



NOW from NORTH AMERICA



Winning artwork from the 2018 World Food Day Poster Contest.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dear Readers,

“We need innovation. We need to explore all approaches, practices and techniques that can contribute to making food systems more efficient and sustainable.”

**José Graziano da Silva,
Director-General of FAO**

160th FAO Council

7 December 2018

I hope your year is off to a fruitful start! We are looking forward to 2019 being an important year in setting the global community on track for a future that we all want! Adapting innovative and sustainable methods of agricultural food production will be crucial to produce the food necessary to feed the growing global population.

To explore emerging technologies in this space, FAO North America hosted a roundtable discussion on the application of blockchain on the food ecosystem featuring Ramesh Gopinath, Vice President of IBM Blockchain Solutions in partnership with CSIS Global Food Security Project. Fast-tracking action to end chronic hunger and enhancing U.S. leadership on food security issues was the topic of a Congressional briefing that we co-hosted with the Alliance to End Hunger. Furthermore, we explored how agriculture can be a solution for climate change in our roundtable series with EcoAgriculture Partners.

This issue of our newsletter also includes a thrilling poem by the third place winner of the World Food Day Poetry Contest, and insights from four courageous Planet Forward students who attended the Committee on World Food Security in Rome this past October. We are also thrilled that four of the twelve winners of the 2018 World Food Day Poster contest hail from the United States! A big congratulations to everyone who participated.

This month, we are organizing a technical briefing on the 2018 State of Food Security and Nutrition Report in Ottawa in partnership with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and a roundtable discussion on Geographical Indications with the World Food Law Institute. We are also offering two [internship opportunities](#) in the field of communications, trade and nutrition. Please encourage potential candidates to apply before **18 January 2019**.

Thank you for your continued interest in our work. As always we appreciate your feedback. Looking forward to an eventful year!

Vimlendra Sharan
Director, FAO Liaison Office for North America

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

Blockchain Applications in Agriculture

4 December 2018, Washington, DC - Blockchains and other Distributed Ledger Technologies (DLTs) hold enormous potential to transform agriculture and food systems by improving traceability, enabling rights enforcement, optimizing food chains, and improving transactions. To examine the potential application of blockchain in food and agriculture, FAO North America and the CSIS Global Food Security Project convened a roundtable discussion featuring Ramesh Gopinath, Vice President for Blockchain Solutions at IBM; and Mischa Tripoli, Economist in the Trade and Markets Division of FAO, who joined virtually from Rome.

Gopinath provided an overview of IBM Food Trust™, a data-sharing platform that uses blockchain technology to create accountability in the food supply chain. The tool connects growers, processors, distributors, and retailers through a permission based, permanent and shared record of food system data. Data sharing in the food ecosystem has been a challenge for decades, and is crucial for ensuring food safety, freshness, reducing food waste, and avoiding food fraud.



From left to right: Vimlendra Sharan (FAO); Kimberly Flowers (CSIS); and Ramesh Gopinath (IBM).

Fast-tracking Action to Reach Zero Hunger



From left to right: Vimlendra Sharan; Beth Dunford; John Ellenberger; Asma Lateef; Noam Unger; Rebecca Middleton; and Amb. Tony Hall

6 December 2018, Washington, DC - With global hunger levels on the rise for the third consecutive year – reaching 821 million people – FAO North America and the Alliance to End Hunger hosted a Congressional Briefing on how the United States can build off its historic leadership in global food security issues to end chronic hunger globally. U.S. Representative Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) sponsored the event room.

Ambassador Tony Hall, Executive Director Emeritus of the Alliance to End Hunger, and former Member of Congress, opened the event noting the importance of U.S. bipartisan support for global food security through the passing of the Global Food Security Reauthorization Act this past November. Seeking a more holistic approach to addressing rising rates of hunger, Ambassador Hall recommended establishing a select committee on hunger, or a potential omnibus “hunger bill” to elevate food security issues in Congress.

Following the Ambassadors remarks, Rebecca Middleton, Executive Director of the Alliance to End Hunger, moderated a discussion featuring Beth Dunford of USAID; John Ellenberger of Land O’Lakes, Inc.; Noam Unger of InterAction; and Asma Lateef of the Bread for the World Institute.

