



## *NOW from NORTH AMERICA*



April 7 is World Health Day - Good health starts with good nutrition.

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### FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dear Reader,

“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 health and nutritious food, and also preserve the environment.”

José Graziano da Silva  
Director-General, FAO

We concluded Women's History Month on a high note by co-hosting a captivating public event with the Center of Strategic International Studies celebrating the role of women and girls as change agents for food and nutrition security, especially in conflict settings. The event took place following the launch of FAO's annual “Global Report on Food Crises,” which further underlined women's vulnerability to malnourishment in times of conflict.

March also featured a range of timely activities, including an engaging discussion on the role of geographic indications in rural development and in bridging the gap between producers and consumers. Ahead of the 2nd International Agroecology Symposium, we held a session on the important role of agroecology in achieving sustainable food systems. A highpoint for me was addressing students from around the world at the Universities Fighting World Hunger Summit in Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, and representing FAO in a public seminar at the University of Missouri.

In April, FAO will be participating in the Planet Forward Summit and hosting a congressional briefing on the future of the world's most traded food, fish. Additionally, in recognition of World Health Day, our event with Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition will look at how we can transform the food system to support nutritious diets.

I hope you enjoy our newsletter, and as always, we look forward to your feedback and comments.

Thank you,

Vimlendra Sharan  
Director, FAO Liaison Office for North America

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

### Celebrating Women and Girls: Agents for a Food Secure World



From right to left: Kimberly Flowers (CSIS); Mara Russell (CARE-USA); Ilaria Sisto on screen (FAO); Natacha Stevanovic-Fenn (ICRW); and Kavita Ramdas (MADRE)

28 March, Washington, DC – Building on the momentum of International Women’s Day and Women’s History Month, FAO North America partnered with the Center of Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) to host a well-attended public event entitled “Celebrating Women and Girls: Change Agents for Food and Nutrition Security in Conflict Settings.”

The dynamic session was opened by **Vimlendra Sharan**, Director of FAO North America, and was moderated by **Kimberly Flowers**, Director of the Global Food Security Project, CSIS. The session showed the complexity of the struggles that girls and women face on a daily basis in conflict environments, and the extremely important role they play as agents of change for a more resilient and food secure world.

**Kavita Ramdas**, former Head of the Global Fund for Women and Advisor of MADRE, kicked off the event with a captivating keynote address underlining social movements that women have been leading around the world for greater justice, food sovereignty and power. Her remarks highlighted the social, structural and institutional barriers facing women and girls. She emphasized the need for institutions to look at gender roles to overcome the obstacles and hardships confronting women and girls, especially in conflict environments.

FAO’s Gender and Capacity Development Officer, **Ilaria Sisto**, joined from Rome, and stressed the timeliness of the discussion with the rise in food crises driven by conflict. According to the recent [FAO Global Report on Food Crises](#), 124 million people across 51 countries face acute food insecurity - representing an alarming 50 percent rise from 2016. She noted the different ways that men and women are impacted by acute food crises, and how women are more vulnerable to malnutrition and gender based violence in conflict settings, which in turn affects their household’s food security.

The panel also featured **Mara Russell**, CARE-USA Director of Food Security and Resilience, who outlined the importance of using a gender sensitive framework in all of their projects.

**Natacha Stevanovic-Fenn**, Senior Sociologist on Gender Development, International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), discussed the connection between conflict and a rise in child marriage, which has detrimental impacts on food and nutrition security. Read [full article](#).

### Universities Fighting World Hunger Summit

16-17 March, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois – FAO North America Director **Vimlendra Sharan** addressed hundreds of students from campuses around the world during the Universities Fighting World Hunger Summit. Sharan presented FAO’s work to defeat hunger and malnutrition globally. The Summit brought together leaders and innovators developing and implementing creative solutions to food insecurity. Students engaged and learned from experts in a range of fields related to hunger, including social justice, social enterprise, public health, and non-profit management.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Roundtable on Geographic Indications

6 March, Washington, DC – FAO North America and the World Food Law Institute (WFLI) of Howard University hosted the third roundtable event on geographical indications for food. The discussion, moderated by **Marsha Echols**, Director of WFLI, featured approaches to promote geographical indications as vehicles for rural development globally. The universality of the geographical indications is a concept that has gained prominence internationally.

