FAO in Africa: Highlights in 2023
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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
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The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) work in Africa is guided by and contributes to the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031. At the end of 2023, FAO in Africa completed the first biennium of implementing the Strategic Framework, demonstrating a better business model and practices to achieve better results. Over the biennium, FAO mobilized close to USD 1.3 billion to support work in the Africa region, exceeding the target of USD 810 million by about 60 percent.

I am delighted to share the FAO in Africa: Highlights in 2023 report, a comprehensive reflection of our work in Africa under the Strategic Framework towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind. The report is organized according to each of these four Betters to demonstrate how our activities in Africa are aligned to the global strategic approach.

In the face of ever-evolving global dynamics and the persistent multiple, overlapping manmade and natural shocks and challenges, FAO remains at the forefront of fostering positive change in Africa. Through technical excellence and strategic partnerships, FAO has played a pivotal role in shaping a more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable future for Africa.

Our commitment to better production is evident in our work on digital agriculture, solar-powered irrigation and sustainable mechanization in Africa, as highlighted in this report.

Better nutrition has been prioritized through promoting healthy diets for all. Through collaborations with governments and local organizations, FAO is working to reduce malnutrition and ensure the safety of the food supply chain, particularly for the most vulnerable populations.

Efforts to promote green jobs and urban gardens through the Green Cities Initiative underscore our commitment to a better environment in Africa. Our contributions to the Great Green Wall and the sustainable use of natural resources have also contributed to this objective.

Evident throughout the examples presented in this highlights report is our dedication to gender equality and rural women’s empowerment to drive inclusive rural transformation – one of the principles of a better life.

Our achievements are only possible through solid partnerships forged with governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local communities, development partners, as well as effective teamwork within FAO, delivering as one. These collaborations have been instrumental in implementing impactful programmes that show the transformative power of agrifood systems.

In 2023, we held a series of sub-regional consultations with national and regional stakeholders such as the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) through our Multidisciplinary Team Meetings (MDTs). These sessions, as well as consultations with regional civil society and private sector organizations, will help to shape discussions at the upcoming 33rd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa which takes place in the Kingdom of Morocco in April 2024.

As we navigate the complexities of the future, FAO remains steadfast in its mission to address emerging challenges, foster innovation, and work together with our partners for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind.

Abebe Haile-Gabriel
Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
BETTER PRODUCTION

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, through efficient and inclusive food and agriculture supply chains at local, regional and global level, ensuring resilient and sustainable agrifood systems in a changing climate and environment.
BETTER PRODUCTION

Programme priority areas for better production include innovation for sustainable agriculture production, blue transformation – the vision for sustainable aquatic food systems, small-scale producers’ equitable access to resources, digital agriculture, and the multisectoral One Health approach to attain optimal health for people, animals and the environment.

Digital Villages Initiative


In Senegal, the national extension agency, Agence Nationale de Conseil Agricole et Rural (ANCAR), is planning to expand the e-commerce platform Senlouma to connect farmers with even more partners, including seed traders, input suppliers, food processing experts, insurers, wholesalers, and financial institutions. This expansion will benefit many in the Saloum and Niaye regions, who have already discovered new markets, sold their produce, and established partnerships through the platform.

Liberia is preparing to transform three counties into digital village hubs. A workshop was held in collaboration with the government, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and other UN bodies to discuss the challenges and opportunities of DVI and digitalization in these targeted counties. A partnership has been established with the national Liberia Telecommunications Corporation (LTC) to implement the necessary digital infrastructure and applications for the DVI rollout.

In Zimbabwe, a report assessing the potential for implementing DVI has been finalized. Similarly, in Nigeria, approval has been granted for an FAO-funded Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) to implement DVI, with activities starting in 2024.
A sub-DVI project called “Delivering Digital Village services for rural transformation leveraging Artificial Intelligence and other technologies” was launched in Malawi and Senegal. This project provided computers and other digital equipment to selected farmer cooperatives and extension units in DVI locations. This support helped farmers engage in agribusiness activities, expand their markets, and access better services from extension units. Fifty farmer cooperatives received training on using social media platforms to professionally promote their agri-food products and increase revenue. The project also promoted awareness of how extension officers can use generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT to better support farmers with advisory services.

The FAO Regional Office for Africa collaborated with Wageningen University & Research and other institutions in organizing a four-week online forum on enhancing digitalization for agriculture (#D4Ag) with artificial intelligence. FAO also established an agreement with Wageningen University & Research to develop generative AI tools specifically for agricultural information and advisory services. This partnership between FAO and Wageningen University & Research has resulted in a new body of evidence for policymakers and development actors on innovative technologies for monitoring of child labour through blockchain technology.

In Rwanda, the European Union-funded Development of Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) project is using drones to deliver germ cells for reproduction to livestock producers for better production. DeSIRA is also supporting farmers to use hydroponics to grow animal feed.

