

## 28th Session of the Committee on Agriculture

### **Item 2.5: The future of food and agriculture – Drivers and triggers for transformation**

The agenda item 2.5 presents to the 28th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) highlights and key messages of the forthcoming FAO corporate report *The future of food and agriculture – Drivers and triggers for transformation (FOFA-DTT)*, notably its purpose, scope, structure, and analysis.

*FOFA-DTT* will consolidate the findings of the Corporate Strategic Foresight Exercise (CSFE) 2020-21, which provided the conceptual basis of the report and further contributed to guide the development of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31. The CSFE and the resulting *FOFA-DTT* report are multidisciplinary in nature and involve FAO technical divisions and Decentralized Offices (DOs).

The FAO corporate report will address fundamental questions about the long-term sustainability of agrifood systems, namely: Will agrifood systems be able to meet the needs of a global expanding population, while the pressure on natural resources intensifies, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions increase, and climate change poses unprecedented challenges? Will future socio-economic and environmental settings warrant universal access to safe, sufficient, and nutritious food for all?

These questions, and the significant trade-offs that unavoidably emerge from pursuing the long-term sustainability of agrifood systems, are of particular relevance today given that recent developmental achievements show fragility – particularly in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing conflicts – and the world seems off-track to fulfilling the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The *FOFA-DTT* report will consist of three parts.

- Part 1: *Drivers of agrifood systems*, will provide a deep dive into the different drivers affecting the future of agrifood systems.
- Part 2: *Alternative scenarios for agrifood systems*, will provide narratives of possible agrifood systems' futures that build upon the ones provided in the FAO report *The future of food and agriculture - Alternative pathways to 2050 (FOFA-2050)* and other key global foresight exercises.
- Part 3: *Triggers, challenges, opportunities and strategic options*, will outline possible key triggers of transformative changes and strategic options for moving agrifood systems towards sustainability and resilience.

The qualitative narratives of possible futures presented in the forthcoming report have been informed by quantitative information and analyses. In turn, the quantitative information will be presented in a dedicated web-based dashboard that will be regularly updated.

The fundamental message of the report will be that transforming agrifood systems along a pattern of sustainability and resilience is possible if key triggers of transformation are properly activated. However, strategic policy options to activate these triggers will have to prevail over vested interests and conflicting objectives, while prioritizing long-term sustainability, resilience and inclusivity over short-lived achievements that cannot secure sustainability.

The Committee is invited to:

- *acknowledge* FAO's efforts to think and act strategically through corporate forward-looking exercises of global nature and information and analysis emanating from the corporate reports on the Future of Food and Agriculture (FOFA);

- *welcome* the production and future publication of the report *The Future of Food and Agriculture – Drivers and triggers of transformation (FOFA-DTT)*; and,
- *recommend* that FAO, with the Committee on Agriculture (COAG)'s support, reinforces its strategic foresight studies, including new global quantitative analysis of possible alternative futures, with contributions from all technical divisions, and in collaboration with the United Nations (UN) High-Level Committee on Programmes Strategic Foresight Network and other UN system and international bodies.

*Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist*