



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



FAO AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Achieving the 2030 Agenda
through empowerment
of local communities

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COVER: FAO-supported wheat farming in Balkh District,
as hunger threatens Afghanistan
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AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION AND THE SDGS



Overheated, overstretched and riven by wealth extremes, our world sits on multiple knife edges. There may be 10 billion of us by 2050 – and already, the race to keep ourselves fed is straining the planet. Biodiversity is ailing. Resurgent conflict cripples food supplies. Poor nutrition saps health. Battered by water stress, whole regions dry up. Primary education still eludes millions of children. Gender inequality threatens society’s fabric. Climate change, deforestation and the overexploitation of resources are sending humanity into a tailspin.

Seeking to turn the tide, 193 countries have – laudably – agreed upon the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). But having an agenda is not enough. With less than a decade left, we are off track to meet the Goals. To make matters worse, over the last two harrowing years, the COVID-19 pandemic has reversed progress on many targets.



Back in 2019, the [Global Sustainable Development Report](#) had identified food systems and nutrition patterns as entry points for transformative action across the SDGs. This is – even more starkly – still the case today. Agrifood systems are essential to human survival and to a world free from hunger: without them, no Goal, including the eradication of hunger and poverty, can be achieved. It is also true that as they stand, agrifood systems are unbalanced; they can entrench injustice; and they generate a large share of harmful emissions. To make agrifood systems decisively the solution rather than the problem, we must starve out those parts of them that feed on inequality and environmental degradation. And to do so credibly and efficiently, we must start from the ground up – at the local community level.



FAO'S FOUR BETTERS: A SYSTEMS LENS TO ACCELERATE THE SDGS



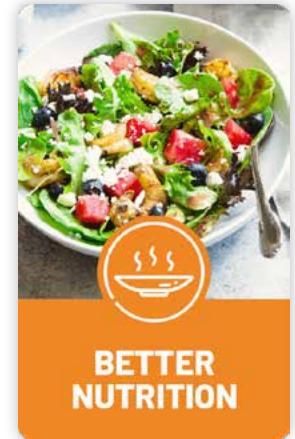


With the SDGs intrinsic to FAO's overall theory of change, the Organization is vitally invested in advancing them. Consequently, the Strategic Framework adopted in July 2021 seeks to support the 2030 Agenda through the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems. This approach has been synthesized as **better production; better nutrition; a better environment;** and a **better life**, leaving no one behind.

More than a concept, the four betters are an organizing principle for FAO's work on SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), as well as for furthering the broader 2030 Agenda. Actions to achieve SDG 2 and realize sustainable agrifood systems will accelerate progress across most other Goals and targets. Key SDGs and their indicators – including all indicators for which FAO is a custodian or contributing agency – act as instructions to sharpen the focus; track progress; and formulate aspirations for medium- or long-term outcome and impact.

The four betters do not posit individual or alternative pathways to the 2030 Agenda. Instead, they reflect and build on the interconnected economic, social and environmental dimensions of agrifood systems. These interlinkages tend to manifest themselves in three main areas: agricultural productivity, environmental impact and social sustainability (with the proviso that productivity is mainly linked to economic sustainability). FAO's agrifood systems approach thus casts agriculture, beyond its production and macroeconomic functions, as the means to realize food security and resilient livelihoods, promote innovation, and catalyse investment and partnerships.

This publication aims to illustrate FAO's work under the four betters to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.



BETTER PRODUCTION

Better production seeks to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, by way of efficient and inclusive food and agriculture supply chains at the local level and beyond. In doing so, it promotes resilient and sustainable agrifood systems in a changing climate and environment.

Better production means:

- *increased productivity*, which results in higher income for the producers and a greater abundance of commodities in the community;
- *sustainable agriculture*, which drives higher productivity and food security, while nurturing healthy ecosystems and supporting the sustainable management of natural resources;
- *freshwater use efficiency* to address both the irrigation and consumption needs of communities, and thus make them more resilient;
- *increased freshwater withdrawal* to make communities water-sufficient and improve public health and well-being;
- *combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing* to secure livelihoods in fishing communities; and
- *sustainable forest management* to create a double dividend for local income and conservation of resources.



MADAGASCAR: HIGHER-YIELDING RICE EQUALS MORE FOOD SECURITY FOR FARMERS

TARGET 2.3 | Indicator 2.3.1

Volume of production per labour unit by classes of farming/pastoral/forestry enterprise size



Background:

Much of Madagascar – and rural Madagascar in particular – is a three-rice-meals-a-day society. But with average daily incomes below USD 1.90, food insecurity runs deep. Added to this, domestic rice production trails demand; reliance on imports is traditionally high.

FAO's actions:

Under a 2019 FAO South-South Cooperation project involving China and Madagascar, Chinese experts have introduced a higher-yielding variety of rice, developed specifically to suit the island's climatic and soil conditions. Family farmers have been offered training.

Results:

Within less than a year, the harvest per hectare had tripled on average. The aim is to extend training to 1 000 farmers and eventually quadruple output.

Impact:

The introduction of the new variety marks a step towards rice self-sufficiency in Madagascar, with its corollary of lesser import bills. It also embeds knowledge among farmers, boosts food security at the local level, and stabilizes communities.

Threshing rice over an old barrel,
Betroka, Madagascar
©FAO/Yasuyoshi Chiba



NORTH MACEDONIA: CONSOLIDATING LAND FOR HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY

TARGET 2.4 | Indicator 2.4.1

Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture



Background:

Land fragmentation is a by-product of (re)privatization in Central and Eastern Europe. The breakup of large state cooperatives left farms in North Macedonia with an average size of less than 2 hectares. It has proved accordingly difficult to scale up production and make the leap to commercial farming.

FAO's actions:

The FAO–European Union–funded MAINLAND project, in close cooperation with North Macedonia's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, has set out to increase farm size and improve agricultural infrastructure.

Results:

A majority of landowners in the village of Egri have chosen to consolidate their land, blazing a trail for the rest of the country. The number of parcels has been reduced and their shape regularized. A rise in yields of 30 to 40 percent is expected.

Impact:

Land consolidation is improving competitiveness and spurring applications for European Union funding to invest in new machinery. Expansions are meanwhile being planned to the drip-irrigation system, which encourages greater crop variety.



GUATEMALA: HARVESTING RAINWATER FOR FOOD AND FISH FARMING IN THE DRY CORRIDOR

TARGET 6.4 | Indicator 6.4.2

Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources



Background:

Guatemala's Corredor Seco (Dry Corridor) is one of the driest areas on the planet. Here, 1.2 million people, whose staple diet consists of corn and beans, make do with two-thirds less water than fellow Guatemalans. Until 2016, the municipality of Chiquimula had no local water supply: every five years, an average of three harvests failed.

FAO's actions:

Using a grant from the Swedish Government, FAO teamed up with Guatemala's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food to set up a rainwater-harvesting system. This involves harvesting what little rainfall there is during the wet season and keeping it from evaporating – in this case, with an ingenious added benefit: snails and tilapia are farmed inside the reservoirs.

Results:

Within a year, villagers in the Dry Corridor were eating and selling fish and snails. The yield of staple crops had gone up – and more vegetables were being grown than ever before.

Impact:

Such projects open up family farming to fresh approaches and new, low-cost technologies. Local food security and nutrition indicators improve dramatically. By investing in people's livelihoods, FAO brings closer the Goal of Zero Hunger, while making the use of water in agriculture vastly more efficient.



Harvesting tilapia for FAO-supported school feeding, Minas Abajo, Guatemala
©NOOR for FAO/Pep Bonet

GUINEA: IMPLEMENTING INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS TO RESTORE FISH TRADE

TARGET 14.6 | Indicator 14.6.1

Degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing



Background:

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing can destroy the livelihoods of fishing communities; harm food security and nutrition; wreck biodiversity; and distort local and international trade. It often involves unsafe and indecent working conditions, and sometimes serious crime. With FAO's support, countries are coming together to combat IUU fishing – and making noteworthy progress.

FAO's actions:

FAO's Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) is designed to prevent, deter and eliminate the phenomenon by preventing IUU fishing vessels from using ports and landing their catches. At stake is the long-term conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources and ecosystems. Collaborating closely with FAO, Guinea – one of a growing list of signatories to the PSMA – has put great effort into implementing the agreement effectively.

Results:

In the two years since signing up, Guinea has become one of the front runners in the fight against IUU fishing, and has had European Union trade sanctions against it lifted.

Impact:

Progress towards the elimination of IUU fishing, country by country, helps safeguard biodiversity; protects the livelihoods of fishing communities; promotes fair local and international trade; and boosts food security. The fact that a least developed country (LDC) has achieved such progress demonstrates the PSMA's transformative potential.



Mending a fishing net as Guinea
clamps down on IUU fishing
©FAO/Desirey Minkoh

DOMINICA: BUILDING MORE RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS IN ISLANDS VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

TARGET 14.7 | Indicator 14.7.1

Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP in Small Island Developing States, least developed countries and all countries



Background:

Rising sea levels, and multiplying violent storms and hurricanes, gravely erode lives and livelihoods in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as Dominica. The nation's aquaculture sector had already shrunk due to shifting government priorities, raising the import bill for fish and fish products.

FAO's actions:

Under the Climate Change Adaptation of the Eastern Caribbean Fisheries Sector (CC4FISH) project, FAO has joined forces with Dominica's Government to rejuvenate prawn production as a driver of sustainable fisheries development.

Results:

Since the first local hatch in August 2020, larvae have been distributed to farmers looking to grow high-value prawns to meet domestic demand. Encouraged by the early results, fisheries officers and project team members are adding more farms to their distribution list.

Impact:

The CC4FISH project spans seven countries in the eastern Caribbean: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. By building up the aquaculture industry and making it climate resilient, FAO is helping island nations increase household income as fisheries move up the value chain.



FAO's CC4FISH project
promotes freshwater-prawn
farming in the Caribbean
©FAO/Dwayne Benjamin

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: FOREST MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR LOWER EMISSIONS

TARGET 15.2 | Indicator 15.2.1

Progress towards sustainable forest management



Background:

Forests are home to most of the Earth's biodiversity. They supply us with water and food, and sustain livelihoods. But they are at risk: halting deforestation and managing forest resources sustainably is a burning challenge of our time. For this to succeed, information about the state of forests is vital.

