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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Organisation des Nations
Unies pour l'alimentation
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Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

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الغذية والزراعة
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COUNCIL

Hundred and Fifty-eighth Session

Rome, 4-8 December 2017

Developments in *Fora* of Importance for the Mandate of FAO

Executive Summary

In keeping with established practice, the Council is informed of developments in other *fora* of importance for FAO's mandate:

1. High-level Political Forum 2017;
2. Update on "Our Ocean" Conference (Malta, 5-6 October 2017);
3. Global Meeting "Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World" (Rome, 31 October-1 November 2017);
4. Outcome of the 40th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Geneva, 17-22 July 2017);
5. Migration;
6. Child Labour;
7. Outcomes of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP23), (Bonn, 6-17 November 2017).

Suggested action by the Council

The above topics are presented to the 158th Session of the Council for information only.



I. High-level Political Forum 2017

1. The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) meets annually and is the central platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2017 HLPF was convened from 10 to 19 July 2017 under the theme "*Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world*". This was the first HLPF that reviewed a subset of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. The Technical Segment included reviews of SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14, and SDG17 (which is reviewed annually) and the Ministerial Segment focused on the presentations of 43 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). The VNR process was valued not only as a way to present advances towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, but as a mechanism to enhance national coordination, mobilize participation and make the process more inclusive and nationally owned. Ending poverty "*in all its dimensions*" was underlined as the greatest overall challenge of the 2030 Agenda, and the interlinkages between ending poverty and the entire 2030 Agenda were emphasized. Member States also cautioned that lack of adequate data would make it impossible to monitor progress in many SDG targets.
3. The final outcome document of the HLPF was the Ministerial Declaration¹, which was adopted by the High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on 20 July 2017. The Declaration highlighted the need for resilient, sustainable and inclusive food systems. The paragraph dedicated to SDG2 also recognized the interlinkages between hunger and poverty, the need for responsible investments, coherent policies and accountable institutions. The importance of promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation and the growing number of people experiencing emergency levels of food insecurity were also underlined.
4. FAO actively participated in the thematic reviews of the SDGs and in the HLPF as a whole and, together with IFAD and WFP, FAO was actively engaged throughout the various follow-up and review processes that converged in the 2017 HLPF. Support included co-drafting of Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA+) technical papers for HLPF², co-organizing an Expert Group Meeting on SDG 2, supporting the preparation of VNRs and participation in the Regional Fora for Sustainable Development. The Expert Group Meeting provided inputs to the HLPF, as well as the follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda, with many of its key messages reflected in the Ministerial Declaration and in the debate during the thematic review of SDG2.

II. Update on "Our Ocean" Conference (Malta, 5-6 October 2017)

5. The Conference "*Our Ocean*" was held from 5 to 6 October 2017 in Malta and was the third in a series of high-level international events on the importance of oceans in that year, which started with the High-level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG14 held from 5 to 9 June 2017 in New York and the HLPF from 9 to 18 July 2017 also in New York. FAO provided technical advice and support to Members in the lead-up and during these events.
6. The Conference "*Our Ocean*" focused on issues related to the ocean and climate change, marine pollution, sustainable fishing, sustainable blue growth, ocean governance, and empowering a new generation to lead the way. It increased visibility for the countries, industry and civil society in their work to overcome the problems currently being faced. The Conference also engaged participants towards making significant commitments aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans' resources.
7. The Conference generated 437 commitments, including more than 200 commitments from governments and 100 from the private sector, in line with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, as well as recommendations on the implementation of SDG14. Furthermore, financial pledges for a total

¹ <https://undocs.org/E/HLPF/2017/L.2>

² https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14371SDG2_format.revised_FINAL_28_04.pdf

amount of EUR 7.2 billion were made and the establishment of 2.5 million square kilometres of additional Marine Protected Areas were announced.

8. It is expected that the next sessions of “*Our Ocean*” Conference will take place in Indonesia (2018), Norway (2019) and Palau (2020).

III. Global Meeting “*Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World*” (Rome, 31 October-1 November 2017)

9. FAO, together with its Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries and in collaboration with the Centre for International Forestry Research, the Finance Alliance for Sustainable Trade, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the World Bank and the World Wildlife Fund, organized the Global Meeting ‘Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World’ from 31 October to 1 November 2017 at FAO headquarters. More than 100 participants from 40 countries attended the meeting, including a significant number of private sector representatives.

10. The meeting aimed at promoting the societal benefits provided by sustainable wood value chains and the critical role sustainable wood products can play in achieving the SDGs, and produced a set of agreed key messages on five thematic areas, namely:

- a. Sustainable wood value chains are relevant for all 17 SDGs, especially for SDG8, SDG12, SDG13 and SDG15.
- b. Sustainable forest management is recognized as a significant component of sustainable landscape management. Promoting wood value chains that are environmentally friendly, socially responsible and economically sound is an important step forward in transitioning to sustainable landscapes.
- c. To enhance local livelihoods, there is a need to connect global/regional/local value chains and to diversify forest products beyond wood to make effective use of ‘baskets of value chains’.
- d. Sustainable wood value chains are critical to mitigating climate change in several ways which include carbon storage in standing forests and in harvested wood products, as well as for the substitution of fossil-based raw materials and products. The contribution to mitigation in the construction sector was particularly highlighted.
- e. Enhancing investments to promote sustainable wood value chains requires critical assessment of investment barriers and opportunities along the value chain and better securitization and monetization of the full range of forest products and services. Creation of a virtual multi-stakeholder investment promotion facility would help tailor financing to support sustainable wood value chains.

