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Africa Region Synthesis of Evaluations 2014-2019

Executive Summary

This report is a synthesis of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Office of Evaluation (OED) evaluations 2014-2019 on FAO's work in the Africa region. This paper documents FAO's contribution to results, identifies gaps and emerging issues, and lessons learned. The synthesis is organized around three themes, namely, Food security and nutrition (ending hunger), building resilience to threats and crises, and the sustainable management of natural resources.

FAO has made a solid contribution to the region. Its support strengthened the policy environment, plans and strategies for agriculture, food security and nutrition. Its support contributed to mainstreaming climate change adaptation into policies and practices, and strengthened capacities for early warning systems. FAO's support strengthened governance and institutional capacities for the sustainable management of natural resources and contributed to modest improvements in the livelihoods of communities. Communities experienced some improvement in their livelihoods.

FAO's relationships with regional and sub-regional institutions, its technical expertise and leadership in its areas of mandate, and access to global and regional financing facilities are key enablers of results. Several constraints were identified, notably, capacity gaps in FAO country offices, financial constraints and governance arrangements in public institutions, shortcomings in project design, and local conditions and events outside FAO's control.

Gaps and emerging issues identified include the need for attention to urban food security and nutrition; improving the scalability and sustainability of projects; working with local government; prioritizing youth employment; building partnerships with the private sector at country level; joint programming and implementation with other United Nations organizations at country level; improving gender mainstreaming; and strengthening monitoring and evaluation capacities of country offices and government counterparts.

This report outlines the following lessons learned:

- FAO's technical expertise and leadership are paramount in retaining its strategic relevance to the Africa region.
- FAO can best achieve its objectives through effective partnerships.

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- Building resilience is a long-term process that has to address multiple, interrelated issues. Achieving sustained impact of resilience-building initiatives cannot be done through short-term projects.
- There is no substitute for good project design.
- FAO's contribution to gender equality requires demonstrated commitment from senior level staff in the region, commitment from member countries to promoting gender equality, and FAO staff capable of using the gender analytical tools FAO has placed at their disposal.
- Technical interventions are necessary but on their own they are insufficient to address the scale and complexity of Africa's food security and nutrition challenges. FAO's advocacy on issues, including the normative agenda, is as important as its technical contributions.

Suggested Action by the Regional Conference

The Regional Conference may wish to:

- (i) Note the contents of the report;
- (ii) Encourage FAO's Regional Office for Africa (RAF) to pursue actions to address the constraints and gaps identified in the report.

Queries on the content of this document may be addressed to:

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I. Introduction

Background

1. FAO's OED conducts evaluations to provide accountability of the Organization to member countries, giving them an assessment of the work of the Organization against the strategic objectives the Organization set for itself as well as its organizational performance. OED evaluations also contribute to corporate learning, and provide an objective basis for decisions on improvements to the Organization's programmes and projects. The Programme Committee, at its 125th Session, expressly invited OED to submit to the FAO Regional Conference in 2020 a synthesis of regional lessons learned and trends identified in OED evaluations. This report is the synthesis of evaluations of FAO's work in the Africa region. The FAO Regional Conference for Africa is the primary audience of this report.

Scope and objectives

2. The regional synthesis covered all categories of evaluations that OED managed and completed between 2014 and 2019. The evaluations used in the synthesis were evaluations of country programmes and projects implemented in the Africa region, as well as thematic evaluations that contained information relevant to the Africa region.
3. The objective of the synthesis was to identify lessons and issues from evaluations, and so contribute to informed discussion on FAO's contribution to results in the Africa region. Enhancing the usefulness and utilization of OED evaluations was a secondary objective. The synthesis was required to address the following questions:
 - a. What are the main results, in the regional priorities and/or thematic areas, which have been achieved through FAO support to the region and countries in the region?
 - b. What issues and gaps emerge from the evaluations, which require attention and/or consideration by the FAO Regional Conference?
 - c. What lessons can be learned from evaluations that can inform FAO's future programming and/or actions in the region?

Methodology

4. The synthesis identified three broad themes for answering the evaluation questions. The identification and selection of the themes involved reviewing reports of Africa Regional Conferences, documents on the Regional Initiatives for the Africa Region, and a rapid review of reports of OED evaluations completed between 2014 and 2019. A total of 35 evaluation reports were reviewed to identify the main themes for the evaluation synthesis. Each report was reviewed to assess whether it covered issues or priorities identified in Africa Regional Conference documents and the Regional Initiatives for Africa sufficiently to assist with responding to the key questions. The final selection of the themes was based on the availability of a minimum of five evaluation reports that were relevant for the proposed theme. A concept note was submitted to the Regional Office for comment.
5. The following themes were selected for synthesis:
 - i. Food security and nutrition (ending hunger)
 - i. Resilience to threats and crises
 - ii. Sustainable management of natural resources (including biodiversity)
6. The synthesis drew on a final sample of 28 reports, including six country programme evaluations, 15 project evaluations, and seven thematic evaluations completed between 2014 and 2019. The final sample of evaluations was based on their relevance to the themes selected and did not make a judgement on the quality of the evaluations. The approach sought to be inclusive of all relevant evaluations. The Annex contains the list of evaluation reports reviewed. Each evaluation report was reviewed in detail and relevant information to respond to the key questions was captured. Keywords

and phrases were included to allow for analysis and searching for themes and issues. A preliminary findings paper was prepared and further analysis was done to strengthen these findings.

Limitations

7. The synthesis endeavoured to be rigorous, but as with any evaluation, there are limitations:
 - a. The regional synthesis is by no means an exhaustive representation of FAO's activities and results achieved in the Africa Region, as it is based on a sample of evaluation reports. There was also considerable variability in the quality of the reports.
 - b. The data were limited to the sample of evaluation reports. Time constraints prevented any opportunity to supplement the information with interviews.
 - c. Several of the evaluations covered programmes that were developed prior to 2014, and it is likely that events have overtaken the findings and recommendations contained in these reports. Due to time constraints, the regional synthesis did not obtain information on the implementation of evaluation recommendations and improvements made to projects and programmes.
 - d. The three themes selected covered several sub-themes, and this posed a challenge to synthesizing the results to give a coherent picture of results achieved under each main theme.
 - e. The results reported in the synthesis are mostly country-specific. Given the diversity of the geographic contexts of countries, the results cannot be generalised across the entire region.

II. Regional Context

State of Food Security and Nutrition in Africa Region

8. A key message from the 2018 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World is that Africa is not on track to meet the targets of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2. Of the 821 million undernourished people in the world, 237 million live in sub-Saharan Africa. The number of undernourished people in sub-Saharan Africa has increased by 32.6 million since 2015. Although stunting of children under-5 years of age is declining, most countries in Africa are not likely to achieve the SDG target. Overweight and obesity of children under-five years is increasing in Southern Africa. Food security in the region has been negatively impacted by adverse global economic conditions, a downturn in commodity prices, and the adverse impact of the El Niño phenomenon in Southern and Eastern Africa.¹
9. Conflict is a major driver of food insecurity in a number of African countries, often occurring concurrently with other factors such as adverse climatic and economic conditions.² The majority of undernourished people in Sub-Saharan Africa live in countries affected by conflict, and have generally worse nutrition outcomes than people living in countries not affected by conflict.³ For example, the armed conflict in the Central African Republic is a major driver of the 1.9 million people requiring urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance. Armed conflict in South Sudan contributes to food insecurity for 6.1 million people; while in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 13.1 million people require urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance as a result of conflicts and humanitarian crises in certain regions. Although the security situation in Chad and Somalia has improved, internally displaced persons remain vulnerable to food insecurity.⁴
10. Shocks caused by natural disasters and human origin (economic shocks) have had a devastating impact on agriculture and related livelihoods in Africa, pushing vulnerable households into crisis.

¹ FAO. 2018. *Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Africa 2018*, Accra.

² The relationship between conflict and food insecurity is complex, with multiple internal (endogenous) factors and external factors determining the impact of conflict on food insecurity.

³ FAO. 2017. *Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Africa 2017. The food security and nutrition-conflict nexus: building resilience for food security, nutrition and peace*. Accra. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7967e.pdf>

⁴ FAO and WFP. 2019. *Monitoring food security in countries with conflict situations: A joint FAO/WFP update for the United Nations Security Council, January 2019*, Rome.

The frequency, size and intensity of natural hazards have increased in Africa with severe impacts on agriculture and food security for Africa's populations.⁵

11. Natural resources on the African continent are under increasing pressure from a range of sources such as the growing demand for land for agriculture and non-agriculture purposes. Africa faces a key challenge in conserving biodiversity and reducing pressure on its vast natural resources on the one hand, and generating growth, employment opportunities and sufficient food for its increasing urban populations. The importance of conserving biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources for food security was affirmed at the FAO Regional Conference for Africa 2018.

