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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

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The catalyser role of the UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028 (UNDF) and progress towards its implementation

Executive Summary

In the period 2019–2021, the UN Decade of Family Farming (UNDF) proved to be a cohesive global partnership initiative that works at global, regional and national levels, supports and enhances participation by all actors, and recognizes and encourages the emergence of multi-actor fora and platforms for policy dialogue, to coordinate and complement actions in support of family farming.

At national level, National Action Plans for family farming were approved in ten countries, and 185 relevant policies, laws and regulations were developed and endorsed.

At global level, the Decade played a catalytic role in mobilizing a wide range of stakeholders to identify concrete initiatives and measures in support of family farming.

The Decade shows strong thematic linkages with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31. The national platforms and policy frameworks developed under its umbrella could play a catalytic role as entry points for relevant Programme Priority Areas (PPAs), leveraging already existing resources and capacities in FAO and in the countries that can be effectively mobilized to provide country-specific, synergic and integrated technical and policy support.

Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to:

- *welcome* the results achieved in the implementation of the UNDF;
- *recall* the continuous need to comprehensively support family farmers as key actors in promoting social innovation in the agrifood systems, while making important contributions to sustainable development and accelerating progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- *recognize* the role that family farming plays in safeguarding biodiversity, food security, economic growth, the environment and culture;
- *recognize* the potential of the UNDF and the National Action Plans for Family Farming as catalysts to support the implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 at national level;
- *recommend* further strengthening and enhancing of interagency collaboration and efforts in the framework of the UNDF; and
- *invite* Members to accelerate efforts and enhance resource mobilization to support family farmers through conducive policies and investments.

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I. Introduction

1. The UN General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed the period 2019–2028 as the UNDDFF¹, and called upon FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to lead its implementation.
2. The aim of the UNDDFF is to provide a clearly defined, cohesive framework for Members to develop, improve and implement public policies and investments in support of family farming, with a view to accelerating efforts and fostering additional commitments in line with the transformative ambitions of the 2030 Agenda. The UNDDFF acts as a framework to help family farmers realize their full potential in contributing to the achievement of all the SDGs.
3. The Global Action Plan of the Decade (GAP)² includes relevant outputs, indicative actions and indicators under each outcome to monitor progress towards the Decade's ultimate targets. The overall assessment against the targets for 2021 shows very positive results, with at least 29 out of 37 targets met and with implementation fully on track for at least 20 out of the Plan's 28 outcomes³.
4. FAO and IFAD continue to monitor the results achieved at global, regional and national levels, to periodically inform the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG), the UNGA and the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) about the implementation of the Decade.

II. Overall contributions of the Decade to the SDGs

5. The Decade addresses the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development, putting people and their livelihoods at the centre, and leaving no one behind by tackling inequality and vulnerability in rural areas. The seven mutually reinforcing pillars of work of the GAP leverage actions undertaken in different policy areas in an integrated way, promoting coordination among different actors at global, regional and national level.
6. The Decade focuses on securing family farmers' access to natural resources, productive inputs and tailored services (SDG 2); supports the creation of income-generation opportunities (SDGs 1 and 10) and decent jobs, in particular for youth (SDGs 8 and 9); promotes sustainable integration between urban and rural areas (SDG 11) and climate-resilient, sustainable agrifood systems (SDGs 12 and 15); provides voice and recognition to family farmers through extensive dialogue, awareness-raising and capacity development (SDGs 5, 10, 16 and 17); and reinforces family farmers' organizations to deliver inclusive rural services (SDGs 3, 4 and 6).

III. Main national policy processes triggered by the Decade

7. At national level, FAO and IFAD have been working with thousands of stakeholders including governments, producers' organizations and civil society organizations to design and implement National Action Plans (NAPs), contextualized frameworks of action to support family farming. To date, ten NAPs have been officially endorsed⁴, other 14 countries are in an advanced drafting stage⁵ and the mobilization process is underway in 27 countries.
8. Approximately 185 policies, laws and regulations were approved, most of which are focused on mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on family farmers and on promoting approaches centred on family farming to address agrifood system issues.

¹ A/RES/72/239

² www.fao.org/3/ca4672en/ca4672en.pdf

³ This aggregated data is based on the assessment conducted for the period 2019-20. A comprehensive assessment against the 2021 targets, including data from 2021 and based on a consultative exercise, will be provided in the next monitoring report.

⁴ Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, the Gambia, Indonesia, Nepal, Panama, Peru, Philippines, and Sierra Leone.

⁵ Albania, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Portugal, Spain, Togo and Tunisia.

9. Forty-five national committees of family farming and other multistakeholder platforms for policy dialogue mobilized more than 2 600 stakeholders through a wide range of activities including the creation of roadmaps and methodologies to elaborate the NAPs, the organization of policy dialogue fora and multistakeholder consultations to draft the NAPs.

