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Food and Agriculture
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Продовольственная и
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Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
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CONFERENCE

Forty-second Session

2021

**Report of the Sixth Informal Regional Conference for North America
(22-23 October 2020)**

Report of the Sixth Informal Regional Conference for North America
Virtual Meeting, 22-23 October, 2020
Virtual Pre-Briefings, 22-23 September, 2020

The North American Region recommends that FAO: embrace an inclusive approach to innovation; focus on its core mandate, in particular its normative work; highlight the need to build food systems resilience, including through trade; systematically adopt gender responsive approaches, including those that tackle the root causes of gender inequalities); and leverage the power of partnerships.

Celebrating 75 years of North American partnership with FAO

1. The 6th Informal North American Regional Conference (INARC) opened with a Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the FAO's first Conference, held in Quebec City, Canada in 1945. Canada's Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Marie-Claude Bibeau, United States Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue, FAO Director-General Dr. Qu Dongyu and Quebec Minister of International Relations and the Francophonie, Nadine Girault, each delivered remarks.
2. All speakers addressed the critical role North America played in the FAO's creation. Minister Bibeau identified the need for innovation, international trade and inclusive food systems as prerequisites to addressing global hunger. Secretary Perdue spoke about the need for a digital FAO, stressing that FAO should continue to adapt to and address the challenges of today and the future.¹

North American Priorities for the FAO identified

3. The North American Region identified a set of concrete priorities for FAO's 2022-2031 Strategic Framework and program of work, including global and in-country actions. They are presented in Appendix C and correspond to the five key strategic recommendations shown below:
 - **FAO should pursue an inclusive innovation agenda that promotes [scientific, digital, technological, and other] innovations that contribute to fostering environmental, social, and economic sustainability.**
 - **FAO adds most value when delivering the critical functions of its core mandate: normative and standard-setting work; scientific, evidence-based, and impartial analysis; and serving as a knowledge aggregator.**
 - **FAO will best build resilience to persistent and emerging threats by focusing on timely, science and evidence-based responses and highlighting the importance of global supply chains and international trade.**
 - **FAO will be most effective by systematically adopting gender-responsive approaches including those that tackle underlying social norms, attitudes, behaviors and social systems perpetuating gender inequalities and increasing its focus on engaging women, youth, and indigenous peoples.**

¹ A recording of the public session is available by request for up to one year.

- **To meet the global challenges and emerging threats before it, FAO must optimize its comparative advantage by leveraging partnerships with the private sector, civil society, the Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs), and other international organizations.**

Overview of the INARC

4. The INARC was established in 2010 as a forum for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) North American Region (United States and Canada) to strengthen collaboration between Region members and the FAO.
5. The FAO does not implement technical assistance programs in the North American Region. Nonetheless, the countries of the North American Region are active participants in the organization, including the FAO's numerous technical and governing body committees and an active Liaison Office (FAOLOW) in Washington, DC, which conducts advocacy and awareness-raising activities and fosters collaboration to advance FAO's goals. Both countries have significant agricultural, fisheries, and forestry sectors and are fully committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and the FAO's goal "*to achieve food security for all, and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives.*" Given this engagement, INARC meetings have sought to express the North American Region's views on FAO's work and activities globally, as well as the Region's views on effective institutional governance.
6. The INARC is "informal" because the meeting has not been formally sanctioned by the FAO's Conference. The North American Region has chosen to keep this informal approach to significantly reduce the costs and administrative burden for the FAO. While the INARC format is informal, the priorities detailed in the INARC report are considered to be a formal declaration of the North American Region's views regarding the FAO's strategic programming. The North American Region expects that these views be given equal consideration as the reports from other regional conferences in the FAO's budgetary and operational planning and reporting.

Organization of the 2020 Conference

7. The 6th INARC was held virtually, and in two main parts after the original in-person conference was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The North America Region held a series of pre-briefings and discussions with the FAO on September 22-23, 2020, followed by the INARC plenary on October 22-23, 2020.
8. Representatives from Canada and the United States, which make up the FAO's North American Region, participated in the Regional Conference alongside officials from the FAO and the FAO's Liaison Office in Washington (FAOLOW).
9. The pre-briefings were co-chaired by Canada's Chief Agriculture Negotiator and Director-General, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Aaron Fowler and by U.S. Mission to the UN Agencies in Rome Deputy Chief of Mission Jennifer Harhigh. Assistant Deputy Minister of

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Frédéric Seppey and U.S. Undersecretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs Ted McKinney co-chaired the plenary. A complete list of Regional Conference participants is provided in *Appendix A*.

Adoption of the Agenda

10. The Regional Conference adopted agendas for the pre-briefings and for the plenary meeting. Both are provided in *Appendix B*.

Proceedings of the INARC Plenary Discussions

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Opening Remarks from Assistant Deputy Minister Frédéric Seppey

11. Assistant Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Frédéric Seppey, opened the session by expressing gratitude to FAO and the U.S. for their efforts to convene the INARC meetings virtually during the Covid-19 pandemic. He noted regional conferences are an important source of input for the FAO and that the INARC is an opportunity to consider high-level priorities in a flexible way. Seppey underlined the need for a better collaborative response to pests, disease, and emerging threats and a need for FAO to focus on its core mandate.

Opening Remarks from Under Secretary Ted McKinney

12. U.S. Undersecretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs, Ted McKinney, underlined the importance of raising the North American voice to support collaboration on science-based innovation to feed the world's growing population while reducing the environmental footprint of agriculture. McKinney focused his remarks on the importance of innovation and reiterated the critical importance of the FAO's mandate, noting the important progress achieved prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Opening Remarks from Director-General Qu Dongyu

13. Director-General of the FAO, Dr. Qu Dongyu, appreciated the historical contributions from Canada and the United States to the Organization since its inception, underlining the need for continued North American leadership to eradicate global hunger. The Director-General highlighted recent steps FAO has taken to respond to Covid-19 and increase organizational transparency. He concluded his remarks by explaining the need for efficient reform of the FAO structure and governance to make the organization more agile, which will be further reinforced by the development of the FAO Strategic Framework.

Opening Remarks from Canada's Ambassador to the Italian Republic and Permanent Representative to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, Alexandra Bugailiskis.

14. Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the FAO, Alexandra Bugailiskis, appreciated the fundamental role and mandate of FAO as a neutral convening power, bringing technical expertise and data, including in measuring impact, and helping develop enabling environments to foster innovation. She underlined the importance of the three pillars of sustainability and including women, youth and indigenous peoples in the decision-making process. In this regard, she highlighted Canada's commitment and engagement, including in her role as Chair of the Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples and as co-convenor of the Group of Friends of the UN Food Systems Summit, and in her team's involvement as focal point for the FAO in the Gender Network in Rome to build a more inclusive FAO.

Opening Remarks from Assistant Deputy Minister, Global Affairs Canada, Peter MacDougall

15. Assistant Deputy Minister, Global Affairs Canada, Peter MacDougall, underlined the importance of science and innovation for agricultural development and food security and shared concerns over the impact of Covid-19 on vulnerable people. With increasingly complex food security crises, aggregation of knowledge to support decision making is critical, especially to recognize the role of women in agriculture.

Opening remarks from Ambassador and Permanent Representative of United States to the United Nations Agencies in Rome, Kip Tom.

16. Ambassador and Permanent Representative of United States to the United Nations Agencies in Rome, Kip Tom, appreciated the timing of the sessions to address the impacts of Covid-19, including implications for access to food, openness of markets, freedom of trade, and effects on supply chains. He underlined that the United States is actively championing all forms of innovation including agricultural advances, technology, use of digital tools, and other innovations. He stated that new innovations and productivity growth should be at the center of efforts to create more sustainable food systems. The United States welcomed innovative partnerships, including with the private sector aimed at speeding progress toward achieving the SDGs, which make the FAO more agile and increase its effectiveness. Ambassador Tom hoped that the new FAO Strategic Framework will be flexible and responsive to address risks and challenges. He reminded that as the FAO modernizes, it must continue to prioritize its normative work and coordination with the RBAs and the United Nations.

Opening Remarks from Assistant to the Administrator for Resilience and Food Security, USAID, Jim Barnhart.

17. Assistant to the Administrator for Resilience and Food Security, USAID, Jim Barnhart., underlined the proud partnership of USAID with the FAO which includes the provision of humanitarian assistance to the FAO to achieve results in reducing hunger and malnutrition. He emphasized the critical importance of addressing the challenges of at-risk groups and communities which include emerging threats such as African Swine Fever, as well as committing to aligned, and early, development action in response to COVID-19. He explained that USAID is focused on integrating humanitarian assistance, conflict prevention

and stabilization and food security work, within a framework of relief, response and resilience. Barnhart also underlined the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit in 2021 as an opportunity to maintain focus on alleviating malnutrition, poverty, and hunger.

