Sweden and FAO
Partnering to build global food security

Sweden is an active resource partner, providing indispensable support to a wide array of FAO activities, including response to emergencies. It is one of four partners to have joined FAO’s Multipartner Programme Support Mechanism, which pools resource partners’ contributions to enable more flexible support to FAO’s work. In addition, Sweden’s International Development Cooperation Agency recently signed a multi-million dollar Contribution Agreement aimed at improving the quality of FAO’s assistance in several high-priority countries and regions. The Agreement provides for a programme approach, permitting FAO to deliver more effectively and expeditiously.

Making fair and humane rural employment opportunities the norm

With 75 percent of the world’s poor living in rural areas of developing countries, creating decent rural employment opportunities is a crucial component for inclusive economic growth, poverty reduction and food security.

With the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), through the Multipartner Programme Support Mechanism, FAO scaled up its Decent Rural Employment Team and piloted country-level projects to increase economic opportunities and reduce child labour in Malawi, Mali and the United Republic of Tanzania. FAO is working to bring together agriculture and labour ministries, unions and farmers’ federations in order to raise awareness, develop partnerships and bolster national institutional capacities for improving rural employment opportunities through appropriate policies, strategies and programmes.

Although these countries have child labour laws which prevent children from working in factories, more than 60 percent of all child labour occurs in agriculture, often as unpaid family labour. Poor families send their children to the fields instead of to school. In this way, a cycle of poverty is created in which generations of youth are denied the opportunity of receiving an education and developing the skills that could lead to a better future.

To promote youth employment in Malawi, Mali and Tanzania, government officials were trained to include youth in policy debates and adapt rural economies to the needs of young people. FAO Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools helped over 150 young farmers enter cooperatives and gain access to land, credit and markets. Graduates of the programme reported a 60 percent improvement in their incomes as well as increased access to markets and more fairly negotiated prices.

In line with Sida’s support for the Youth and United Nations Global Alliance, FAO has seen young people bring new enthusiasm and innovation to agriculture. Trained young farmers are more likely to use natural pesticides and to practice climate-smart agriculture, making them the likely future leaders of economically and environmentally sustainable agriculture.

“Overcoming climate change is central to achieving a sustainable future for the planet’s growing population, and food security must lie at the heart of that effort.”
José Graziano da Silva, FAO Director-General
Scaling up climate-smart agriculture

Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) is rapidly gaining international momentum, and it all began with a small amount of seed money from the Sida. Through FAO’s Multipartner Programme Support Mechanism, Sweden has been instrumental in developing an innovative funding channel that gives new ideas the flexibility to expand beyond the confines of a single project.

CSA is one such idea which, thanks to Sida funding, grew exponentially from a technical concept into a globally recognized strategy. It has demonstrated the potential to transform agriculture from an environmental hazard into an environmental caretaker, all the while addressing the interlinked challenges of food security and productivity. Sida funds are also helping Malawi, Viet Nam and Zambia make climate-smart agriculture the gold standard, both in agricultural policy and in the field. FAO projects focus on CSA’s long-term viability by identifying and overcoming local barriers to implementation.

FAO has embedded CSA into its strategic objectives and the international community is following suit. In September 2014, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the UN Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture to help national governments adjust their agricultural sectors using CSA as a key response to climate change.

International financing institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, as well as NGOs and the private sector are reorienting their programmes and funding towards CSA. Large corporations are also at the table, with Kellogg’s, Walmart and McDonalds say they intend to use and sell goods that are “CSA certified”.

Helping rural populations recover and thrive

The world’s 2.5 billion people who depend on agriculture for their livelihoods often bear the worst impact of conflicts, natural disasters, pests and other devastating emergencies.

Thanks to contributions from the Government of Sweden, FAO has been able to rapidly respond to such threats and emergencies across the globe, helping countries to be better prepared by reducing the risks and enhancing the resilience of their food and agricultural systems.

Between 2010 and 2015, Sweden provided US$54.5 million for FAO’s emergency work in Africa, in Asia and in Latin America.

With this funding, FAO is supporting the agriculture-based livelihoods of vulnerable households affected by climate-related disasters (drought and floods), political instability and conflicts. Beneficiary households are able to produce their own food and acquire the knowledge and skills to rebuild and sustain their livelihoods. The funding is also helping improve the quality of FAO’s work before, during and after emergencies, while strengthening coordination of food security and agriculture at the national and global levels. As a result, a wide range of stakeholders (including UN agencies, ministries and NGOs) will be better placed to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of future responses.

Support to FAO’s resilience programmes

For the first time, Sida and FAO signed a Macro-grant Agreement enabling multiyear planning and predictable funding for FAO’s resilience programmes. The agreement covers the period 2014-2016.

During 2015, Sweden’s financial support has gone towards a wide range of activities including:

- Contributing to the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) enhancing food security coordination and data assessment at the national level in Somalia.
- Building resilient livelihoods for farmers and agro-pastoralist households affected by the security crisis and climate change in Mali.
- Enhancing the resilience of vulnerable pastoral communities through appropriate early warning systems and community-based disaster risk reduction and management in Djibouti.
- Contributing to emergency programmes in Chad, Colombia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Niger.
- Supporting – with funding from Sida – a post-Ebola recovery project in Sierra Leone and Guinea.

For 2016, the contribution agreement has been modified to include a new project in Chad, increased funding for ongoing projects in Colombia, Djibouti and Somalia, and support to the Food Security Cluster.