In Côte d’Ivoire, the project Circular Bioeconomy in Abidjan, from food waste to fork (Bioéconomie circulaire à Abidjan des Déchets Alimentaires à la Fourchette, known with the French acronym BioDAF) is using black soldier fly larvae to convert food waste into organic and readily available fertilizer and to provide protein for poultry, pig, and fish feed. The project is a collaboration between FAO and the Autonomous District of Abidjan through its Institute of Circular Economy (l’Economie Circulaire d’Abidjan, IECA) with private sector partner BioAni.

In the United Republic of Tanzania, DNA sequencing and barcode labelling are being used to preserve the integrity of avocado seedlings.

In Guinea, a pilot project is developing a device to safely transport animal biological samples from the field to the lab using a smartphone tracking app, and the lab results are to be uploaded to a shared data platform for better monitoring and analysis.

Within the framework of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy, a regional Science and Innovation Forum event was held that focused on youth, women, and science-led innovations for climate action in agrifood systems in Africa.

### Innovation for sustainable agriculture production

The Agricultural Information Management System (AIMS) continued to be rolled out across the 16 countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. The system developed by FAO provides policymakers and planners access to reliable and timely agricultural information for better policy development, emergency preparedness, planning, and decision-making. The System promotes data-driven decision-making and fosters regional cooperation across the SADC countries. SADC countries are working towards the integration of their national agricultural information management systems to the SADC AIMS platform, with the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia taking the lead on this.

### Blue Transformation

A comprehensive database on fisheries and aquaculture in Africa is being tested in collaboration with the African Union Inter-African Bureau of Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) which will contribute to eliminating longstanding challenges in data accessibility.

To support enforcement of the Agreement on Port State Measures and to combat illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, FAO supported four countries in Eastern Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, and Somalia) to develop national implementation strategies and roadmaps. A framework and action plan for Central Africa subregion was also developed in 2023.
FAO trained stakeholders on the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of Food Security (VGGTs), which supported investment planning for Blue Transformation.

The 23rd Session of the Fishery Committee for Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF) was held in Monrovia, Liberia in July 2023. More than 20 Member countries participated at the meeting, which approved the 9th Session Scientific Sub-committee report, and endorsed the EAF-Nansen Programme Report and Workplan. EAF-Nansen Project is funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and implemented by FAO across 32 countries globally. Some of the recommendations of the meeting included greater cross-cutting thematic collaboration, capacity building and closer collaboration with sub-regional organizations.

FAO supported the development and implementation of National Plans of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSF) in four African countries (Madagascar, Namibia, United Republic of Tanzania, and Uganda).

In Cabo Verde, a comprehensive 10-year plan prepared with FAO support, which aims to improve tuna and mackerel value chains, received public and private sector endorsement. The step is a significant milestone in the journey towards sustainable fisheries development and a Blue Transformation of the aquatic food system in Cabo Verde.

A ten-year plan to make Zambia’s kapenta (a type of small sardine) value chain stronger and more sustainable was endorsed by public and private sector stakeholders in 2023.

In Sao Tome and Principe, the EAF-Nansen Programme and FAO supported the Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture to draft a new General Regulation on Fishing Activities which aims to bolster sustainable fisheries management for better production in aquatic food systems.

Women and youth in three African countries (Ghana, Guinea and Liberia) who work in fishery products processing were trained on reducing food loss and waste to enhance fisheries and aquaculture value chains.
One Health

Recognizing the intricate link between human, animal, and environmental health, and health risks in their intersections, FAO has championed One Health operationalization in Africa.

The capacities of 22 African countries were strengthened in multisectoral prevention, control and response to animal diseases using the One Health approach. A One Health Monitoring Tool was developed, which was recommended by the One Health High-Level Expert Panel and considered as one of the leading tools for assessing implementation of the global One Health Joint Plan of Actions.

Kenya and Senegal were supported to develop One Health investment plans, using an innovative multisector and multistakeholder consultative approach.

On anti-microbial resistance (AMR), 255 initiatives covering 28 countries and regional interventions were implemented to support mitigation of AMR in agrifood systems. Over 2100 professionals and farmers were trained on AMR and good practices for antimicrobial usage. More than 1370 professionals were trained on AMR surveillance to generate reliable data to support policy development. Around 700 farmers were enrolled in Farmer Fields Schools to strengthen their knowledge of good practices to avoid AMR for better production.

More than 50 laboratories were enhanced through training and the provision of lab equipment and guidelines to support efficient AMR surveillance.

Nine One Health AMR national action plans were developed and a total of 22 countries were supported to strengthen governance through multisectoral coordination, partnership, and national guidelines.

Over 500 laws relevant to AMR and antimicrobial use were mapped which supported African countries to revise and/or develop legislation to meet international guidelines or standards, such as the Codex Alimentarius, and strengthen national and regional regulatory capacity on AMR-related areas.

The regional celebration of World Antimicrobial Awareness Week was held in Zimbabwe spearheaded by the Quadripartite (FAO, WHO, WOAH and the UNEP) in collaboration with the African Union. Among others, the celebration included a visit to an FAO-supported laboratory, FAO participation in a live Twitter conversation on preventing AMR, and a field visit with farmers at a Farmer Field School who are adopting good practices in the appropriate use of antimicrobials.