North American Strategic Priorities for the FAO

FAO Liaison Office in Washington (FAOLOW)'s Role in Implementing North America's Priorities

18. Director for FAOLOW, Vimlendra Sharan, presented on FAOLOW's role in implementing the North American Region's priorities. Sharan highlighted FAOLOW's advocacy, partnerships, and stakeholder-engagement within the North American Region, conducting evidence-based awareness-raising for FAO's mission of advising and assisting the development and implementation of FAO policies and programmes around the world.

FAO's Progress to Implement 2018 INARC Priorities

19. Director of FAO's Office of Strategic Planning and Resources Management, Beth Crawford, noted that regional priorities are arranged by strategic objectives in the document, which are measured based on the achievement of the SDGs. She noted that the FAO has achieved 95% of targets under the strategic objectives and there was an increase in resources mobilized.

North American Deliberations

20. Administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), Ken Isley, commended the FAO for its more comprehensive incorporation of gender aspects in the organization. He also applauded the three-year Global Action Plan for the fall armyworm (FAW), noting remaining areas of concern for the Desert Locust. Isley underlined the central importance of using new technologies when responding to emerging threats as the scope of the FAW guide does not sufficiently highlight the role of innovative crop protection tools and stressed the importance of science, evidence, and risk-based policies. He also appreciated the work of FAOLOW and suggested the development of a programme of work based on regional priorities.
21. Director General of the Trade Agreement and Negotiations Directorate at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Aaron Fowler, stressed the need to improve productivity – producing more with less – and sustainability in order to achieve the SDGs. He reiterated that the FAO is a knowledge organisation, and called on the organisation to focus work in areas where it has a comparative advantage, specifically calling for sustainable funding for standard-setting work. He also underlined the importance of work on gender transformative approaches at the FAO.
22. As an outcome of the 2020 INARC process, the Governments of Canada and the United States have agreed on detailed North American regional priorities for 2020-2021, as provided

in Appendix C. The North American Region requests that the FAO report on implementation of these priorities be received in advance of the seventh FAO informal Regional Conference for North America in 2022.

The Next Strategic Framework of the FAO

23. Director of FAO's Office of Strategic Planning and Resources Management, Beth Crawford, outlined the next Strategic Framework (2022-2031) and FAO work related to its development. Built around the strategic narrative of "Leaving No One Behind Through Better Food Systems", the framework is powered by four accelerators: technology, innovation, data and "complements" such as governance, human capital and institutions. The aim of the strategy is the delivery of Agenda 2030, especially SDGs 1,2,10, and 14, but also the aspiration of bettering nutrition, prosperity, livelihoods and the environment. Formal and informal consultations with Regional Groups, Technical Committees, and Member Nations are ongoing as Crawford's office drafts the new Strategic Framework, and she anticipated these opportunities to provide feedback and input would continue until March 2021.

North American Deliberations

24. The Regional Conference was supportive of many areas of the proposed framework, with a particular appreciation for the normative work of Codex Alimentarius (Codex) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). It underlined the need to establish a sustainable source of funding and prioritize consistent, empowered leadership for these bodies, and make the FAO's normative work and its support of standard-setting more prominent than in the past framework. The United States specifically warned against forces advocating for departures from FAO's scientific work. The Regional Conference also supported the shift away from transactional relationships and innovation as a centerpiece of sustainability. The Region highlighted transparency as a crucial principle for all areas of FAO's work, and welcomed FAO's consultative approach on the Strategic Framework's development.
25. The United States asked how the FAO's framework would meaningfully integrate opposing perspectives on key issues such as pesticide use. In this sense, the Regional Conference advocated that the framework should be inclusive and consultative so that farmers have access to all the tools necessary to address their challenges. For example, Canada and the United States highlighted the relevance of new technologies, biotechnology, and emerging research potential in the fights against the Desert Locusts and FAW.
26. Canada and the United States argued for additional emphasis in the framework on alignment with SDGs, innovation, private sector partnerships at all levels, and gender as a cross-cutting component. Canada looks forward to the development of the FAO's Gender Action Plan. Canada also noted that the FAO should avoid areas of duplication and deemphasize areas where the organisation has no comparative advantage, considering the mandate and resources of other agencies.

Looking Forward to 2020-2021

27. FAO Chief Economist, Máximo Torero, charted the FAO way forward based on the accelerators of data, technology, innovation and complements. He notably underlined the critical role played by data, which fuels the Early Warning System and which the FAO put to effective use in responding to the global pandemic. He further explained that the FAO's aim is to provide robust, objective, and science- and data-based information on the constraints and trade-offs of adopting various approaches and innovations, considering all three pillars of sustainability, in order to enable policy decision-making by Member Nations.
28. FAO Deputy Director-General, Maria Helena Semedo, presented future plans for the organization around the ideas of building back better to prevent the next pandemic, and of using technologies and science to reinforce capabilities. She also underscored the essential work of the Codex, Joint FAO/IAEA Programme such as the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) initiative, FAO/OIE/WHO Collaboration (Tripartite) on anti-microbial resistance and the "One Health" approach, and support to the FAO technical committees.
29. FAO Deputy Director-General, Beth Bechdol, laid out the priorities related to technical work, partnership, and internal streamlining. Technical work includes response to emerging threats such as FAW and the Desert Locusts, work at the IPPC and support to the FAO technical committees. Partnership work consists of making sure that FAO partnerships with a variety of stakeholders are best leveraged, more strategic and intentional. Streamlining work is based on creating an environment that enables the use of its resources, structure, and programs.
30. Strategic Planning Director Crawford again took the floor to present the structural reorganisation which was approved by Council for 2020-2021 and is now being implemented.

North American Deliberations

31. U.S. Ambassador Tom argued that priorities and all FAO work should be more measurable. He noted the critical role played by Codex and the need to promote inclusive innovation. He stated that the new Chief Scientist's policy formulation and the work of the Office of Innovation should be based on science and the principles of risk management and trade-offs. He also stressed the severity of the FAW and Desert Locusts threats as well as the importance of fostering agricultural trade.
32. Canadian Ambassador Bugailiskis underlined the central importance of systematically integrating gender across the work of the FAO. She also highlighted the important role played by Indigenous Peoples in sharing their traditional knowledge and food systems. She argued for increased inclusivity as a source of resilience, creating synergy across the organisation. She lastly noted that the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the World Food Programme highlighted the important linkages between food security and peace, and that the UN's Food Systems Summit in 2021 will be an opportunity to put a spotlight on food

security issues as an effective pathway to achieve the SDGs and climate action, noting that RBA collaboration is essential.

33. U.S. Undersecretary McKinney underscored the importance of the FAO being inclusive in its promotion of approaches to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In this sense, the United States believes the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit should not force a specific food systems approach on Members and participants. The FAO should remain an unbiased referee grounded in science and should ensure that farmers, pastoralists, forest keepers, and fishers have access to the tools that empower them to be sustainable, while avoiding non-scientific barriers to trade and production.
34. Canadian Assistant Deputy Minister Seppey valued the FAO's expertise, which drives the organization's normative and technical work. In this sense, he underlined the central importance of the FAO providing neutral, science and evidence-based frameworks for decision-making. He also appreciated that the structural changes moving the FAO away from working in silos.

Concluding Remarks

Closing Remarks from Undersecretary Ted McKinney

35. McKinney said the historical 75th anniversary of the FAO marked a significant opportunity to highlight the need for more outreach, bilateral work and engagement with the FAOLOW. He highlighted FAO should focus on the role of science-based innovation, in all its forms, and place emphasis on promoting open, transparent, and predictable markets, as a key tool for eradicating hunger. McKinney further noted the importance of sustaining and deepening the normative work undertaken by CODEX and the IPPC.

Closing Remarks from Assistant Deputy Minister Frédéric Seppey

36. Seppey appreciated the quality and the substance of the dialogue of the informal sessions and FAO's recognition of the Region's special status. He noted that Canada shares the comprehensive vision and priorities of the Director-General of the FAO, especially with regard to innovation, and looks forward to future collaboration. He warned against bias towards certain agriculture production approaches, as these can lead to non-scientific barriers to trade or production, thereby reducing food security.
37. Both Canada and the United States reflected on the significance of the FAO's 75th anniversary and on the immense challenge that FAO and its members face in responding to Covid-19, and in taking the necessary steps to achieve the SDGs. Both countries remarked on the broad scope and complexity of the topics that the 6th INARC had considered. Delegates further agreed on the need to engage the Secretariat and other Member Nations on an ongoing basis to foster dialogue on issues the INARC considered. The Regional Conference agreed to reconvene in 2022.

