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Africa

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Rabat, the Kingdom of Morocco, 26-28 March 2024 and 18-20 April 2024
Building resilience through agrifood systems transformation

Executive Summary

Resilient agrifood systems and livelihoods are key to achieving food and nutrition security in the face of overlapping and more prolonged shocks and crises. Africa is facing serious setbacks in its strive to meet the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 and the African Union (AU) Malabo Declaration target of ending hunger by 2025. Currently, the number of food insecure and of undernourished people remains high. The most recent estimates show that nearly 282 million people in Africa (about 20 percent of the population) were undernourished in 2022, an increase of 57 million people since the COVID-19 pandemic began.[1] Additionally, Africa's food import bill is projected to increase to USD 90 billion by 2030, while many African countries are facing a debt crisis and reduced fiscal space.[2] African countries need to urgently accelerate concerted actions to transform to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems.

More resilient agrifood systems are achieved through complementary disaster risk and impact management actions along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. This approach aims to enhance resilience capacities to better prevent, prepare, anticipate, respond and recover in the face of disasters at household, community, institutional and ecosystems levels focusing on at-risk population through inclusive, do-no-harm, multisectoral, strategic livelihood- and context-specific solutions, and leveraging local capacities for ensuring food and nutrition security for all.

Countries and the international community need urgent, coordinated and concerted efforts to work along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to address the immediate and long-term needs of the most vulnerable and at-risk populations to enhance their agrifood systems transformation.

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[1] FAO. 2023. *Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition*.
https://www.fao.org/3/cc8743en/cc8743en.pdf
[2] African Union. *Africa Common Position on Food System*.
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/246156/AU%20Common%20Position%20on%20Food%20Systems%20-%20English%2011-2021.pdf

This document can be consulted at www.fao.org

Suggested actions by the Regional Conference

The Regional Conference is invited to:

a. take note of the disaster risks involved and invite Members to acknowledge the imperatives to enhance resilience capacities at community, institutional and ecosystems levels, to contribute to agrifood systems transformation;

b. recognize the best practices, innovations and lessons learned for enhancing resilience through the adoption of innovative, context- and gender-specific approaches and solutions to mitigate the risks and manage the impact of disasters;

c. call on Members to step up carefully targeted investments in resilient agrifood systems; and

d. call on Members to strengthen partnerships with multiple stakeholders, including national and subnational stakeholders, development partners, United Nations agencies, the civil society, academia, smallholder producers and their organizations, and the private sector.

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I. Introduction

1.   Africa has the highest proportion of hungry people in the world, nearly 20 percent, compared with less than 10 percent in other regions (8.5 percent in Asia, 6.5 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 7.0 percent in Oceania.). The prevalence of undernourishment in Africa rose from 19.4 percent in 2021 to 19.7 percent in 2022.[3] The number of people facing hunger in Africa has increased by 11 million people since 2021 and by more than 57 million people since the outbreak of the pandemic. Food insecurity affects both rural and urban areas in many African countries, with similar or slightly higher rates in urban and peri-urban areas than in rural areas. Africa is not on track to meet the No Poverty and Zero Hunger targets under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (by 2030) and Malabo Declaration (by 2025).

2.   Conflicts, weather extremes and economic shocks are the main drivers of food insecurity, rising hunger and deepening poverty. These multiple, interconnected and overlapping shocks and stresses need urgent, coordinated and concerted effort of countries and the international community to enhance resilience, by working along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to address the immediate and long-term needs of the most vulnerable and at-risk populations. Enhancing resilient agrifood systems and related livelihoods is crucial to protecting development gains and for the achievement of all the SDGs, and notably SDGs 1 and 2.

3.   The United Nations *(UN) Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies* defines resilience as "the ability of individuals, households, communities, cities, institutions, systems and societies to prevent, resist, absorb, adapt, respond and recover positively, efficiently and effectively when faced with a wide range of risks, while maintaining an acceptable level of functioning without compromising long-term prospects for sustainable development, peace and security, human rights and well-being for all."

4.   This definition calls for an understanding of how households manage shocks and stresses, to inform the design and implementation of a blend of humanitarian and development interventions aimed at reducing vulnerabilities and risks to shocks and stresses, developing capacities to prevent, prepare, anticipate, absorb, adapt and transform in views of the threats to the agrifood systems.

II. Agrifood systems and related livelihoods resilience challenge in Africa

5.   Agriculture in Africa is severely impacted by disasters, which include conflicts, climate and economic shocks affecting food security and nutrition. Over the past 10 years, agriculture absorbed more than 23 percent of the overall impact caused by medium- to large-scale natural disasters, with drought alone accounting for 82 percent of the impact.[4] Approximately USD 108.5 billion were lost as a result of declines in crop and livestock production in least developed countries (LDCs) and low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).[5]

6.   According to the EM-DAT database of the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, which contains the most extensive records of extreme events, disasters caused nearly 21 235 deaths and an estimated USD 13.8 billion in economic losses in 2023 alone, affecting more than 11.7 million people in Africa. The frequency of such events has increased from 100 per year in the 1970s to approximately 400 events per year worldwide in the past two decades.

7.   The importance of the agriculture sector to the African economies is high, with livelihoods and production systems highly vulnerable to various shocks and stresses in the region. Multiple interconnected risks across the agrifood systems, including the global climate change, biodiversity loss,

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[3] FAO: 2023. *Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition – Statistic and Trends*. https://www.fao.org/3/cc8743en/cc8743en.pdf
[4] FAO. 2018. *The Impact of Disasters and Crises on Agriculture and Food Security 2017*. http://www.fao.org/3/I8656EN/i8656en.pdf
[5] FAO. 2021. *The impact of disasters and crises on agriculture and food security 2021*. Rome, Italy. https://doi.org/10.4060/cb3673en

health crisis, but also the broad range of natural hazard-related disasters, food chain crises and protracted crises and conflicts, are intensifying food insecurity, malnutrition and hunger across Africa.

8.   The existing vulnerabilities of agricultural livelihoods in Africa, including rising poverty in absolute terms, rising undernourishment, the alarming level of acute food insecurity and weak mechanisms and capacities compound the impact of multiple and overlapping shocks and stresses. This primarily affects rural areas and disproportionately affects agricultural livelihoods and vulnerable groups, resulting in disasters and crises that lead to rising hunger and malnutrition.

9.   Conflict, insecurity, weather extremes and economic shocks have been the primary drivers of food crises in Africa. These drivers are often interlinked and mutually reinforcing. There are also differences in trends, depending on whether a country is affected by one or multiple drivers. Typically, the highest levels of food insecurity and malnutrition are seen in countries affected by multiple drivers. In 2022, the number of undernourished people increased significantly in low- and middle-income countries affected by multiple drivers. The most recent estimates show that nearly 282 million people in Africa (about 20 percent of the population) were undernourished in 2022, an increase of 57 million people since the COVID-19 pandemic began. About 868 million people were moderately or severely food insecure and more than one-third of them – 342 million people – were severely food insecure.[6]

10.   In particular, conflict and other forms of armed violence worsen food insecurity, leading to displacement, disruption of trade and cropping, confinement of communities, abandonment of agricultural land and loss of life and assets – while also affecting access to humanitarian assistance. Insufficient governance and institutional capacity to deal with conflict can lead to a protracted crisis, where overlapping shocks are prolonged over time. Conflicts are the major drivers of food insecurity, affecting around 67 million people facing high levels of acute food insecurity in ten countries in Africa.[7]

11.   Weather extremes affect crop production and pastures, aggravating crop losses, reducing yields and water for animals, as well as damaging agricultural infrastructure. Climatic/geological extreme events, floods, drought, hurricanes, typhoons and earthquakes are among the most frequent natural hazard-related shocks. Climate change further exposes populations to more frequent and more intense climate-related hazards which continue to threaten agricultural livelihoods. Weather extremes are the second major driver of food insecurity, affecting 48 million people facing high levels of acute food insecurity in ten countries in Africa.[8]

12.   Economic shocks, coupled with recent climatic shocks in some countries, have significantly reduced agricultural production, posed risks of higher food inflation, increased price of inputs and fuel and lower incomes, usually leading to a reduction in domestic food supply. Macro-economic shocks, including debt and slow economic growth in the most vulnerable African countries currently facing rising fiscal pressures and struggling to get back to pre-COVID-19 rates of economic growth, are also affecting food availability. Economic shocks represent the third driver of food insecurity, with 30.6 million people facing high levels of acute food insecurity in 16 countries in Africa.[9]

13.   Animal pests and diseases, including transboundary animal, plant, aquatic, forest pests and diseases, food safety concerns, locusts, armyworms, cassava mosaic, fruit flies and mycotoxins, affect crop production and pastures, reducing yields, as well as constituting a health concern which can wipe up agricultural livelihoods, including loss in animal population and increased food insecurity. For example, the 2020 desert locust plague of unprecedented scale across the Great Horn of Africa threatened the food security and livelihoods of 41.2 million people.

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[6] FAO: 2023. *Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition – Statistic and Trends*. https://www.fao.org/3/cc8743en/cc8743en.pdf
[7] *2023 Global Report on Food Crises*. https://www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/GRFC2023-compressed.pdf
[8] *2023 Global Report on Food Crises*. https://www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/GRFC2023-compressed.pdf
[9] 2023 *Global Report on Food Crises 2023*. https://www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/GRFC2023-compressed.pdf

14.   Conflict, climate variability and extremes, and economic downturns impact the four dimensions of food security availability, access, use and utilization, and stability. These crises disrupt economic activities, in particular in rural areas, impacting agricultural production (crop, livestock and fisheries), markets and prices, agrifood small and medium enterprises, and food and agriculture trade. The result is consistent across the above-mentioned shocks impact channels, leading to increased food insecurity, social and political instability and contributing to rising hunger and further conflicts through diverse pathways.

15.   Resilience, according to the *UN Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies*,[10] is the ability of individuals, households, communities, cities, institutions, systems and societies to prevent, anticipate, absorb, adapt and transform positively, efficiently and effectively when faced with a wide range of risks – while maintaining an acceptable level of functioning, without compromising long-term prospects for sustainable development, peace and security, human rights and well-being for all.

16.   Resilience efforts imply strengthening crucial capacities to reduce risk and vulnerabilities to disasters and crises. The five capacities for resilience building are: a) **anticipative capacity**: the ability to take early action in anticipation of a potential threat; b) **preventive capacity**: the ability to implement activities and take measures to reduce existing risks and avoid the creation of new risks; c) **absorptive capacity**: the ability to take protective action and "bounce back" after a shock; d) **adaptive capacity**: the ability to make incremental adjustments, modifications or changes to the characteristics of systems; and e) **transformative capacity**: the ability to create a fundamentally new system when ecological, economic or social structures make the existing system untenable.

17.   Resilience building is system thinking to address the multidimension of risks – including threats, exposure, vulnerabilities, capacities and risk drivers – and achieve a tangible, collective outcome through a multi-stakeholder approach, cutting across sectors, systems and levels, and that is inclusive and people-centred. The key elements of resilience-building include multidimensional risk and context, interconnected systems, multiple stakeholders and resilience capacities.[11] (Figure 1).
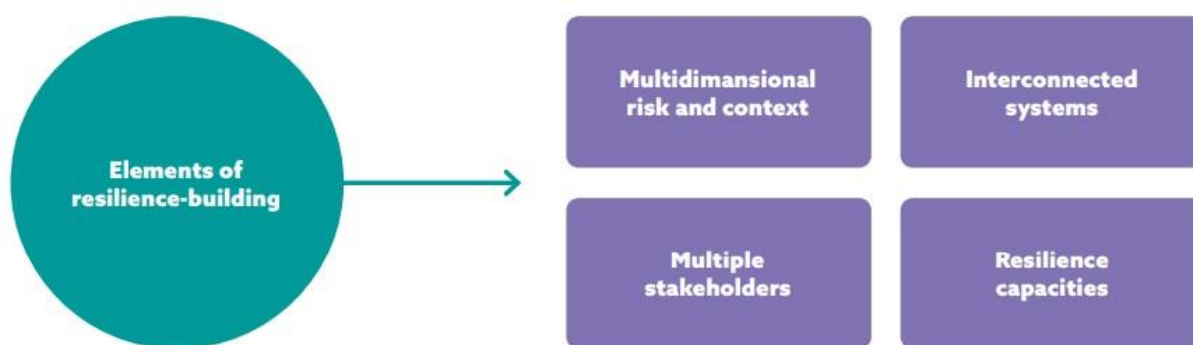

Figure 1: The Key Elements of Resilience building

18.   According to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme review, using the FAO Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis methodology that evaluates household resilience through access to basic services, productive and non-productive assets, adaptive capacities

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[10] UN. 2020. *UN Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies*. https://www.sparkblue.org/basic-page/un-common-guidance-helping-build-resilient-societies.