Regional Initiatives and Regional Priorities

12. FAO's priorities in the Africa region find expression in the three Regional Initiatives, namely:
 - a. Accelerate action by countries in the fight against hunger (Africa's Commitment to End Hunger by 2025).
 - b. Promote sustainable inclusive proven innovative practices and principles of production and post-production processes (Sustainable Production Intensification and Value Chain Development in Africa).
 - c. Strengthen resilience among vulnerable farming and pastoral communities (Building Resilience in Africa's Drylands).
13. *Regional Initiative 1* supports countries in multi-sectoral planning, coordinated implementation, and monitoring and evaluation to achieve the commitments countries have made to the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
14. *Regional Initiative 2* supports countries to transform agriculture with the aim of making nutritious food accessible to all, while preserving biodiversity through effective management of the region's natural resources. Technologies deployed include climate smart agriculture, technology transfer, and access to markets and trade. FAO also supports countries to achieve nationally determined contributions (NDC) on climate change, and supports diversification of agriculture and a value chain approach.
15. *Regional Initiative 3* supports countries to address the root causes and consequences of shocks (natural and human-induced) to reduce their reoccurrence. The initiative focuses on Africa's drylands and works with stakeholders from national institutional level to household level. Support includes developing capacities in disaster risk management, resilience, mitigation of impacts, response and recovery.
16. FAO's Regional Initiatives are aligned with its strategic objectives. These initiatives do not constitute the totality of FAO's work in the region but rather serve as a mechanism for the delivery and demonstration of impact of FAO's work on key priorities. The FAO Regional Conference for Africa 2018 underscored the relevance of these Regional Initiatives and supported a mechanism for guiding FAO's actions on priorities in the region during the 2018-2019 biennium.⁶
17. FAO's priorities in the region are informed by the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the overarching policy framework for the transformation of agriculture for economic growth, food security and nutrition, and sustainable livelihoods for the people in the region. CAADP has evolved over time and was given greater impetus with the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods. The Malabo Declaration calls on member countries to commit to ending

⁵ FAO.2018. *Climate change and its impact on the work and activities of FAO: Building Resilience to address extreme vulnerability of Africa's agriculture and rural livelihoods*. Report presented at the Thirtieth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa, ARC/18/3. Rome.

⁶ FAO.2018. *Report: Thirtieth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa*, ARC/18/REP, Rome.p.7.

hunger by 2025, reduce stunting to 10 percent, halve poverty by 2025 through inclusive agricultural growth and transformation, and enhance resilience in livelihoods and production systems to climate variability and other shocks. It also calls for recommitment to CAADP principles and values and enhanced investment finance in agriculture.⁷

Regional Structures

18. FAO works with the African Union (AU), which is the primary regional institution representing 55 member states in Africa. The New partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA) serves as the implementation agency of the AU and the African Union Commission (AUC). There are sub-regional bodies, the regional economic communities (RECs) representing member states in Eastern, Southern, Western, Central and Northern Africa. The major multilateral development finance institutions are the African Development Bank (AfDB), the World Bank Group and the Islamic Development Bank. The United Nations has a strong presence on the continent through country offices of the various United Nations Programmes and Funds and Specialized Organization, and also has a presence in regional centres. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa is an important interlocutor with the African Union. Other relevant institutions include African academic and research institutions and global institutions based in Africa; the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and members of sub-regional parliaments; regional civil society bodies, cooperatives and producer organizations and the private sector; and the FAO Regional Office through its sub-regional offices supports 47 FAO country offices.

III. Results Achieved through FAO's Contribution in the African Region in Three Selected Themes

A. Theme: Food Security and Nutrition (Ending Hunger)

19. The evaluations sampled for the regional synthesis reflected a wide diversity in the type and level of results, and in the robustness of the results reported. The synthesis cannot reflect the full spectrum of FAO's contributions to the region as the synthesis is based on a defined number of evaluations. There are many FAO activities that take place in the Africa region, and many of these may be achieving results that are not reported or evaluated. The ensuing discussion of results is presented with this caveat.

Finding 1: FAO contributed to strengthening policies and plans for improved food security and nutrition, and provided opportunities for designing and testing approaches to reducing rural poverty.

20. *Policies and plans developed and/or enhanced.* Many countries in the region benefited from FAO support to develop or enhance national food and agriculture policies and investment plans in line with the CAADP Framework.⁸ Examples include support to Burkina Faso to develop its National Policy for Food Security and Nutrition, and to Kenya to develop a new overarching national policy on agriculture to consolidate the reforms that had taken place including devolution of functions to county governments. FAO's advocacy and support contributed to a greater appreciation of the importance of food-based approaches to nutrition. FAO advocated for nutrition-sensitive agriculture with national legislatures and with the Pan-African Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (PAPA-FSN). The Niger developed a multi-sector national policy on nutrition, and Ethiopia developed a nutrition-sensitive agricultural strategy and training material for extension workers. Further examples of FAO's contribution include Nigeria's development of an Agriculture

⁷ NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, CAADP and Other related AU Decisions, downloaded 8 December 2019. <https://www.nepad.org/caadp/publication/synthesis-malabo-declaration-caadp-and-other-related-au-decisions>

⁸ Strategic Objective 1 Evaluation, p.17

and Food and Nutrition Security Strategy and Rwanda's Fourth Strategic Plan for Transformation of Agriculture with explicit nutrition outcomes.⁹

21. FAO supported six regional economic communities, namely, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Indian Ocean Commission, Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and West African Economic and Monetary Union to develop nutrition-sensitive policies and agriculture investment plans. ECOWAS, for example, developed the ECOWAS Regional Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Security Investment Programme 2016-2020 covering 15 member states.¹⁰
22. *Strengthened Capacities for Data Collection and Analysis.* Data and analysis on food and agriculture statistics is one of FAO's strengths, and responds to a need of member countries, for reliable data that can be analysed to inform policies and programmes. The evaluations reviewed contained several examples of FAO's contribution to strengthening national capacities for data collection and analysis. Burkina Faso, for example, benefited from capacity building in the use of Adept to analyse data derived from national statistics, as well as capacity building in analysing food and agricultural policies.¹¹ FAO supported the piloting of the Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W) indicator in Eswatini, Nigeria and South Africa. This indicator has been included in the CAADP Zero Hunger indicators through FAO support, along with the inclusion of the Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU) indicator in the CAADP results framework and the AfDB nutrition scorecard.¹² FAO supported the development and institutionalization of national food security information systems in the Somalia (the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit) and South Sudan's Agriculture and Food Information Systems (AFIS). The AFIS was found to be a highly relevant contribution and supported decision-making of the Government and the larger humanitarian community in South Sudan.¹³
23. *Reducing Rural Poverty.* Member countries view the employment of Africa's youth in agriculture as one of the most critical strategies to address the unsustainable, high levels of unemployment among Africa's youth, and the associated poverty, food insecurity and poor nutrition. The Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF) managed by FAO on behalf of member countries, supported several countries including Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, in formulating national policies, strategies, investment plans and programmes for youth employment in agriculture.¹⁴
24. The area of social protection is relatively new for FAO. The social protection portfolio has increased steadily since 2015, and included 33 social protection activities (projects) in the Africa region between 2013 and 2016.¹⁵ FAO, working in partnership with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), contributed to piloting new approaches to social protection and building an evidence base for designing and strengthening social protection policies and programmes in countries including Lesotho, Malawi and Zambia. Examples of FAO's contribution include livelihood profiling to inform the design of complementary packages of agricultural and social protection interventions, analytical work to assess the institutional, legal and financial feasibility of expanding social insurance to informal agricultural workers, and developing human capacities of ministries of agriculture for supporting coherence between agriculture and social protection.¹⁶ FAO also worked