FAO's actions:

FAO provides technical assistance and innovative tools to gather the type of data needed to manage and protect forests. A total of 45 countries – Papua New Guinea among them – are being supported by the Organization to develop robust [National Forest Monitoring Systems](#) (NFMS).

Results:

Within a year, Papua New Guinea has developed a forest mitigation strategy, and cut back emissions by the equivalent of a thousandth of total emissions blamed on agriculture worldwide.

Impact:

FAO is a prime disseminator of science-based forest management strategies among vulnerable members of the international community. The Organization's interventions are catalytic and transformative, especially in small, highly exposed countries such as the SIDS.



Identifying birds at a national forest initiative camp near Kupiano, Papua New Guinea
© UN-REDD/FAO/Cory Wright

FAO AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

BETTER NUTRITION

The UN declared 2021 the International
Year of Fruits and Vegetables
©Unsplash/Taylor Kiser

Better nutrition aims to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition in all its forms, including promoting nutritious food and increasing access to healthy diets.

Better nutrition means:

- *decreased undernourishment*, especially during the early years of life, to raise healthy, productive individuals;
- *healthy food supply* to promote overall well-being;
- *increased food security*, which leads to more balanced food prices and greater access by poorer people to all products and services;
- *improved food safety* to safeguard public health and reduce the premature mortality of mothers and children from non-communicable diseases; and
- *better food distribution* to reduce food loss and waste, and increase community self-sufficiency.



THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: DIVERSIFIED DIETS EASE MALNUTRITION BURDEN

TARGET 2.1 | Indicator 2.1.1

Prevalence of undernourishment



Background:

Georgette Iyenze's experience echoes that of many Congolese women. Displaced to a forest camp by intercommunal conflict, she returned home to Sankuru Province with three of eight children severely malnourished.

FAO's actions:

With Belgian and European Union funding, FAO set out to tackle malnutrition in children under five, and in pregnant and breastfeeding women, in Sankuru. The project relied on the community to conduct home-based screenings of children. Each household received a kit to grow vegetables. Meanwhile, live cooking demonstrations helped women provide their children with healthy diets.

Results:

Iyenze visited the health centre twice a week to attend the nutritious-food demonstrations organized by FAO staff with the centre's medical team and Congolese non-governmental organization, Coeur de Compassion in Sankuru. Data collected in 2019 showed the health centre treating 220 malnourished children in the area, and 32 children no longer malnourished as a direct result of FAO's nutrition training.

Impact:

FAO's multipronged approach has allowed more children to receive adequate nutrition in their first 1000 days of life. This helps strengthen food security in both the short term, by reducing wasting and stunting, and the long term, by laying the foundation for healthier generations.



Picking potatoes in the Okapi
Wildlife Reserve, the Democratic
Republic of the Congo
©FAO/Thomas Nicolon

ENSURING PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO FOOD: BOLIVIA (PLURINATIONAL STATE OF), CAMBODIA, EL SALVADOR, MOZAMBIQUE, NEPAL, SENEGAL AND TOGO

TARGET 2.1 | Indicator 2.1.2

Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)



Background:

Food is a human right, enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. To promote its implementation, FAO Member Nations have adopted the Right to Food Guidelines.

FAO's actions:

The Organization has worked in Kenya, Mozambique, Senegal and Togo; in the Plurinational State of Bolivia and El Salvador; and in Cambodia and Nepal to help operationalize the right to food of vulnerable groups. Knowledge co-creation events, policy dialogues and partnerships have driven standard-setting and built institutional capacity.

Results:

Mozambique's Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition, the Bolivian National Council for Food and Nutrition, and El Salvador's National Council for Food Security and Nutrition were strengthened to lead normative and policy processes on the Right to Food. Nepal enshrined the right in its constitution. Regional expert consultations organized in Colombia, Kenya and Senegal brought together food experts, parliamentarians and policymakers, including the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. Research in Cambodia, Senegal and Togo analysed the impact of gender policy in the field.

Impact:

The Right to Food Guidelines have influenced global efforts to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. Grounded in human rights, they remain highly relevant to the 2030 Agenda.



School meal in Brasília, Brazil. The country's school feeding programme is an example for the world
©FAO/Ubirajara Machado

DESIGNING POLICIES AND USING IMPACT PATHWAYS TO REDUCE MALNUTRITION AND CHILD WASTING

TARGET 2.2 | Indicator 2.2.2

Prevalence of malnutrition among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight). Also relevant to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)



TARGET 3.2 | Indicator 3.2.1

Under-5 mortality rate



Background:

The deadliest form of malnutrition, wasting is characterized by a rapid deterioration in nutritional status, over a short period of time, in children under five; it is associated with a twelvefold rise in the risk of death.

FAO's actions:

At the request of the UN Secretary-General, FAO and partner agencies have designed, and are jointly supporting, a [Global Action Plan \(GAP\) on Child Wasting](#). It aims to reduce the prevalence of child wasting to less than 5 percent by 2025, and to less than 3 percent by 2030. Policy recommendations found in national strategic documents have been mapped against the GAP framework to gauge government commitments. This has led to the publication of country policy maps.

