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PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Hundred and Thirty-seventh Session

Rome, 6-10 November 2023

**Outcome of the Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock
Transformation**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) organized from 25 to 27 September 2023 the first-ever Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation (GC-SLT), with the theme “Better production, better nutrition, better environment, better life”. The overall objective of the GC-SLT was to provide a neutral forum for FAO Members, producers, scientists, development agencies, policy makers, civil society and the private sector to engage in dialogue on innovations and pathways to efficiently produce more nutritious, safe and accessible animal sourced foods (ASF) with a reduced environmental footprint and contribute to vibrant local and diversified livestock systems that are more resilient to shocks and disruptions.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

- The Programme Committee is invited to take note of the document.

Draft Advice

The Committee:

- **appreciated the organization of the first-ever Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation; and**
- **further appreciated FAO as a neutral platform to engage stakeholders to discuss on innovations and pathways to efficiently produce more nutritious, safe, and accessible animal sourced foods with a reduced environmental footprint to achieve the *four betters*.**

I. Introduction

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) organized the first-ever Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation (GC-SLT)¹ with the theme “*Better production, better nutrition, better environment, better life*” from 25 to 27 September 2023. The overall objective of the GC-SLT was to provide a neutral forum for FAO Members, producers, scientists, development agencies, policy makers, civil society and the private sector to engage in dialogue on innovations and pathways to efficiently produce more nutritious, safe and accessible animal sourced foods (ASF) with a reduced environmental footprint and contribute to vibrant local and diversified livestock systems that are more resilient to shocks and disruptions.
2. More specifically, the aims of the GC-SLT were to: i) raise awareness of the contribution of sustainable livestock production to implementing the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) at global, regional and national levels; ii) share information and knowledge on the strategic direction and technical developments in sustainable livestock production worldwide; and iii) demonstrate FAO’s technical leadership and convening power to support its Members in sustainable livestock production.
3. An External Advisory Panel, comprising a group of internationally recognized experts in their field, assisted in the development of the GC-SLT programme. An internal FAO Advisory Task Force, composed of representatives of several technical units and divisions, also provided guidance to the GC-SLT Secretariat on the thematic areas and overall structure of the conference.
4. About 740 people from 96 Member Nations plus the European Union, including almost 20 ministers and other high-level government representatives, participated in-person in this event. They included about 100 young people from over 40 countries who attended the Global Youth Dialogue on Sustainable Livestock Transformation, which took place in conjunction with the GC-SLT and was organized in collaboration with the Mediterranean Universities Union (UNIMED). The GC-SLT included an opening plenary session headlined by the FAO Director-General, followed by two keynote addresses and two high-level ministerial panels; four technical plenary sessions with presentations and moderated discussions, each dedicated to one of the *four betters* of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31: *better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life*; and a closing plenary session with reporting from the Global Youth Dialogue and two high-level ministerial segments. Simultaneous interpretation in all FAO official languages was provided and all sessions were webcast live.
5. Speakers and panellists from a wide range of stakeholders, with diverse backgrounds and expertise, contributed to the event. Out of the 59 speakers, chairs, and panellists in the technical components of the conference, 34 percent work in research or academic institutions, 19 percent work for governments or governmental organizations, 15 percent work for intergovernmental organizations, 14 percent work in the private sector, 10 percent for producer or pastoralist organizations and 8 percent work for civil society or non-governmental organizations. The 59 speakers, chairs and panellists were from all regions of the world and 51 percent were women.
6. In addition, during the high-level ministerial panels and segments of the GC-SLT, 17 representatives of FAO Members spoke about their initiatives and policies relevant to sustainable livestock transformation, including seven ministers (Cameroon, Chad, Indonesia, Ireland, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Somalia, and Uruguay).

II. Highlights of the GC-SLT

7. Over the three days, the participants engaged in dynamic discussions on innovations and pathways to efficiently produce more nutritious, safe, and accessible ASF with a reduced environmental footprint. A resounding message from all participants was that this GC-SLT was both warmly welcomed and long overdue. They expressed their appreciation for FAO’s role as a neutral forum. The subsequent paragraphs summarise the highlights of this conference.

¹ <https://www.fao.org/events/detail/fao-global-conference-on-sustainable-livestock-transformation/en>

Plenary Session 1 – Opening and Setting the Scene

8. The FAO Director-General opened the conference with his vision for the sustainable development and transformation of the livestock sector, underlining how sustainable livestock production systems are at the heart of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31.
9. The two keynote addresses stressed the need for adopting integrated and system-based approaches that combine sustainable production, nutrition, and the environment to improve the lives of all and, secondly, highlighted the importance of farmers being invited and playing an active role in discussions on sustainable livestock transformation.
10. Nine participants in two high-level panels showcased policies, major programmes, and investments from their countries relevant to the sustainable transformation of the livestock sector. The main elements of the FAO Sustainable Livestock Transformation Initiative were presented by the GC-SLT Secretariat.
11. Participants highlighted the importance of innovation and science-based and balanced discussions; the need to tailor solutions to local needs and context; the need to share best practices and expertise and work collectively in addressing common issues; and to continue this dialogue at the regional level.