Food systems and Covid-19: North American views on how FAO can build resilience

38. During the 6th INARC, the North American Region gathered senior government leaders from the U.S. and Canada, the Director-General and other FAO senior management, as well as representatives from the civil society and private sector mechanisms of the United Nations Committee on World Food Security to discuss FAO's approach and response to the most pressing issue facing food systems: Covid-19. Providing a platform for civil society and the private sector to engage directly with government and FAO leaders on this issue was important to the North American Region.
39. Panelists praised the FAO for its early action in collecting data, issuing analyses and delivering policy recommendations. Participants made particular reference to FAO's efforts to highlight the need for international trade to keep flowing in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Panelists also called for continuing and deepening focus on women's empowerment and equality in all of FAO's work, as well as capturing lessons learned from FAO's Covid-19 response to apply to other areas of FAO's work addressing persistent and emerging challenges.²

² A recording of the public session is available by request for up to one year.

Appendix A – INARC Pre-Brief and Plenary Agenda

North America Pre INARC Briefings

Tuesday, 22 September, 2020

Session - 1

Audience: United States, Canada, FAO

Total Time Allotted: 4 hours 15 mins

Proposed Time	Agenda	FAO Presenters (Name & Designation)
14:00 hrs (Rome time) 8:00 am EST (15 min)	1 Introductions & Opening Remarks	FAO : DDG Behdol Canada : Aaron Fowler, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (Head of Delegation) USA: Jennifer Harhigh- Deputy Chief of Mission
14:15 hrs (Rome time) 8:15 am EST (45 min)	2 FAO and Innovation: New Prioritization of Innovation, Addressing Biotechnology 2.1 Update from FAO on Office of Innovation and Chief Scientist Position (15 min) 2.2 Discussion on innovation to increase productivity, environmental sustainability, peoples' access to food, and the efficiency of food systems (30 min)	DDG Behdol - Office of Innovation position Chief Economist/Director ESF – food systems Director NSP - biotechnology
15:00 hrs (Rome time) 9:00 am EST	3 Agri-Food Trade and Global Food Security 3.1 Update from FAO on trade and SDG work (10 min) 3.2 Update from FAO on ongoing/upcoming work that can enhance understanding of trade problems such as how trade barriers can affect trade between low-middle income countries (10 min)	Chief Economist/Director EST/George Mermigkas (Economist, EST) – points 1 and 2 on trade Chief Economist/Director ESF – Strategy on Food Safety

<p>(1 hour)</p>	<p>3.3 Updates from FAO on Strategy on Food Safety (10 min) 3.4 Updates from FAO on AMR work including New AMR Action Plan (10 min) 3.5 Q&A / Dialogue (20 min)</p>	<p>Chief, CJW – AMR and AMR Action Plan</p>
<p>16:00 hrs (Rome time) 10:00 am EST (45 min)</p>	<p>4 FAO support for Technical & Scientific work 4.1 Update from FAO on CODEX, including funding, and CODEX’s Scientific Advice Programme (10 min) 4.2 Update from FAO on the International Plant Protection Convention (10 min) 4.3 Updates from FAO on other technical & scientific work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ITGRFA (International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture) (5 min) ○ CGRFA (Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture) (5 min) 4.4 Discussion: N. Am. views on FAO support of standard-setting work incl. challenges and potential solutions. (15 min)</p>	<p>DDG Semedo CODEX Secretary - CODEX DDG Bechdol/Director NSP - IPPC ITGRFA Secretary – ITGRFA Director OCB – CGFRA Chief CJW/CODEX Secretary – standard setting work</p>
<p>16:45 hrs (Rome time) 10:45 am EST (30 min)</p>	<p>5 FAO and Partnerships: Expanding Opportunities 5.1 Update from FAO on partnerships programs, including private sector and civil society strategies. (15 min) 5.2 Discussions on FAO and Partnerships (15 min)</p>	<p>DDG Bechdol/Director PSU/Director PSR</p>
<p>17:15 hrs (Rome time) 11:15 am EST</p>	<p>6 FAO: Emerging Threats and Emergencies agenda 6.1 Update from FAO on Emerging pests and Emergencies (10 min) 6.2 FAO: Nexus between development and emergencies, and building resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. (10 min) </p>	<p>Director OER</p>

(45 min)	6.3 Discussion: FAO's global coordination role in responding to emergencies and emerging threats; innovation and evidence-based approaches to combatting emerging threats. (25 min)	
18:00 hrs (Rome time) 12:00 pm EST (15 min)	7 Wrap Up & Closing Remarks	Canada: Aaron Fowler, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada USA: Jennifer Harhigh- Deputy Chief of Mission FAO: DDG Bechdol

Wednesday, 23 September, 2020

Session 2

Total Time Allotted: 3 hrs 15 min

Proposed Time	Agenda	FAO Presenters (Name & Designation)
14:00 hrs (Rome time) 8:00 am EST (15 min)	1 Introductions & Opening Remarks	FAO: DDG Bechdol Canada: Frederic Seppey, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Canada: Stephen Potter, Global Affairs Canada USA: Jennifer Harhigh- Deputy Chief of Mission
14:15 hrs (Rome time) 8:15 am EST	2 FAO Development Agenda 2.1 Update from FAO on Gender Mainstreaming Initiatives (10 min) 2.2 Update from FAO on Youth engagement/work and next steps (10 min) 2.3 Update on work with Indigenous Populations (10 min) 2.4 Update from FAO on new SIDS, LLDCS, LDS office (10 min) 2.5 Dialogue with FAO officials on the Development Agenda (30 min) Discussion Topics:	Chief Economist/Director ESP – Gender and Youth DDG Bechdol/Director PSU/Yon Fernandez (Advocacy Officer, PSU) - Indigenous Populations

<p>(1 hr 30 min)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - North American views on gender equality and empowerment of women to reverse negative trends in achieving SDG 2 - UN Development Reform, progress and obstacles <p>2.6 Conclusions – Next Steps and Recommendations (20 min)</p>	<p>Chief Economist/Director OSL – SIDS, LLDCS, LDS office</p> <p>Chief Economist/Director ESP – empowerment of women</p> <p>Chief Economist/Michael Clark (Senior Coordinator DDCG) - UN Development Reform</p>
<p>15:45 hrs (Rome time)</p> <p>9:45 am EST</p> <p>(45 min)</p>	<p>3 FAO & Sustainability</p> <p>3.1 Update on Fisheries work (10 min)</p> <p>3.2 Update on Forestry (10 min)</p> <p>3.3 UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030) (5 min)</p> <p>3.4 Global Soil partnership (5 min)</p> <p>3.5 LEAP (5 min)</p> <p>3.6 Q&A (10 min)</p>	<p>DDG Semedo</p> <p>Director NFI – fisheries</p> <p>Director NFO – forestry</p> <p>Director OCB – UN Decade on Ecosystem</p> <p>Director OCB – Global Soil Partnership</p> <p>Chief NSAL - LEAP</p>
<p>16:30 hrs (Rome time)</p> <p>10:30 EST</p> <p>(30 min)</p>	<p>4 Food Systems Summit</p> <p>4.1 Update from FAO on preparations and involvement in Food Systems Summit</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. (10 min)</p> <p>4.2 Discussion on involvement of North America Region (20 min)</p>	<p>Chief Economist/Director ESF</p>
<p>17:00 hrs (Rome time)</p> <p>11:00am</p> <p>(15 min)</p>	<p>5 Wrap Up & Closing Remarks</p>	<p>Canada: Stephen Potter, Global Affairs Canada</p> <p>USA: Jennifer Harhigh- Deputy Chief of Mission</p> <p>FAO: DDG Bechdol</p>

Informal North America Regional Conference

October 22-23, 2020

Virtual WebEx

INARC Plenary Day 1

October 22, 2020

10:15 am	<p>Agenda Item 1</p> <p>Opening & Welcoming Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (15 min) Welcome from Co-Chairs from Canada (Assistant Deputy Minister Seppey) and the United States (Under Secretary McKinney)<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Welcome remarks○ Roundtable Introductions○ Administrative items
10:30 am	<p>Agenda Item 2</p> <p>High Level Segment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (30 min) FAO DG, Qu Dongyu<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ FAO and emerging threats<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Covid-19 pandemic○ Hand-in-Hand Initiative○ Transparency○ FAO's Governance & Structure○ Digital Council○ Innovation• (15 min) High level remarks from Canada<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ (10 min) Ambassador Alexandra Bugailiskis, Permanent Representative of Canada to the FAO○ (5 min) Peter MacDougall, Assistant Deputy Minister, Global Issues & Development, Global Affairs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (15 min) High level remarks from the U.S. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ambassador Kip Tom, Permanent Representative of United States to the FAO ○ USAID Assistant to the Administrator for Resilience and Food Security Jim Barnhart <p>Audience: United States, Canada, FAO</p>
11:30 am	<p>Agenda Item 3</p> <p>Summary of preliminary INARC briefings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (15 min) Director-General and Chief Agricultural Negotiator, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to summarize discussions from pre-briefs (Innovation, trade, and technical and scientific work, development agenda) • (15 min) United States Deputy Chief of Mission, USUN Rome, Jennifer Harhigh to summarize discussions from pre-briefs (FAO Strategic Framework, administrative issues and partnerships, Emerging threats and emergencies and sustainability, Food Systems Summit) <p>Audience: United States, Canada, FAO</p>
12:00pm	<p>Agenda Item 4</p> <p>North American Priorities</p> <p>2018 INARC priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (15 min) Presentation- 2018 Priorities: Action Taken - Beth Crawford, Director OSP • (15 min) FAO Liaison Office’s role in North America and progress on implementing INARC 2018 priorities • (15 min) Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2018 INARC priorities and Integration of priorities into FAO’s workplan <p>Audience: United States, Canada, FAO</p>