Results:

FAO has developed a user-friendly, all-in-one interactive dashboard organized by country, system and priority action. The GAP also introduced a series of guidance notes specific to each sector to support governments and partners, building on experience from 12 countries.

Impact:

Through information and policy support, FAO contributes to safeguarding and improving nutrition of at-risk and crisis-affected populations. The Organization promotes an enabling environment to strengthen the humanitarian-development-peace nexus for improved nutrition and achievement of SDG 2 (Zero Hunger).



Internally displaced mothers at a Médecins
Sans Frontières (MSF) paediatric clinic in
Yusuf Batil camp, South Sudan
© FAO/Giuseppe Carotenuto

HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING: IMPROVING CHILD NUTRITION WHILE SUPPORTING SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

TARGET 2.2 | Indicator 2.2.2

Prevalence of malnutrition among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight). Also relevant to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)



TARGET 3.2 | Indicator 3.2.1

Under-5 mortality rate



Background:

School feeding programmes nourish children and expand access to education. Additionally, an increasing number of governments are sourcing food for school meals locally from smallholder farmers (“home-grown school feeding”).

FAO’s actions:

With donors increasingly asked to support national school feeding efforts, FAO has joined the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as a stakeholder in the [Global Child Nutrition Foundation](#), the [Partnership for Child Development](#), and the [New Partnership for Africa’s Development](#).

Results:

FAO has supported Angola, Honduras and Peru to incorporate fish into national school feeding programmes, encouraging them to include small-scale fishers and aquaculture producers in their procurement schemes.

Impact:

Home-grown school feeding programmes boost local food production; create business opportunities for rural producers and processors with little access to markets; and contribute to communities’ socioeconomic development. In Honduras, FAO found an “acceptability rate” – children’s willingness to eat the fish – for tilapia meals of 100 percent in the three schools tested; in Peru, acceptability rates for vacuum-sealed salted anchovies, which have a 12-month shelf life, reached 88 percent. There were also high acceptability rates for fish soup, fish pie and fish croquettes derived from powdered mackerel in Angola.



FAO's Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean 2025 Initiative in action at Aldea el Horizonte, Guatemala ©NOOR for FAO/Pep Bonet

KENYA: MORE CLOUT FOR FARMERS THROUGH FARMERS' GROUPS AND COLLECTIVE MARKETING

TARGET 2.c | Indicator 2.c.1

Indicator of food price anomalies



Background:

One way for farmers to boost their bargaining power is to work the land and sell their produce as a group, based on agreements with buyers. In southern and central Kenya, some 15 000 farmers have joined forces to form groups that are 15- to 30-strong. Several farmers' groups, in turn, constitute a community-based organization (CBO), which is normally registered with the county government.

FAO's actions:

FAO has supported the association process and helped train farmers' groups in conservation agriculture; in reducing production costs and post-harvest losses; in meeting quality standards; and in selecting and packaging their production.

Results:

Farmers' incomes have gone up and become more regular. Through groups and CBOs, farmers can also access loans to buy seeds, fertilizers and pesticides at a lower cost, as well as hire equipment.

Impact:

FAO plays a key role in monitoring, analysing and disseminating food price data along the food supply chain, from producer to consumer, across domestic and international markets. Supporting the establishment of farmers' groups and CBOs also means FAO works for fairer producer prices and more secure livelihoods.

Harvesting sorghum,
a drought-resistant staple, in
Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya
©FAO/Tian Cai





BETTER ENVIRONMENT

A better environment aims to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial and marine ecosystems and combat climate change (reduce, reuse, recycle, residual management) through more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems.

A better environment means:

- *endemic biodiversity conservation*, which allows local communities to continue using endemic species for food, agriculture and medicinal purposes;
- *protecting local breeds* to enable local communities to sustain their traditional livelihoods;
- *implementing climate-smart agricultural practices, policies and programmes* to mitigate climate change and make local communities resilient to a changing climate;
- *increasing fish stocks* to benefit fishing communities, particularly in vulnerable coastal areas;
- *protecting marine ecosystems*, which results in greater access by small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources, and enhanced access rights when involved in their management; and
- *forest ecosystem conservation* to ensure provision of forest ecosystem services to all, and especially to local and mountainous communities.



MALI: PROTECTING AND PRESERVING SEED BIODIVERSITY FOR RESILIENT AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS AND SECURE FOOD PRODUCTION

TARGET 2.5 | Indicator 2.5.1

Number of (a) plant and (b) animal genetic resources for food and agriculture secured in either medium- or long-term conservation facilities



Background:

Crop biodiversity fortifies agrifood systems against climate change, invasive species, pollution, urban sprawl and the overuse of land. In Mali, for example, rice and millet are staples. But with 80 percent of rainfed rice cultivation ravaged by drought, yields have shrunk drastically.

FAO's actions:

The [Benefit-sharing Fund](#), established through the [FAO International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture](#), supports farmers in developing countries to safeguard and use plant genetic diversity for food security. In Mali, it has helped communities identify local rice varieties that are both tough and high-yielding.

Results:

The fund's work with local producers and communities through the Institut d'Économie Rurale has helped preserve 266 local rice varieties – and identify which species give maximum output while tolerating drought and excessive water submersion. The farmers are being given greater access to these varieties; these seeds were also recently sent to the [Svalbard Global Seed Vault](#).

Impact:

By supporting the sustainable management of crop genetic resources in developing countries, the fund has increased the food security and improved the livelihoods of more than a million people.



FAO has distributed vast quantities of improved cereal seeds and fertilizer around Mopti, Mali
©FAO/B.Geers

GREEN CLIMATE FUND: FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE AROUND THE WORLD WITH INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

TARGET 13.a | Indicator 13.a.1

Amounts provided and mobilized in USD per year in relation to the continued existing collective mobilization goal of the USD 100 billion commitment through 2025



Background:

Forests play a key role in keeping our planet healthy. Tragically, some 11 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions are linked to deforestation.

FAO's actions:

FAO has supported some 40 countries in accessing [Green Climate Fund \(GCF\)](#) resources to meet climate goals. One project aims to reduce deforestation in Argentina. Another envisions low-emission fuel alternatives in Armenia's rural areas. Yet another project involves maintaining Nepal's landscapes. And the first African FAO-GCF project will boost zero-deforestation cocoa production in Côte d'Ivoire.

Results:

Nearly 3 000 local and Indigenous families in Argentina are being included in planning efforts to restore native forests, and prevent or respond to forest fires. In Armenia, the GCF project will promote energy-efficient stoves to reduce wood consumption by 30 percent. The GCF project in Nepal will help nearly 200 000 households mitigate the effects of extreme weather events. In Côte d'Ivoire, the project encourages naturally shaded cocoa agroforestry systems.

Impact:

Involving communities in managing their own resources makes it less likely that forests will be cleared illegally. Fostering ownership and engagement also reduces the causes of deforestation by ensuring that wood and other products, such as honey and nuts, are produced and traded sustainably.



Rolling back deforestation in
Armenia's Lori Province
©FAO/Karen Minasyan

WORLD'S OCEANS: STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS TO TACKLE OVERFISHING

TARGET 14.4 | Indicator 14.4.1

Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels



Background:

Oceans are essential for our ecosystems. But their management is extremely complex. No single nation governs what are known as areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), yet all have a joint duty to maintain them.

FAO's actions:

The Common Oceans ABNJ Program (2014–2019) has improved fisheries management and biodiversity conservation. Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and led by FAO, the program has helped reduce overfishing of tuna; protect marine life; safeguard vulnerable ecosystems; and tackle illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing.

Results:

Eighteen new sites were established to protect at-risk marine life; reduce the mortality of marine mammals; and attract investment to combat IUU fishing. Eight out of 13 major commercial tuna stocks are no longer overfished. A second phase of the program has been approved, led by FAO and co-implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Impact:

The program has collected data and conducted research on the effects of fishing operations in common ocean areas. It has also directly helped reduce the number of marine mammals caught accidentally (“bycatch”). Most notably, it has brought overexploited fish species back to sustainable levels.



Working the shift at Volma fish farm, Cherven District near Minsk, Belarus
©FAO/Sergei Capon

ETHIOPIA, INDIA, NICARAGUA AND RWANDA: USING GEOSPATIAL TECHNOLOGY TO MONITOR TREE RESTORATION

TARGET 15.1 | Indicator 15.1.1

Forest area as a proportion of total land area



Background:

Trees are still being lost at alarming rates. Quality local monitoring is needed to track successes and failures, and to catalyse and scale investments.

FAO's actions:

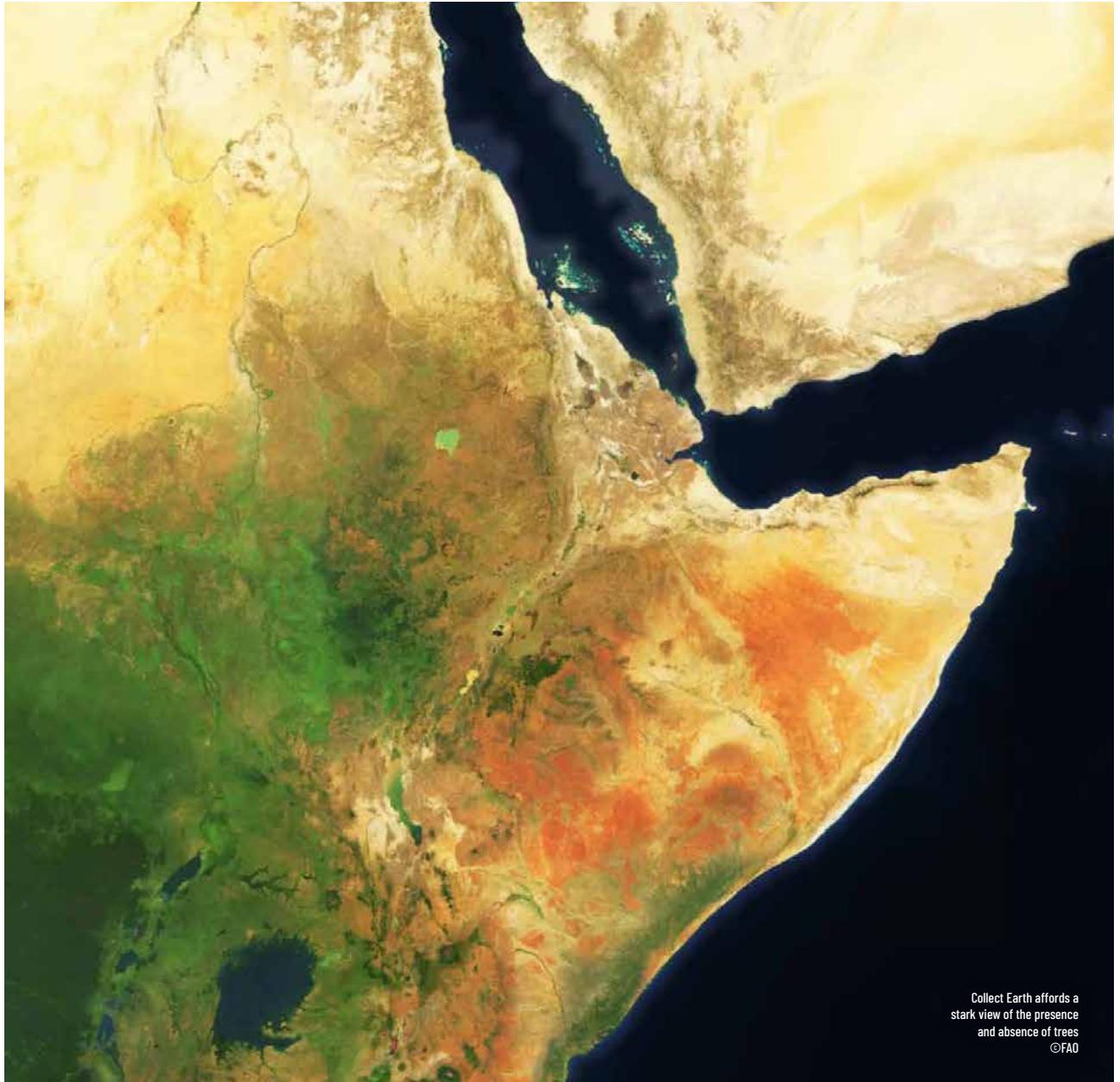
FAO has counted trees in northeast Nicaragua by contracting a satellite internet provider and crowdsourcing help. The data was fed into FAO's Open Foris tool, [Collect Earth](#), which uses images from NASA, the European Space Agency and Google Earth, and Planet data from Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative. Validated data compiled in Collect Earth is then plugged into FAO's [System for Earth Observation Data Access, Processing and Analysis for Land Monitoring \(SEPAL\)](#).

Results:

Experts and residents in Nicaragua were able to update previous surveys and monitor the restoration progress of tree cover. The "mapathon" there was followed by another in Ethiopia. In one part of India, local participants identified points where tree cover existed and where more could be grown. In one Rwandan district, the mapathon revealed more trees than expected.

Impact:

Mapathons are a novel way to integrate different stakeholders, including government forestry officials with their priorities and smallholder farmers with theirs. Thanks to the use of historical satellite data sets, such exercises allow governments to evolve adaptive management in a changing climate.



Collect Earth affords a stark view of the presence and absence of trees ©FAO

MOUNTAIN GREEN COVER INDEX: INNOVATIVE METHODS TO MONITOR THE HEALTH OF MOUNTAIN ECOSYSTEMS

TARGET 15.4 | Indicator 15.4.2

Mountain Green Cover Index



Background:

Mountain ecosystems provide vital resources to a significant proportion of the global population. But they are especially vulnerable to climate change. This is all the more alarming as mountain dwellers are among the world's most food insecure.

FAO's actions:

Together with the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), FAO has developed free, open-source tools to strengthen national technical capacity to report on the [Mountain Green Cover Index \(MGCI\)](#).

Results:

FAO has established agreements with data providers on using Earth Observation (EO) images. The Organization has also developed a methodology to simplify and automatize the measuring and monitoring of the MGCI based on EO products. In 2021, this methodology earned FAO the Group on Earth Observations Sustainable Development Goals Award in the category "SDG custodian agency".

Impact:

EO data contributes both directly and indirectly to improving the availability, quality and consistency of SDG indicators. Part of FAO's work towards more accurate monitoring of SDG progress includes working with Member Nations and partner organizations to further improve the MGCI methodology.

Surveying the Andean
environment of Peru
©FAO/Edson Vandeira



**BETTER
LIFE**

A better life aims to promote inclusive economic growth by reducing inequalities (between urban and rural areas, rich and poor countries, men and women).

A better life means:

- *increasing income* of small-scale food producers, which contributes to the overall well-being of their communities;
- *guiding government expenditures* towards the agricultural sector, to help rural communities, dependent primarily on agriculture, to secure their livelihoods;
- *securing land tenure*, by promoting ownership or strengthened rights over agricultural land, which allows men and women to build prosperous communities; and
- *ensuring women's rights* to land ownership and control, which should reduce gender inequalities, with benefits for overall community well-being.