**Florence Tartanac**, Senior Officer of FAO’s Nutrition and Food Systems Division, highlighted geographical indications as a tool for forging sustainable food systems and the Sustainable Development Goals, while recognizing their potential economic impact at the regional and country level, especially in developing countries.

**Sylvain Maestracchi**, Agricultural Counsellor of the Embassy of France, highlighted how geographic indications can be used to enhance product quality, adding value to the producers and consumers, bridging the gap between them and contributing to rural development.

**Nathan Bowen**, Executive Director of Public Policy in the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), provided policy priorities of members in regards to trade and international harmonization of standards. He noted that geographical indications could be used as trade barriers if they prevent some domestic producers from accessing international markets. Read [full article](#).

[Learn more](#) about geographic indications.



Nathan Bowen (NASDA), Vimlendra Sharan (FAO) and Marsha Echols (WFLI) discussing geographical indications for food.



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

## Roundtable on Integrated Landscapes and Agroecology



Seth Shames moderating the panel discussion, following Thomas Pesek's introductory remarks.

27 March, Washington, DC – FAO North America and EcoAgriculture Partners hosted a roundtable event entitled [Agroecology in Sustainable Landscapes](#). The event convened diverse stakeholders from intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and academia, and showcased the important role agroecology plays in integrated landscape management in order to deliver a more sustainable food system. **Thomas Pesek**, Senior Liaison Officer for FAO North America opened the discussion, which was moderated by Eco Agriculture Partners' Director of Policy and Markets, **Seth Shames**.

**Remi Cluset**, FAO's Agroecology Expert virtually presented an overview of the [Second International Symposium on Agroecology](#) (April 3-5) in Rome. The symposium will explore how agroecology efforts can be scaled-up to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals building on recommendations from regional dialogues conducted between 2015 and 2016 involving over 1,300 multi-stakeholders from 170 countries.

**Emile Frison**, member of the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES Food), highlighted Panel's report "From uniformity to diversity: A paradigm shift from industrial agriculture to diversified agroecological systems." He emphasized that agroecological systems can deliver a more sustainable food system while being economically viable. He added that diversified agroecological systems need to be applied at a larger scale and go hand-in-hand with integrated landscape management.

**Marcia DeLonge**, Senior Scientist and Agroecologist at the Union of Concerned Scientists, described agroecology as the application of ecological principals to agricultural systems, both at the farm and landscape level, while considering how farms interact with surrounding communities. She emphasized that building the science of agroecology can support the practice and movement.

**Kata Young**, Project Manager at EcoAgriculture Partners, highlighted the important role that agroforestry plays in regenerating landscapes, especially for high value perennial agroforestry species, such as coffee, cacao, rubber, and palm oil. She described the case of Brazil, where successional agroforestry systems have been the primary mechanisms to regenerate landscapes, while also producing high value products for the market. [See full event summary](#).

### Partner Corner: International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

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.



**IDRC | CRDI**

International Development Research Centre  
Centre de recherches pour le développement international

As part of Canada's foreign affairs and development efforts, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) invests in knowledge, innovation, and solutions to improve the lives of people in the developing world.

IDRC supports and promotes research-backed innovations and public policy interventions aimed at enabling developing countries to implement and scale up solutions to pressing challenges in health, food security, nutrition, and other critical areas.

Through its Agriculture and Food Security program, IDRC supports innovation for more efficient and sustainable agricultural production in ways that benefit smallholder farmers—particularly women. It does so through projects aimed at enhancing food security, boosting household incomes, and improving lives and livelihoods.