IV. Main policy processes at the regional and sub-regional levels

10. Significant results were achieved in the development of regional and subregional action plans for family farming, with one regional plan (Near East and North Africa) and three subregional action plans (Central Africa, Central America, and South Asia) being drafted, and mobilization efforts in three other subregions: the Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR).

11. Twenty-three national parliaments, almost 60 parliamentary advisers, and more than 500 parliamentarians, organized into 25 Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger and Malnutrition, were mobilized and took action in the context of the UNDF. A subregional framework law for family farming in Andean countries was approved by the Andean Parliament, and the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO) ratified a regional declaration to protect family farming during COVID-19.

V. Development of global knowledge products

12. At global level, FAO and IFAD engaged in the development of global knowledge products aimed to offer technical support for the implementation of the Decade at national level, providing a toolbox to address the challenges emerged in developing and approving the NAPs. These are the products currently developed or under development:

- a. the Regional Technical Platform for Family Farming⁶, a tool available to countries worldwide to facilitate the exchange of ideas, experiences and knowledge;
- b. a legal analysis of existing legislative and regulatory frameworks in support of family farming⁷;
- c. a learning guide on empowering farmers through the enhancement of the social capital⁸;
- d. a Learning Framework for Inclusive, Integrated and Innovative Public Policy Cycles for Family Farming for policymakers and other relevant stakeholders;
- e. a methodology to develop territorial samples to collect more rigorous, quality and statistically representative data on family farmers' characteristics, needs and challenges (including in the context of COVID-19), while building the capacities of Family Farming Networks to collect and analyse their own data;
- f. guidelines to mainstream gender-sensitive approaches in the development and implementation of the NAPs;
- g. a research methodology to analyse and systematize information about public policies targeting family farming, to identify relevant issues and match them with specific policy solutions, and to promote exchange of experiences;
- h. the Family Farming Knowledge Platform (FFKP)⁹, which brings together entities to share knowledge, solutions, and action-oriented initiatives in support of family farming, reaching an average of 70 000 visitors per month, and with over 27 000 documents in its database; and
- i. three regional communication initiatives to provide access to information on family farming and promote rural communication services in Africa (Yenkasa)¹⁰, Asia (ComDev Asia) and Latin America (Onda Rural)¹¹.

⁶ www.fao.org/americas/daf/plataforma

⁷ www.fao.org/3/cb6922en/cb6922en.pdf

⁸ www.fao.org/3/cb1423en/cb1423en.pdf

⁹ See <http://comdevasia.org>.

¹⁰ See <https://yenkasa.org>.

¹¹ See <https://ondarural.org>.

13. Further to the contribution made at global level, in the period 2019–2021 FAO directly supported 20 countries in different regions, assisting in mobilizing stakeholders and in developing and reviewing relevant legislation and policies.

VI. Communication initiatives to raise awareness and promote engagement

14. Participatory communication plans were developed for Asia, Latin America and Africa, in partnership with family farmers' organizations, community media organizations and rural institutions. Overall, more than 200 radio stations and 150 radio programmes and podcasts were involved, with a potential reach of 40 million listeners. In addition, more than 20 000 users per month were reached via websites and social media.

15. Assistance for Communication for Development has been provided to 11 countries through strategies and plans that deal with issues such as access to markets, resilience, and sustainable use of natural resources to advance rural communication services for family farming.

VII. Challenges posed by COVID-19 and the Decade's potential to advance the pandemic response

16. After slowing down due to the spread of COVID-19, the Decade received new impetus in the second half of 2020 with new opportunities to scale up. The GAP provided key indicative actions to mitigate the immediate impacts and to revamp rural economies and societies in the medium term.

17. The development of NAPs resumed as part of the COVID-19 response and the ongoing discussion on the achievement of the SDGs and sustainable agrifood systems. In various countries, processes related to the Decade leveraged and built on the paramount role of family farming in feeding communities and cities during the worst period of the pandemic. There was a renewed commitment to the incorporation of emergency COVID-19 measures into strategies, policies and NAPs, but also to the inclusion of family farmers as key actors in medium-term recovery strategies.

VIII. The catalyser role of the Decade at international level

18. At international level, the Decade played a catalytic role in mobilizing a wide range of stakeholders to identify concrete policies and measures in support of family farming. It proved to be a suitable mechanism to effectively contextualize international tools and guidelines in support to family farmers and their organizations, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP), and many global policy instruments of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), such as the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*, and the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication*.

19. The UNDFP also helped to channel key emerging priorities, needs, messages, and concrete solutions from the local and national levels to feed the global discussion and the international agenda. This two-way dialogue is paramount to paving the way for the establishment of synergies and collaboration with other relevant processes and fora at global and regional level.

20. As a follow-up of the UN Food Systems Summit, the Coalition on Family Farming and on strengthening actions in support of the UNDFP (CFF) was launched thanks to the initiative of Members.¹² The Coalition leverages the results, networks, governance and implementation mechanisms created in the framework of the Decade, with the objective to scale up and scale out the achieved results.

¹² Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Spain and Switzerland. The Islamic Republic of Iran and Philippines already expressed their interest in joining the initiative.

IX. Synergies among the Decade and the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31

21. The work done under the umbrella of the Decade aims to foster comprehensive and family farming-adapted policies to support the shift to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for *better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life*, leaving no one behind.
22. There are direct connections between the UNDFP GAP and the SF. In the GAP, Pillar 1 “Developing an enabling policy environment to strengthen family farming” leverages the accelerators included in the SF (in particular, data and complements: governance, institutions and human capital) to build an enabling political, social and economic environment based on the solid and sustained commitment of all relevant actors.
23. The crosscutting themes of gender equality and youth in the SF are comprehensively addressed in the GAP in two transversal pillars: Pillar 2 “Support youth and ensure the generational sustainability of family farming”, and Pillar 3 “Promote gender equity in family farming and the leadership role of rural women”. Both Pillars provide specific indicative actions as well as relevant approaches mainstreamed all along the other Pillars of action.
24. The *four betters* and their systemic approach are well reflected in different outcomes of Pillar 4 “Strengthening family farmers’ organizations and capacities to generate knowledge, represent farmers and provide inclusive services in the urban-rural continuum” (particularly contributing to *better production* and to a *better life*); Pillar 5 “Improving socio-economic inclusion, resilience and well-being of family farmers, rural households and communities” (*better production, better nutrition and a better life*); Pillar 6 “Promoting sustainability of family farming for climate-resilient food systems” (*better production and a better environment*); and Pillar 7 “Strengthening the multi-dimensionality of family farming to promote social innovations contributing to territorial development and food systems that safeguard biodiversity, the environment and culture” (*better production, a better environment and a better life*).
25. Considering its strong thematic linkages with the SF, the Decade represents an innovative mechanism to comprehensively work on some of the FAO priority themes translated into interdisciplinary PPAs. The Decade leverages existing resources and capacities in the Organization that can be mobilized to provide country-specific technical and policy support for development actors to achieve the SDGs. By helping to increase synergies among country-level interventions, the Decade is well positioned to provide focalized support for family farming, and to facilitate the development, implementation and monitoring of targeted policies and programmes for sustainable and inclusive rural development.
26. The Decade is particularly relevant to the following PPAs:
- a. *Better production*: the PPA BP 4 “Small-scale producers’ equitable access to resources” advocates for small-scale producers inclusion in decision-making and for inclusive governance models and policies (Pillar 1 of the GAP) as a core strategy, and recognizes the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT)* and the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines)* as normative aspects that are catalysed by the UNDFP implementation through the NAPs.
 - b. *A better environment*: the PPA BE 3 “Biodiversity and ecosystem services for food and agriculture” capitalizes on and develops synergies between the three UN Decades of Ecosystem Restoration, of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and of Family Farming to maintain genetic resources and biodiversity, ensure the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources, prevent and address loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems and support countries’ efforts to mobilize resources in national planning and implementation.

- c. *A better life*: the PPA BL 2 “Inclusive rural transformation” relies on the GAP to foster multisectoral and territorial approaches to anti-poverty, anti-hunger, and rural development policies and programmes, to promote collective action and participation, and inclusive institutions and organizations, to render agrifood systems and rural areas attractive to youth, and to facilitate income diversification and decent work along agricultural value chains.

27. With the involvement of different actors, stakeholder mobilization under the Decade could help coordinate the implementation of PPAs at country level, supporting the establishment of effective partnerships, leading policy dialogue for improved synergies and integration at different levels, and contributing to corporate processes through matchmaking.

28. FAO is already assisting a number of Members to develop NAPs to promote inter-institutional cooperation aimed at the integration of specific family farmers’ issues into policies and strategies related to the wider food and agricultural sectors, and the integration of broader social and environmental sector considerations into dedicated policies for family farmers.

29. Due to their integrated and cross-sectoral approach, NAPs have the potential to help linking and coordinating policies related to agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors at country level, to improve synergies between production systems and enhance management of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

30. Leveraging the Decade’s possibility to catalyse resources and synergies at national level, PPAs could be provided with a contextualized and clear theory of change that ensures coordinated action and supports the identification of multisectoral contributions to PPAs/SDGs, to scale up and scale out integrated technical support. The Decade could also help in facilitating knowledge sharing around PPAs themes, and in identifying success stories for advocacy and resource mobilization purposes.

31. In 2022-23, the Decade’s implementation should be scaled up, effective support and investment increased, policy dialogue and coherence enhanced, and the number of national commitments and implementation of NAPs raised.

32. In order to reach these goals, FAO is committed to develop a joint FAO-IFAD resource mobilization strategy to scale up the implementation of priority areas of work; to reinforce synergies between ongoing FAO and IFAD initiatives; to provide a framework to support the development and implementation of NAPs and relevant global products for technical support; and to identify projects based on country demands and on the dialogue with family farmers’ organizations.