Promoting Climate Smart Agriculture in the U.S.

13 December 2018, Washington, DC - FAO North America and EcoAgriculture Partners co-hosted a timely roundtable discussion on “Agricultural Landscapes and Climate Change in the U.S.: Recent policy and program developments.”

Gabriel Laizer, Strategic Partnerships Officer at FAO North America, highlighted the relevance of the topic with the recent passing of the U.S. Farm Bill and the UN Climate Change Conference in Poland (COP24) taking place in parallel.

Seth Shames, Director of Policy and Markets at EcoAgriculture Partners, moderated the discussion, which focused on how agriculture can be a solution for climate mitigation. Expert speakers included Ernie Shea, Principal Architect at Natural Resources Solutions, Inc.; Rima Al-Azar, Global Climate Governance Coordinator and lead of Climate Smart Agriculture team at FAO; and Marci Baranski, Climate Change Specialist at the USDA Office of Environmental and Energy Policy in the Climate Change Program Office.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

World Food Day Poetry Contest - Third Place Poem

FAO North America in partnership with *Poetry X Hunger* hosted the first of its kind World Food Day Poetry Contest. In this issue, we showcase the third place winner Jesse Alexander's poem "Hunger #1". The winners were selected by judges Carla Christopher, York Pennsylvania's Fourth Poet Laureate, and widely published poet and playwright, Kim M. Baker. [Read](#) the judges comments along with the others poems.

Shutter

For Kevin Carter, Winner of the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography in The New York Times

And if you could go back, you would
 You would pick the child up, gingerly like a newborn
 cradling her large head, thin-skinned body, jutting bones,
 And no mother you, but you would have hushed her
 Won't you pick her up, gingerly, like a newborn
 Shoo away the vulture, whose crime is hers too, hunger
 And you're no mother, but you would have hushed her because
 What distance is a lens, a camera's shutter, snap that captures
 Shooing away the vulture, (whose crime was hers too, hunger)
 Framing a moment that will pass, like breath, like life
 Because what distance is a lens, a camera's shutter, snap that captures
 Arid, ravaged Sudan, torn in two, like you as you crouch closer
 Framing a moment that will pass, like breath, like life
 And if you could go back, you would
 into arid ravaged Sudan, torn in two, just like you, crouch closer
 cradle her, large head, thin-skinned, body only jutting bones

Teri Ellen Cross Davis
Silver Spring, Maryland

Planet Forward Insights from CFS

11 December 2018, Washington, DC - Four Planet Forward Students set out to learn about how countries are committed to the task of ending global hunger by attending the Committee on World Food Security proceeding in Rome this past October. Through the FAO North America and Planet Forward partnership, the students met with policymakers, leading academics, economists, among others to learn about what it takes to create a planet free from hunger.

From the impact of hunger on health to youth involvement in agriculture; from the role of the European Union to indigenous communities to eradicate hunger, the students bring you four unique perspectives to the hunger narrative.

- "Rural communities aim for 'Zero Hunger' goal by 2030," by **Sierra Williamson** from University of Minnesota
- "If it's not at the table, it won't be on the menu: Health," by **Harleen Marwah** from George Washington University
- "UN-FAO, European Union partner to build resilience to food crises," by **Arianna Dunham** from George Washington University
- "Planting the seeds of tomorrow: Getting youth into ag," **Terrius Harris**, Planet Forward Senior Correspondent from the University of Mississippi.

To read the articles visit www.planetforward.org/content/a-zero-hunger-future

Partner Corner:

Poetry X Hunger

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.

With hunger on the rise worldwide, the need for poets to raise the alarm, describe the harm, and touch hearts and minds is especially urgent. *Poetry X Hunger* is a new initiative to tap into the power of poetry to assist in the struggle to reduce and eliminate hunger.

Poetry X Hunger collaborated with FAO North America to launch the first of its kind 2018 World Food Day Poetry Competition, which called on poets in the Greater Washington, DC area to write a powerful array of hunger-focused poems. As a result, food banks, soup kitchens and other hunger groups can now tap into this treasure trove of poems for messaging and inspiration.

"It is great to see organizations like FAO encouraging so many powerful poetic voices to speak up," said *Poetry X Hunger* Founder Hiram Larew.