⁹ Nutrition Strategy and Vision Evaluation, p.38

¹⁰ Strategic Objective 1 Evaluation, p.18

¹¹ Burkina Faso Country Programme Evaluation Summary, p.6

¹² Nutrition Strategy and Vision Evaluation, p.31

¹³ South Sudan Country Programme Evaluation, p.2

¹⁴ Africa Solidarity Trust Fund Evaluation, p.14

¹⁵ Strategic Programme 3 Evaluation, Annex 5, p.14

¹⁶ Strategic Programme 3 Evaluation, Field Work Report, p.23

- jointly with UNICEF on impact evaluations of national cash transfer programmes in sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁷
25. Tenure security and access to land for the rural poor are essential for sustainable rural livelihoods and food security. FAO supported advocacy and policy dialogue using the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forestry and Fisheries in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) as an entry point, for example in Malawi, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda. FAO's contribution extended to capacity support for drafting legislation and land administration matters.¹⁸
26. *Reported Improvements and/or Changes.* It is difficult to determine whether the policies and planning that FAO supported have translated into better outcomes for food security and nutrition. Information on results at the outcome level is sparse, fragmented, and in instances are reported as potential rather than actual results.
- a. Examples of results from FAO's advocacy and support include:
- i. Changes to Kenya's basic education curriculum to include nutrition¹⁹
 - ii. School nutrition strategies in Cabo Verde, Malawi and Mozambique and urban food projects in Ghana and the United Republic of Tanzania were reported to show promising results.²⁰
 - iii. Unexpected results from support to CAADP processes include the use of and the adaptation the Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Guidelines to the regional context, country nutrition papers, an e-learning course on agriculture investments, and guidance and training material for integrating nutrition in agriculture extension services.²¹
 - iv. Building capacity of PAP on the right to food and supporting the establishment of the PAP-FNS at regional and national level, as in Madagascar, Sierra Leone and Uganda. King Letsie III of the Kingdom of Lesotho is an FAO ambassador on Nutrition in Africa.
 - v. A dedicated National Rural Youth Employment Policy for Senegal reported to be the first of its kind in Africa, and has the potential to create 100 000 jobs in Senegal. Nigeria's youth employment policy was reported to have the potential to create 750 000 jobs.²²
 - vi. FAO influenced social protection policies and budgets resulting in: increased funding to the national social protection programme in Ghana; increased Government commitment and budget for social protection in Kenya; scaling up the coverage of the Child Grants Programme and adding homestead garden inputs for all child grant beneficiaries in Lesotho; increasing transfer amounts to beneficiaries in Malawi; and a large increase in the national budget to cover cash transfers benefiting over 80 000 additional households in Zambia.²³
 - vii. An increase in the income of 69 percent of youth participating in the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) in the United Republic of Tanzania, through application of knowledge and skills acquired through the JFFLS.²⁴
27. The evaluations reviewed for this synthesis did not contain information specifically on progress of the region and sub-regions with the Malabo Commitments. The 2018 Biennial CAADP Review process gives an indication of progress, based on member countries' reports. Aggregated results show that Africa as a whole is not on track in meeting the Malabo Commitments. At the sub-regional

¹⁷ Strategic Programme 3 Evaluation, p.21

¹⁸ Strategic Programme 3 Evaluation, p.22 and Strategic Objective 1 Evaluation, p.17

¹⁹ Kenya Country Programme Evaluation, p.36

²⁰ Nutrition Strategy and Vision Evaluation, p.40

²¹ Nutrition Strategy and Vision Evaluation, p.40

²² Strategic Programme 3 Evaluation, p.22

²³ Strategic Programme 3 Evaluation, Annex 5, p.34

²⁴ United Republic of Tanzania Country Programme Evaluation, p.39

level, only nine of 14 countries in Eastern Africa and all but one country in Southern Africa are on track. In West Africa, only five of 15 countries are on track. No countries in Central Africa are on track. On specific commitments – namely, enhancing investment finance in agriculture, ending hunger by 2025, and enhancing resilience to climate variability – no sub-regions are on track to achieve these commitments.²⁵ These aggregated assessments do however obscure the significant progress made in countries such as Kenya in reducing undernutrition.

B. Theme: Building Resilience to Threats and Crises

Finding 2: FAO plays a significant role in supporting regional and national governments to build the resilience of countries to threats and crises caused by adverse climatic conditions and natural disasters, conflict and other human factors. FAO's support contributed to increased productive capacities of vulnerable households, at least in the short term.

28. *Strengthening Sub-regional and National Capacities.* FAO provided support to key sub-regional institutions to develop strategies and plans in the 'resilience space'. In West Africa, FAO works with the *Comité permanent inter-Etats de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel* (CILSS) and countries in the Sahel, providing technical support on the use of food security early warning decision tools including the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC). FAO also provided technical support to the IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative, and to SADC in developing the Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee Action Plan to address the impacts of the protracted drought caused by El Niño.²⁶ Through Regional Initiative 3, the RAF Regional Resilience Team supports country offices on resilience-related projects, complemented by the sub-regional resilience teams. Surveyed country offices and stakeholders acknowledged and valued the technical contributions of the Resilience Teams.²⁷
29. Early warning and/or early action systems such as the IPC and the Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis Model were institutionalized in several countries with the support of FAO. The Strategic Objective 5 Evaluation found demand in countries for a national integrated early warning early action system that consolidates information from different warning systems, identifies areas/locations at high risk of food insecurity, and actions to be taken (along the lines of the global Early Warning Early Action system developed by FAO).²⁸ The Agriculture Food and Information Systems for Decision Support (AFIS) built capacity to produce and analyse food security and nutrition data in South Sudan. Though initially the AFIS had a development focus, it became applicable for the humanitarian response to the escalation of conflict in the country.²⁹ The capacities of county departments of veterinary services in Kenya were enhanced through, among other things, supply of vaccines and drugs to mitigate the effects of major livestock diseases.³⁰
30. *Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation.* FAO supported a number of countries to enhance their capacities in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Uganda strengthened the capacity of its newly established Climate Change Department to coordinate climate change across ministries. Six district local governments were supported to establish district climate task forces for coordinating climate change adaptation at district level, and mainstream climate change adaptation in district development plans.³¹ Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) features in several FAO supported interventions. In the United Republic of Tanzania, FAO supported the national "Climate Smart Agriculture" initiative that included the development of national CSA guidelines. Then, the Tanzanian Government developed the Agriculture Resilience Plan that seeks to address the impacts of climate change using climate smart agriculture as the approach to increase agriculture production

²⁵ FAO. 2018. *Regional Overview of the State of Food Security and Nutrition in Africa 2018*, Accra, p.22-23

²⁶ Strategic Objective 5 Evaluation, p.34

²⁷ Strategic Objective 5 Evaluation, p.35

²⁸ Strategic Objective 5 Evaluation, p.39

²⁹ Africa Solidarity Trust Fund Evaluation, p.1

³⁰ Kenya Country Programme Evaluation, p.53

³¹ Global Climate Change Alliance Uganda Evaluation, p.17

³² United Republic of Tanzania Country Programme Evaluation, p.42

yields and mitigate economic shocks at smallholder farm level.³² In Mali, FAO helped strengthen the capacity of the National Agriculture Board for integrating climate change adaptation practices into its Farmer Field School approach to extension services, and in agriculture policies and programmes.³³

31. *Building Resilience at Community and Household Levels.* FAO supported the implementation of several projects at community level, aimed at reducing risks and building resilience of vulnerable households through increasing their productive capacities. Improving productive capacities comprised the largest share of Burkina Faso's Country Programme. FAO's support included distribution of quality certified short-cycle variety seeds, distribution of animal and animal feed, small-scale irrigation for vegetable gardening and livestock, and development of lowlands for rice production.³⁴ The Somalia Joint Resilience Programme implemented with World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF covered a broad spectrum of interventions necessitated by the conflict and breakdown of governance at the time. FAO's contribution included livestock support activities, such as vaccinations and deployment of community animal health workers, training of communities in good agricultural practices at places such as farmer field schools, and through programmes such as Cash For Work.³⁵
32. *Reported Improvements and Changes.* FAO's resilience portfolio covers a diverse range of projects and initiatives. The changes or improvements at the institutional level were mainly about processes:
 - i. Institutionalization of early warning and information systems has enabled FAO to obtain information and produce quarterly reports on countries at high risk of food insecurity, and recommend early actions. There is greater awareness among countries on the benefit of early warning systems and an increased demand for integrated early warning systems.³⁶
 - ii. Climate change adaptation has been mainstreamed in countries. For example, Uganda mainstreamed climate change in its National Development Plan, sector plans.³⁷ The climate change adaptation approach has been integrated into Mali's agriculture policies and programmes and is used widely by the Malian Government and its partners in building local capacity for climate change adaptation.³⁸
33. There were several projects at community and/or household level that evaluations found to have generated positive results at least in the short term. Interventions in Burkina Faso strengthened the productive capacities of vulnerable households and demonstrated concrete improvements to livelihoods, for example, distribution of small animals targeting mainly women. Products from vegetable gardens were sold, increasing and diversifying income sources, especially for women.³⁹ In Somalia, FAO's livestock support activities helped improve livestock health and reduced livestock mortality. Other benefits reported include increased agriculture production mainly for household consumption (and improved food availability), with a small number able to sell surplus production of vegetables and crops. Most beneficiaries (81 percent) in the Farmer Field Schools reported usefulness of the training received, and nearly one-third (31 percent) had trained other farmers.⁴⁰ In the Niger, animal distributions had positive impacts for beneficiaries from FAO's support to pastoralism and the livestock sector. Impacts include increased income from animal sales, increased availability of milk for children, improved social status of women in vulnerable households, and generating household savings through livestock ownership.⁴¹

³² United Republic of Tanzania Country Programme Evaluation, p.42

³³ Mali Climate Resilience Evaluation

³⁴ Burkina Faso Country Programme Evaluation Summary, p.3

³⁵ Somalia Resilience Sub-Programme Evaluation

³⁶ Strategic Objective 5 Evaluation, p.39

³⁷ Global Climate Change Alliance Uganda Evaluation, p.16

³⁸ Mali Climate Resilience Evaluation, p.30

³⁹ Burkina Faso Country Programme Evaluation Summary, p.4

⁴⁰ Somalia Resilience Sub-Programme Evaluation, p.4

⁴¹ Niger Country Programme Evaluation Summary, p.4

C. Theme: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (including biodiversity)

Finding 3: FAO contributed to strengthened governance and institutional capacities for the sustainable management of natural resources, and improved community awareness of and capacities for the sustainable use of natural resources.