FAO, in collaboration with the SADC Secretariat and other partners, has formulated the Southern Africa Programme for One Health (SAPOH) which aims to accelerate the institutionalisation and operationalisation of One Health in Southern Africa, by building on what already exists and leveraging the lessons learnt from previous initiatives. Acknowledging the diverse progress of the implementation of One Health across countries in the region, the programme provides a framework of action that each Member Nation will adapt to its situation to enable the collective progress towards improved health outcomes for humans, animals, plants, and their shared environment.
Better livestock production

In 2023, FAO worked with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to tackle climate-related livestock losses and livelihood strains in Eastern Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda) through feed and fodder action plans to ensure food security, nutrition, and sustained livelihoods, and for the prevention and control of climate-sensitive zoonotic diseases.

FAO and IGAD provided Member countries with regular joint alerts on the risk of Rift Valley Fever (RVF) outbreaks in the region to improve multisectoral RVF preparedness and response.

FAO supported 23 African countries to improve the core capacities of their animal health sector, covering AMR, zoonotic diseases, biosecurity and biosafety, national laboratory systems, surveillance, and human resources.

FAO supported the ECOWAS Commission to develop a plan for the prevention and control of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in the West Africa region to safeguard public health, improve poultry production and protect livelihoods.

In February 2023, the FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu visited the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) where he toured veterinary laboratories, and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)-World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) research institute where he toured soil and seed laboratories, noting that effective collaboration with science and innovation centres is vital for agrifood systems transformation in Africa.

In Somalia, over 100 young people were awarded scholarships to study livestock veterinary sciences to enhance technical capacity, supported by FAO and the European Union under the RAAISE project (Resilient Fisheries and Livestock Value Chain for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in Somalia).

In November, the Livestock Sector Investment and Policy Toolkit (LSIPT) and the Global Livestock Environmental Assessment Model (GLEAM-i) were introduced to Members at a regional workshop in Dakar, Senegal as part of the Regional Support Project for Pastoralism in the Sahel Phase 2 (PRAPS-2). The tools aim to strengthen capacities on capturing quality data on pastoralism for better policy decisions and investments.

LSIPT was developed collaboratively by FAO, the World Bank, the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD). It offers a comprehensive set of tools to analyse the role of the livestock sector in poverty alleviation, economic growth, food security, and climate change adaptation. GLEAM-i, developed by FAO with the support of the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), offers insights into greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation strategies within the livestock sector.
One Country One Priority Product (OCOP)

By the end of 2023, 29 African countries had signed up to participate in the One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) initiative, with a diverse array of special agriculture products (SAPs) identified across four main categories: field crops (cassava, teff, maize, rice, soybean, sorghum), horticulture (avocado, baby vegetables, green banana, onion), forestry (cashew nuts, honey, dates), and livestock (dairy and meat). Special agricultural products are those that have unique qualities and special characteristics that can contribute to the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind.

OCOP aims to support countries to formalise and boost production, processing, and marketing of their chosen SAPs through more sustainable ‘green’ agriculture value chains. OCOP also aims to support smallholder farmers to improve their livelihoods, increase productivity, minimize the use of chemical inputs, reduce food loss and waste, limit negative impacts on the environment and adapt to climate change. The initiative was launched globally by FAO in 2021.

In 2023, FAO held the first meeting of the Africa Regional Organizing Group (ROG). FAO Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol joined key regional stakeholders and technical experts, including representatives from the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the Pan-African Farmers Organization (PAFO) for the session. The ROG provides technical advice and support for partnerships and resource mobilization for OCOP-participating countries.

DDG Bechdol also visited Malawi to attend the FAO Regional Launch Event and Workshop on the Implementation of OCOP projects in Africa that attracted more than 100 participants from African Member Nations.
The 28th Session of the African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS28) was held in Johannesburg in December 2023 with the aim of supporting countries to advance agricultural statistics for better decision-making. More than 100 people from national, regional and international statistics institutions attended. AFCAS28 included the launch of the Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023, a joint publication by FAO, the African Union, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the World Food Programme (WFP) and provides a snapshot of current food security and nutrition statistics in Africa to help guide policy decision-making. Critical technical support has been provided to 12 African countries on analysis or design of agricultural or livestock censuses or surveys.
The Sustainable Intensification of Smallholder Farming Systems in Zambia (SIFAZ) project, funded by the European Union, has partnered with private sector suppliers to promote mechanization and link private suppliers with farmers through a series of roadshows around the country. SIFAZ acts as a broker between buyer and supplier, ensuring a fair deal.

"We want to cross the poverty line, and we will not cross the poverty line with hoe and human power. We need animal power. We need machine power," the Government of Zambia’s Minister of Agriculture Reuben Mtolo said at the national launch of the roadshows.

The project has also supported the Government of Zambia to formulate a national agricultural mechanization strategy to help achieve national food security goals.

SIFAZ is implemented by FAO in collaboration with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) and the Zambian Ministry of Agriculture. It has reached more than 17,000 smallholder farmers in Zambia and aims to reach an additional 44,000 over the next three years, scaling up sustainable food production and building resilience in agrifood systems.
BETTER NUTRITION

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition in all its forms, including promoting nutritious food and increasing access to healthy diets.
BETTER NUTRITION

Programme priority areas for better nutrition include healthy diets for all, nutrition for the most vulnerable, safe food for everyone, reducing food loss and waste, and transparent markets and trade.