To learn more, visit *Poetry X Hunger* on [Facebook](#) or email: POETRYXHUNGER@gmail.com

FAO Deputy Dan Gustafson Attends Soybean Innovation Lab Board Meeting

Dan Gustafson, Deputy Director of FAO Programs, attended the Soybean Innovation Lab Advisory Board Meeting at the Mississippi State University in December 2018.

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Soybean Value Chain research (Soybean Innovation Lab, SIL) is USAID's only comprehensive program dedicated to soybean research for development.

The Soybean Innovation Lab is building a foundation for soybean production in Africa by developing the knowledge, innovation, and technologies to enable successful soybean production.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

EVENTS IN JANUARY

What	When	Where	Register
Geographical Indications Roundtable	Thursday, 24 January 2019 from 9:00 -10:30 am	FAO North America 2121 K Street, Suite 800B, Washington, DC	Contact Gabriel Laizer, <Gabriel.Laizer@fao.org>
Technical Discussion on the 2018 State of Food Security and Nutrition	Tuesday, 29 January 2019	Ottawa , ON	Contact Pesek, Thomas <Thomas.Pesek@fao.org>

INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY

FAO's Liaison Office for North America is currently looking to hire a Nutrition and International Trade Intern, and Communications Intern for a duration of six months. The internship will be based in Washington, DC . To learn more and to apply, [click here](#). The application deadline is **18 January 2019**.

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.

The United States does not exempt UN earnings from income tax for U.S. citizens and permanent residents. In the interest of equity, the UN General Assembly established a system (Tax Equalization Fund) to reimburse income taxes to those staff members who are required to pay income taxes in respect of salaries or other emoluments they receive from the United Nations.

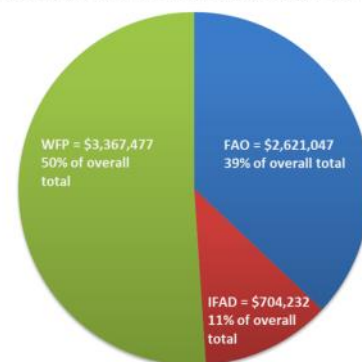
The FAO North America Tax Unit processed 786 **tax reimbursement and advance requests from FAO/ WFP/IFAD staff** members (an 11.8% increase from last year) for the 2018 Calendar Year – totaling almost **\$6.7 million in payouts**. The Tax Unit manages this workload with one full time Finance/Tax Assistant, a Tax Assistant (at 40% time), and a Finance Assistant at 50%.

Important upcoming dates:

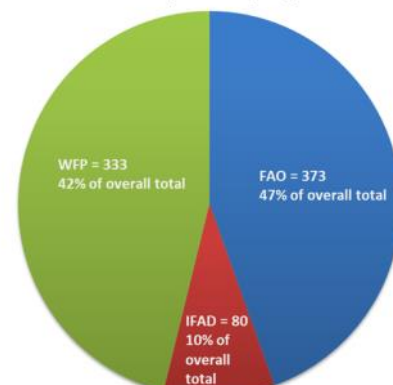
15 January 2019 - 4th Quarter Estimate payments due to the IRS
28 February 2019 - FAO Administrative Circular approval (estimate date)

Please feel free to email the Tax Unit with questions:
low-ustax-settlement@fao.org

Overall Payout Amounts By Organization - CY 2018



Total Number of Tax Requests By Organization - CY 2018



FAO GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

Innovation and Joint Action Needed to Achieve Sustainable agriculture and food systems

7 December 2018, Rome - "No country alone will be able to overcome all the challenges we face fully, so we must act globally. Nobody must be left behind," FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva said in remarks to member states.

Concluding the week-long deliberations of the FAO Council, the governance body that manages administrative and financial affairs for the Organization, FAO's Director-general praised participants for taking decisions by consensus with a focus "on substantive issues rather than micromanagement" and urged them to continue that approach after his tenure ends in 2019.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the fundamental tool for joint action to achieve global goals such as eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and assuring a viable environment, he noted.

"Countries cannot achieve the Sustainable Development Goals on the basis of traditional agricultural approaches," Graziano da Silva added. "We need innovation."



UN resolutions focus on plant health, food safety & pulses

20 December 2018, Rome - The UN General Assembly approved three new resolutions creating awareness-raising initiatives, focused on plant health, food safety and pulses. The UNGA proclaims:

- The year 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health. With up to 40% of global food crops lost annually due to plant pests, the importance of fostering healthy plants is critical for public opinion and policy makers.
- 10 February as World Pulses Day, keeping alive the positive momentum surrounding these healthy, nutritious, protein-rich, nitrogen-fixing legumes after FAO's successful 2016 International Year of Pulses Campaign.
- 7 June as World Food Safety Day, paying tribute to an increasingly important issue in today's highly interconnected food systems.

FAO also hailed the UNGA resolution adopting the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas. Adopted on 17 December, the resolution aims to protect the rights of all rural populations including peasants, agricultural and rural workers and indigenous peoples, while also recognizing their contribution to sustainable development and biodiversity and the challenges they face.

FAO Conference Awards

The [FAO Conference Awards](#) recognizes Individuals, institutions and organizations who have made outstanding achievements in fighting hunger. The award was established by FAO's highest governing body. Awardees will be recognized as champions of the Zero Hunger Generation - the first generation with the capacity to end hunger and make food and nutrition security truly universal.

The awards include:

- B.R. Sen Award for recognizing the outstanding performance of **field officers** during country assignments.
- A.H. Boerma Award for **journalists** who have successfully steered public attention towards food security topics.
- Edouard Saouma Award for **institutions** that have created true impact in the efficient execution of FAO Projects.
- Jacques Diouf Award for the best **Contribution to Global Food Security**.
- Margarita Lizárraga Medal for exceptional application of the **Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries**.

To make a nomination, please contact: FAO-Awards@fao.org. All nominations need to be submitted by **31 January 2019**.

NASA and FAO launch next-generation geospatial tool

12 December 2018, Katowice, Poland - Seeing both forests and trees will now be easier, thanks to a new open-access tool developed by US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and FAO, with support from the Google Earth Engine Team and the US Government's SilvaCarbon Program.

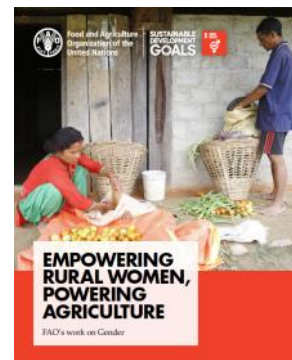
Collect Earth Online (CEO) amplifies the power of FAO's [Open Foris Collect Earth](#) tool, which for the past few years has enabled the collection of data on land use, deforestation and for other purposes with the help of satellite imagery. CEO will become a central technology supporting FAO's global Remote Sensing Survey.

The new platform is web-based, free of charge, open to all, requires no downloads or installation, and allows users to systematically inspect any location on the Earth with satellite data. To access the platform register at <http://collect.earth/>

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN, POWERING AGRICULTURE

This [booklet](#) looks at FAO's work in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, showing that enabling rural women to have the same access as men to resources, services and opportunities translates into economic and social gains for families, communities and nations at large.



EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL OVERVIEW OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

This [study](#) warns that many countries in the region have gone from dealing with undernutrition to coping with over-nutrition and non-communicable diseases. This is associated with a transition in diets towards an increased intake of processed foods, often accompanied by a more sedentary lifestyle.



THE STATE OF MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEA FISHERIES 2018

According to this [report](#), small-scale vessels make up the biggest proportion of the region's fleet and generate most employment. However, they generate only 26 % of total revenue, as their workers earn about half that of workers on trawlers/purse seiners.



HAVE YOU TUNED INTO TARGET ZERO HUNGER PODCAST?

TARGET: Zero Hunger is a podcast about global food security. With the latest research and the help of farmers, development experts and decision-makers around the world, each episode explores the food challenges and solutions of our time. TZH is available on [Soundcloud](#), [iTunes](#) and [Stitcher](#).



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 conceptualized in the United States during a meeting in Hot Springs, Virginia 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 FAO and [Canada](#) and the [United States](#).

CONTACT US

FAO Liaison Office for North America

2121 K Street, NW.
Suite 800B.
Washington, D.C.
20037 USA

+1 (202) 653-2400
Faolow@fao.org

[www.fao.org/
north-america](http://www.fao.org/north-america)

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