RWANDA: SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES TO TURN WOMEN SMALLHOLDERS INTO ENTREPRENEURS

TARGET 2.3 | Indicator 2.3.2

Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and Indigenous status



Background:

The soil of Rwanda's Rubavu District is fertile, but most farmers lack access to seeds, fertilizer or good farming practices. Consequently, this area has the highest malnutrition rates in the country.

FAO's actions:

In 2017, Christine Mushimirimana was selected as one of the 600 participants in FAO's social protection project. She was given two goats, a starter kit avocado seedling kit and vegetable seeds. She also received training in vegetable production and small animal husbandry from a farmer field and life school (FFLS). There were further lessons on agribusiness, nutrition, gender equality and financial literacy. Finally, participants were encouraged to form savings and loans groups, with each member contributing 400 Rwandan francs (USD 0.40) a week.

Results:

Mushimirimana grew the seedlings, reaping from the first harvest much more than her family could consume. She then took out a loan from the group and started a small business selling fruits and vegetables in a market along the highway.

Impact:

Social protection measures are essential to reducing poverty and hunger, especially in rural areas. They allow poor smallholders to manage risks; engage in more economic and productive activities; and envisage a food-secure future.

Farmfield Schools – here in Rwanda
– teach farmers to diversify their
techniques for higher yields
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THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA: INDIGENOUS WOMEN LEADING THE WAY TO RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION OF THE IMATACA FOREST RESERVE

TARGET 5.a | Indicator 5.a.1

(a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure



Background:

The Indigenous Kariña community lives in the Imataca Forest Reserve, which hosts jaguars, tapirs, howler monkeys and the giant harpy eagle. Regardless of this biodiversity and of the Kariña's ancestral claims, outsiders have been mining the earth and felling trees in the area. The Kariña community, meanwhile, was heavily male-dominated, with women, by their own description, having "neither voice nor vote".

FAO's actions:

In coordination with the Venezuelan Government, FAO and the GEF have helped Kariña women set up a business that finds new ways for the forest to provide, through the commercialization of non-wood products.

Results:

The Venezuelan Government has granted the Kariña 7000 hectares to co-manage. This land has become the centre of training and restoration activities to revitalize areas degraded by mining.

Impact:

Beyond the improved forest management and livelihoods, there has been a change of mindset among the Kariña, with a new belief by women in their own management capacities. In the words of the group's "captain", Cecilia Rivas, the community has become the "true guardian of the forest". In Latin America and elsewhere, FAO works with Indigenous Peoples to ensure that their voices are heard, and their ancestral knowledge and stewardship recognized.

Indigenous Karíña women take the lead in restoring the Imataca Forest Reserve in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
©FAO/Jesús Contreras



GUATEMALA: GIVING WOMEN A VOICE IN FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

TARGET 5.a | Indicator 5.a.2

Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control



Background:

While gender equality has advanced in Guatemala, male hegemony still characterizes the rural culture. Less than 8 percent of Guatemalan women farmers own the land they farm. This makes it difficult for them to obtain credits and undermines their decision-making power.

FAO's actions:

FAO has helped improve the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food's capacity to develop a gender equality policy, with technical advice to support a new Special Cabinet for Women. The Organization also helped establish a technical working group on rural development that would operate across institutions and sectors, with a focus on gender and Indigenous Peoples.

Results:

In August 2016, the Guatemalan Government ratified its first policy for gender equality in the areas of national food security, nutrition and rural development. FAO and other UN agencies have facilitated the country's cultural shift by bringing together government officials and civil society to turn the policy into practice.

Impact:

Such policies are milestones in implementing the [UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#). FAO, through strengthening the institutional and legal framework, makes progressive and lasting improvement in the quality of life of rural and Indigenous women a reality, especially in developing countries.



Women landowners – as here in Somalia – remain a small minority in much of the world
©FAO/Isak Amin/ARETE

SCALING UP FROM LOCAL RESULTS TO GLOBAL IMPACTS

Rinderpest used to decimate cattle.
FAO has helped the world eradicate it
©FAO/Ishara Kodikara

FAO has long been on the ground, identifying the needs and challenges of diverse countries and communities, and setting out decisively to meet them. The Organization's programmatic approach prioritizes work that delivers across the four betters, rippling out from the local level to generate global impact.

THE ORGANIZATION'S PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH PRIORITIZES WORK THAT DELIVERS ACROSS THE FOUR BETTERS, RIPPLING OUT FROM THE LOCAL LEVEL TO GENERATE GLOBAL IMPACT.

Various global initiatives and programmes are galvanizing SDG progress, from sustainable forestry and ecosystem monitoring to social protection for local farmers. The **National Forest Monitoring System (NFM) initiative** assists more than 50 countries to develop modern, transparent, reliable and accessible

monitoring systems, through free and open-source tools for forest data that use remote sensing and field inventories (SDG 13, SDG 15, SDG 17). Indicators of restoration in key ecosystems can be monitored and reported through the **Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring (FERM)**. The **Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA)**, for its part, contains detailed regional and global analyses for 236 countries and territories to meet the needs of the diverse stakeholders (SDG 13, SDG 15, SDG 17).