In 2023, FAO supported the nutrition policy landscape by enhancing policy and planning instruments for nutrition, healthy diets, the right to adequate food and food security spanning across food fortification, food safety, dietary guidelines, post-harvest practices, and organic specifications. FAO systematically and continuously engages the African Union and Member countries on nutrition targets needed in the shaping of the post-Malabo agenda.

FAO continued its longstanding technical support focusing on tracking nutrition indicators under Commitment of the African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN) Accountability Scorecard. This has been critical for enabling countries to meet their reporting obligations under the African Union Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

The evidence base on food security and nutrition has been strengthened through knowledge products such as the Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023, a scoping review of stakeholders engaged in nutrition, a regional compendium of Africa’s forgotten foods, food composition tables and national Food-Based Dietary Guidelines.

At the 36th Session of the African Union Heads of State and Government Summit, FAO co-hosted a high-level side event on building momentum for better nutrition in Africa, with the AU, the African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN) and the AfDB. Attended by the FAO Director-General as well as African Heads of State and Government and other leaders, the event focused on accelerating investments and improved coordination to address malnutrition.

Technical support and training were provided by FAO to the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Coordinating Committee for Africa and Member countries to improve knowledge on the structure and functioning of Codex, and on international food standards, to enhance the participation of national Codex committees in the activities of the International Standard Setting Body.

FAO collaborated with the African Development Bank (AfDB) in supporting African countries to develop Country Food and Agriculture Delivery Compacts in the framework of the Feed Africa Dakar II Summit.

To enhance market access and trade facilitation, FAO contributed to generating evidence for policy dialogue and boosting agribusiness ecosystem development in the region. This included knowledge products on adaptation of agribusiness business models to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and on the incubation and acceleration landscape in Africa.

The Network of Parliamentary Alliances for Food Security and Nutrition in Central Africa (RAPAC-SAN) met in Gabon in February 2023, supported by FAO, and identified priority areas for action in the sub-region. In June 2023, RAPAC-SAN delegates attended the 2nd Global Parliamentary Summit Against Hunger and Malnutrition in Chile.
As part of the regional celebration of the International Year of Millets 2023, the FAO Regional Office for Africa hosted an event with chef Fatmata Binta, in which high-level government and partner organizations representatives attended, to promote millets including fonio as a key ingredient to address climate change, boost nutrition and increase farmers’ incomes. Chef Binta is a strong advocate for fonio and empowering women farmers.

FAO provided inputs, cash, community-level loans, livestock, infrastructure, or rehabilitation support to specifically address the nutritional needs of the most vulnerable households in nine African countries. This support was complemented by strengthening the nutrition sensitivity of various actors in the agrifood system, such as smallholder farmers, cooperatives, civil society organizations and the private sector, through Farmer Field Schools, community model farms, cooking demonstrations, and train-the-trainer sessions in 14 countries.

During his visit in Eswatini in February 2023, the FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu met with His Majesty Mswati III the King of Eswatini and handed over lab equipment to national authorities that will be used to conduct tests for aflatoxins in food.

FAO launched a project called “Green Classes for innovative, recreational, educational and nutritious production” after successful first-phase pilots in Cameroon, the Congo and Gabon that renewed interest for product diversification and improved nutrition practices by participating youth and communities.

FAO with ECOWAS commissioned a scoping study in five African countries (Benin, Ghana, Niger, Senegal and Sierra Leone) to develop a proposal for a One Million Silos program for West Africa and the Sahel. The program supports implementation of ECOWAS’ Regional Storage Strategy and aims to increase storage capacity from 500,000 to 1 million tonnes by 2026. This will help rural communities better preserve and manage their food stocks, improve food safety by reducing risks linked to mycotoxins, combat malnutrition, and establish more predictable and favourable terms of trade throughout the year.

A proof of concept was developed for ECOWAS countries for a digital platform for remote food inspections.

In Ghana, an abattoir and a wild meat market were provided with food safety equipment and training for safe food for everyone.

In partnership with local incubation hubs, academic institutions and government agencies, FAO contributed to boosting job creation and increasing access to financial services of value chain actors, agribusinesses, cooperatives and entrepreneurs through an array of innovative ground-level capacity development initiatives in 13 countries.

At the institutional level, government officials in four countries were trained in the design of youth-sensitive agribusiness programmes using youth sensitive tools, guidelines and strategies.

During the 8th FARA Africa Agribusiness and Science Week, FAO hosted a plenary session on how digitalization and women and youth’s participation can enhance the inclusive implementation of the AfCFTA.

Under the project, “Protecting the diets of the most vulnerable people as part of COVID-19 response and recovery programme” funded by Ireland’s Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, FAO provided technical assistance to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Kenya and Malawi to enable them to deliver healthy and nutritious food for all.
An FAO project in north-east Nigeria funded by the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is supporting internally-displaced women to process and promote nutritious and locally-sourced porridge, known as Tom Brown or garin kunu.

