

168th Session of the Council
Written Correspondence Procedure – inputs from Members - English version
Item 4 – FAO’s Response to COVID-19: Building to Transform

Member Name	Comments
<p style="text-align: center;">Australia (Wed 17/11/2021 7:03)</p>	<p>Australia appreciates FAO’s ongoing efforts to address the impacts of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition and we respectfully provide the following comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. While recognising that the COVID-19 pandemic has undeniably been a major setback to achieving the SDGs by 2030, we highlight the important opportunities for renewed collective progress which have stemmed from the crisis, such as improving global collaboration, building resilient markets and agri-food trade opportunities, and expanding the use of innovative technologies and digitalisation tools. 2. We appreciate the significant efforts by FAO to understand and seek to mitigate the different impacts of COVID-19 at a global, regional and country level, including through the use of real-time monitoring systems and data information platforms, such as AMIS. 3. Acknowledging the highlighted need for FAO to further balance regional focus, we welcomed advice provided at the Joint Meeting of the 132nd Programme Committee and 188th Finance Committee that expanded efforts to support Small Island Developing States, with their unique challenges related to being tourism- and import-dependent, are underway, and we look forward to receiving future updates. 4. We acknowledge the work on Trade and Food Safety Standards as a clear example of FAO using its comparative advantage to improve livelihoods and ensure the movement of safe food across long and short supply chains alike. 5. We reaffirm our commitment to FAO’s work on One Health, as referenced in paragraph 43, and we encourage other Members to contribute voluntary funding to support these efforts.
<p style="text-align: center;">United States of America (Wed 17/11/2021 17:20)</p>	<p>The long-term impacts of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition continue to be a concern for the United States. The new U.S. Global Food Security Strategy, which was released in October, fully integrates a food systems approach, as advanced by the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, and prioritizes programs that counter the negative impacts of the pandemic, such as disruptions in food systems, economic downturns, and slowing growth.</p> <p>The United States welcomes the work FAO is doing to address the short-term and long-term effects of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition.</p> <p>We recognize FAO’s key role in the production and dissemination of information and assessments of the impacts of COVID-19 on agriculture, food security and nutrition, especially given the challenges that COVID-19 has presented for data collection. We encourage FAO to continue its excellent monitoring and analytical work.</p> <p>We also encourage FAO to continue working closely with other organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Food Policy Research Institute, to track the impacts of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition. In order</p>

	<p>to effectively prepare for and respond to the secondary impacts of COVID-19, it is important for FAO members and other stakeholders to have timely and reliable information that is consistent across sources.</p> <p>Many countries, including the United States, have been contributing through bilateral and multilateral channels to prevent and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition. We recognize the important role FAO should continue to play in supporting the global response. In addition to the provision of data, analysis, policy advice, and technical support, we welcome FAO's efforts to match countries in need with the resources available to meet those needs. We look forward to continued reporting on the Food Coalition and other FAO efforts to match needs with resources.</p> <p>The United States strongly supports the One Health and Tripartite-Plus. We encourage FAO, with its counterparts in One Health, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), to actively participate, within its areas of mandate (such as pandemic response and recovery, zoonotic disease prevention, and other technical areas of expertise), in the next phases of origin studies led by the WHO.</p> <p>Finally, we welcome FAO's partnership with the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) to assess the impact of national emergency laws on access to affordable and nutritious food, particularly for vulnerable groups including women and youth. We look forward to the results of the joint FAO-IDLO global assessment and national assessments in Honduras and Uganda.</p>
<p>Japan (Fri 19/11/2021 13:20)</p>	<p>Japan expresses its appreciation for various FAO's works on the impact on food systems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic increased global food insecurity both in developed and developing countries. Therefore, FAO's role, which has various information and data, is becoming more and more important.</p> <p>Japan recognizes the importance of the FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, and providing emergency assistance to impoverished and vulnerable communities in Bangladesh for improving food production and nutrition conditions, and strengthening food systems in cooperation with FAO.</p> <p>Also, in response to the various challenges caused by the pandemic such as the disruption in the food supply chain, it is becoming more important to build resilient and sustainable food systems than ever before.</p> <p>Japan emphasises the importance of free and open and fair trade rule to have a smooth flow of foodstuffs, improving productivity through digitalization and innovation with appropriate protection of intellectual properties and privacy, and no one-size-fits-all approach. We will continue to focus its activity through FAO with the other countries. Now we are supporting FAO through voluntary contributions to develop guideline principles to strengthen the food production and supply system and the free, open, and fair trade for building a more resilient and seamless global food supply chain, which includes improving global food security by strengthening food production and supply through voluntary contributions to FAO. It is requested that FAO will consider allocating such resources effectively and efficiently.</p> <p>The importance of the One Health approach based on regional and international cooperation in preventing and mitigating future pandemics is increasing. As the paragraph 15 (g) of the Report of the 132nd Session of the Programme Committee expressed, Japan hopes for FAO's continued proactive activities in close collaboration with</p>