12:45 pm	Break
1:15 pm	<p>Agenda Item 5</p> <p>Forward look to 2020-2021: FAO's Strategic Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (20 min) Update from FAO on process for the next Strategic Framework • (20 Min)Discussion and Q&A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developing the FAO's next Strategic Framework ○ How does the FAO's work contribute to and support other global initiatives/alliances/fora in Agriculture and Food? (eg. UN summits on biodiversity 2020 and food systems 2021) • (20 min) North American Priorities for the next Strategic Framework <p>Participants: United States, Canada, FAO</p>
2:15pm	<p>Agenda Item 6</p> <p>(15 min) Day 1 Closing Remarks from Co-Chairs from Canada (ADM Seppey) and the United States (Under Secretary McKinney)</p> <p>Participants: United States, Canada, FAO</p>
2:30 pm-3:00pm	<p>Agenda Item 7</p> <p>United States-Canada <u>Closed Session</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion & preparation of an outline of the report with main points <p>Audience: United States, Canada</p>

<p>11:30 am</p>	<p>Agenda Item 8</p> <p>Forward look to 2020-2021</p> <p>(20 min) FAO Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will FAO work with the Region to implement INARC 2020 priorities? • PWB, Governance, and structural changes in the 2020-2021 biennium <p>(15 min) Regional update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-level outline of Canada’s and the United States’ priorities for the FAO in the 2020-21 biennium <p>(25 min) Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020 INARC priorities and Integration of priorities into FAO’s workplan • Hand-in-Hand Initiative- Regional views and FAO’s perspective • North American Priorities for Food Systems Summit <p>Participants: United States, Canada, FAO</p>
<p>12:30 pm</p>	<p>Agenda Item 9</p> <p>(15 min) Concluding Plenary Remarks from Co-Chairs from Canada (ADM Seppey) and the United States (Under Secretary McKinney)</p> <p>Participants: United States, Canada, FAO</p>
<p>1:00 pm</p>	<p>BREAK</p>

1:30 pm	Agenda Item 10 United States-Canada <u>Closed Session</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion of agenda items from Day 1 & 2• Discussion: INARC 2020 priorities• Drafting INARC Report Audience: United States, Canada
4:00 pm	INARC Concludes

Appendix B – List of Participants

FAO's 75th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION EVENT - SPEAKERS

Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Canada

Sonny Perdue, United States Secretary of Agriculture

Qu Dongyu, Director General, FAO

Nadine Girault, Minister of International Relations and the Francophonie, Quebec

Moderator: **Chris Forbes**, Deputy Minister, Agriculture and Agri-Food

CANADA

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Frederic Seppey, Assistant Deputy Minister, Market and Industry Services

Fowler, Aaron, Chief Agriculture Negotiator and Director General

Desrochers, Marie-Noelle, Executive Director

Breithaupt, James, Deputy Director

Hameed, Qamer, Senior Policy Advisor

Global Affairs Canada

Peter MacDougall, Assistant Deputy Minister, Global Issues & Development Branch

Potter, Stephen, Director of the Agriculture and Food Systems Division

Johnson, Alexandra, Senior Policy Advisor on the International Institutions team in the Agriculture and Food Systems Division

Kadji, Christophe, Deputy Director of the International Institutions team in the Agriculture and Food Systems Division

Eriksen-Hamel, Nikita, Deputy Director of the Policy and Programming team in the Agriculture and Food Systems Division

Guerra, Jill, Policy Analyst on the Policy and Programming team in the Agriculture and Food Systems Division

Camaganacan, Melissa, Policy Analyst, Gender Equality Division

Mushtaq Ahmed, Senior Agriculture Advisor

Canada's Permanent Mission to the Rome-Based UN Agencies

Alexandra Bugailiskis, Canada's Ambassador to the Italian Republic and Permanent Representative to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development

Nguyen, Mi, Deputy Permanent Representative and Counsellor at Canada's Permanent Mission to the Rome-Based UN Agencies

Fellows, Jennifer, Alternate Permanent Representative at Canada's Permanent Mission to the Rome-Based UN Agencies

Quebec's Ministry of International Relations and la Francophonie

Rachel Lévesque, Advisor in International Relations, International Organizations and Global Issues Division

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in Washington:

Ted McKinney, Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs

Anna Osterlind, Chief of Staff, Office of the Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs

Ken Isley, Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service

Aileen Mannix, Senior Director, Multilateral Affairs, Foreign Agricultural Service

Wendell Dennis, Senior Policy Advisor, Multilateral Affairs, Foreign Agricultural Service

U.S. Mission to the UN Agencies, Rome:

Kip Tom, Ambassador and Permanent Representative

Jennifer Harhigh, Deputy Chief of Mission

Tommie Williams, Agricultural Minister Counselor

Sean Cox, Agricultural Attaché

Alison Storsve, Political-Economic Section Chief

Kelli Ketover, Political-Economic Officer

Silvia Giovanazzi, USUN Rome Political-Economic Program Specialist

U.S. Department of State in Washington:

Rose Marks, Food Security Advisor, Bureau of International Organizations

Jayanta Chatterjee, Food Security Officer, Bureau of International Organizations

James Crow, Economic Officer, Office of Agriculture Policy, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs

Dr. Marcella Szymanski, Deputy Director, Office of Agricultural Policy, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Washington:

Jim Barnhart, Assistant to the Administrator, Bureau for Resilience and Food Security

Tim Hurley, Senior Policy Adviser, Multilateral Engagement, Office of Development Cooperation, Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning

Jennifer Chow, Senior Policy Advisor, Strategic Engagement Division, Bureau for Resilience and Food Security

Michelle Snow, Senior Global Partnerships Officer Policy, Partnerships, Program and Communications Division, Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance

Sung Lee, General Development Officer, Bureau for Resilience and Food Security

U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC):

Meghan Crowe, Senior International Economist, Office of Consumer Goods, Industry & Analysis, International Trade Administration

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Qu Dongyu, Director-General

Laurent Thomas, Deputy Director-General

Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General
Beth Bechdol, Deputy Director-General
Maximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist
Beth Crawford, Director, Office of Strategy
Christopher Emsden, Communications Consultant
Dominique Burgeon, Director, Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER)
Rosanne Marchesich, Senior Emergency & Rehabilitation Officer
Keith Cressman, Senior Agricultural Officer (NSP)
Michael Clark, Senior Coordinator of the Governance and Policy Unit (DDCG)
Vimlendra Sharan, Director, FAOLOW
Thomas Pesek, Sr. Liaison Officer, FAOLOW
Florian Doerr, Associate Professional Officer
Gabriel Laizer, FAOLOW
James Cordero, FAOLOW
Ahdi Mohammed, FAOLOW

**FOOD SYSTEMS IN THE TIME OF COVID-19: NORTH AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES
ON HOW THE FAO CAN CONTRIBUTE TO GREATER RESILIENCE - SPEAKERS**

Frederic Seppey, Assistant Deputy Minister, Market and Industry Services, AAFC
Ted McKinney, Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs, USDA
Rick White, Chair of the International Agri-Food Network – the focal point for the Private Sector Mechanism of the United Nations Committee on Food Security
Nettie Wiebe, North American Focal Point for the Civil Society and Indigenous People’s Mechanism of the United Nations Committee on Food Security
Beth Bechdol, Deputy Director General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Maximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Moderator: **Aaron Fowler**, Chief Agriculture Negotiator and Director General, AAFC

Appendix C –North American Priorities (2020-2021)

Priority Area 1: Inclusive Innovation

FAO should pursue an inclusive innovation agenda that promotes [scientific, digital, technological, and other] innovations that contribute to fostering environmental, social, and economic sustainability

***Priority 1.1:** Support the establishment of the Office of Innovation and creation of the Chief Scientist position included in the Program of Work and Budget in order to ensure that a wide range of innovative and best practices are available to farmers and fishers in all countries in order to increase productivity, promote environmental sustainability, expand peoples' access to food, and enhance the efficiency of food systems.*

***Priority 1.2:** Further analyze and highlight how innovative agricultural and aquaculture biotechnologies and other advanced technologies improve farm productivity and profitability, decrease agricultural carbon emissions, and enhance sustainable natural resources management.³*

***Priority 1.3:** Strengthen FAO's work on climate information services, including the development of decision –support tools and services that are directly relevant to smallholders, including farmers, aqua culturists, and fishers, and which can be disseminated and applied on a broad scale, taking into account local conditions.⁴*

***Priority 1.4:** Support the development of climate-smart agriculture related science and evidence-based decision support tools, extension materials and services.⁵*

Priority Area 2: Core Mandate

³ FAO Strength: Increased partnerships with civil society, the private sector, academia and research institutions, including 130 new corporate partners

Improvement Needed: Enhance opportunities for collaboration among civil society, private sector and academia and governments in targeted countries; research and disseminate best practices generated from these partnerships.