The Centre works with like-minded organizations worldwide, in the shared belief that knowledge can be used as a tool for addressing pressing global challenges. Through joint partnerships with FAO North America, Global Affairs Canada, the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, and others, IDRC is developing, testing, and scaling up innovative solutions for better food security and nutrition across the Global South.

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

### FAO Perspectives at the Land and Poverty Conference



Marcela Villarreal, Director of FAO's Partnerships and South-South Cooperation Division (center) speaking at the conference.

19-23 March, Washington, DC - Attracting over 1,000 participants, the World Bank Land and Poverty Conference presented the latest research and practice on interventions and innovations in the land sector globally.

FAO colleagues from around the world presented the organization's multi-faceted work on tenure governance, covering topics such as measuring the gender gap in land ownership; the relationship between tenure and conflict; positive effects of land titling; leveraging the Land Governance Assessment Framework (LGAF); and the implementation of investment contracts consistent with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT) as well as the Committee of Food Security—Responsible Agriculture Investment (CFS-RAI).

**Marcela Villarreal**, Director of FAO's Partnerships and South-South Cooperation Division chaired a session on "Blockchain Technology to support Land Administration" and presented the interconnections of land tenure security, migration and VGGTs. She highlighted the achievements and the next steps of the VGGTs on the occasion of its 5th anniversary, emphasizing that it is one of the strongest instruments to improve the governance of tenure.

**Chiara Brunelli**, FAO Statistician, presented a household survey module that would enable countries to collect and report gender-disaggregated data on land ownership and use. The Sustainable Development Goals will provide an opportunity to institutionalize the reporting and analysis of land data.

Overall, there was consensus at the conference that land rights need to be accessible, inclusive and affordable for all. Better information about land rights to inform policy makers is needed, and sustainable urban expansion will be key for the 21st century. New information technologies like blockchains hold the potential to transform the land sector, and allow governments to collect better data.

Read more about FAO's work on the [governance of tenure](#) and on [SDG indicators](#).

### Innovation and the Future of Food Systems

5-14 March, Washington, DC - FAO participated in the World Bank Agriculture and Food Forum and Learning Week on the topic of "Technology and Innovation in Agriculture: The Future of Food Systems."

**Mohamed Manssouri**, Director of FAO's Investment Center participated in a High-Level Panel on "Maximizing Finance for Development." In speaking about FAO's experiences in supporting private sector investment, he provided examples of FAO support in the areas of plant quarantine and trade regulations. Manssouri underscored the importance of continual public-private sector dialogue and capacity development in addition to detailed policy and regulatory analysis to improve the enabling environment.

**Dr. Danilo Mollicone**, FAO forest ecologist presented two new geospatial technologies developed by FAO in partnership with Google, NASA and the US Forest Service. CollectEarth is an innovative tool for detailed land assessments, while Earth Map is a user friendly tool to access and analyze geospatial data.

Read more about FAO's work on [geospatial information for sustainable food systems](#).



Mohamed Manssouri, Director of FAO's Investment Center (on the right).

### FAO North America Director visits the University of Missouri

19 March 2018, Columbia, Missouri - FAO North America Director **Vimlendra Sharan** visited the University of Missouri, a public, land-grant research university. Sharan presented "Food and Nutrition Security: Challenges and Opportunities" and how FAO's work is tailored to address these challenges at a public seminar hosted by University's School of Journalism.

During his trip, Sharan met with representatives from the Cambio Center and the Center for Food Security and discussed trends of emerging Hispanic farmers and food security issues. He also participated in the "Lunch & Learn Seminar" in the Division of Applied Social Sciences where he shared FAO's work in North America and why FAO is championing the idea of saving livelihoods to save lives with the participants.