[11] UN. 2020. *UN Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies*. https://www.sparkblue.org/basic-page/un-common-guidance-helping-build-resilient-societies.

and social safety nets, on average 57 percent of farm, pastoral and fisher households improved their resilience between 2020 and 2022 in 33 countries in Africa.[12]

19.   West Africa has shown most progress in enhancing resilience to food insecurity with 72.57 percent of farm, pastoral and fisher households that have improved their resilience to climate change and other shocks (based on 12 reporting countries), Southern Africa follows at 36 percent **across four reporting countries, while Central Africa, encompassing five nations, averages a** 57.28 percent improvement in resilience. Eastern Africa, with eight reporting countries, records an average 45.67 percent improvement. Northern Africa shows a 53.97 percent improvement.

20.   In view of the interconnected risks and crises, from production to consumption across the entire agrifood system, resilience is achieved through complementary risk and crisis management actions along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. This approach aims to enhance resilience capacities at community, institutional and ecosystems levels, focusing on at-risk-population through inclusive, do-no-harm, multi-sectoral, strategic livelihood- and context-specific solutions, and leveraging local capacities for ensuring food security and nutrition for all.[13]

III.   Food insecurity hotspots in Africa

21.   The *Hunger Hotspots* report by the World Food Programme (WFP) and FAO identifies 18 hunger hotspots in 22 countries worldwide where food security is expected to significantly deteriorate from November 2023 to April 2024. Thirteen hotspots are in Africa, namely Burkina Faso, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe.[14]

22.   Burkina Faso, Mali, South Sudan and Sudan are the hotspots of highest concern for the November 2023 to April 2024 outlook. These hotspots have segments of populations identified or projected to be at risk of famine or at risk of deterioration towards catastrophic conditions. They require the most urgent action due to the devastating impacts of conflicts on livelihoods, the agriculture sector and the economy at large, amid internal displacement and influx of refugees, driving high levels of acute food insecurity.

23.   The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Somalia are the hotspots of high concern for the same period. These countries have sizeable populations – over 500 000 people – estimated or projected to be requiring urgent humanitarian assistance. The needs are expected to be high in the outlook period, due to a combination of natural- and human-induced hazards.

24.   In Chad, Djibouti, Malawi, Niger, Uganda and Zimbabwe, the food security situation is projected to deteriorate due to the impact of persistent economic challenges, extreme weather events and crop reduction, refugee influx and political instability.

25.   The business-as-usual approach of responding to food crises and disasters as they occur, in the face of climate change, rising food insecurity and malnutrition risks, deepening poverty and inequality, widening food dependency, increasing the number of populations in need of humanitarian assistance, elevating mortality rates among children, youth and women, is not sustainable. These factors can all contribute to overwhelming political turmoil and regional insecurity.

26.   To address the challenge of enhancing resilience to food insecurity, countries need to prioritize scaling up transformative agricultural interventions that are risk and conflict sensitive since their design. This implies a paradigm shift from responding to crises to managing risks for resilient agriculture and food systems. These measures include investing more in anticipatory action, addressing the drivers of

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[12] Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe

[13] UN. 2020. *UN Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies*. https://www.sparkblue.org/basic-page/un-common-guidance-helping-build-resilient-societies.

[14] Hunger Hotspots: FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity, November 2023 to April 2024 outlook | World Food Programme

conflicts and maximizing contribution to local peace, vulnerability reduction and climate-resilient measures, among others. This latter includes infrastructure for water security, where water resources are scarce or prone to climate variability, climate-resilient feed and fodder availability for livestock, to address shortage due to recurrent droughts and land degradation, post-harvest losses management, ecosystem/landscape restoration and ensuring durable solutions for displaced populations, returnees and host communities to meet their food needs in a sustainable manner.

27.   Progress has been made in reducing risks and vulnerabilities of agricultural livelihoods and recovery from shocks in countries and subregions through the implementation of the African Union's *Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa*. In line with the four priority areas of the Sendai Framework (understanding disaster risk; strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk, investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience; and enhancing disaster risk preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction), countries and subregions have developed national and regional policies, preparedness and coordination mechanisms for improved risk management and enhancing resilience that are crucial, not only to contribute to addressing the persistence of chronic and acute food insecurity and malnutrition, but also to contribute to the achievement of all the SDGs, and notably SDGs 1 and 2.