	international organizations such as other Rome-based Agencies to prevent gaps and overlaps between initiatives and organizations.
<p>Spain (Fri 19/11/2021 19:05)</p>	<p>Regarding FAO's response to COVID-19: Building to transform, we would like to highlight the following: Spain fully supports the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. Due to the urgent need to build resilient and sustainable food systems, we encourage FAO to strengthen the resilience of rural jobs and livelihoods, and to accelerate transformation processes at national level, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable groups such as smallholder family farmers, youth and women. The COVID-19 pandemic, a public health crisis which may have been caused by a virus of animal origin, has highlighted the importance of the One Health approach. Therefore, we welcome the establishment of the One Health High-Level Expert Panel, which will involve close collaboration between FAO, OIE, WHO and UNEP, stressing the importance of the interrelationship between human health, animal health and the environment in preventing and addressing global threats. We call on FAO to ensure, within its mandate, closer cooperation with other UN bodies, including the Committee on World Food Security and its own High-Level Panel of Experts, in order to provide valuable information on the impact of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition.</p>
<p>France (Fri 19/11/2021 20:56)</p>	<p>France aligns itself with the statement by the European Union and its 27 Member States. <u>Regarding part II. FAO Intervention Programme, 2 remarks</u> <u>In f) - paragraphs 43 to 47 - on the One Health approach:</u> we welcome FAO's commitment to preventing zoonotic pandemics by strengthening the One Health approach, and underline the importance that UNEP's inclusion in the Tripartite Alliance be formalized as soon as possible. We also welcome the mention of the One Health High-Level Expert Panel in paragraph 44. We would like the document to mention FAO's participation in the PREZODE international initiative, the aim of which is to make the One Health approach operational in the field to prevent the risk of zoonotic emergencies and pandemics. However, we would point out that the reference <u>in paragraph 47</u> of the document to the One Health Global Fund as a G7/G20 initiative is not correct because this Fund proposal from the Italian presidency of the G20 was not adopted. <u>We therefore propose deleting this sentence.</u> We recall that many funds exist already and it is important not to create duplicates. Priority must be given to strengthening existing ones. <u>Regarding point IV, "key lessons learned and relevant policy actions":</u> we have three proposals to better reflect the lessons of the document: 1-We underline the importance of sustainability when it comes to actions taken to improve the resilience of food systems, especially in the face of pandemics. Sustainable and resilient approaches must be promoted, in particular, Agroecology, for which FAO has shown its support by joining the political coalition for Agroecology launched at the United Nations Food Systems Summit on September 23 and 24. We therefore propose to add a paragraph in section IV, which would state that the lessons learned from the COVID crisis include the need for transformation toward sustainable food systems: "<i>The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to achieve sustainable food systems.</i>"</p>

	<p>2-Another lesson contained in the document is the importance of the One Health approach. In line with the report from the last session of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees, we encourage FAO to ensure that this approach is integrated into its work with an emphasis on the prevention of zoonotic diseases.</p> <p>3-In addition, we believe that COVID-19 has highlighted not only the role of “digital technologies” (cf. paragraph 62) but also that of “innovation in all forms” (social, political, institutional, financial, etc.). We therefore urge that in its response to COVID-19, FAO pay equal attention to all forms of innovation, which must be adapted both to the needs expressed in the field and to the local context</p>
<p>Africa Regional Group (Mon 22/11/2021 14:05)</p>	<p>Guinea and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are addressing this agenda item on behalf of the Africa Regional Group.</p> <p>The Africa Regional Group commends the FAO Secretariat for the development and brilliant presentation of the revised version of this item entitled “FAO’s Response to COVID-19: Building to Transform”.</p> <p>According to the recent publication on the state of food security and nutrition in the world, between 720 and 811 million people were suffering from hunger in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, 161 million more than in 2019.</p> <p>In this context, the Africa Regional Group is concerned about the dramatic increase in the number of people suffering from hunger and malnutrition, further affecting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2 by 2030.</p> <p>Despite all the concerns raised, we note with satisfaction that agri-food production, markets and trade have proven resilient, thanks to the efforts of all stakeholders and multilateral cooperation.</p> <p>The Africa Regional Group would like to express its support for FAO’s COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, and encourages donor countries and technical and financial partners to continue to mobilize resources for it to the benefit of vulnerable populations in the region.</p> <p>Our delegations, on behalf of the Africa Regional Group, support the main activities carried out by FAO in each of the seven areas of work outlined in the report.</p> <p>These activities have contributed significantly toward better management of the effects of the pandemic at the global, regional and national levels and to preventing possible zoonotic pandemics, under the “One Health” approach.</p> <p>In addition, we welcome the close collaboration between FAO and the Italian G-20 Presidency, which led to the launch of the Food Coalition in November 2020 under the leadership of FAO, with a view to creating and coordinating a political, financial and technical support mechanism to address the challenges posed by COVID-19.</p> <p>The Africa Regional Group thanks FAO for its support in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which will increase inter-African trade in agricultural goods and services.</p> <p>Pursuant to these comments, the Africa Regional Group encourages the Council to take note of the progress made by FAO in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
<p>European Union (Mon 22/11/2021 20:42)</p>	<p>I am honoured to write to you on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States regarding item 4 on the agenda of the 168th Session of the FAO Council.</p>

The Candidate Countries Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia¹ and Turkey, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova and the Republic of San Marino, align themselves with this written statement.

We commend FAO for its tireless efforts in tackling the pandemic's multiple negative effects on food systems, including through its comprehensive COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme and its role in the African Union-FAO COVID-19 Task Force on food security and nutrition in Africa.

We wish to highlight the crucial role of the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS) in providing valuable data to ensure well-informed and timely decisions.

The COVID-19 crisis has more than ever demonstrated the urgent need to build resilient and sustainable food systems for healthy diets within the planetary boundaries. This comprises the need to strengthen the resilience of rural jobs and livelihoods, grant access to markets and to social protection programmes, keep trade flows open and pay particular attention to supporting the most vulnerable groups such as smallholders and family farmers, indigenous peoples, young people and women.

In this regard, we call on FAO to ensure, within its mandate, a closer cooperation with other UN bodies, including the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and its High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE), which has produced relevant analyses on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on food security and nutrition. We also stress the importance of the One Health approach and encourage FAO, based on the existing Tripartite partnership, to formalise its collaboration with UNEP, as the leading global environmental authority. In this respect, we welcome the establishment of the One Health High Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP), involving FAO, OIE, WHO and UNEP, as well as the participation of FAO in the PREZODE Initiative.

As we all strive to learn and to be better prepared for the future, we encourage FAO to present to Members specific lessons learned from the pandemic and how these lessons could be applied elsewhere.

We thank FAO for having this item updated and discussed on a regular basis.

¹ The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.