⁴ FAO Strength: Development of web-based tools and analytics to assist countries in understanding climate and environmental dynamics; increased focus on gender-specific education and training.

Improvement Needed: More training for stakeholders on use of web-based tools; developing metrics for access, use, and relevancy of tools

⁵ FAO Strength: Published the second addition of CSA Sourcebook, including new gender-specific module; development of online database of CSA technologies for smallholder farmers.

Improvement Needed: Increase access to database, including increased access for women farmers.

FAO adds most value when delivering the critical functions of its core mandate: normative and standard-setting work; scientific, evidence-based, and impartial analysis; and serving as a knowledge aggregator.

Priority 2.1: Provide information, assessments and analysis to combat hunger and reduce malnutrition, including intra-household assessments.⁶

Priority 2.2: Increase awareness and utilization of innovative technologies for farmers and fishers in developing countries to increase their productivity and incomes and improve conservation of natural resources and climate resilience.⁷

Priority 2.3: Support the development and improvement of science-based regulatory systems in member countries that enable greater harmonization of procedures to approve products of modern biotechnology and that promote appropriate, risk-based policies for dealing with Low-Level Presence (LLP); enhance the functionality of the FAO database for food safety assessments of foods derived from modern biotechnology, and promote the use of the database and Codex LLP annex in dealing with LLP when it does occur.⁸

Priority 2.4: Build capacity at the national and regional levels to support implementation of existing instruments and processes, particularly the voluntary guidelines on small scale fisheries, the aquaculture strategic framework, and forest resource monitoring and information.

Priority 2.5: Continue efforts to improve sustainable plant protection programs, including through the International Plant Protection Convention, efficient and resilient production systems; and sustainable forest management practices - for example on wildfire management, forest, climate resilience and combatting illegal logging and associated trade.

Priority 2.6: Promote science and evidence-based context specific natural resources management and environmental sustainability in land use including integration into food system value and supply chains.⁹

⁶ Strength: Progress in analysis and assessments, like country-specific, food-based dietary guidelines and regional symposia on Sustainable Food Systems

Weaknesses: North America remains concerned that certain FAO-supported work streams (e.g., the Committee of World Food Security) continue to promote linkages between undefined “sustainability” metrics, and more well-defined science and evidence-based approaches to food safety or nutrition policy. Sustainability objectives should be defined and agreed before being used.

Improvement Needed: Intra-household assessments in more countries

⁷ Strengths: Support for rural organizations in 35 countries to provide services and assist in the development of national policies to benefit small-scale producers.

Improvement Needed: Capitalize on partnerships with the private sector to explore ways to increase affordability of innovative technologies for the most vulnerable.

⁸ FAO Strength: Organized a series of regional workshops in Africa; regularly updated FAO database on safety assessments of genetically modified organisms.

Improvement Needed: Assist countries to better streamline approval of regulatory systems, and provide information on the benefits to countries of swiftly adopting better regulatory systems, and coordinating at the regional level.

⁹ FAO Strength: Increased dissemination of extension materials designed to raise awareness of environmental considerations in the context of connecting farmers to markets.

Priority 2.7: Strengthen FAO's ability to develop technical and normative work on fisheries and aquaculture through restructuring of the COFI subcommittees or creating a new subcommittee on fisheries management.

Priority 2.8: Promote the protection and sound management of freshwater resources by harmonizing and sharing water data and providing science and evidence-based decision-support tools to watershed managers and water users.

Priority 2.9: Promote the protection and sound management of soil health by harmonizing and sharing soil data and providing science and evidence-based decision-support tools to soil conservation managers and other land users.

Priority Area 3: Resilience, including through trade

FAO will most effectively build resilience to persistent and emerging threats by focusing on timely, science, evidence and risk-based responses and highlighting the importance of sustainable global supply chains and international trade.

Priority 3.1: *Promote food safety and quality with a focus on nutrition-sensitive agriculture programming, and the prevention of food-borne diseases; focus on consumer protection and fair practices in food trade.*¹⁰

Priority 3.2: *Support the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems that serves as a platform for promoting food security by improving investment in agriculture and other food-production systems.*¹¹

Priority 3.3: *Increase agricultural, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture capacity building activities in targeted countries, particularly those least-developed, to develop the trade-related skills and infrastructure needed to implement and benefit from WTO agreements and expand their trade.*¹²

Priority 3.4: *Ensure that the Codex Secretariat has continued appropriate resources to meet program needs and strong leadership and management to follow the founding principles of Codex Alimentarius; ensure Codex's Scientific Advice Programme is aligned with regional priorities; support joint FAO/WHO expert scientific advice program through increased and stable funding within existing budget resources, and through innovation within FAO on policies related to the acceptance of funds from non-government sources.*¹³

Priority 3.5: *Promote food safety, plant health and animal health, including fish, data collection and sharing, and provide food insecurity forecasting and early warning systems for decision-support tools within the terrestrial agriculture, forestry, and fisheries and aquaculture sectors.*¹⁴

Priority 3.6: *Prioritize the global response to the Fall Armyworm threat, among other emerging pest pressures, and continue to work towards greater collaboration with member nations.*¹⁵

Priority 3.7: *Prioritize the global response to the Desert Locust, particularly in Near East Asia and Africa, to control the outbreak of pests, and mitigate crop loss. Employ new digital technologies and institutionalize corporate knowledge on emerging threats.*

¹⁰ FAO Strength: Development of toolkits

Weaknesses: North America maintains that food safety, nutrition, and food security—while important topics—must be carefully considered in light of existing international policy frameworks. Linkages between these topics should not undermine existing international obligations and should not be used to erode science-based assessments of food safety.

Improvement needed: Wider distribution of toolkits; more emphasis on preventing food-borne illnesses and their impact on value chains

¹¹ Strength: Conducted multi-stakeholder capacity assessment events; developed Umbrella Programme and concurrent joint OECD Guidance

Improvement needed: Assess impact of capacity assessments and track implementation in countries

¹² FAO Strength: Increased usage of FAO market information products, like the Agricultural Markets Information System (AMIS); increased training on risk analysis mechanisms; increased trade-related capacity development

¹³ Improvement needed: Support expert scientific advice program through increased and stable funding within existing budget resources; continue to push for use of un-earmarked funding from the private sector and other sources, to be used for this program.

¹⁴ Strengths: Collaborated with other UN agencies and international organizations in developing information systems designed to help policy makers more effectively monitor food safety and food insecurity; developed a vulnerability index to complement early warning system analysis. Improvement needed: Develop metrics to determine use and effectiveness of information systems and indices.

¹⁵ Strength: Plan roll-out complete

Improvement needed: Needs more funding; should increase scientific basis for recommendations and approach.

Priority 3.8: *Strengthen the EMPRES and GLEWS platforms, ensure an effective and sustainable Emergency Management Centre- Animal Health (EMC-AH) that quickly responds to transboundary animal disease outbreaks.¹⁶*

Priority 3.9: *Work to address and adapt to the impacts of a changing marine environment on fish stocks, fisheries and fisheries management governance, including the development of specific guidance on adapting fisheries management plans to be more flexible and responsive to unforeseen changes to the underlying environmental and ecosystem conditions.*

Priority 3.10: *Continue to prioritize work to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, including efforts to implement relevant instruments, including the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) and the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, and support capacity building through the FAO Umbrella Programme on the PSMA and Related International Instruments to Combat IUU Fishing.*

¹⁶ FAO Strength: Issued quarterly reports that identified major risks to agriculture and food security; incorporated new technology, like the release of surveillance systems as mobile apps.
Improvement needed: Increase the use of new technology, as appropriate to the local conditions, to better disseminate information on emerging threats to relevant decision-makers.

Priority Area 4: Gender-responsive approach

FAO will be most effective by systematically adopting gender-responsive approaches including those that tackle underlying social norms, attitudes, behaviors and social systems perpetuating gender inequalities and increasing its focus on engaging women, youth, and indigenous peoples.