FAO's flagship **Hand-in-Hand Initiative** helps accelerate agrifood transformation and sustainable rural development by pairing up countries with high rates of poverty and hunger with developed countries, in an effort to attract new donors or private sector investments. It also helps identify investment gaps for existing donors or multilateral and bilateral agencies to target (SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 10, SDG 17). Largely thanks to funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, FAO's **Integrated Country Approach (ICA)** programme provides policy support for decent rural employment, by spurring job creation for youth in the agrifood systems of sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America (SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 17). The **Green Cities Initiative** aims to improve the livelihoods and well-being of urban and peri-urban populations, by strengthening urban-rural linkages and the resilience of urban systems, services and populations to external shocks; it is also built to strengthen collaboration between local and national authorities, and to foster engagement between rural and urban communities – especially with women and young people (SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13).

For FAO to address complex issues related to food and agriculture effectively, it must be highly flexible. The **COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme** was designed to address the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic by leveraging USD 1.3 billion in initial investments for an agile and coordinated global response during and after the pandemic (SDG 2, SDG 17). More permanently, the **Africa Solidarity**

Trust Fund (ASTF) provides catalytic funding for Africa-to-Africa initiatives on food and agriculture at regional and country level – an innovative, Africa-led instrument to strengthen food security (SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 17). Moreover, FAO's accreditation to the **Adaptation Fund** and **Green Climate Fund** as an implementing partner helps vulnerable countries fight the effects of climate change (SDG 13, SDG 17).





FAO improved seed distribution to communities living on inhospitable terrain in Zinder, the Niger
©FAO/Issouf Sanogo

Partnerships are not limited to funding: they also regard common networks and platforms. FAO is an active member of the **Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B)**, and a partner in the socialprotection.org platform and the **Social Protection and Human Rights** platform (SDG 1, SDG 5, SDG 16, SDG 17). The Organization hosts the **Family Farming Knowledge Platform**, which provides a single access point for international, regional and national information on family farming issues (SDG 2, SDG 8, SDG 10, SDG 17). Together with WFP and the European Union, FAO has launched the **Global Network against Food Crises (GNAFC)**, an alliance of humanitarian and development actors set up to

mitigate crisis impacts, and to boost resilient and sustainable recovery and rehabilitation (SDG 2, SDG 16, SDG 17). Last but not least, FAO now hosts the **UN Food Systems Coordination Hub** that collaborates with, and draws upon, wider UN system capacities to support the follow-up to the [UN Food Systems Summit](#) convened in 2021: this body seeks to raise global awareness and kick-start actions to transform agrifood systems; eradicate hunger; and reduce diet-related diseases, presenting a unique opportunity to accelerate SDG implementation (SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 17).

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND



Maasai women watering saplings
at a community tree nursery in
Kisiria Forest, Kenya
©FAO/Luis Tato

Is progress towards the SDGs occurring at the rate needed to meet the deadline of the 2030 Agenda? Clearly, it is not. And yet, monumental setbacks aside, not all is lost. In September 2021, in a report that tracked progress on SDG indicators for food and agriculture, FAO found considerable advances in areas such as the implementation of measures against IUU fishing; sustainable forest management; elimination of agricultural export subsidies; investment to boost agricultural productivity in developing countries; and duty-free access for developing and least developed countries (LDCs), particularly for agricultural products.



Fishing for sprats on Lake Tanganyika
near Kigoma, the United Republic
of Tanzania
©FAO/Luis Tato



Fetching water for the cabbage patch in the village of Thiaye, Thiès Region, Senegal
©FAO/Olivier Asselin

There is far more distance to go. The world must scale up investment in agriculture and relevant science and innovation. It should improve access to new agricultural technologies, credit services and information resources for farmers. There is a dire need to support small-scale food producers, to conserve plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture, and to adopt measures to counter food price volatility. More must be done to prevent potentially hazardous events from worsening into

full-blown disasters. There is an imperative to use water more efficiently in regions most affected by high water stress; to target interventions to reduce food loss and waste; and to protect terrestrial and forest ecosystems in general. Much tougher action is wanted on the legal and practical aspects of women's land rights. The threat of IUU fishing must be fought more vigorously. And across all these objectives, there is an intense need for timely and high-quality data.

Since its establishment, FAO has been leading international efforts to end hunger and achieve food security in the world. It is now clear that its goals are the world's goals; that they can only be achieved within the framework of sustainable development, where economic growth is coupled with social development and environmental protection. FAO therefore endeavours to empower local communities, which in turn coalesce to pave the way for achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The road is never smooth. But this overarching mission, evidenced by FAO's role as a custodian agency for 21 SDG indicators and host of

the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, will carry on unabated: FAO will continue to engage all actors, including the private sector as a strategic partner, to shape thriving, sustainable, humanity-enhancing agrifood systems.



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) belong to all of us. But amid resurgent conflict, climate havoc, and social and health crises, we risk losing sight of them. Even so, they represent our best shot at a better future for people and planet. This publication shows how FAO and partners continue to work for the achievement of the SDGs, project by project, field by field, and country by country.

Conscious of the indivisibility and integrated nature of the SDGs, FAO's new Strategic Framework and work attests to our complete commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We accelerate the SDGs through more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind.

Director-General Qu Dongyu
Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations