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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE NEAR EAST

Thirty-sixth Session

10-13 January 2022 and 7-8 February 2022

**Update on the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change –
Information Note 1 – December 2021**

Executive Summary

At the 166th Session of the Council, FAO Members requested inclusive consultations ahead of the 168th Session of the Council to start the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change which aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), based on the three dimensions of sustainable development and shared goals and cooperation towards the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. The 168th Session of the FAO Council held from 29 November to 4 December 2021 discussed extensively the Update on the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change (CL 168/21) and supported the annotated outline of the new Strategy. This Information Note supplements the Update on the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change document that is tabled for discussion at the 2022 Regional Conferences by providing an overview of the 168th Council conclusions that guide the development of the new Strategy and suggests actions by the Regional Conferences.

In their Council deliberations, FAO Members underlined the importance of considering the diverse contexts, specificities, priorities and capacities across regions, countries and the local level in developing the new Strategy. Council Members from the Near East and North Africa Region underlined the impacts of climate change which represent a major threat to the region that is already suffering from extreme temperatures, drought, desertification, water scarcity, flooding and migration towards urban areas as well as high food insecurity. FAO was requested to consider this specific context in its range of activities on sustainable agriculture and climate change and to support, in particular, smallholder farmers in building their resilience to the impact of climate change.

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I. Introduction

1. The Council at its 168th Session supported the outline and roadmap of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change and looked forward to continuing the inclusive process with Members on development of this thematic strategy.
2. This Note sets out the conclusions regarding the annotated outline of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change made by the Council at its 168th Session.
3. The roadmap for the Strategy development anticipates that following consideration by the Council at its 168th Session in November-December 2021, the outline will be developed into a draft Strategy in early 2022, followed by a consultation process through the 2022 Regional Conferences.
4. Implementation of the Strategy will be outlined in a five-year Action Plan following endorsement of the Strategy by the FAO Council at its 169th Session.

II. Council conclusions on the update on the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change¹

5. The Council noted document CL 168/21, *Update on the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change* and the associated, inclusive and consultative process.
6. The Council:
 - a) welcomed FAO's development of the new Strategy *inter alia* within the context of the evaluation of the existing Strategy, alignment with the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and recognized the multilateral understanding agreed by members at the Glasgow UNFCCC COP 26 to boost efforts in enhancing ambition and action in relation to mitigation, adaptation, and finance in order to overcome the challenges of climate change;
 - b) stressed the need to align the new Strategy with FAO's Strategic Framework 2022-31, its PPAs, and other related FAO Strategies and initiatives, for the Organization's contribution to the achievement of SDG 13 and for more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems;
 - c) underlined the importance of avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach and taking into account the goal of sustainable and inclusive economic growth, social development, environmental protection and the eradication of poverty and hunger, but rather adopt a fit-for-purpose principle considering national circumstances, the diverse contexts, specificities, priorities, synergies and capacities across regions, countries and the local level in developing the new Strategy;
 - d) stressed the importance of supporting developing countries in formulating and implementing Nationally Determined Contributions and relevant national plans, as appropriate, including via capacity building, technology transfer upon mutually agreed terms and financial resources *inter alia* to strengthen resilience building and adaptation, as well as mitigation to climate change;
 - e) highlighted that FAO's new Strategy on Climate Change should align with the SDGs based on the three dimensions of sustainable development and shared goals and cooperation towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, including their principles, as relevant² the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, including Article 2.1

¹ CL 168/21; CL 168/REP, paragraphs 22-24

² In particular, those principles related to the paragraph on Adaptation.

and 2.2 and the relevant paragraphs of the Glasgow Climate pact and notes in this regard 1/CP.26 paragraphs 5 and 6 and 1/CMA.3 paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Glasgow Climate Pact decisions, and 1/CP.26 paragraphs 17 and 18 and 1/CMA.3 paragraphs 22 and 23 from the Glasgow Climate Pact CMA decisions;

- f) highlighted the positive role of sustainable agriculture and agrifood systems as part of the solutions for addressing the challenges of climate change;
- g) underlined the need for a coordinated approach with all stakeholders, including the private sector, women, youth and Indigenous Peoples and local communities;
- h) highlighted that the focus of the Strategy should be within FAO's mandate, to avoid duplication with other international organizations in terms of the relevance of agrifood systems, while addressing and responding to climate challenges, in line with FAO's mandate;
- i) requested the use of multilaterally agreed language in the Strategy;
- j) highlighted multilateral efforts on environmental protection and commitments to sustainable agriculture;
- k) welcomed the attention in the Strategy to sustainable forest management, nutritional needs, oceans, rivers and inland waters, biodiversity, food loss and waste, soil erosion and ecosystem-based approaches;
- l) exhorted the promotion within the new Strategy of the best available science- and evidence-based decision-making for promoting solutions, innovations and good practices, including those which may be scaled up and have a lasting impact to achieve Zero Hunger and comprehensively address climate and sustainability goals;
- m) stressed the value of ensuring that the Strategy is socially inclusive and that gender considerations related to climate change are integrated;
- n) requested that the Strategy address disaster risk reduction, early-warning systems, strengthen resilience, adaptation and mitigation and reduce vulnerability to climate change in line with the best available science, taking into account the priorities and needs of developing countries;
- o) highlighted the importance of identifying financing mechanisms and innovative partnerships, including with the private sector and institutional partners, to tackle climate change in the context of agrifood systems to support developing countries, including Small Island Developing States; and
- p) encouraged Management's ambition to finalise the first draft of the Strategy and to clearly define the implementation process, deliverables and performance indicators, through its Action Plan;

7. Accordingly, the Council supported the outline and roadmap of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change, and looked forward to continuing the inclusive process with Members on the development of this thematic strategy.

III. Other specific recommendations

8. Although it is not documented in the conclusions of the Council, Management also took note of the various interventions made by the Members from the Near East and North Africa region during the discussion in the Council session, and confirms its agreement to consider them in the development of the draft Strategy, such as:

- a) welcomed the inclusive process in developing the new Strategy;

- b) called for urgent concrete actions on the ground;
- c) reminded that the impacts of climate change represent a major threat to the region that is already suffering from extreme temperatures, drought, desertification, water scarcity, flooding and migration towards urban areas as well as high food insecurity;
- d) reminded that some countries in the region are among those that will see their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declining by 2050 due to the changing climate;
- e) requested FAO to expand its range of activities on sustainable agriculture and climate change to support in particular smallholders' resilience to tackle the impact of climate change;
- f) welcomed the pillars suggested in the Outline, in particular the strengthening of farmers capacity, innovative solutions to adapt to climate change, and the importance of partnerships with regional, international and national organizations;
- g) considered financing as key to implement the Strategy at national and regional levels, noting that 50 percent of climate financing should go to adaptation; and
- h) recommended science as a roadmap while putting emphasis on transforming the results of science in the field to empower farmers to escape from poverty.