Priority 4.1: Provide sex-disaggregated data and gender-based information, assessments and analysis to combat hunger and reduce malnutrition.¹⁷

Priority 4.2: Strengthen efforts towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls by addressing the gender-barriers they face in accessing productive resources and social services as well as decent farm and non-farm employment opportunities; in participating as equal decision-makers in their households, communities and local institutions; and in realizing their human rights, as well as promoting their equal access to land and property ownership.¹⁸

Priority 4.3: Strengthen efforts towards gender equality and women's empowerment by enhancing women's full access to and equal opportunities in the fisheries and aquaculture sector through gender-based policies, taking effective action against discrimination and abuse in the workplace, by facilitating women's access to education, resources, and opportunities, and by combating systemic gender inequalities that disadvantage women.¹⁹

Priority 4.4: Continue to focus on the Voluntary Guidelines on the Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests. Place a high priority on conducting research; promoting information on and advocacy of best practices; and assisting governments to adopt policies and laws on tenure and governance, particularly in favor of advancing women's access to land ownership.²⁰

Priority 4.5: Provide technical and policy assistance in targeted countries, particularly those least-developed, to develop the knowledge and skills required to maximize smallholder farmers' access to markets, including to address the particular constraints faced by women smallholder farmers.²¹

Priority 4.6: Promote policies that support and recognize the contribution of forestry, small-scale fisheries and aquaculture in food security, employment and income and, further promote the access of foresters, small-scale fishers and fish farmers to local, national, and international

¹⁷ FAO Strength: Progress in gender assessments, like Country Gender Profiles

¹⁸ FAO Strength: Enhancing women traders' access to information on protocols and regulations;

Improvement needed: Work with governments to make information on protocols and regulations more accessible to rural women

¹⁹ Strength: Facilitated multi-stakeholder discussion via the Vigo Dialogue.

Improvement needed: Increased outreach to international organizations for collaboration; outreach to laborers in the fish and seafood sector, particularly women, to raise awareness of international fisheries and labor instruments

²⁰ Strength: More gender-sensitive implementation of the VGTLFF; developed guide for improving gender equality in territorial issues (IGETI)

Improvement needed: Expanding and implementing more learning programs to assist governments to adopt gender-sensitive laws on land tenure and governance

²¹ Strength: Targeted capacity-building in gender-based constraints affecting cross-border trade; enhancing women traders' access to equipment and information; produced and disseminated conceptual framework and implementation guidelines to support value chain interventions

Improvement needed: Expand outreach to targeted countries; assess impact of capacity-building and analyze adoption of guidelines

markets, ensuring equitable and non-discriminatory trade for forestry and small-scale fisheries and aquaculture products, and continue to implement the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines).

Priority Area 5: Leveraging partnerships

To meet the global challenges and emerging threats before it, FAO must optimize its comparative advantage by leveraging partnerships with the private sector, civil society, the Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs), and other international organizations.

Priority 5.1: *Work collaboratively with other international organizations to address the gender, social, and labor inequities within the aquaculture and seafood sector.*²²

Priority 5.2: *Collaborate with the other RBAs bringing together key food assistance and nutrition actors to continue to advance food interventions in humanitarian situations, including using resilience-based approaches to prevent and address protracted food and nutrition insecurity.*²³

Priority 5.3: *Ensure that FAO's engagement on the Food Systems Summit 2021 aligns with food security priorities as they relate to trade and inclusive agriculture-led economic growth, building resilience, and promoting diverse food systems approaches, including in relation to the forestry, fisheries and aquaculture sectors.*

Priority 5.4: *Ensure UN Development System reform increases efficiencies and eliminates overlapping mandates to maximize effectiveness and flexibility of UN organizations to respond to global crises.*

Priority 5.5: *Encourage FAO to engage the private sector and civil society on innovative ways to contribute to food interventions in humanitarian situations, including using resilience-based approaches to prevent and address protracted food and nutrition insecurity.*²⁴

²² FAO Strength: Facilitated multi-stakeholder discussion via the Vigo Dialogue

Improvement needed: Increased outreach to international organizations for collaboration; outreach to laborers in the fish and seafood sector, particularly women, to raise awareness of international fisheries and labor instruments

²³ FAO Strength: Increased collaboration among RBAs, including joint meetings and the first joint country visit.

Improvement needed: Continue to promote and uphold best practices and quality coordination in humanitarian work that enhances the path toward resilience and development.

²⁴ The COVID-19 pandemic emergency warrants whole-of-society response and recovery.

Appendix D - Pre-Brief Summary

FAO and Innovation: New Prioritization of Innovation, Addressing Biotechnology

Office of Innovation and Chief Scientist Position

1. DDG Bechdol provided an update on FAO's work on innovation noting that the FAO Director-General has named Dr. Ismahane Elouafi as the new Chief Scientist who will oversee the new Office of Innovation.

Discussion on innovation to increase productivity, environmental sustainability, peoples' access to food, and the efficiency of food systems

2. Chief Economist Torero opened the discussion on innovation by highlighting the need for FAO to embrace innovation at all levels and in all its forms, including in data, technology, governance and processes.
3. Jingyuan Xia, FAO Director of the Plant Production and Protection Division, gave a presentation on FAO's work on biotechnology noting the increase in productivity of crop yield by acreage caused by biotech innovations and outlined the FAO's support to standard setting work of the IPPC and the *Codex Alimentarius*.
4. Chike Mba, from FAO's Plant Production and Protection Division, emphasized the role of technology in food security and the role played by farmers in achieving a consensus on the use of biotechnologies.

North American deliberations

5. The Regional Conference welcomed the announcement of the FAO's new Chief Scientist and noted interest in further collaboration on innovation. Delegates expressed a desire to better understand how the Chief Scientist position will interact with other existing experts and bodies. FAO advised that the role of the Chief Scientist was still being developed. The Regional Conference further sought to ensure that biotechnology fits in the FAO's approach to foster food systems transformation and inquired about how FAO envisions agroecology in this context. The Regional Conference made clear that the Region looks to FAO for normative work based on science, not for value judgments on tools and systems.
6. In response, Jamie Morrison, FAO Director of the Food Systems and Food Safety Division, underlined that agro-ecology is context specific and incorporates both the increase of productivity and also social and developmental goals. He added that the FAO only provides evidence and tools for stakeholders to decide which approach to use. Chief Economist Torero further explained that the FAO's aim is to provide robust, objective, and science- and data-based information on constraints and trade-offs of adopting various approaches and innovations, considering all three pillars of sustainability, to enable policy decision-making by Member Nations.

Agri-Food Trade and Global Food Security

FAO on trade and SDG work

7. Georgios Mermigkas, from FAO's Trade and Markets Division, introduced the publication of a new FAO report on Trade and Sustainable Development Goal 2: Policy options and their trade-offs. He also presented the four broad areas of FAO's work on trade: (1) strengthening the knowledge base, (2) advocacy of policy recommendations, (3) market intelligence and monitoring, (4) monitoring SDG indicators.

FAO on ongoing/upcoming work that can enhance understanding of trade problems such as how trade barriers can affect trade between low-middle income countries

8. Boubaker Ben Belhassen, FAO Director of the Trade and Markets Division, presented the FAO's vision on trade: "Transparent and efficient food and agricultural commodity markets and trade for global food security". He also stated that the FAO is currently developing a Memorandum of Understanding with the WTO on this topic which could be signed in early 2021.

Strategy on Food Safety

9. Morrison presented the Food Safety Strategy, which was subsequently endorsed by the FAO Committee on Agriculture.

AMR work including New AMR Action Plan

10. Junxia Song, FAO Senior Animal Health Officer, reported on the progress of the implementation of the FAO Action Plan on AMR (2016-2020) based on 4 pillars: awareness, surveillance, governance, good practice. She also introduced the proposal for the new FAO Action Plan on AMR (2021-2025) which includes new goals, a results chain and output indicators.

North American deliberations

11. The Regional Conference underlined the importance of open and predictable trade, FAO's work on international standards and the FAO's knowledge products and science and evidence-based policy guidance on trade issues. In this regard, concerns were shared about the proliferation of unjustified non-tariff barriers and measures not consistent with international trade rules.
12. The Regional Conference observed that a discussion on trade is often difficult in the FAO context outside of the Committee on Commodity Problems, and suggested that although multilateral trade rules are negotiated at the WTO, it is critical that FAO discussions be informed by and in alignment with relevant global trade rules.

13. The Regional Conference encouraged continued partnership with WTO and efforts to broaden the discussion of trade to other areas of FAO's work. North America also recognized the interdependence of food safety and food security and encouraged collaboration with other bodies. The Region noted that the FAO should focus on issues that present a public health risk in relation to the use of antimicrobial drugs as growth promoters.
14. In response, Morrison and Song acknowledged the call for increased collaboration and presented areas of current engagement.

FAO support for Technical & Scientific Work

Codex, including funding, and Codex's Scientific Advice Programme

15. Tom Heilandt, Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), acknowledged the significant impact of Covid-19 on meetings and activities for technical work. He informed the Regional Conference that, in response to this situation, Codex is using electronic working groups and virtual tools including holding a virtual commission. He also presented Codex's budgetary status.

