



联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Organisation des Nations
Unies pour l'alimentation
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

E

COUNCIL

Hundred and Sixty-sixth Session

26-30 April 2021

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) Institutionalization of Cost and Affordability of Healthy Diet Indicators in FAO;
- 2) FAO's engagement in the G20 process;
- 3) Agro-informatics, a new IT instrument for digital agri-food systems and public goods; and
- 4) Outcome of the One Planet Summit on Biodiversity and the Great Green Wall Investment Forum (11 January 2021).

Further information on the above topics will be posted as Web Annexes to CL 166/INF/4.

Suggested action by the Council

The above topics are presented to the 166th Session of the Council for information only.

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

Rakesh Muthoo
Director
Governing Bodies Servicing Division (CSG)
Tel. +39 06570 55987

I. Institutionalization of Cost and Affordability of Healthy Diet Indicators in FAO

1. [*The State of Food Insecurity in the World \(SOFI\) 2020*](#) brought global attention to the fact that, in both rich and poor countries, low disposable income relative to the high cost of food is one of the most serious impediments to accessing nutritious foods essential for a healthy, active life. The analysis in SOFI 2020 showed that, if we look beyond calories and consider food that is nutritious, **more than 1.5 billion people cannot afford a diet that meets essential nutrient needs and 3 billion people cannot afford the cheapest healthy diet.**
2. FAO and its SOFI partners (International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Health Organization (WHO) established a partnership with Tufts University in order to generate such evidence for SOFI 2020. They estimated the cost of three diets for all countries (energy sufficient diet, nutrient adequate diet, and healthy diet), using the least expensive combination of retail items whose food composition achieves the specific criteria for each diet. Affordability of each of these diets was measured by comparing their estimated cost with people's income.
3. The affordability of healthy diets is a crucial measure of people's economic access to nutritious foods and healthy diets. The likelihood that people will face food insecurity and different forms of malnutrition increases when they cannot afford a healthy diet. Meeting the food security and nutrition targets of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 will require that everybody can obtain and afford adequate quantities of nutritious foods for a healthy diet.
4. FAO is focusing attention on the pursuit of healthy diets and transformations of agri-food systems to ensure healthy diets are affordable for all. It is encouraging Governments to put affordability of healthy diets at the heart of their agricultural policies, social protection, and investment decisions. To increase affordability, Governments need to address the drivers of the cost of nutritious foods, through policies all over the food system, in the realms of food production, food supply chains, food environments and consumer demand.
5. Systematically monitoring the effect of all these policies requires regularly measuring the cost and affordability of healthy diets. To this end, the Agri-food Economics Division (ESA) in collaboration with the Statistics Division (ESS) and Markets and Trade (EST) within the Economic and Social Development Stream, have initiated a process to institutionalize the computation of cost and affordability of healthy diet indicators for each country every year. This will allow FAO to continue publishing updated cost and affordability of healthy diet indicators in the global and regional SOFI Reports, starting with a first update in SOFI 2021.

II. FAO's engagement in the G20 process

6. Since 2011, FAO has been actively engaged in The Group of Twenty (G20) process, leading several initiatives. In 2020, FAO supported the G20 process under the Presidency of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, providing knowledge, technical inputs and evidence-based policy advice to inform G20 Members' deliberations in different tracks of the G20 work, including agriculture, water, environment and climate stewardship.
7. Under the Saudi Presidency, FAO provided significant technical support and expertise to the development of G20 initiatives, such as the *G20 Riyadh Statement to Enhance Implementation of Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems* and the *Global Initiative on Reducing Land Degradation and Enhancing Conservation of Terrestrial Habitats*.
8. The Director-General participated in the Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit on the COVID-19 pandemic (26 March 2020), the Extraordinary Meeting of the G20 Ministers of Agriculture (21 April 2020), the G20 Agriculture and Water Ministers Meeting (12 September 2020), and the G20 Leaders' Summit (21-22 November 2020). All the meetings were held virtually.
9. FAO will continue providing support to the G20 under the Presidency of the Republic of Italy in 2021. Contacts and collaboration with the Italian G20 Secretariat have already started.

III. Agro-informatics, a new IT instrument for digital agri-food system and public goods

10. World agriculture is undergoing critical digital transformation thanks to the rapid development and innovation in relevant techniques such as remote sensing, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, machine learning, geospatial Information Technology (IT), digital twin, big data and so on. Trustable data and actionable information are becoming essential factors like water, seeds and fertilizer in agricultural practice for higher productivity, profitability and sustainability. Led by FAO's Information Technology Services Division (CSI), in close collaboration with relevant divisions, units and teams in FAO and external partners, Agro-informatics is an enabling IT instrument for the digital transformation in agriculture. It plays an essential role in FAO's digital innovation and upscale to facilitate FAO's mandate to fight poverty and hunger with the delivery of digital public goods for food and agriculture in the world. This document will share the framework, practices, and perspective of Agro-informatics, a new IT instrument.

11. Aiming at promoting digital public goods in food and agriculture, digital FAO and agricultural digital transformation, FAO Agro-Informatics is engaging in: (i) Agricultural data federation and sharing with geospatial IT and other information technologies; (ii) Platform and application (including mobile apps) development facilitating agricultural information and knowledge sharing and services; and (iii) Standard and protocol development with coordinating relevant partners in this domain in the world.

12. Several projects and platforms are in the framework of Agro-informatics:

1. Hand-in-Hand Geospatial Platform;
2. Digital Services Portfolio;
3. Integrated Agricultural Data Visualization and Analytics (Situation Rooms, Dashboards).

IV. Outcome of the One Planet Summit and the Great Green Wall Investment Forum (11 January 2021)

13. On 11 January 2021, the Government of France, in cooperation with the United Nations and the World Bank, convened the One Planet Summit for Biodiversity. The Summit brought together 11 Heads of State and Government, as well as the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Prince of Wales, the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Council and business leaders, civil society leaders and other representatives of international organizations.¹

14. Four themes were discussed in particular: (i) The protection of marine and terrestrial areas; (ii) the promotion of agroecology; (iii) the financing of biodiversity; and (iv) the protection of tropical forests, species and human health.

15. The Director-General of FAO, in a virtual address, joined the call for urgent action on biodiversity for sustainable development. He expressed FAO's commitment to supporting countries in mainstreaming biodiversity across agriculture and food sectors through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and recognized the importance of environmental sustainability as a key determinant of a long term "One Health for All". The Director-General supported the establishment of the One Health High-level Expert Panel tasked with collecting and disseminating information on the close links between human, animal and environmental health in a context of biodiversity erosion. He also emphasized FAO's willingness to intensify its work at the interface of One Health and Ecosystem restoration and therefore announced that the PREZODE (PREventing ZOonotic Diseases Emergence) programme can count on FAO's field work and experience.²

16. The Director-General of FAO also addressed the Great Green Wall Investment Forum held during the Summit and called for an urgent scale-up of the Great Green Wall initiative to restore degraded land, create jobs and address climate change. The Forum resulted in pledges of

¹ [One Planet Summit - Commitments to act in favor of biodiversity \(12 January 2021\)](#)

² <http://www.fao.org/director-general/speeches/detail/en/c/1368860/>

USD 14.3 billion. Of these, FAO's portfolio amounts to USD 238 million in direct support of the Great Green Wall.