## FAO NORTH AMERICA EVENTS & TAX CORNER

### EVENTS IN APRIL

What	When	Where	RSVP
<b>Progressive Management Pathway to Improve Aquaculture Biosecurity</b>	10-12 April 2018	World Bank Headquarters, Washington, DC	
<b>Fish for the Future: How do we protect the world's most traded food commodity?</b>	Thursday, 12 April 2018 2:00 - 4:00 PM	U.S. Capitol, Senate Room S-115 Washington, DC	To RSVP, email: <a href="mailto:Edona.Dervisholli@fao.org">Edona.Dervisholli@fao.org</a>
<b>Transforming Food Systems to Support Nutritious Diets</b>	Tuesday, 17 April 2018 8:30 - 10:30 AM	FAO Liaison Office for North America, 2121 K Street, Suite 800B, NW, Washington, DC	To RSVP, email: <a href="mailto:Gabriel.Laizer@fao.org">Gabriel.Laizer@fao.org</a>
<b>Informal North American Regional Conference</b>	18-19 April 2018	United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC	
<b>Washington, DC Launch of the 2018 Global Report on Food Crises</b>	27 April 2018	IFRPI 1201 Eye St. NW, 12th Floor, Washington, DC 20005	<a href="#">Click here</a>

### 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 Day

UN staff who are United States citizens or permanent residents are subject to U.S. income tax on their UN earnings. Filing deadline for those who are based in the U.S is 17 April 2018. For those who are based overseas it is 18 June 2018.

#### Beware of Fraud and Tax Scams

There has been a recent uptick in various types of scammers. Some call consumers posing as collection agencies, demanding immediate payment or claiming that taxpayer is due a (fraudulent) refund—after providing their personal information. Others send “phishing” emails and/or texts to trick consumers into providing their personal and financial data – which is then used for identify theft. Scammers may even file a fraudulent tax return with the stolen data to claim refunds. Further, they direct consumers to “update your IRS e-file immediately” through a website that has malware, which can damage computers and/or steal confidential information. In order to avoid scammers and to protect your personal information, note:

#### The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Does Not:

- ☒ Call to demand immediate payment via debit/credit card or wire transfers.
- ☒ Demand that a consumer pay tax without a chance to question or appeal.
- ☒ Threaten to bring local police, immigration officers or any other law enforcement to arrest the consumer for non-payment.

#### IRS Does:

- ☒ Initiate contact with taxpayers through the US Postal Service mail regarding overdue tax or adjustments to tax liability – per official IRS Notices.
- ☒ Provide the “Taxpayer Bill of Rights” when requested by the taxpayer.
- ☒ Request that consumers report scams via the IRS Impersonation Scam Reporting web page, the FTC Complaint Assistant, and/or email: [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov).

For more information, please visit the [IRS webpage](#).



## FAO GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

### Sustaining peace is a cornerstone for zero hunger



FAO Director-General José Graziano with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres at the FAO Headquarters in Rome.

15 March, Rome - FAO Director-General **José Graziano da Silva** thanked UN Secretary-General **Antonio Guterres** for his commitment to the goal of eradicating hunger and focus on the challenges caused by conflict and climate change.

In a bilateral meeting during the Secretary General's first visit to FAO Headquarters in Rome since he took office in January 2017, Graziano da Silva informed Guterres that conflict and insecurity continue to be the primary drivers of food insecurity in 18 countries, where almost 74 million food-insecure people remain in need of urgent assistance. Half of food insecure people are in Africa and more than a third in the Middle East.

At the meeting, FAO Director-General updated Guterres on the **2018 World Food Day** on 16 October which will focus on Sustainable Development Goal 2 and Zero Hunger. [Full story](#)

### Mobile App to curb Fall Armyworm in Africa

14 March, Rome - FAO launched a mobile application to help farmers and agricultural workers in Africa identify and monitor the spread and level of infestation of fall armyworm.

Since the evasive specie arrived to the continent in 2016, the insect has spread to all most of Sub-Saharan Africa and infected millions of hectares of maize, threatening the food security of more than 300 million people, most of which are smallholder farmers.