International Plant Protection Convention

16. Plant Production and Protection Division Director, Xia, highlighted the progress made towards the implementation of the IPPC strategic framework (2020-2030) which includes the priority of facilitating trade. He noted the importance of the International Year of Plant Health and the related proposition for an International Day of Plant Health. He also presented the 3 core activities: (1) standard setting, (2) standard implementation, and (3) communication and partnership.
17. Avetik Nersisyan, from FAO's Plant Production and Protection Division, highlighted the importance of capacity building and the related need for cooperation with Member Nations considering the IPPC's limited resources and noted the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation which can assess the capacity of countries.

Updates from FAO on other technical & scientific work

18. Marcus Lipp, Senior Food Safety Officer of the FAO's Food Systems and Food Safety Division, presented FAO's technical and scientific advisory work which has continued virtually during the Covid-19 pandemic.

ITGRFA (International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture)

19. Kent Nnadozie, Secretary of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITGRFA), presented the outcome of the inter-sessional work of the Governing Body of the treaty. This included negotiations of a package of measures to enhance the functioning of the system and an amendment to increase the scope of the treaty.

The first multi-year programme of work and a 2020-2025 implementation strategy were notably adopted.

Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA)

20. Eduardo Mansur, Director of FAO's Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, presented an overview of all the work on genetic resources which includes the outcomes of the 17th regular session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) held in February 2020. He also gave an update on the status of work on aquatic genetic resources including a Global Plan of Action which is still under development.

North American deliberations

21. The Regional Conference reiterated the importance of the development of guidance based on science, evidence and principles of risk analysis to maintain a well-functioning international trading system. The Regional Conference made clear that it does not accept the notion that export and import regulation could be appropriately based on anything other than scientific evidence.
22. The Regional Conference also stressed the importance of sustainable funding for international standard setting bodies (ISSBs) and asked if it was the view of the organization that there were sufficient resources to deliver on the mandates of the Codex Alimentarius and the IPPC.
23. Canada and the United States expressed concerns about the backlogs for scientific advice of the Joint FAO-WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) and the Pesticide Priority List from the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) to be reviewed by Joint Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR).
24. The Regional Conference requested an update on the process for filling the IPCC Secretary position and for confirmation that it would remain a D1 level position, noting the importance of consistent, empowered leadership. It further requested additional information on the organisational changes at FAO headquarters and asked if Members would be engaged if the need for reallocation of resources was being contemplated.
25. The Regional Conference acknowledged the operational challenges related to the pandemic and asked if the FAO was considering any additional support to help ISSBs deliver on their mandates.
26. In response, DDG Semedo noted that the resources provided by the FAO and Members have been helping to reduce the backlog for scientific advice, noting the disruptions caused by Covid-19. On the question of need for additional support for ISSBs, she noted that the FAO has sufficient resources for its operations although the contribution from the WHO had been reduced.

27. DDG Bechdol added that there are a number of vacancies across the organisation including at senior level. The FAO is open to input for the selection of candidates. In terms of line of reporting, the IPPC Secretariat reports to her, the Deputy Director-General. She also added that the FAO will be working towards conserving the IPPC Secretariat position at a D1 classification level.

FAO and Partnerships: Expanding Opportunities

Update from FAO on partnerships programs, including private sector and civil society strategies

28. Bechdol presented the ongoing work on the development of a Private Sector Engagement Strategy which will be presented to the Finance and Programme Committees in November 2020 and subsequently to the FAO Council in December 2020. She further noted that the strategy, which has been the subject of consultations with all regional groups, is aligned with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
29. Alexander Livingston Jones, Director of FAO's Resource Mobilization and Private Sector Partnerships, focused his remarks on partnerships related to innovation, technology and resources, noting that the FAO could concentrate on a smaller number of engagements. He also gave a number of examples of private sector partnerships and added that the FAO aims to have a more diverse and broader geographical representation for future engagements.
30. Marcela Villarreal, Director of FAO's Partnerships and UN Collaboration Division, presented her new unit which will coordinate engagement with all non-state actors except the private sector. She explained that in implementing the new vision for partnership engagement, the FAO is moving away from one-time engagements to enhance replicability.

North American deliberations

31. The Regional Conference appreciated the significant progress and the approach taken in developing a more modern strategy for engagement with the private sector. It encouraged the FAO to continue to expand the realm of partnership opportunities, especially the non-transactional relations such as knowledge transfer, implementation of innovative agricultural tools and streamlining of technology trials.
32. The Regional Conference recognized the importance of private sector engagement to the achievement of the SDGs and noted that the FAO's engagement has room for improvement but is proceeding along the right path. It further underlined the importance of engagement with small and medium enterprises.
33. The Regional Conference requested additional information on the Private Sector Advisory Group, resource allocation for the Resource Mobilization and Private Sector Partnerships

Division, and the relationship between resource mobilization partnerships and the investment sector.

34. In response, DDG Bechdol explained that the Private Sector Advisory Group will be the subject of regional consultations until later in 2020. She explained that the aim of this group is to informally discuss implementation and execution of the strategy. The importance of avoiding conflicts of interest and preserving the reputation of the FAO when engaging with partners was also highlighted.
35. Director Livingston Jones added that the investment sector does not play the role of partners but rather the role of primary providers of finance which allows better risk assessment. He also noted the possibility of leveraging additional resources by having Member Nations send senior staff on a temporary basis to support the organization.

FAO: Emerging Threats and Emergencies agenda

Update from FAO on Emerging pests and emergencies

36. Dominique Burgeon, Director of FAO's Office of Emergencies and Resilience, presented on the FAO's collaboration with other RBAs, highlighting the Joint FAO-WFP early warning analysis of acute food insecurity hotspots, anticipatory action and operational work related to the Emergency Center for Transboundary Animal Diseases and the Global Network Against Food Crises. He also gave an update on emergency situations such as the Desert Locust and food insecurity in the DRC.

North American deliberations

37. The Regional Conference recognized the critical work of the FAO in this domain, underlining the need for collaboration with other RBAs and the importance of protecting livelihoods as they strengthen resilience to food insecurity crises.
38. The Regional Conference underlined the severity of the Desert Locust crisis which has been compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic. It encouraged the FAO to accelerate its technical response to this situation including through the use of technologies such as "eLocust".
39. The Regional Conference encouraged the FAO to further explore and develop a comparative advantage in post-conflict settings and in scaling up innovative and gender transformative approaches to humanitarian responses in the context of achieving SDG 2.
40. The Regional Conference asked if the FAO has initiated an introspective process to assess its response to the COVID-10 pandemic. It also applauded the FAO's 3-year Action Plan on Fall Armyworm (FAW) which incorporates evidence-based pest management and requested more information on that approach.

41. The Regional Conference asked for additional information on how the FAO distinguishes its value-added from the work of the World Food Programme in the Global Network Against Food Crises.
42. In response, Director Burgeon acknowledged the importance of collaboration with the other RBAs and with the UN's humanitarian and developmental work. He also recognized the link between livelihoods and food security. On the Global Network Against Food Crises, he noted the importance of documentation of funding sources to contribute to the nexus of resilience. In terms of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, he stated that the FAO strives to understand the dynamics of food insecurity at play. He also noted that COVID is one driver of acute food insecurity among many others.

FAO's Work on Inclusion

Gender Mainstreaming

43. Benjamin Davis, Director of FAO's Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equity Division, presented FAO's gender mainstreaming activities such as its work to revise the Gender Equality Policy and develop a Gender Action Plan but also partnerships, capacity development, evidence generation and dissemination. He also explained FAO's response and mitigation of COVID which includes sex and age-disaggregated evidence generation and awareness-raising on gender-based violence resulting from Covid-19.

Youth engagement work

44. Davis presented work on youth engagement in order to promote growth and excitement in the sector. The key strategies are to engage young men and women as agents of change for inclusive rural transformations and raising youth voices, including through youth networks and champion's empowerment. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, on-going projects were adapted, including to better raise awareness on the impacts of the pandemic on youth and children.

Work with Indigenous Populations

45. Marcela Villarreal, Director of FAO's Partnerships and UN Collaboration Division, presented the work of the FAO related to Indigenous peoples, including the creation of a dedicated unit in 2019 and the on-going development of a Plan of Action. Priorities for the future include free prior and informed consent, Indigenous food systems, data and climate change. She further highlighted the role of Indigenous peoples in achieving the SDGs. She noted their vulnerability and the lack of recognition of their rights in the context of food security.
46. Yon Fernandez-de-Larrinoa, from FAO's Partnerships and UN Collaboration Division, expanded on the Global-hub on Indigenous food systems to highlight FAO's work which

includes the provision of public services and goods, including knowledge and coordination. He also noted the creation of regional schools for Indigenous women.