11. The meeting concluded that in order for sustainable forest management and sustainable wood value chains to achieve their potential to contribute to sustainable development, it was important that further work by FAO and its partners focus on the above key messages.

IV. Outcome of the 40th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Geneva, 17-22 July 2017)

12. The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) is the central part of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme and was established by FAO and WHO to protect consumer health and promote fair practices in food trade.

13. At the 40th Session, the Commission adopted over 50 new and revised food quality and safety standards and related texts as well as approving new work for the *Ad Hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance. The Commission also agreed on the significant value of the synergies between SDGs and the Codex work and that SDGs would be taken into account in the development of the forthcoming Codex Strategic Plan (2020-2025).

14. The Commission encouraged countries to continue to provide support for funding of scientific advice to Codex and to the Codex Trust Fund for enhanced participation of countries in Codex. The Commission welcomed the adoption of the resolution on “*Observance of a World Food Safety Day*” by the 40th Session of the FAO Conference on 7 June and strongly encouraged WHO Member States to propose the matter for consideration in 2018 on the agendas of the WHO Governing Bodies.

V. Migration

15. Migration is an area of work in which FAO is gaining increasing importance at the global, regional and country levels. The upcoming year will be of great significance in the migration context, as it will see the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration, as well as the Global Compact on Responsibility Sharing for Refugees.

16. In support of related preparatory processes, and as a member of the Global Migration Group (GMG), FAO continues to provide technical support to Members. The Organization contributed to thematic discussions regarding the drivers of migration, co-led the development of a thematic issue brief with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and participated in discussions on migration and sustainable development.

17. In 2018, FAO will co-chair the GMG together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). As upcoming GMG co-chairs, FAO and IOM presented their joint programme of work at the GMG Principals Meeting on 7 November 2017. The joint programme of work aims to support the inter-governmental negotiations leading towards the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration.

18. FAO’s GMG co-chairing will also facilitate increased collaboration on migration with the other two Rome-based Agencies, IFAD and WFP. By coordinating and joining efforts, FAO, IFAD and WFP can better mainstream agriculture, rural development and food security concerns in the global migration debate.

19. Furthermore, FAO has recently obtained the Observer status with the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), which is an important inter-governmental forum on migration and a key partner of the GMG.

VI. Child Labour

20. Recently released global estimates show that 152 million children are in child labour globally, which accounts for almost one in ten of all children worldwide, 71 percent of children in child labour work in agriculture and the number is rising in the sector – from 98 million before 2012 to 108 million boys and girls. The new figures confirm the urgent need to focus on child labour in agriculture in order to make significant progress towards achieving SDG target 8.7 on ending child labour by 2025.

21. FAO’s programmes to reduce rural poverty, eradicate hunger and increase resilience of rural livelihoods are the heart of addressing the root causes of child labour in agriculture. FAO is playing a leading role in the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture, which includes IFAD, ILO, IUF and the CGIAR centres, and a central role in child labour prevention in agriculture within the UN system and beyond. In September 2017, an African regional meeting of rural workers’ and small producers’ organizations issued a Call to Action as a first response to the increased challenge in the sector.

22. The Fourth Global Conference on Child Labour took place in Buenos Aires from 14 to 16 November 2017, with dedicated attention to child labour in rural economies and agriculture. The “*Buenos Aires Declaration*” informs about the global efforts to achieve SDG 8.7, with unprecedented attention to the agriculture sector. Moreover, the Declaration highlights the role of agricultural policies and agricultural stakeholders in addressing the problem.

23. FAO is stepping up to the challenge and stands ready to support national governments to have a strong policy framework to address the root causes of child labour in agriculture. Furthermore, the Organization will help countries strengthen their capacity from national to local level, to ensure better implementation of programmes that provide decent work for youth and adults and that are free from child labour.

VII. Outcomes of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP23) (Bonn, 6-17 November 2017)

24. The 23rd Conference of the Parties (CO23) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Bonn from 6 to 17 November 2017 adopted 31 decisions, including the establishment of a [gender action plan](#) and the operationalization of [the local communities and indigenous people's platform](#). The most significant for FAO's work is the "[Koronivia joint work on agriculture](#)"³. This decision requested Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) to jointly address issues related to agriculture, taking into consideration the vulnerabilities of agriculture to climate change and approaches towards food security. The elements to be integrated in the joint work of SBSTA/SBI cover many of the most promising areas for action, including methods and approaches for assessing adaptation, adaptation co-benefits and resilience; soil carbon, soil health and soil fertility; nutrient use and manure management; livestock management systems; as well as socio-economic and food security dimensions.

25. As the next step, parties and observers, including FAO, are invited to submit their views on the above areas by 31 March 2018.

26. FAO will continue to support the process related to agriculture in the Subsidiary Bodies by providing technical input as requested, and will also provide technical support, tools and mechanisms to the UNFCCC Secretariat for these new activities, as part of the ongoing collaboration between FAO and the UNFCCC. Amongst others, FAO supports countries to integrate agriculture in their National Adaptation plans (NAPs), facilitating the organization of the Thematic Working Group on Agriculture, Food Security and Land Use under the NDC Partnership. The Organization will develop a knowledge exchange hub for agriculture and climate change to enhance pre- and post-2020 action and ambition addressing agriculture and food security under a changing climate.

³ Links to documents reflect the draft conclusions, as accessible online on 24 November 2017. The adopted COP decisions will be published by UNFCCC on <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>.