The Fall Armyworm Monitoring and Early Warning System (FAMEWS) application provides valuable insights on how the insect changes over time and space to improve knowledge of its behavior in Africa and to guide best responses. [Full Story](#)

### Food crises continues to grow alarmingly

22 March, Rome - The latest [Global Report on Food Crises](#) sounds alarm on surging levels of acute hunger. Around 124 million people in 51 countries were affected by acute food insecurity during 2017 — 11 million more people than the year before. Acute food insecurity is severe hunger that poses an immediate threat to lives and livelihoods.

The recent uptick is largely attributable to new or intensified conflict and insecurity in Myanmar, north-east Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Yemen. Prolonged drought conditions also resulted in consecutive poor harvests in countries already facing high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition in eastern and southern Africa.

The report finds that food crisis are increasingly determined by complex causes such as conflict, extreme climatic shocks and high prices of staple food often acting at the same time. The situation revealed by the Global Report highlights the urgent need for simultaneous action to save lives, livelihoods and to address the root causes of food crises. [Full story](#)

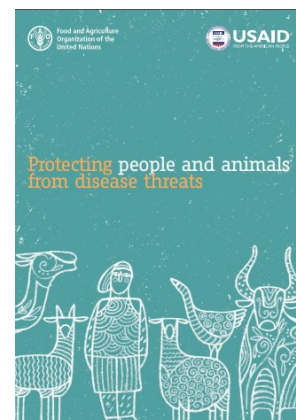


### USAID and FAO work to avoid global pandemic

9 March, Rome - The most damaging outbreaks of high impact disease in recent decades, including the highly pathogenic avian influenza and Ebola, had one thing in common—an animal source.

To ward off future pandemics and their massive health and economic impacts, FAO and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) have been working together to strengthen the developing countries' capacity to manage disease outbreaks in farm animals. In just one year, the partnership has trained over 4,700 veterinary health professionals in 25 countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

"A partnership with FAO not only enables us to protect human populations from future viral threats, but also to protect animal populations from viruses that could decimate food supplies. It's not just a global health, infectious disease issue, but also a food security, food safety, and economic growth issue," Dennis Carroll, Director of USAID's Global Health Security and Development Unit. [Full Story](#)



## LATEST FAO PUBLICATIONS

### UNDERSTANDING AGROECOLOGY

Although not a new concept, agroecology is gaining momentum worldwide as an effective approach to tackle climate change and the interconnected challenges facing food security and nutrition. On the occasion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Symposium on Agroecology (3–5 April 2018, Rome), have a look at FAO's work in this area and a selection of publications offering guidance, tools and analysis. For further reading, see [publications](#).



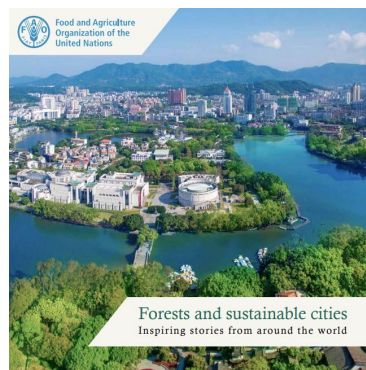
### SAFEGUARDING OUR WATER

Water is essential for every form of life. It is also an integral part of every aspect of FAO's work: from agriculture to forests and fisheries; from climate change to crises caused by conflict. In a context of growing populations and food demands, increasing pressure from agricultural production and changing weather patterns, there is a widening gap in water quality and availability among regions. On the occasion of World Water Day 2018 on 22 March and the [World Water Forum](#), have a look at FAO's water-related guidance, tools and analysis. For further reading, see [publications](#).



### FORESTRY

On the occasion of this year's [International Day of Forests](#) on 21 March, FAO released a [publication](#) that presents success stories of cities that have opted for "green" strategies to deal with urban challenges, such as large-scale afforestation in Beijing and tree planting to protect from landslides in Lima. March also featured the launch of [Seventy years of FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment \(1948–2018\): Historical overview and future prospects](#).



## 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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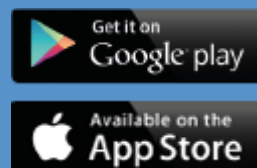
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