SIDS, LLDCS, LDS office

47. Angélica Jacôme, Director of FAO's Office for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), presented the main functions of the office, which are stocktaking, engagement and consultations. She expanded on activities such as outreaches through intergovernmental processes and awareness raising. She also highlighted the importance of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HiHI) for these countries.

UN Development Reform: progress and obstacles

48. Michael Clark, Senior Coordinator of FAO's Governance and Policy Unit, presented the on-going work related to UN reforms in the context of delivering on the 2030 Agenda which occurs at the country, regional and global level. He also explained the challenges related to reforms including the UN Development System (UNDS) repositioning which has two views: (1) the One UN and (2) UN as Enabler of Collective Action. He also highlighted the FAO contribution to the Covid-19 Response and Recovery Plan.

North American deliberations

49. The Regional Conference recognized the alignment of FAO's work on gender, youth and Indigenous Peoples with the Region's priorities, notably in the context of achieving the SDGs. The Regional Conference highlighted that Rural Youth Engagement is a valuable avenue for investment by FAO and requested further information on FAO's collaborations with other RBAs. It also requested information on what steps the FAO had taken to address the report of the Organization's Inspector General regarding a lack of grievance mechanisms to receive and handle complaints about FAO standards. Noting the upcoming Food Systems Summit, the FAO was asked to what extent it is focusing on Indigenous conflicts over access to resources.
50. The Regional Conference acknowledged the challenges of running the Office of SIDS, LDCs, and LLDCs since many issues are cross-cutting in nature and involve many stakeholders. In this sense, the Regional Conference hopes to see the Office being fully integrated into the FAO to increase efficiency and eliminate duplication of efforts, while stressing the importance of transparency. The Regional Conference asked what percentage of work in this new Office is dedicated to the HiHI and how it was being received by the Members.
51. The Regional Conference took note of the role of data, evidence driven policy making, and utilizing partnerships in UN Reform initiatives. It asked for more information on how these efforts relate to those of the other RBAs and if the FAO had identified any efficiencies through the reform process.

52. In response, Davis agreed on the importance of women empowerment, intersectionality, gender-disaggregated data, recruitment and representation. He underlined the need to take in consideration small and medium enterprises in FAO's partnership work. He also emphasized the tight collaboration between the FAO and other RBAs and partners.
53. Villarreal agreed on the critical importance of partnerships to achieve the 2030 Agenda and noted the lack of data specific to Indigenous Peoples necessary for evidence-based policy.
54. Fernandez-de-Larrinoa acknowledged the need for reform of the grievance mechanism. New projects must now identify a grievance mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and other vulnerable populations. He noted that the FAO is developing a map of the world incorporating recognized Indigenous Peoples.
55. Jacôme explained that she leads a coordination office which will not undertake programmes and projects. In this sense, the Office will not be working on HiHI, but has a complementary role given the country overlap. She also underlined the importance of a systematic stocktaking.
56. Clark presented an overview selection process of the HiHI, noting that it has been affected by uncertainty such as local crises.
57. Bechdol acknowledged the need for a culture change to empower women in the FAO. She also highlighted the presence of women in senior positions throughout the organisation such as 2 DDGs, a Chief Scientist, a legal counsel, and many more. That being said, work remains to be done for the overall workplace environment.

FAO and Sustainability

Fisheries

58. Vera Agostini, Deputy Director of FAO's Fisheries Division, identified the publication of the State of the World and Aquaculture Report and the FAO International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability in 2019 as two noteworthy milestones. Other accomplishments highlighted were the 2020 Global Aquaculture Conference and the Sustainable Aquaculture Guidelines. The Division noted on-going work such as the 4th version of the Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture which will be tabled at the 34th session of COFI in February 2021

Forestry

59. Mette Wilkie, Director of FAO's Forestry Division, underlined the priority thematic areas for the Committee on Forestry (COFO) such as halting deforestation, forest-based livelihoods, mitigation and adaptation to climate change. She noted that the 2020 Moving Forwards Report will provide updates on key achievements of Forestry Division. She also laid out the proposed priorities for 2022-2025 Plan as halting deforestation and forest degradation

(Supporting the UN REDD program), conservation and sustainable use of forest resource, and Building Back Better as a response to Covid-19.

UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030)

60. Wilkie presented on-going work based on preventing, halting and reversing the degradation of ecosystem worldwide through UN Resolution A/RES/73/284. This work includes consultations and partnership building to develop this decade’s strategy with government, private sector, NGOs and UN agencies. She also underlined the publication of documents such as The Strategy and Visual Identity was notably released in September 2020.

Global Soil partnership

61. Ronald Vargas, Secretary of the FAO’s Global Soil Partnership, underlined the importance of focusing beyond soil being used for producing food and health crops, but also supporting ecosystem services and climate change adaptation. On-going work presented included the development of normative tools, the Global Salinity Map, the Global Soil Laboratory Network and the Global Soil Doctors Programme. He also noted the upcoming launch of the State of Knowledge of Soil Biodiversity in December 2020 and the Global Assessment of Soil Pollution in February 2021.

LEAP

62. Henning Steinfeld, Chief of FAO’s Animal Production and Genetics Branch of the Animal production and Health Division, presented work including the production of LEAP Guidance Documents and the completion of the Community of Actions on Livestock, Climate and Environment. He also underlined on-going work such as the “Leap Talks” workshops with national authorities.

North American deliberations

63. The Regional Conference appreciated and continues to contribute efforts to the development of the Declaration on fisheries and aquaculture. It supported the recognition of the importance of climate resilience for the sustainability of fisheries. The Regional Conference asked how the structural changes at FAO will affect the work priorities of the technical divisions. Concerns were expressed over the reduction in FAO’s technical capacity in the fisheries sector.
64. The Regional Conference acknowledged the contribution of FAO in the forest research assessment program and its success in gathering and analyzing data on forest resources. It underlined the importance of the COFO meetings which were subsequently held from October 5th to October 9th. Concerns and oppositions were expressed around the proposition of increasing the frequency of reporting of the Global Forest Resources Assessment (GFRA) from 5 years to 2 years. In the context of the FAO reorganization, the Regional Conference

asked whether the FAO will ensure that the Forestry Division will conserve its relevancy and attribute appropriate amount of resources.

65. The Regional Conference supports the development of the code of conduct for the management of fertilizers. It stressed the need for inter laboratory comparisons to harmonize procedures, results and standardized recommendations and a interoperable information system. It was requested that international barriers be removed for the exchange of soil samples for research purposes while ensuring the existence of safeguards to eliminate the transfer of pest and invasive species. The Regional Conference asked for additional information for both these aspects. It also requested information regarding further information on the legal and financial implications for the GSP Plenary before any further actions occur and on how the proposal to formalize the global soil partnership from a voluntary partnership to a formal body of the FAO structure might impact FAO Member's assessment of contribution payment.
66. In response, Wilkie explained that the changes to the reporting schedule are not intended to result in full assessments every two years but rather to have updates on specific indicators where there might be new information available in some countries. She also reassured that the human resources of the Division remained unaffected by organizational changes.
67. Agostini added that a new version of the Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture will be discussed with the COFI Bureau ahead of the February 2021 COFI meeting. In terms of organizational changes, she stated that the Division does not anticipate changes to professional staff but noted that there is a reflection on the structure based on the efficient delivery of FAO's framework priorities and SDGs.
68. Vargas acknowledged the need for additional evaluation on legal and financial implications for the organization. Interoperability was further underlined as one of the GSP's goals and the Regional Conference welcomed movement in that direction while noting the technology gap between Members.
69. Semedo explained that, further to the approval of the new organigram, there are reflections on the development of new priorities. These should influence FAO's strategic framework and are expected to emerge from Members through the COFI, COFO and COAG.

Food Systems Summit

Update on preparations & involvement in Food Systems Summit

70. Director of Food Systems and Safety Morrison gave a presentation on the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit 2021 (FSS 2021) noting the context of the UN Decade of Action towards the delivery of the Agenda 2030. The five objectives highlighted were access to safe and nutritious food to all, boosting nature positive production, sustainable consumption, equitable livelihoods and building resilience to vulnerabilities. The FAO highlighted its support to Action Tracks with its knowledge in technical groups and scientific groups.

North American deliberations

71. The Regional Conference underlined the need for the FSS 2021 to be inclusive of all food systems approaches, target innovations, productivity growth, increased efficiencies, open trade and improved nutrition. The Summit outcomes should be grounded on scientific evidence and focused on tangible actions. In this sense, all relevant tools and approaches should be accessible to farmers and all levels of the supply chain through to consumers. The Regional Conference also supported using a sustainable food systems approach to improve how development assistance empowers women, builds climate resilience to address complex environmental challenges, addresses malnutrition in all its forms, contributes to livelihoods, and supports inclusive economic growth in developing countries.