28.   With a focus on enhancing resilience of African food systems to shock and stress, under the Africa Common Position on Food Systems for the UN Food Systems Summit,[15] Africa is committed to:

   a. facilitating and supporting locally appropriate and targeted social and food safety net programmes to strengthen communities and household capacities to anticipate, absorb and adapt to shocks and stresses, as well as other socioeconomic disruptions;

   b. promoting production of traditional and indigenous foods, not only to enhance sustainable access to nutritious food, but also to broaden the capacities for food system resilience;

   c. stimulating and incentivizing relevant policy choices and increased investments in climate data and knowledge systems to support early warning systems for food security and climate change related disasters;

   d. encouraging partnerships and investments to overcome water scarcity challenges in the continent;

   e. facilitating and supporting, as necessary, investments and policy choices for enhanced risk insurance capacities and measures, such as weather-indexed crop and livestock insurance schemes; and

   f. expanding social protection programmes and linking them to nutrition and food access.

29.   Enhancing the resilience of food systems requires significant investments. According to the UN Interdepartmental Task Force on African Affairs policy report,[16] about USD 76 billion annually is estimated to be needed until 2030 to transform African food systems. In 2019, Africa spent around USD 12 billion on agriculture. Africa is still well below the 10 percent level of share of agriculture in government expenditure. From 2001 to 2019, Africa's share of agriculture expenditures declined slightly from 2.93 percent to 2.32 percent (Figure 2). There is need to sustain efforts toward making more adequate public and private investments to enhance the resilience of agrifood systems.

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[15] Africa Common Position on Food Systems. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/246156/AU%20Common%20Position%20on%20Food%20Systems%20-%20English%2011-2021.pdf
[16] United Nations Interdepartmental Task Force on African Affairs. *Building Africa's Food Sovereignty and Resilience through Sustainable Investments*. https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/docs/unfoodsystemslibraries/stocktaking-moment/unfss-2-special-sessions/idtfaa---africa-special-session---un-food-systems-summit-2---policy-paper.pdf?sfvrsn=e19159a_3
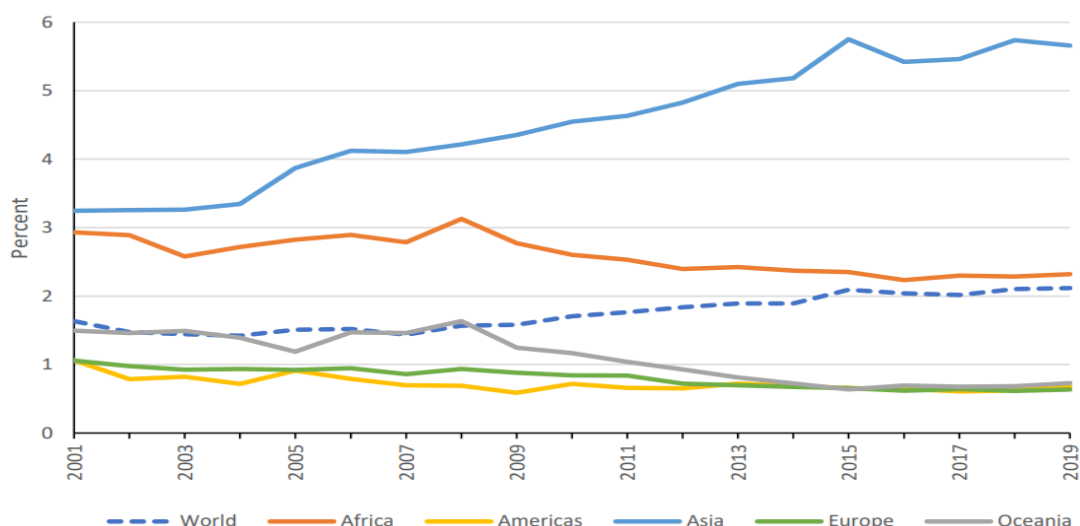
Figure 2: Share of agriculture in government expenditure by region | Source FAOSTAT 2021

IV.   Increasing Resilience of agrifood systems: FAO initiatives in the Africa region

30.   International cooperation is crucial to managing the crises and risks to food insecurity in the Africa region. FAO works to enhance resilience by supporting countries to adopt a multi-hazard and cross-sectoral approach to: i) measure and understand risks; ii) monitor crisis and disaster risks, coupled with early warning; iii) reduce agricultural livelihoods and related agrifood systems vulnerabilities to crises and disasters risks; and iv) prepare for and respond to crisis and disasters.

31.   These four thematic areas are interconnected and reinforce each other: measuring, understanding and monitoring multiple risks are fundamental prerequisites on which interventions must be based, in order to inform improved multi-risk governance and implementation that contribute to concretely reduce risks and vulnerabilities, in the face of shocks and stresses, and prepare for and respond to crisis and disasters when they cannot be prevented. These thematic components aim to facilitate engagement across interlinked agrifood systems layers and key actors, including local and national governments, domestic food networks, individual producers, producers' associations, food processors, agrifood businesses, on- and off-farm workers and consumers (with a focus on ensuring access to sufficient, healthy and sustainable diets in the face of shocks and stresses). Attention needs also be directed to the inclusion of population groups such as Indigenous Peoples, women and youth.

32.   Understanding and measuring multiple risks strengthen the enabling environment of Members, along with appropriate legislation, policies and institutional frameworks for resilience in agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forestry and natural resource management, and to strengthen the institutional capacities to implement these. FAO's resilience work in Africa includes capacity support for damage and loss assessment, contingency planning, as well as integration of disaster risk reduction in sectoral and agricultural policies and good governance in agricultural sectors.

33.   Monitoring systems, coupled with early warning, are key for predicting the likelihood of the occurrence of climate hazards and their impacts on livelihoods, food security and nutrition. They are particularly useful when timely alerts help trigger accurate decision-making and anticipatory actions at all institutional levels, including in communities, to mitigate the impact of hazards, reduce humanitarian needs and enable quick recovery of agricultural livelihoods. Strengthening food security and agriculture analysis also supports timely and evidence-based knowledge to inform decision-making for effective policies and investments for preparedness and risk management.

34.   Through conflict sensitivity and a context analysis approach, FAO works with communities to reduce and prevent conflict through innovative approaches, including improved and equitable access to natural resources, enhanced peaceful coexistence, for example between host and displaced families, and livelihood support, to enhance resilience, cross-border programming and rural employment. More needs

to be done to address the root causes of acute food insecurity and malnutrition, including enhancing the work on climate security and strengthening the work along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, given the key role of agriculture in food security and peace. Building peace is a shared responsibility. FAO, working with partners and communities, has a role to play in contributing to peace, which can be translated into a way of working that "does no harm" and, when possible, "does good" by contributing to reduce levels of violence, strengthen communities' capacities to respond to their own needs, and support societies to transform the relationships that led to conflict in the first place.

35.   FAO is working with WFP and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Southern Africa, focusing on building Members' capacity to enable effective disaster risk management through subregional systems for interagency anticipatory action using a multi-hazard, multisectoral approach. Further investment is focusing on strengthening capacities on risk analysis and early warning, including the implementation of appropriate and timely actions to protect the livelihoods of vulnerable people ahead of shocks. In particular, FAO designed the *Anticipating El Niño: Mitigation, preparedness and response plan for Southern Africa, 2023–2025*, to protect the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable populations and to contribute to efforts to strengthen the collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors.

36.   In terms of risks and vulnerabilities reduction at community, institutional and ecosystems levels, it is crucial to ensure that smallholder producers and processors have access to tailored livelihoods, context- and gender-specific technology and needed tools. For instance, FAO is promoting post-harvest losses management to address food losses from production to consumption due to poor storage facilities, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to technologies and markets, resulting in a significant loss of food for consumption and income for small-scale farmers.

37.   Water scarcity exacerbates vulnerability and food insecurity, with the availability of water dropping by over 40 percent in two decades, impacting 96 million people in West Africa.[17] FAO supported the water initiative in the Sahel under the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, which has selected water as an accelerator for development. FAO's Hand-in-Hand Initiative in the Sahel, intended to spur investments from the public and private sectors, through partnerships and resource mobilization to accelerate food systems transformation and sustainable rural development using matchmaking, to include one pillar on the improvement of water management and governance. Investment plans are being developed in line with this pillar, to be presented to potential investors at various fora, including at the FAO flagship event "World Investment Forum". FAO has also implemented the One million cisterns for the Sahel Initiative on eight countries of West Africa. The Initiative integrates four pillars (social protection, access to water, climate change adaptation and capacity development) that successfully strengthen women's resilience and ease their access to quality water through a cost efficient and participative approach.

38.   The Great Green Wall initiative, