such as storytelling expeditions to California, New York, Rome, Siberia and elsewhere. These opportunities are the result of joint partnerships with FAO, Land O'Lakes, and others.

"We are thrilled to partner with FAO again to celebrate, mentor, and reward student storytellers," Sesno said. "Vimlendra and FAO are leading the way in investing in young people, and helping tell the stories of - and reveal the solutions to - how we feed a growing, changing planet."

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

The CFS - Working Together to End Hunger



H.E. Ambassador Mario Arvelo, Chairperson of the CFS.

25 April, Washington, DC - FAO North America and the Alliance to End Hunger hosted a roundtable discussion on the role of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG2. The roundtable featured **Ambassador Mario Arvelo**, Chairperson of the CFS and Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the Rome-based UN Agencies. **Rebecca Middleton**, Executive Director of the Alliance, moderated the Q & A session.

Vimlendra Sharan, Director of FAO North America, opened the event by emphasizing the unique role the CFS has as the most inclusive international platform for governments, civil society and the private sector to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all.

Ambassador Arvelo noted how the CFS has expanded stakeholder participation in order to become the central UN platform dealing with food security and nutrition over the years. He stated that the ultimate goal of CFS is to create an enabling environment for everybody to have sufficient, nutritious and culturally appropriate food. Read more about [CFS](#). Read [full article](#).

Unleashing the Power of Poetry to Address Hunger

30 April, Washington, DC - Renowned local poets and food security experts gathered at the FAO Liaison Office for North America in recognition of National Poetry Month to explore how poetry can be used to mobilize people to combat hunger. Featured poets included **Sylvia Dianne Beverly (Ladi Di)**, **Sarah Browning** and **J. Joy Matthews Alford (Sistah Joy)** who recited poems on the many faces of hunger.

"Poetry plays a key role in inspiring social change, which is essential to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals," said **Vimlendra Sharan**, Director of FAO North America, in his opening remarks. Poet and USDA Retiree, **Hiram Larew**, introduced Poetry X Hunger, a new initiative which aims to engage poets across the U.S. and overseas, with an emphasis on youth, to lend their collective voices to reduce food insecurity and hunger. **Thomas Pesek**, Senior Liaison Officer for FAO North America, cited the grim reality that globally hunger has been on the rise with 815 million people now chronically undernourished and 124 million facing crises levels of food insecurity. **Asma Lateef**, Director of the Bread for the World Institute, noted the recurring problem of hunger in the United States, which affects 18 million households (15% of Americans), impacting Latinos, African Americans, and southern states disproportionately.

"All across the world people die from hunger and malnutrition. To ignore this plight would be a ridiculous selfless shame. People are hungry, yet people continue to waste food," were the impassioned words from Ladi Di's poem *Pitch In*. Sarah Browning recited *Lunch Break* from her book *Killing Summer* that looked at how hunger deprives us of dignity. Sistah Joy's poem *Sweet Children* brought to light the harsh reality of food insecurity facing children, "concentrating on mathematical calculations or scientific equations is hard amid stomach growls and hunger headaches." Following the interventions, food security expert **Susan Schram** moderated a dynamic discussion on how poetry can be harnessed to engage people. Participants explored putting out a call for poetry on hunger and organizing an event around them on World Food Day. Read [full article](#).

Transforming Food Systems for More Nutritious Diets

17 April, Washington, DC - Food systems affect the quality of people's diets by shaping the demand, availability and affordability of safe and nutritious foods. Globally, nearly **three billion** people have low-quality diets, placing ever-greater demands on health care systems. To explore opportunities and challenges in transforming food systems to support nutritious diets, FAO North America and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) co-hosted a roundtable discussion with experts.



Anna Lartey, Director of FAO's Nutrition and Food Systems Division (ESN), joined by video and outlined the increasing importance of nutrition for FAO. Nutrition has been mainstreamed through all [Strategic Programs of FAO](#), while an organization-wide food systems framework is currently being developed. Lartey urged all actors to collaborate under the [Decade of Action](#) to change food systems, as the international policy environment has never been better.

"Food systems shouldn't contribute to the problem, but to the solution," said **Bonnie McClafferty**, Director of Food Value Chain at GAIN USA. **Dr. Mduduzi Mbuya**, Senior Technical Specialist at GAIN USA, accentuated the important role that fortification and nutrition education can play to improve diets. **Aira Htenas**, World Bank Agriculture Economist, illustrated how the Bank has fostered nutrition sensitive investments. **Dr. Ruben Grajeda**, Senior Advisor at the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), called attention to low quality diets being the number one risk factor for the entire global burden of disease. Read [full article](#).



Front: Sarah Browning, Sistah Joy, Ladi Di, and Hiram Larew.

FAO NORTH AMERICA EVENTS & TAX CORNER

EVENTS IN APRIL

What	When	Where	RSVP
World Bee Day	Monday, 21 May 2018	TBC, Washington, DC	Updates will be posted here
Towards Sustainable Landscapes Investment	Tuesday, 29 May 2018 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM (EDT)	George Washington University, Law School Faculty Conference Center, 2000 H Street NW Washington, DC	Register
Geographical Indications for Foods Symposium	Thursday, 31 May 2018 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM (EDT)	The Cosmos Club 2121 Massachusetts Ave NW Washington, DC	Register

TAX CORNER

This section provides important updates from the tax unit located at the FAO Liaison Office for North America, which processes tax reimbursement requests by FAO, World Food Programme (WFP), and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) staff members.

Tax advances are loans from the organization to help staff members (who are required to pay U.S. income tax) pay estimate income tax. The IRS Tax Code mandates that all tax payers must pay estimate income tax on their earnings. The Code allows tax payers to pay on a quarterly basis, per the following IRS-specific deadlines:

15 April 2018
16 June 2018
15 September 2018
15 January 2019

When staff members request a tax advance in the [tax portal](#), they should note the Tax Unit policy is to pay the tax authorities directly. If staff members request and receive a tax advance, it is mandatory for them to create a tax reimbursement request so that the tax advance (loan) can be reconciled with their actual tax liability. Specifically, if a staffer receives and/or requests a 2018 tax advance; then the staffer must create a 2018 tax reimbursement for the next year when filing their actual tax return(s) with the tax authorities.

Tax Unit Deadline

30 November 2018 Request a 2018 tax advance

FAO GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

Agroecology Can Help Change the World's Food Production for the Better



3-5 April, Rome - **José Graziano da Silva**, FAO Director-General called for healthier and more sustainable food systems, and said agroecology can contribute to such a transformation. He made the call during his opening remarks at the [2nd International Agroecology Symposium](#). The three-day Symposium brought together 700 policy-makers, agroecology practitioners, academics, and representatives from government, civil society, the private sector and UN agencies to discuss key elements and actions to support scaling up agroecology. The symposium focused on identifying needs, challenges and opportunities to promote agroecology policies, practices and investments.

Graziano da Silva said that most food production has been based on high-input and resource-intensive farming systems at a high cost to the environment, and as a result, soil, forests, water, air quality and biodiversity continue to degrade. "The focus on

increasing production at any cost has not been sufficient to eradicate hunger and we are seeing a global epidemic of obesity," he added. "We need to promote a transformative change in the way that we produce and consume food. We need to put forward sustainable food systems that offer healthy and nutritious food, and also preserve the environment. Agroecology can offer several contributions to this process," Graziano da Silva said. Combining traditional and scientific knowledge, agroecology applies ecological and social approaches to agricultural systems, focusing on the rich interactions between plants, animals, humans and the environment. The Scaling-Up Initiative to encourage more inclusive and holistic agroecology transition processes was launched on the last day of the Symposium. Read [full article](#).

Unique Agricultural Heritage Sites Designated

19 April, Rome - Thirteen landscapes were formally recognized as Globally Important Heritage Systems (GIAHS), paying tribute to ingenious way that natural resources have been sustainably converted to create viable food systems. The sites range from the Huzhou Mulberry-dyke and Fish Pond System in China to Portugal's Barroso Agro-sylvo-pastoral System, with primary production varying from fruits, vegetables, salt and rice to silk, meat, tea, and wasabi.

These systems "reflect a profound harmony between humanity and nature," said FAO Deputy Director-General Maria Helena Semedo. "The sites are not about a nostalgic past but offer solutions for the present and the future."

The new additions bring the total number of GIAHS worldwide to 50. GIAHS highlight unique ways that rural communities have over generations forged to foster food security, viable livelihoods, resilient ecosystems, and high levels of biodiversity, all while enhancing remarkable beauty. Read [full article](#).

New Measures Adopted to Stop the Spread of Plant Diseases and Pests

18 April, Rome - The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) adopted several new standards aimed at preventing destructive agricultural and environmental pests from jumping borders and spreading internationally. New measures include standards for fruit flies, heat and chemical treatments, surveillance and wood packaging.

"This is challenging work with high stakes: each year an estimated 10-16% of our global harvest is lost to plant pests - a loss estimated at USD \$220 billion," FAO Deputy Director-General Maria Helena Semedo said at the opening of this year's IPPC annual meeting in Rome. Approx. USD \$1.1 trillion worth of agricultural products are traded internationally each year, with food accounting for over 80 % of that total, according to FAO data. The standardized norms developed by IPPC cover a range of strategies and techniques used to prevent the introduction and spread of plant diseases and pests to new environments, thereby avoiding their often-devastating impacts on biodiversity, food security, and trade. Read [full article](#).



LATEST FAO PUBLICATIONS

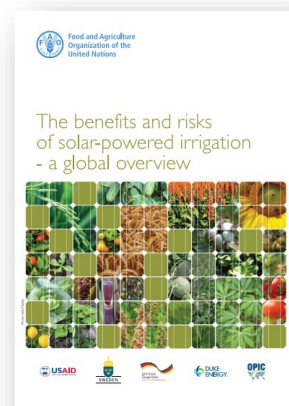


CAN ORIGIN LABELLING BOOST LOCAL ECONOMIES?

From Moroccan saffron to Cameroonian pepper, a new study called [Strengthening sustainable food systems through geographical indications](#), produced by FAO and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), highlights the multiple benefits of geographical indication labelling. The study analyzes the economic impact of geographic indications through nine case studies, ranging from Darjeeling tea (India) to Kona coffee (United States). Read [press release](#).

BENEFITS AND RISKS OF SOLAR POWERED IRRIGATION

Solar powered irrigation systems are now an affordable and climate-friendly technology for both large and small-scale farmers in developing countries, however they need to be adequately managed and regulated to avoid the risk of unsustainable water use, stresses the report, [The Benefits and Risks of Solar-Powered Irrigation-A Global Overview](#).

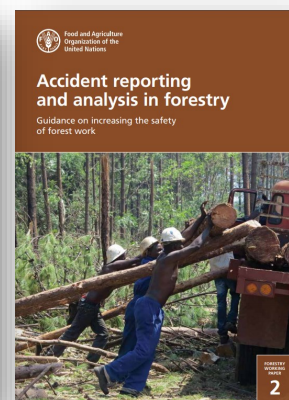
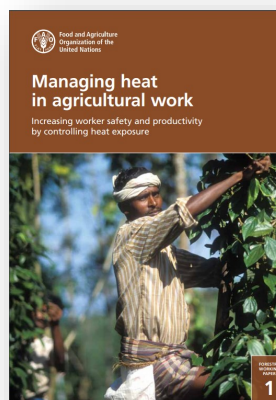


IMPROVING DIETS IN AN ERA OF FOOD MARKET TRANSFORMATION

The policy brief, [Improving diets in an era of food market transformation: Challenges and opportunities for engagement between the public and private sectors](#), produced by the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition, recommends ways in which governments can encourage food industry partners to provide consumers with better access to healthier diets. Read [press release](#).

FORESTRY

FAO launched two working papers at the 6th International Forest Engineering Conference (17-19 April) in New Zealand. [Managing heat in agricultural work: Increasing worker safety and productivity by controlling heat exposure](#), reviews the implications of heat stress in agriculture, looking at ISO standards. The [Accident reporting and analysis in forestry: Guidance on increasing the safety of forest work](#) report discusses recommendations on increased occupational safety, including assisting developing countries in improving accident reporting and analysis.



FAO AND THE UNITED STATES & CANADA

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has deep roots in North America. The Organization was conceived of during a meeting in Hot Springs, Virginia, United States in 1943 and its first headquarters was located in Washington, DC. In 1945, FAO was formally established as a specialized agency by the newly created United Nations during its very first session, which was held in Quebec City, Canada. FAO's headquarters was permanently moved to Rome, Italy in 1951. The FAO Liaison Office for North America based in Washington, DC continues to strengthen the Organization's partnership with Canada and the United States.

FAO shares with Canada and the United States a vision of how to achieve a world without hunger and poverty. Both member states have been working closely with FAO since its inception more than 70 years ago. Canada and the United States both play critically important leadership roles within FAO and they are also among the Organization's largest financial supporters.

FAO's Liaison Office for North America works to support and implement FAO policies and programs through strategic partnerships with governments and other key stakeholders based in Canada and the United States, including civil society organizations, multilateral institutions, research centers and think tanks, the private sector, philanthropic foundations and the media.



[Read more](#) about the United States and FAO.



[Read more](#) about Canada and FAO.

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