34. *Strengthened Governance and Capacities.* FAO supported a small number of countries to strengthen the governance of natural resources through the application of VGGT.⁴² For example, Sierra Leone received support to develop its first National Land Policy and an implementation plan based on VGGT principles. Senegal, with FAO's support revised its land tenure policy using VGGT principles, as well as piloted customary and formal forest tenure rights.⁴³ FAO's support to Uganda filled gaps in legislation governing forests and land,⁴⁴ and in Kenya, the governance of grazing lands was strengthened through enactment of by-laws, the establishment of land committees, and the training of pastoralists.⁴⁵ FAO contributed to strengthening the legal and institutional framework for the management of the mangrove ecosystem in the Republic of the Congo.⁴⁶
35. FAO's support helped to establish the Congolese Coastal Observatory, the development of monitoring and evaluation tools, and the training of non-governmental organizations and government officials in environmental assessment and impact monitoring.⁴⁷ A similar project in Cameroon supported capacity strengthening for developing natural resource management strategies and generating information for research and monitoring on mangrove ecosystems and coastal forests.⁴⁸ Capacity building in Uganda was rolled out to public and private institutions at national, regional, district and local levels, and understanding of the VGGT principles was enhanced through a series of regional forums.⁴⁹
36. FAO strengthened the capacities of smallholder agro-pastoralists to mitigate the impact of land degradation and rehabilitate degraded lands in Angola, using the Agro-Pastoralist Field School method.⁵⁰ Several countries, including Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia were supported to adopt conservation agriculture practices. Local communities in the Republic of the Congo were supported to establish legal associations to enable them to secure opportunities to improve their livelihoods through managing community forests. In Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, capacities of farmers and communities living in and around trans-frontier conservation areas were developed to achieve sustainable livelihoods through sound agricultural and conservation practices.⁵¹
37. *Reported Improvements and/or Changes.* The evaluations reviewed identified mostly immediate (short-term) outcomes. This is not surprising as most of the interventions evaluated were projects with a limited duration of 4-5 years. Longer timeframes are required to assess the impact of interventions. Examples of results reported:
- a. The VGGT project in Uganda created awareness of new laws on land tenure and their implications for forest use. This in turn informed new guidelines on the registration and declaration of private forests.⁵²

⁴² The Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests promote secure tenure rights and equitable access to land, fisheries and forests as a means of eradicating hunger and poverty, supporting sustainable development and enhancing the environment. (Committee on World Food Security): <http://www.fao.org/cfs/home/activities/vgg/en/>

⁴³ VGGT Implementation Evaluation, p.26

⁴⁴ VGGT Implementation Evaluation, p.30

⁴⁵ Kenya Country Programme Evaluation, p.47

⁴⁶ Congo Mangrove Ecosystem Evaluation, p.9

⁴⁷ Congo Mangrove Ecosystem Evaluation, p.9

⁴⁸ Cameroon Mangrove Ecosystem Evaluation, p.56

⁴⁹ Tenure Rights for Forest Landscape-dependent communities (draft) evaluation, p19

⁵⁰ Angola Land Rehabilitation and Rangelands Management Evaluation, p3

⁵¹ Ghana-Cote d'Ivoire Transfrontier Evaluation, p.20

⁵² Tenure Rights for Forest Landscape-dependent communities (draft) evaluation, p19

- b. In the Republic of Congo, the forestry and environmental codes were updated to incorporate mangrove and coastal ecosystems. The first community forest was established and small areas were reforested.⁵³
- c. The Forest and Farms initiative in Kenya improved the management of water and grazing resources and restored arid and semi-arid land.⁵⁴ Conservation Agriculture in Kenya increased production yields of crops, diversification of crops and increased income for farmers.⁵⁵
- d. Through innovative use of community participatory methods in Angola, over 750 hectares of rangelands were rehabilitated, almost 30 000 hectares of rangeland reserve established and 28 water points rehabilitated.⁵⁶

D. Contribution to Gender Equality

Finding 4: FAO has made a notable contribution to gender equality in the Africa region, though mainstreaming gender equality in FAO's projects at the design stage has been limited.

38. *Contribution at Policy and/or Strategy Level(s):* FAO collaborated with the AUC to convene Africa-wide consultations of rural women for development of the AU Gender Strategy, and supported the AU to strengthen gender reporting on the Malabo Commitments. FAO also supported RECs to develop Gender and Agriculture Action Plans and Gender Responsive Regional and National Agriculture Investment Plans. The RAF Gender Team strengthened evidence for REC plans through preparation of sub-regional outlook papers on gender and agri-food systems, based on Country Gender Assessments.⁵⁷ FAO supported Ghana in developing the Gender in Agricultural Development Strategy for the Agricultural Sector and National Gender Policy; and the Gambia develop a national agriculture policy inclusive of gender. FAO Kenya supported the development of the Gender Strategy for Agriculture.⁵⁸ FAO Zambia supported the mainstreaming of gender into the Forest Livelihoods and Economic Survey, providing a basis for gender-sensitive reporting, and FAO Malawi supported a programme for generating sex-disaggregated data. The employment of a gender specialist in the Somalia Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit gave a gender lens to data definitions and improved gender analysis of the unit's data.⁵⁹ Countries, including Liberia, Sierra Leone and South Africa, were trained in using FAO's technical guide on Governing Land for Women and Men.⁶⁰
39. *Contribution at Project Level:* Few projects mainstreamed gender from the outset or systematically. In Uganda, the climate change project supported a gender review of the project document, and a baseline study that developed gender indicators for the project (though not from the outset). At district level the project built capacity of implementing partners on gender and climate change, promoted a Gender Action Learning Systems methodology for Farmer Field School facilitators, capacity building for District Local Governments on gender analysis tools, gender responsive budgeting, gender-sensitive indicators, monitoring, evaluation and learning in the context of climate change.⁶¹ Gender in most projects meant the participation and targeting of women as beneficiaries of community level projects. There were several projects building capacities of women in agriculture, disaster risk reduction and climate change, and nutrition. The Dimitra Clubs in the Africa region are practical examples of strengthening the capacities of rural women (and young farmers) to discuss their needs, priorities and challenges and take collective action to address these. There are around 1 600 active Dimitra Clubs in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, the Niger and Senegal, with about 50 000 members and an estimated one million beneficiaries.⁶²

⁵³ Congo Mangrove Ecosystem Evaluation, p17

⁵⁴ Strategic Objective 2 Evaluation, p.10

⁵⁵ Kenya Country Programme Evaluation, p39

⁵⁶ Angola Land Rehabilitation and Rangelands Management Evaluation, p

⁵⁷ FAO Gender Evaluation: Africa Region, p.19

⁵⁸ Kenya Country Programme Evaluation, p.6

⁵⁹ Somalia Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit Evaluation, p.34

⁶⁰ VGGT Implementation Evaluation, p.46

⁶¹ Global Climate Change Alliance Uganda Evaluation, p.35

⁶² Strategic Programme 3 Evaluation, Annex 6, p.6

40. *Reported Improvements and/or Change.* Results reported in projects are largely about women's participation and women's empowerment. Women participants in the Mitigation of Climate Change in Agriculture project in Kenya established a group tree nursery generating sufficient income for the women to invest in dairy production.⁶³ In disaster risk reduction interventions in Kenya, women were the majority beneficiaries, representing 588 out of 633 households.⁶⁴ In Mali, women benefited from participation in market garden Farmer Field Schools and were able to improve production and marketing of produce, and 10 women received administrative title to land plots for production.⁶⁵
41. Evaluations of country programmes of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Kenya, the Niger and South Sudan found that gender was not mainstreamed sufficiently in projects. The inclusion of women beneficiaries in projects was coincidental and not an outcome of a gender analysis. For example, gender was not reflected in the objectives, outputs and outcomes of the Education for Effective Nutrition in Action (ENACT) project, nor was the project informed by a gender analysis. Females were the majority participants in the project, thus perpetuating the stereotyping of nutrition as purely a female issue.⁶⁶ Projects (other than VGGT) seldom considered or addressed underlying social and cultural dimensions that allocate specific gender roles and determine unequal access to productive resources such as land.

IV. Enablers and Constraints

Finding 5: FAO's longstanding relationship with African regional bodies and institutions, and its leadership and technical expertise are the most important factors that have enabled the results it has achieved in the region. Collaboration with WFP, IFAD and other organizations in the UN development system, and civil society organizations is another success factor, as is FAO's access to global funds. FAO's capacity in country offices and the limited financial resources in governments were the most commonly identified as constraints to achieving results, along with project design shortcomings.

Enabling factors

42. FAO's relationship with the AU and the RECs is a critical success factor in FAO's work in the region. This relationship has enabled FAO to contribute to and influence regional policies and strategies, and to support member countries in developing strategies and plans in line with the CAADP Framework. The engagement with the AU lends credibility to FAO's advocacy on the wide range of issues that fall within FAO's mandate, and ensures that FAO's work is aligned with and responsive to the priorities of the region. FAO's relationship with the RECs is also a critical success factor for its work in resilience that in many instances involves trans-boundary issues (e.g. food chain crises, humanitarian crises or severe climatic conditions). The importance of relationships with sub-regional bodies is demonstrated in resilience work with IGAD (drought disaster resilience) and CILSS (food insecurity in the Sahel).
43. FAO's leadership at country level, whose importance cannot be overstated, plays a critical role in achieving results. Leadership is essential, not only for ensuring the effective management of the FAO country office, but also for ensuring that FAO remains strategically relevant, leads advocacy on food and agriculture issues as well as on the normative values of the United Nations system, mobilizes resources, and negotiates FAO's contribution in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). Leadership is critical in humanitarian crises, as demonstrated in the case of South Sudan where FAO's diplomacy combined with its technical and analytical expertise was found to be critical to the success of FAO's work in the country.⁶⁷

⁶³ Strategic Objective 2 Evaluation, p.26

⁶⁴ Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Evaluation Annexes, p.70

⁶⁵ Mali Climate Resilience Evaluation, p.27

⁶⁶ ENACT Evaluation, p.28

⁶⁷ South Sudan Country Programme Evaluation, p.66

44. FAO's technical expertise in the areas of its mandate was identified in evaluations as a critical enabler of results achieved. FAO is valued for its technical expertise as confirmed in surveys and interviews conducted as part of the data collection process in evaluations. For example, FAO's technical expertise in food security analysis and early warning information for resilience, together with its convening powers was valued by the Kenya Food Security Steering Group. Partners surveyed for the country programme evaluation identified FAO's technical contribution, professionalism and competence of staff, and the intrinsic value of FAO's reputation as a major benefit of working with the Organization, in addition to capacity building opportunities afforded by FAO.⁶⁸
45. FAO's presence at sub-national levels was identified as an enabler in countries where devolution of authority from national to sub-national governments has taken place. For example, FAO Kenya has established offices in 14 of Kenya's 47 counties, which has had the benefit of better alignment of FAO interventions with local needs and priorities. The establishment of these close working relations with county governments and stakeholders has enabled FAO to engage more effectively with stakeholders at county level. FAO's field presence at county level also facilitated capacity building of officials and extension officers of county agriculture authorities.⁶⁹
46. FAO's access to funding is an important enabler, and conversely, limited financial resources are a major constraint to achieving results. Evaluations on FAO's work in climate change identified the introduction of climate change funds as a factor in enabling FAO to expand its work in climate change adaptation and mitigation. FAO has a sizeable portfolio of projects funded through the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF). FAO's collaboration with development finance institutes such as the AfDB is an important enabler. More recently, FAO, the AfDB and the World Bank are collaborating on the 'blue economy' - the partnership with the African Package for Climate-Resilient Ocean Economies.⁷⁰ The flexibility of the ASTF and the simplicity of its rules were found to be a significant enabler for projects funded through this facility.
47. Collaboration with WFP, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and other United Nations organizations is another critical success factor or enabler of results. FAO collaborates with WFP and UNICEF on resilience, for example, in the Joint Resilience Programme in Somalia. Collaboration with IFAD and the International Labour Organization (ILO) on social protection and decent rural and youth employment is another example of working with other United Nations organizations. Evaluations have however noted that although the organizations collaborate, this does not necessarily translate into joint or integrated delivery, as illustrated in the Somalia Joint Resilience Programme.⁷¹ United Nations organizations tend to implement work independently of one another.
48. Partnerships with civil society organizations are a critical factor in achieving results. FAO works with international and national non-governmental organizations. Evaluations point to positive relationships between FAO and its implementing partners. For example, 87 percent of implementing partners surveyed rated their relationship with FAO as good-to-excellent, and expressed appreciation for FAO's high quality technical support. Implementing partners, however, expressed concern about administrative/contractual procedures, and also wished to be partners and not merely contracted service providers.⁷² In the Niger, for example, national non-governmental organizations felt that FAO was not making use of their knowledge of the country context.⁷³

Constraining factors

⁶⁸ Kenya Country Programme Evaluation, p.20

⁶⁹ Kenya Country Programme Evaluation, p.15-16

⁷⁰ This initiative seeks to support African countries to build climate-resilient coastlines and communities, strengthen food security, create decent employment opportunities and facilitate policy reforms. Brochure: The African Package for Climate-Resilient Ocean Economies downloaded at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6441e.pdf>

⁷¹ Somalia Resilience Sub-Programme Evaluation

⁷² South Sudan Country Programme Evaluation, p.72

⁷³ Niger Country Programme Evaluation Summary, p.2

49. Capacity gaps in a number of FAO country offices were identified as a constraint in several evaluations. The Niger Country Programming Framework (CPF), for example, included climate change adaptation but FAO's contribution was limited due to the lack of dedicated expertise in the country office.⁷⁴ Country offices did not always have access to expertise in other areas such as social protection, placing them at a disadvantage in social protection-related projects.⁷⁵ FAO's country offices cannot be expected to have all the expertise, and so it is critical that country offices have access to the expertise in regional and sub-regional offices, as ultimately, technical experts in FAO headquarters. The recent evaluation of FAO's Strategic Results Framework found that sub-regional offices (not only in the Africa region) did not have the critical mass of technical experts to support country offices.⁷⁶
50. Country office evaluations also found that where country offices have relatively small staff numbers, they were not able to participate regularly in national forums and platforms. This gives the impression that FAO does not value these stakeholder spaces, thereby rendering FAO absent from important platforms and impacting negatively on FAO's strategic positioning. The proliferation of forums in countries has only added to this problem.
51. Capacity constraints also affect FAO's ability to have a permanent presence at sub-national levels, with state, provincial, county and local governments and administrations. This has implications for FAO's work in countries that have, or are devolving powers and functions to sub-national government authorities. Although there are clear benefits to establishing sub-national FAO offices such as in Kenya, these offices are staffed so 'thinly' as they are not intended to be replicas of the country office. Funding county offices through a project is not a sustainable approach to staffing of county offices. In addition, the lack of understanding of FAO's mandate at county level, delays in devolution of powers and functions on the part of the governments, lack of clarity within FAO about the devolution process, and lack of harmonized policies across counties affect the delivery of results at county level.⁷⁷
52. Delays in recruitment have a major impact on FAO's ability to deliver results as was found in the evaluation of FAO's Strategic Results Framework. Although the efficiency in the recruitment of staff has improved, there are still serious delays in the recruitment of consultants, as a result of limited delegations to decentralized offices, and unintended consequences of well-intentioned measures such as language requirements for consultants.⁷⁸ The problem of recruitment was experienced in all regions, and confirmed in the RAF Regional Synthesis Report on Country Annual Reports. The RAF report also highlighted delays in the appointment of FAO Representatives (FAOR) in 2018, with 19 country offices (on average more than 40 percent) were without a permanent FAOR for several months of the year.⁷⁹ Delays in procurement processes in decentralized offices affect delivery negatively, and compromise effectiveness of responses in emergency and humanitarian situations.⁸⁰
53. Financial limitations in public institutions were identified a constraint in several evaluations. They found that governments often lacked sufficient financial resources to implement policies and strategies that have been developed with FAO support. Burkina Faso for example, could not fully implement its new food security and nutrition policy due to lack of financial resources and implementation capacity constraints. The government also experienced difficulties in rolling out the pastoral early warning system at community level due to the lack of funding. Financial constraints were found to hinder the implementation of the Cameroon mangrove ecosystem strategy and

⁷⁴ Niger Country Programme Evaluation Summary, p.2

⁷⁵ Strategic Programme 3 Evaluation

⁷⁶ FAO Strategic Results Framework Evaluation, p.ix

⁷⁷ Kenya Country Programme Evaluation, p.16

⁷⁸ FAO Strategic Results Framework Evaluation, p.22

⁷⁹ RAF Regional Synthesis Report on Country Annual Reports 2018, p.3

⁸⁰ FAO Strategic Results Framework Evaluation, p.24

integrated management plan⁸¹ and the operationalization of the Congo Coastal Observatory was delayed by lack of funding.⁸² In Mali, FAO contributed to enhancing knowledge of the inter-sectoral approaches and methods of climate change adaptation, but implementation by the Government, municipalities and communities was hampered by uncertainty about future funding.⁸³ Financial constraints, though important, are seldom the sole source of government constraints on delivery. Others include limited implementation capacity within government institutions, lack of national ownership, the fragility of government institutions in countries experiencing violent conflicts or emerging from conflict, and changes in governments following elections.

54. Several evaluations identified shortcomings in project design that negatively influenced the achievement of results. FAO supports many small-scale pilot projects but these are not always taken to scale, as they are not designed with explicit, clear exit strategies that could ensure that, among other things, financial resources are mobilized and capacity is in place in government to scale up pilot projects. The lack of robust evidence to support advocacy for governments and other partners to scale up pilot projects was identified as an important factor constraining effective delivery in the resilience portfolio.⁸⁴
55. Poor targeting of beneficiaries and government officials for capacity building is another factor that affected results reported in the evaluations. Beneficiaries did not always meet the eligibility requirements specified in project documents. The Angola Rangelands project illustrates the problem of inappropriate targeting for training in land degradation methods. The project planned to train 80 persons mainly from public institutions and exceeded its target by training 200 persons. However, the prospect for public institutions introducing the methods in everyday work practice is weak, as many of the participants were municipal directors or managers of technical services and not field specialists who were expected to implement the approach.⁸⁵
56. Findings made in the evaluations reviewed suggest that project designs often have over-ambitious targets for the available resources. The West Africa Regional Youth Employment Project, for example, had insufficient budget for the planned target group coverage, and so did not achieve its planned target.⁸⁶ The 27 local communities participating in the Cameroon Mangrove Ecosystem Project did not experience significant improvements to their livelihoods. The evaluation found that the outcomes envisaged for these communities were unrealistic and would require larger volumes of resources and many years to achieve, beyond the project lifespan.⁸⁷ The Angola Rangelands Project planned to introduce 70 Agro-Pastoral Field Schools, but reduced the number to 35 following the mid-term evaluation of the project, to pay greater attention to the quality of field schools. The final evaluation found that fewer than half of the field schools (43 percent) were at an advanced stage functioning, and noted that the field school approach was complex and planned results were difficult to achieve in a project of limited duration.⁸⁸ It should be borne in mind that project targets are often driven by donor requirements rather than a realistic assessment of what is feasible within the local context.
57. Local conditions, often outside the control of FAO, can serve as a constraint to delivery of results, hence the need for a thorough analysis of local conditions and a robust theory of change to identify assumptions and risks when designing projects. The Zambia Conservation Agriculture Project contributed to an expansion in the amount of land under conservation agriculture and increases in crop yields. Farmers however, had limited or no access to markets to sell their produce and consequently did not experience a real increase in their income. Farmers participating in the agro-

⁸¹ Cameroon Mangrove Ecosystem Evaluation, p.15

⁸² Congo Mangroves and Coastal Forests Evaluation, p.10

⁸³ Mali Climate Resilience Evaluation, p.23

⁸⁴ Strategic Objective 5 Evaluation, p.41

⁸⁵ Angola Land Rehabilitation and Rangelands Management Evaluation, 35

⁸⁶ Africa Solidarity Trust Fund Evaluation, p.19

⁸⁷ Cameroon Mangrove Ecosystems Evaluation, p.18

⁸⁸ Angola Land Rehabilitation and Rangelands Management Evaluation, p.4

forestry initiatives experienced difficulties due to lack of water.⁸⁹ FAO Kenya supported initiatives in diversification of livelihoods to reduce dependence on large livestock, but the results from these initiatives were hampered by increasing levels of poverty, local conflicts, and changes in climatic conditions in these communities.⁹⁰ In Burkina Faso, tension between livestock owners and farmers was posited as a factor in the lower than expected rice crop yield, in addition to rainfall problems.⁹¹

58. Governance arrangements in countries influence the achievement of results. Implementing an integrated approach to climate-resilience for example, requires FAO to work in an integrated manner with other ministries in addition to ministries of agriculture. FAO's effectiveness is in part dependent on how well its partners in government coordinate their portfolios and the extent to which they are willing to work collaboratively. These factors are to a large extent outside the control of FAO, but can be mitigated by FAO working collaboratively with other United Nations organizations that have stronger relationships with non-agriculture ministries, for example, the World Health Organization's (WHO) relationship with the Ministry of Health can facilitate FAO's work in nutrition, and the ILO's relationship with the Ministry of Labour can be leveraged for FAO's work on social protection for farmworkers. Intergovernmental issues in countries with sub-national governments can be a constraint to delivering results. FAO Kenya's efforts to work directly with county governments to 'domesticate' the national agriculture policy and develop district investment plans were hindered by the lack of clarity on the respective powers, roles and responsibilities of national and county governments, and by the lengthy process of transferring powers to county governments.

V. Gaps and Emerging Issues

59. The discussion on gaps and emerging issues is based solely on the evaluations that were reviewed for the regional synthesis. As pointed out in the introduction of this report, the regional synthesis is not a comprehensive analysis of everything that FAO has done in the Africa region, and events may have overtaken several of the evaluations used in the synthesis. It is likely that FAO is aware of these gaps and emerging issues and is taking action on these, or intends to do so.

Finding 6: Urban food security has not received sufficient attention in the Africa region. There is also insufficient attention paid to the problem of overweight and obesity among Africa's increasingly urban populations.

60. The Africa region is experiencing a rapid rate of urbanization. This places pressure on food systems, as agricultural spaces in peri-urban areas are lost to settlements for housing and for other non-agricultural activities. Apart from examples of urban food security projects in Ghana and Kenya, there was no mention of urban food security in the evaluations reviewed for the regional synthesis. Urbanization and changes in income also influence diet and food choices. African countries, especially those of middle-income status with increasing urban populations have the twin challenge of malnutrition and stunting on the one hand, and overweight and obesity on the other. Both challenges have major consequences for the health, social and economic development of these countries. Hungry children with stunted growth cannot learn effectively. Overweight and obese children and adults add to an already heavy burden of disease in African countries and to the economic costs of non-communicable diseases in the short and long term. The issue of the increase in overweight and obesity in children under-five years has been raised in the 2018 FAO Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition.

Finding 7: FAO has contributed substantially to climate change work and on the management of Africa's natural resources, but sustainability of these interventions is especially in a cross-cutting manner, is fragile. There are many projects that appear dispersed and disconnected.

⁸⁹ Zambia CASU Evaluation, p.3

⁹⁰ Kenya Country Programme Evaluation, p.55

⁹¹ Burkina Faso Country Programme Evaluation Summary, p.4

Demand for FAO's technical expertise is likely to increase as the impacts of climate change intensify.

61. The evaluations raised concerns about the sustainability of projects in climate change adaptation and mitigation, and natural resources management. Many of the projects are intended as demonstration projects to test the introduction of new approaches or techniques, or catalytic projects intended to generate interest in scaling up. As pointed out in the evaluations, these pilot projects are not scaled up for a variety of reasons, including the lack of finances on the part of governments, the lack of implementation capacity, and vague exit strategies in the project design. These have been canvassed in the preceding section on enablers and constraints. In addition, documenting the successes of pilot projects is not done adequately or at all, and opportunities to mobilize resources from interested partners are lost.
62. Projects in climate change and natural resources management appear somewhat dispersed and disconnected. This may be a reflection of the project approach that dominates FAO's portfolio, and the tendency of donors and funding facilities such as GEF and GCF to fund projects. There have been attempts to move to a more programmatic approach, for example, the South Sudan Resilience Sub-Programme, but the project approach remains dominant. Consolidation of FAO's project portfolio could assist in bringing some coherence to the portfolio and sustainability of interventions. However, it is equally important that the CPFs are improved to be strategic and not merely an aggregation of projects.
63. Countries in the Africa region are likely to have increased demand for FAO's technical expertise and support as the effects of climate change intensify. The El Niño effect in Southern Africa for example, is having a devastating effect on the countries in the region and poses a major risk to food security in Southern Africa, including in middle-income countries such as Botswana, Eswatini, Namibia and South Africa. The lack of technical expertise in smaller country offices and the capacity constraints that exist in sub-regional offices are issues that require FAO's attention. These matters should be addressed at the corporate level as a number of the constraints are a consequence of corporate policies and procedures relating to human resources, procurement and administrative matters such as limitations on travel.
64. The regional synthesis found only one evaluation on the 'blue' environment, namely, the Protection of the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem. It may be that there are other projects on the blue environment, but they have not been evaluated. Coastal countries increasingly are paying attention to the Ocean Economy for economic growth and livelihoods of coastal populations, and this will place pressure on marine ecosystems. Small Island Developing States and countries concerned about the effects of climate change on the oceans and coastlines may require FAO's technical expertise to deal effectively with these issues.

Finding 8: Local governments are emerging as critical institutions in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There were few examples in the evaluations that demonstrated FAO working with local governments.

65. FAO's engagement with, local governments, appears to be limited. Again, this may be a reflection of the sample of evaluations reviewed for the synthesis. Local governments have an important role to play in the achievement of the SDGs. They play a role in SDG 1: Poverty, SDG 2: Hunger, SDG 13: Climate Change, SDG: 14 Protecting Coastal Ecosystems and SDG 15: Conservation. Local governments, as governments 'closest to the people' are essential if we are to '*leave no one behind*'. Working with local government is an issue that deserves FAO's attention going forward.
66. Working with local governments can be challenging, as there are often tensions between national governments and local governments irrespective of whether they are led by the same political party. Local governments are not merely implementers of policies set by national governments, but are also policy makers in their own right, and this can give rise to tensions over policy priorities. There are also legal and constitutional complexities, for example, when local and national governments have legally mandated concurrent functions. Local governments in developing

countries are typically less resourced than national governments, and the financial viability of rural municipalities is often weak. Local governments in developing countries typically have weaker human resource capacities and weaker institutional capacities such as information systems, finance and administration systems, than their national counterparts.

67. FAO will need to consider how best to structure itself to work effectively with local governments. In addition to the challenges mentioned above, there are also FAO's own capacity constraints. The current capacities and structures of many FAO country offices would constrain FAO's ability to have a permanent presence at local government level. The example of FAO Kenya establishing county offices as a response to devolution by the Government of Kenya to county governments provides useful lessons in working with local governments. There are important considerations of sustainable funding, the need for clarity on FAO's role and mandate at local government level, managing the expectations of local governments, and navigating tensions between national and local government.

Finding 9: FAO's engagement with the private sector in the Africa region in the three thematic areas covered by the regional synthesis, has not been sufficient to influence practices of the private sector, nor build strategic partnerships with the private sector.

68. Evaluations seldom mentioned FAO's engagement with the private sector, and when they did, it was usually to identify the absence of the private sector in FAO's engagement. The evaluation of the VGGT made reference to the private sector as participants in the Uganda forest pilot, and this was the only evaluation that identified the private sector as a participant in an FAO-supported project. In projects related to FAO's resilience portfolio, there is reference to private sector service providers in emergency actions. Other than farmer organizations, private sector organizations are seldom mentioned as participants in multi-stakeholder forums on food and agriculture in countries.
69. The evaluation of Strategic Objective 2 found that although FAO at the global level was working with private sector players, interviewees across all regions and at global level felt that FAO's engagement with the private sector has been limited and cautious. The evaluation found that, notwithstanding the progress FAO has made with the private sector, it had limited influence on major private sector players on matters of agriculture and sustainability. The evaluation also reported that they could find no examples of large private companies that had changed their practices as a direct result of working with FAO.⁹² This finding is relevant to the Africa region where many of the large multi-national companies operate. It is also relevant as African ownership of the private sector in middle-income countries increases.

Finding 10: Gender mainstreaming needs to be improved and the issue of youth employment should be given greater attention in the region's portfolio.

70. Although FAO has made a notable contribution to gender equality in the region, the overwhelming message from the evaluations is that the mainstreaming of gender must be improved, especially at project level. This requires consistent messages from the regional leadership about the importance of mainstreaming gender. The region will need to ensure that country offices have gender focal points that have the knowledge and skills to support gender mainstreaming, as well as the authority to ensure that gender analyses are an integral part of project design. Gender focal points should also be able to access gender expertise from the regional office.
71. FAO has recorded some successes in youth in agriculture in the region. However, the scale of these achievements is insufficient to address the serious problem of high youth unemployment in African countries. A large population of unemployed young people and graduates fuels political instability and outward migration of young people, educated and uneducated. Attracting and retaining young people in agriculture and agro-industry is not only essential for food security, it is also essential for economic growth and political stability.

⁹² Strategic Objective 2 Evaluation, p.31

Finding 11: FAO collaborates with WFP and IFAD, and to a lesser extent with other United Nations agencies at country level. However, joint programmes are not planned jointly, and the ‘delivering together’ under former UNDAPs or UNDAFs is rare.

72. Evaluations cited examples of CPFs and projects retrofitted into UNDAF and so appear aligned on paper, when there has been no real joint planning and programming as envisaged during the development of the UNDAF. ‘Joint programmes’ are usually implemented separately by the respective United Nations agencies. The lack of coordination among United Nations agencies has implications for the effectiveness and efficiency of delivering results, and this issue has been documented and debated extensively in evaluations of UNDAFs.
73. The current wave of reforms for the United Nations development system has implications for FAO at the country level. It requires agencies to go well beyond perfunctory collaboration to meaningful joint planning and joint implementation. Agencies will face huge pressures in resource mobilization as the reforms require that a large proportion of resources are mobilized at the country level, and this may require joint resource mobilization on the part of United Nations agencies.

Finding 12: Monitoring and evaluation at country level is a major gap in the region. The gap exists in FAO country offices and in the government institutions that FAO works with.

74. The evaluations reviewed in this synthesis identified monitoring and evaluation as a gap in FAO country offices. Evaluations found that data required for monitoring and evaluation were incomplete or not available, and that the monitoring and evaluation frameworks for projects and country programmes were not robust. The monitoring and evaluation capacity gap is not confined to country offices, and is in part a reflection of capacity gaps in government institutions from which FAO is required to obtain data. Monitoring and evaluation is not institutionalized in several countries, nor is there a strong demand from some governments for evaluative information.
75. The evaluation of projects and programmes is necessary for learning, for generating evidence that can be used to inform policies and programmes, and for use in advocacy and resource mobilization. Strengthening of national monitoring and evaluation capacities as well as capacities in FAO country offices should be given serious consideration by the regional office. FAO evaluations seldom capture the voices of community level beneficiaries in a way that fully conveys the impact of FAO’s interventions on their lives. FAO country office staff are well placed to capture the voices of beneficiaries narrating how an intervention has changed or improved/worsened their life circumstances. This approach can greatly enhance knowledge of what works practically in the field, and also give agency to community beneficiaries.⁹³

VI. Conclusions and Lessons learned

76. *Conclusion 1:* FAO has made a solid contribution to the Africa region. It has contributed to a strengthened enabling environment for food security and nutrition at the regional, sub-regional and national levels through its support to develop new policies or improve existing ones, and raising the profile of nutrition in agricultural development. Its support to countries to develop national agriculture investment plans is an important contribution towards delivering on Africa’s commitments under the Malabo Declaration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. FAO has helped countries to build resilience to crises and threats through strengthening institutional capacities for early warning and disaster risk reduction, mainstreaming climate change, and assisted communities, farmers and pastoralists to improve their livelihoods. FAO contributed to strengthened governance and institutional capacities for the sustainable management of natural resources, and modest improvements in livelihoods from the sustainable use of natural resources.

⁹³ The Capacity Development in Agriculture Innovation Systems (CDAIS) project documented ‘Stories of Change’ and ‘Conversations of Change’ in which beneficiaries narrated the impact of the project on their lives. These documents form part of the learning in the project and for communicating the impact of the project to external stakeholders.

77. *Conclusion 2:* FAO's contribution to results in the region has been enabled by its strong relationships with regional and sub-regional institutions, its strong technical expertise and leadership in areas of its mandate, and its access to global financing facilities. There are several factors that have constrained results, most notably, the capacity gaps in several country offices, difficult local conditions in conflict contexts, financial constraints or low prioritization of financial resources to agriculture in some countries, and the structure of country governments that do not facilitate multi-sectoral approaches. Project designs with unrealistic targets, coverage and timeframes and the lack of clear exit strategies negatively influenced the scalability and sustainability of projects.
78. *Conclusion 3:* The regional synthesis identified a number of gaps and emerging issues. More attention to urban food security, working with local government, and improving the sustainability of its work in climate change are gaps that should be addressed. There are gaps in FAO's partnerships, notably partnerships with the private sector at country level, the need for deeper partnerships with civil society, and for stronger collaboration with other United Nations agencies at country level. Gender mainstreaming needs to be improved and the issue of unemployment of Africa's young people should be given greater priority than has been the case to date. Monitoring and evaluation capacity at country level in FAO and public institutions is a major gap and a lost opportunity for learning and for mobilizing resources.
79. The regional synthesis identified lessons that should be considered in addressing the gaps and emerging issues and in improving results for the Africa region.

Lesson 1: FAO's technical expertise and leadership are paramount in retaining its strategic relevance to the Africa region.

80. The evaluations referred to the value that governments and partners placed on FAO's technical expertise. It is essential that FAO in the region have the necessary technical expertise to respond to the needs of the region. The quality of FAO's leadership at the country level is as important as FAO's technical expertise. Strategic leadership is especially important in humanitarian crises, as demonstrated in the case of Somalia.
81. The evaluations pointed to gaps in FAO's expertise in country offices in areas that are relatively new to FAO, for example, social protection and decent rural employment. These are areas where other organizations such as the ILO and UNICEF have developed expertise over many years. The lesson from FAO's interventions under poverty reduction is that FAO needs to build its own body of knowledge about its specialist contribution to social protection and decent rural employment. This is essential as many African countries are developing social protection policies and programmes, and have also prioritized tackling the problem of unemployment to reduce poverty. Looking ahead to the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, it will be important for FAO to have clarity on its comparative strengths in these emerging areas.

Lesson 2: FAO can best achieve its objectives through effective partnerships.

82. The theme of effective partnerships echoed in many of the evaluations reviewed for the regional synthesis. Partnerships are an important means of implementation. The partnerships that FAO has built over many years with the AU (and its predecessor), and with the RECs and other sub-regional institutions have been pivotal to FAO's work in the region. While the technical expertise that FAO brings to the partnership is important, the partnership cannot be effective without mutual trust and respect, and mutual accountability for results. Several evaluations reflected positive findings on FAO's partnership with regional institutions in Africa. Equally, FAO's partnership with member countries has been important to achieving results at country level, and as a means of building national ownership of projects and programmes.
83. The implementation of FAO's mandate requires a multi-stakeholder approach, and building partnerships beyond FAO's traditional partners is necessary for achieving results. The gaps in FAO's partnerships with the private sector are evident, requiring a more structured approach and with more concerted efforts to support the institutional building of private sector associations in

order to facilitate collaboration and dialogue. FAO at country level engages non-governmental organizations as service providers and implementation agents, but this narrow approach to partnerships misses the opportunity to leverage the insights that civil society organizations have about the country context.

Lesson 3: Building resilience is a long-term process that has to address multiple, interrelated issues. Achieving sustained impact of resilience-building initiatives cannot be done through short-term projects.

84. FAO has implemented many projects aimed at building resilience to threats and crises caused by adverse climate conditions and conflicts that have a catastrophic impact on communities who already live under precarious conditions. Transitioning communities from humanitarian interventions to development interventions cannot be achieved overnight. Evaluations of FAO's resilience projects observed that FAO's support in fragile and conflict contexts often did not make the shift from humanitarian support to development interventions due largely to factors outside FAO's control, such as the re-emergence of local and national conflicts.
85. Achieving sustainable results in building resilience in non-conflict contexts also takes time. The Farmer Field School and Agro-Pastoralist Field School approaches require long time frames for farmers to fully adopt alternative agricultural practices. Evaluations noted that the short timeframes of projects were unsuited for achieving these long-term outcomes. Short-term gains in income can be obliterated by events external to the project, and longer project time frames are necessary to achieve sustainable results.
86. Regional Initiative 3 is a flexible framework for capturing the diversity of projects and activities that fall into the broad category of resilience. It is not, however, a regional resilience strategy. The Strategic Objective 5 evaluation noted the absence of a regional resilience strategy for the Africa Regional Office and its implications for resource mobilization. Consideration should be given to developing a regional resilience strategy to guide the work of FAO in the region, and to serve as a tool for resource mobilization.

Lesson 4: There is no substitute for good project design.

87. The evaluations pointed to flaws in the design of projects. Projects often have targets that are too ambitious for the timeframes and available resources. The planned or expected outcomes cannot realistically be achieved within the available time and resources, and the funding is then spread thinly across a large number of unachievable activities or the number of target beneficiaries is reduced midway through the project. This not only limits the effectiveness of the project, but also presents a risk to FAO's reputation.
88. There are indications that project designs are not based on robust theories of change, and the assumptions and risks are therefore not taken into consideration in the design of the project. It becomes difficult to manage or mitigate risks that were not foreseen. Important assumptions such as the government ownership, and its willingness and ability to scale up projects or mobilize resources to implement projects are not made explicit. This impacts on the effectiveness and sustainability of projects. A robust theory of change can also assist in developing realistic results frameworks.
89. Context matters in project design. The analysis required for a robust theory of change should include a political analysis, not only in conflict contexts. Projects should include a political analysis at the local level where the project is to be implemented. Understanding local conflicts and their origins is as important as understanding large, national conflicts. Analysing local contexts is necessary to ensure that the approaches proposed in projects are relevant for the context. This includes, for example, analysis of agro-ecological zones to ensure that conservation agriculture is suitable for the area. Socio-cultural analysis is also necessary to understand local customs and traditional approaches to agriculture to ensure that the project approach is relevant to local needs. Participatory approaches to project design are labour-intensive (and can be costly), but are likely to yield better results than project designs that rely solely on the inputs of experts.

Lesson 5: FAO's contribution to gender equality requires demonstrated commitment from senior level staff in the region, commitment from member countries to promoting gender equality, and FAO staff capable of using the gender analytical tools FAO has placed at their disposal.

90. Although FAO in the region has made a contribution to gender equality, the evaluations found that gender is still not effectively mainstreamed, especially at project level. Examples where gender has been mainstreamed are few, and this has been achieved through having a dedicated gender specialist within the country office, or at least accessible from the regional or sub-regional offices.
91. Gender analyses at country level and at project level are essential for developing interventions that will promote gender equality. There were several examples of projects that equated gender equality with women's participation in the projects. These projects have contributed to the empowerment of women in a limited way, as they do not address the underlying structural conditions that give rise to and perpetuate gender disparities. A gender analysis can assist FAO staff in understanding the social, cultural and historical factors in a local community or at national level so that projects can take these into consideration, and still seek to contribute to gender equality without undermining the cultural norms and values of the community or country. Knowledgeable gender focal points, who are empowered to perform their functions can greatly assist with mainstreaming gender and supporting gender analyses.

Lesson 6: Technical interventions are necessary but on their own they are insufficient to address the scale and complexity of Africa's food security and nutrition challenges. FAO's advocacy on issues, including the normative agenda, often done with an integrated approach, is as important as its technical contributions.

92. With FAO's strong relationship with regional and sub-regional institutions, and national governments, the Organization is well positioned for advocacy on regional and sub-regional policy and governance issues relevant to FAO's mandate in the region. The CAADP Framework and the Malabo Declaration commitments have provided FAO with a vehicle for advocacy on sound policies and plans for agriculture, food security and nutrition. The relevance of advocacy is demonstrated in FAO's advocacy of the VGGT. Land tenure in particular is at the heart of many challenges in Africa, including poverty and inequality, and gender inequality, and issues of food insecurity cannot be addressed in isolation of insecure land tenure. FAO in the region has done less on advocacy on the 'Voluntary Guidelines of the Right to Food' and 'Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems'. FAO in the region has also advocated on the issue of climate change and supported several countries with the formulation of their NDCs and identifying areas for international support. FAO's advocacy on gender at the regional level secured an important achievement, namely, strengthening gender reporting in the Malabo Commitments. Looking ahead, FAO at country level should intensify advocacy for national governments to prioritize public spending in favour of implementing the policies, plans and strategies that have been developed with FAO's support. FAO should also push for doing it in a more integrated manner.

VII. Annex: Documents consulted

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