The ingredients include ground millet, soybeans, groundnuts (or peanuts) and fish powder made from catfish or tilapia. Fish provides protein, omega-3 fatty acids and essential micro-nutrients which are all especially beneficial for young children aged 6 to 59 months, and pregnant and breastfeeding women.

The project has so far provided the nutritious porridge mix to 17,000 children and pregnant and breastfeeding women in Borno and Yobe states where micronutrient deficiencies are a concern.

FAO also built 13 fish-processing centres that use the FAO-Thiaroye Processing Technique (FTT), a method developed by FAO to improve the smoking of fish so that it is less harmful to people’s health, and trained the 350 women who manage them.

Project participants reported that they used the income generated from the porridge production to pay their children’s school fees, provide food for their family and help others in need in the community.
BETTER ENVIRONMENT

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.
BETTER ENVIRONMENT

Programme priority areas for a better environment include climate change mitigating and adapted agrifood systems, bioeconomies for sustainable food and agriculture, biodiversity and ecosystem services for food and agriculture and achieving sustainable urban food systems.

Rural households in more than 15 countries (Botswana, Burundi, the Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Rwanda, Senegal and Zimbabwe) were supported to adopt climate smart agriculture practices and technologies in areas including sustainable forest management, resource mapping, restoration monitoring, bio-enterprise development, efficient water uses and management, energy efficiency, conservation and agroforestry, and climate smart small-scale irrigation, among others.

A regional consultation on the FAO Climate Change Strategy was held as part of the Africa Regional Dialogue on post-COP27 opportunities for joint action.

Technical and logistical support was provided to the inaugural Africa Climate Summit that was jointly hosted by the Government of Kenya and the African Union in September 2023. The ACS adopted the Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change.

Over USD 91 million was mobilized from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to be operationalized in 2022–2023, representing an increase of nearly 60 percent compared to the previous biennium annualized budget (2020-2021). The partnerships and portfolios with the GEF and the CCF have grown exponentially in the Africa region in response to countries’ needs to access climate financing for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Restoration activities were supported to increase soil stability, promote water infiltration, preserve biodiversity and enhance ecosystem services across rural and urban areas in nine African countries (Benin, Burundi, the Gambia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo). These activities included rehabilitation of water infrastructures and riverbanks, deployment of anti-erosion devices, re-planting of critically degraded areas, fire-proofing protected areas, rehabilitating small market gardens and reforestation.

Mainstreaming of integrated watershed management into the planning of water interventions was supported, including innovative solutions for solar-powered irrigation systems. This encompassed mapping and assessment of the potential for solar irrigation in five countries (Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, the Niger and Senegal), in collaboration with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), and orientation of key stakeholders on solar irrigation opportunities and solutions for the Sahel region.

The generation of data, data systems and evidence in nine countries (Botswana, Cameroon, the Comoros, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, South Sudan) was supported to enable targeted interventions, investments and informed decision-making on natural resource management. These activities included developing monitoring frameworks and systems on forest and landscape restoration, producing maps, atlases, and databases such as on land cover, compiling inventories of marine stocks, developing diagnostic studies on the impacts of climate change on the agricultural sector and associated costs, and designing training modules.

The sustainable development of value chains and linkages to markets of forest, wildlife and fisheries products was supported in five countries (Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia and the Niger) to build the capacity of value chain stakeholders such as farmers, entrepreneurs and producers in sustainable natural resource management, and raised awareness among producer organizations and associations on climate change adaptation and mitigation opportunities.

Early action and response to climate shocks was enabled through the generation and dissemination of timely data, evidence and training.
on plant pest and diseases and other climatic hazards such as floods and droughts; including support to the implementation of national multi-hazard Disaster Risk Management and Preparedness and Contingency Plans.

Good governance on use of natural resources was strengthened through supporting efforts at policy and community levels in the development of policy instruments, plans and legal frameworks for sustainable use and management of natural resources.

Stakeholders were trained on the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of Food Security (VGGTs), which supported investment planning for Blue Transformation and the capacity of institutional stakeholders on land tenure security and conflict resolution.

Community-level participatory approaches to natural resource management were promoted to enable equitable access to resources, increased social cohesion and the prevention of conflict driven by competition over natural resources.

The Green Cities Initiative

In Africa, the FAO Green Cities Initiative is helping urban areas to adopt holistic, sustainable strategies to become greener, healthier places to live.

FAO supported municipalities in city-to-city exchanges and conducted learning labs in Kenya, Senegal and South Africa. A city-to-city exchanges platform and advisory committee were established.

Green Cities regional project consultations have been undertaken in several countries and training materials have been developed, targeting cities such as Antananarivo (Madagascar), Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire), Dakar (Senegal), Dar es Salaam (United Republic of Tanzania), Douala (Cameroon), Kigali (Rwanda), Kisumu (Kenya), Praia (Cabo Verde), Quelimane (Mozambique), and Tamale (Ghana).
Africa Regional Workshop on National Water Roadmaps

In February 2023, leaders of water resources in Africa met in Harare for the first FAO regional workshop on National Water Roadmaps. The three-day meeting, opened by the FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu and hosted by the Government of Zimbabwe, looked at regional and national perspectives on the challenge of ‘more crop per drop’ ahead of the UN 2023 Water Conference. National Water Roadmaps are plans that will help to strengthen integrated water resources management and are a useful tool to address the growing challenges around water.

24th African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC)

Over 215 participants from 27 countries participated in the 24th Session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC), held in the United Republic of Tanzania from 30 October to 3 November 2023. The Commission established by FAO meets every two years and is an important continental forum to discuss policy, scientific and technical issues relating to forestry and wildlife in Africa.

The event concluded with a renewed commitment to advance sustainable management of Africa’s forests and wildlife resources. In the recommendations agreed on the closing day, delegates emphasized the need for increased investments, use of technologies and innovative approaches, and strengthened partnerships.
The black soldier fly farm in Abidjan turns food waste into an opportunity.

The project Circular Bioeconomy in Abidjan: from food waste to fork (Bioéconomie circulaire à Abidjan des D échets Alimentaires à la Fourchette, known with the French acronym BioDAF) in Côte d’Ivoire is using black soldier fly larvae to convert food waste into organic fertilizer and to provide protein for poultry, pig and fish feed.

Beginning in June 2023, FAO has collaborated with the Autonomous District of Abidjan through its Institute of Circular Economy (l’Economie Circulaire d’Abidjan, IECA) to develop the BioDAF pilot fly farm, with private sector partner BioAni.

Around 60 percent of the total waste produced in Abidjan each year is recoverable organic waste. Each day, the project team collects food waste from markets, restaurants and agrifood industries and feeds it to the fly larvae. Through the digestion process it is turned into organic fertilizer. Some of the larvae are then used for animal feed and the remainder continue their life cycle to produce eggs for more larvae.

This innovative project is part of the FAO Green Cities Initiative. The efficient food waste management system enhances sustainable agricultural production, creates green jobs and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

“Scaling up BioDAF into other cities and countries would revolutionize waste management and propel Africa towards a greener, more sustainable future,” said FAO project manager Brou Konan.
BETTER LIFE

Promote inclusive economic growth by reducing inequalities, such as between urban and rural areas, rich and poor countries, and women and men.
BETTER LIFE

Programme priority areas for a better life include gender equality and rural women’s empowerment, inclusive rural transformation, agriculture and food emergencies, resilient agrifood systems, the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HiHI) and scaling up investment.

By the end of 2023, 36 sub-Saharan African countries had joined the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HiHI), making the Africa region the largest in terms of the number of HiHI countries. Eswatini, Lesotho and Zambia are among the newest participants. Africa also has the first sub-regional proposal, covering the Sahel.

Investment plans for Africa now exceed USD 12 billion. Initial investment by FAO through TCPs played a crucial role in providing technical support and coordination for developing these plans. The HiHI approach fostered country-led programming and a shift from resource mobilization to investment facilitation. In 2023, Malawi, Mali and Zimbabwe each hosted a national investment forum as part of the HiHI with support from FAO, and the 2nd Hand-in-Hand Investment Forum, which is an integral part of the World Food Forum at FAO each October, provided an invaluable opportunity to African participating countries to present their investment cases.

FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu is welcomed by Tong Aken Ngor, Governor of South Sudan’s Northern Bahr el Ghazal.
In July 2023, the FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu visited South Sudan as part of a joint mission with heads of the UN Rome-based Agencies, the President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development Alvaro Lario, and the Executive Director of the World Food Programme Cindy McCain. The three heads of agencies called for greater investments in South Sudan to avoid a deepening food crisis and to build resilience. Collaboration among the three agencies and with the Government of South Sudan and other partners helped to stave off famine in recent years and enabled farmers to increase their food production and incomes.

In 2023, an FAO project funded by Japan was launched to provide urgent support to drought-affected herders and agropastoralists in Djibouti, Kenya and Uganda through access to food, cash and other basic goods and services, while protecting and restoring their productive assets.

FAO handed over a spray aircraft to the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA) to strengthen the response capacity in combatting desert locusts and other migratory pests in the region. The aircraft was procured with financial support from the Governments of Denmark and the United States of America, and the MasterCard Foundation.

Through the Data in Emergencies (DIEM) hub, FAO produced useful information on the impacts of multiple shocks on agricultural production and markets, livelihoods and food security in 20 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and supported CILSS on the institutionalization of Anticipatory Action for Food Security for the Sahel.

As part of the broader effort of strengthening national preparedness and response systems, setting up disaster risk reduction (DRR) mechanisms and mainstreaming DRR in national planning, FAO supported the generation of forecast information for anticipatory action and forward planning and strengthened systems for data collection, analysis, early warning and early response. This encompassed generation of timely and accurate data on food insecurity through the Integrated Phase Classification and Cadre Harmonisé mechanisms in 35 African countries.

FAO and regional partners developed tools and capacity building for measuring resilience in the region, including calculating the Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA)-related indicator 6.1 for the CAADP biannual review in 2023. In collaboration with CILSS and WFP, FAO conducted joint resilience analysis studies for Analysis and Measurement of Resilience (AMR) and four joint (with CILSS) country reports on resilience analysis in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal covering more than 45,000 households.

FAO convened in Mauritius a high-level policy dialogue involving six African Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to catalyse stakeholder engagement on priorities for agrifood systems transformation in the African SIDS, resulting, for the first time, in an endorsed roadmap with six areas for priority action.
COVID-19 response and recovery

FAO mobilized USD 250 million to support Member countries through the FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme.

FAO also supported the development of 28 African regional and national project proposals to the World Bank's Pandemic Fund to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response in the regions. FAO will continue supporting countries in the implementation of successful projects.

As one of the Fund’s Implementing Entities will co-lead the implementation of 12 projects globally that were announced in the first funding round in 2023, including those in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Togo and Zambia.

Inclusive rural transformation

FAO continued to integrate gender and youth considerations into all aspects of its work in the Africa region, including policy development, program design, and monitoring and evaluation. The FAO Regional Office for Africa also conducted a needs assessment to inform a regional plan for mainstreaming and operationalization of inclusivity in FAO’s work.

A study on the state of social protection for agrifood systems workers in West Africa was conducted in partnership with the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) which yielded insights on the region’s structural vulnerabilities and identified concrete solutions to increase social protection coverage.

A network of focal points on inclusivity has been established in FAO country offices in Africa to ensure consistent and coherent programming, mainstreaming and delivery of inclusivity-sensitive programmes across the region.

Under the project Empowering women and boosting livelihoods through agricultural trade (EWAT), implemented in collaboration with the International Trade Centre (ITC), FAO supported more than 400 women agripreneurs to learn how to adapt their businesses to the AfCFTA, and promoted gender-sensitive trade and agricultural policymaking in the context of the AfCFTA.

In collaboration with the European Union, FAO in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau launched the ParteMulher network which aims to provide technical support to women seeking gender justice in land rights. Made up of representatives from the country’s regions, members of the network have been trained in mediating land disputes and interacting with national institutions related to land.

With the International Agrifood Network (IAFN), FAO supported a six-month accelerator mentorship programme for 50 African women entrepreneurs of small-to-medium enterprises operating in the agrifood sector.

FAO supported youth-sensitive policy and planning in Rwanda (2023-2027 National Strategy for Youth Employment in Agrifood Systems), South Africa (Youth Empowerment Strategy in Agriculture and Rural Development Sector) and Sierra Leone (Framework for Green Jobs for Rural Youth Employment) therefore boosting the enabling conditions for youth integration in the agricultural sector and local economies.

With Wageningen University & Research, FAO collaborated on research on using blockchain technology to monitor child labour.

Over 350 youth-led agribusinesses in six countries (Cabo Verde, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Tunisia, and Zambia) enhanced their skills in financial literacy, investment readiness and access to grants, technologies, and markets through the Decent Employment in Agrifood Systems project.

Numerous opportunities have been created by FAO to connect youth to policy fora and processes through youth platforms, networks, digital campaigns, and events.
A prolonged dry season in South Sudan forced many agropastoralists to search for water beyond their communities, heightening the risk of intercommunal clashes over scarce resources.

An FAO project funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB) provided support to excavate reservoirs and install solar-powered water pumps to provide water for cattle and crop production.

“Now we don’t need to take our animals to other locations for water because we have enough," said agropastoralist Michael Lokuru Kuri.

In his village of Nakoringomo, two solar panels generate electricity to pump water from the reservoir into troughs for cattle. Having clean water means that the animals stay healthier, a fundamental concern for people who rely on livestock for their living.

Implemented by FAO on behalf of the AfDB and the Government of South Sudan, the support is part of an initiative to boost the resilience and adaptive capacity of communities in the face of climate change.

Lokuru Kuri also trained as a community animal health worker as part of the project to support livestock livelihoods in his village. “I consider myself as a leader because I have the knowledge. I will train the youths and ensure they become like myself in the community,” he said.
Partnerships

Collaboration is at the heart of FAO’s success. Partnerships with governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and local communities have been instrumental in implementing impactful programs in Africa for agrifood systems transformation.

FAO’s collaboration with resource and technical partners in Africa was strengthened in 2023 – these include among others the African Union, the African Development Bank, the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the African Risk Capacity (ARC) Group, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the Burkinabè Economic and Social Development Fund (FBDES), the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), the Pan-African Farmers’ Organization (PAFO), the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), Regional Economic Communities, the World Bank, other multilateral and bilateral partners, other UN agencies, civil society and the private sector.

Over the past biennium, FAO renewed or developed partnerships in the Africa region with: ARC, FARA, PAFO, and FBDES, focusing on gender dimensions in climate action, capacity development for agricultural innovation, strengthening farmers’ associations, and enhancing employability in agro-syvo-pastoral value chains.

During a visit to South Sudan in July, the FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu signed a new five-year partnership agreement with the President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development Alvaro Lario, and the Executive Director of the World Food Programme Cindy McCain, to renew inter-agency cooperation. Under the agreement, the three Rome-based agencies will work on agrifood systems transformation, nutrition, gender equality and women’s empowerment, resilience-building, youth, and climate change.

FAO played a leading role in the UN Regional Collaborative Platform in Africa which unites all UN entities working on development for the 2030 Agenda, and the Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development, organized by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

Through South-South and Triangular Cooperation, Africa is supporting inter-country collaborations and knowledge exchange, such as on rice production between Asian and African countries.
### Top 20 Resource Partners in 2023

FAO in Africa surpassed its target for the 2022–2023 biennium, mobilizing close to USD 1.3 billion in resources for Africa, exceeding the target by nearly 60 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource partner</th>
<th>Sum of total approvals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 European Union</td>
<td>82 163 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Global Environment Facility (GEF)</td>
<td>66 786 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 United States of America</td>
<td>63 988 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</td>
<td>46 684 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Norway</td>
<td>43 528 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)</td>
<td>31 129 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Green Climate Fund (GCF)</td>
<td>24 952 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Burundi*</td>
<td>19 826 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Canada</td>
<td>19 250 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Sweden</td>
<td>18 306 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Germany</td>
<td>13 555 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Madagascar*</td>
<td>9 286 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Democratic Republic of the Congo*</td>
<td>8 539 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 South Sudan*</td>
<td>8 511 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Nigeria*</td>
<td>8 210 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Switzerland</td>
<td>7 963 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Belgium</td>
<td>7 850 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAF)</td>
<td>6 000 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Japan</td>
<td>5 502 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 International Organization for Migration (IOM)</td>
<td>5 402 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FAO Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS)

* Countries that contributed through Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF) agreements established between the government of a given country and FAO. The UTF is a funding modality financed entirely by a government for programmes or projects to be implemented in the country typically originating from loans and/or grants by international financial institutions (IFIs) or by development partners through budget support.
In 2023, FAO communicated on African channels and to African audiences on FAO’s work in Africa and advocacy issues such as the case for agrifood systems transformation, and shared African success stories to reach global audiences.

The FAO Regional Office for Africa collaborated with African chef Fatmata Binta throughout the International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023 including launching a global Instagram campaign on millets recipes. She participated in many high-level events around the world at which she promoted FAO and IYM including at the World Food Forum in Rome. The FAO Regional Office for Africa hosted an event with chef Binta aimed at donors and partners in Accra highlighting a menu of millets including fonio.

Also in 2023, FAO’s Regional Office for Africa hosted a photo exhibit in Brussels for World Food Day, in collaboration with the FAO Liaison Office in Brussels. The exhibit highlighted the work of FAO in Africa.

The regional communications team supported a large number of events and high-level visits to Africa in 2023 including:

- FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu’s visits to Ethiopia, Eswatini, Kenya, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe to meet with African leaders, participate at high-level events, visit farms, laboratories and other sites, and meet farmers and other partners;
- FAO Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol’s visit to Malawi to attend the FAO Regional Launch Event and Workshop on the Implementation of One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) projects in Africa and the Global Farmer Field Schools Forum;
- FAO Deputy Director-General Maria Helena Semedo leadership of the FAO delegation to the Feed Africa Dakar II Summit in Dakar;
- Africa Regional Forum on Hand-in-Hand to boost agricultural investments;
- Africa Climate Summit;
- Africa Food Systems Forum (formerly the AGRF);
- 24th Session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC);
- Regional Science and Innovation Forum event on fostering youth, women and science-led innovations;
- World Food Day celebrations in Ghana and support to events across Africa;
- African joint celebration of World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week (WAAW) in Zimbabwe;
Publications

The FAO Regional Office for Africa published a number of regional publications in 2023 including the update of the Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition and a summary and analysis of the Digital Villages Initiative in Africa, plus preparations for a number of publications that are due to be released in 2024.

Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023

FAO in Africa newsletter

Exchange of experience on successful rice sector development policies in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia

Pilot Digital Villages Initiative in Africa

French and Chinese versions of the digital brochure on FAO’s work on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in sub-Saharan Africa

French | Chinese
Media

FAO was featured in a broad range of regional media coverage throughout 2023, particularly tied to FAO involvement at major regional events, such as:

- Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol’s visit to Malawi was covered by influential national outlets;
- Deputy Director-General Maria Helena Semedo and Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa Abebe Haile-Gabriel were interviewed on TV5 Monde, Al Jazeera English and CGTN Africa’s AfricaLive program at the Feed Africa Dakar II Summit;
- influential Spanish wire service EFE wrote a feature piece timed for the Feed Africa Summit on technologies that can be used to help solve hunger in Africa, and interviewed Amadou Fall from FAO’s Digital Villages Initiative in Senegal;
- China Daily and many outlets in Ghana produced a feature story on the Dine on a Mat event with chef Fatmata Binta and quoted ADG Abebe Haile-Gabriel;
- ADG Haile-Gabriel was interviewed by influential Kenyan outlets including The Star and KBC TV at the Africa Climate Summit;

Social media

The @FAOAfrica Twitter account reached 77,000 followers in 2023 making it the eighth largest FAO account globally. This success is attributed to crafting an engaging positive voice targeted at an African audience and consistent collaboration with partners.