Plenary Session 2 – Better Production

12. Presenters underlined that *better production* is not only about more output but should also consider the synergies and trade-offs within the sector and across the *four betters*, that the feed subsector is key for the sustainable development of the livestock sector, and that genetic diversity is essential for adaptation to environments and market demands. The world's breeds (and diversity) are embedded in traditional communities, but face challenges to remain economically viable.
13. The One Health approach aims to create the enabling environment to keep people, animals and ecosystems healthy and requires cooperation at multiple levels (i.e. farmers, veterinarians, policy makers and across countries). Noting the very limited number of veterinarians in certain countries, participants underlined the importance of building a strong community-based animal health workforce. Likewise, it was stressed that animal welfare is key for *better production* and ultimately to achieve sustainable livestock transformation.
14. Recognizing that the technological and information divide among countries continues to grow, participants argued that powerful approaches like precision livestock farming and use of big data in livestock production or biotechnologies like genomic selection should be made available and affordable to small-scale producers, especially in low- and middle-income countries.

Plenary Session 3 – Better Nutrition

15. Presenters showed that ASF play an important role in human nutrition and health at all life stages and can contribute to achieving the four core principles of healthy diets (adequacy, balance, moderation and diversity). The food-based dietary guidelines operationalize these principles and their development should not overlook the cultural and contextual factors.
16. It was underlined that there is no food security without food safety. The Codex Alimentarius Commission was seen as an essential body for providing a sound regulatory framework for the domestic, regional and international trade in food, and should be strengthened in supporting countries to implement standards.
17. As more consumers demand accountability on the environmental sustainability of ASF production, it was noted that there are no global standards for measuring environmental impacts.
18. Discussions also highlighted that making ASF more available, accessible, and affordable requires increased productivity through genetic gain and improved production practices.

Plenary Session 4 – Better Environment

19. The session underlined that, to ensure sustainability, livestock systems must adapt to climate change while mitigating its sources of greenhouse gas emissions with a view to recognize synergies and trade-offs between livestock production and the environment. Presenters in the session also shared practical experiences and lessons from Ireland, Kenya, Thailand and Uruguay on mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
20. Environmental sustainability should be considered in a holistic manner, including biodiversity preservation, ecosystem restoration, water and soil quality and sustainable land management, energy generation and nutrient cycling.
21. The livestock sector can mitigate emissions by improving efficiency (through animal genetics, health and feeding practices) and directly targeting greenhouse gas formation (using, for example, feed additives).
22. Solutions must be more farm-centric, economically viable and realistic regarding the timeline and path for emissions reduction with context-specific strategies designed and implemented at the farm level.
23. Successful implementation of solutions relies on the engagement of farmers and collaboration between the government and the research community.
24. The issues of circularity in feed production, better use of crop residues and other agro-industrial by-products as well as the competition between human food and animal feed should be tackled as we look to improve the sustainability of production systems.

Plenary Session 5 – Better Life

25. The contribution of livestock to *better life* goes beyond income generation and includes resilience, availability of quality and nutritious foods, and gender equity, among others. Farmers, including youth, women, and pastoralists, are expected to play a pivotal role in the sustainable transformation of livestock, thus maximizing its contribution to *better life*.
26. Livestock contribute to *better life*, but the potential of the sector to improve livelihoods remains untapped. Maximizing this contribution requires engaging all farmers in designing and implementing solutions.
27. Policies and investments should not simply provide direct support to farmers, but also tackle barriers that prevent them from accessing productive inputs and tapping into existing business opportunities. They should also consider the increased frequency of disasters and the role of livestock to enhance resilience.
28. Pastoralists are an integral part of the sustainable livestock transformation, bringing ancestral knowledge, genetic diversity and nature stewardship.
29. Data, such as from animal identification and surveillance systems, at all levels are indispensable for attracting and scaling up investment.
30. Technology development and adoption, also incorporating traditional knowledge, could help make livestock production more profitable and attractive to farmers, especially for young farmers.

Plenary Session 6 – High-level session and closing

31. The Secretariat presented an overview and highlights from the conference.
32. Youth representatives from the Youth Dialogue presented the outcomes of their dialogue (the Global Youth Statement on Sustainable Livestock Transformation²) and urged global leaders to engage with youth and include their aspirations for the sustainable transformation of the livestock

² <https://www.fao.org/3/cc8053en/cc8053en.pdf>

sector. They also committed themselves to continuing the discussions through a Global Youth Network on Sustainable Livestock Transformation.

33. Representatives of 12 Members participated in two high-level ministerial segments. They thanked and congratulated FAO for organizing the conference and described their main initiatives and priorities for sustainable livestock transformation.

III. Way forward

34. In conclusion, the objectives of the GC-SLT were successfully achieved. To continue this knowledge sharing momentum, FAO is exploring options to establish a Sustainable Livestock Transformation Digital Platform to promote and facilitate cooperation at all levels, as a neutral, shared space for stakeholders to continue to present and share their sustainable livestock production initiatives and knowledge. This platform would contribute to maintaining the spirit of collaboration and innovation for sustainable livestock transformation.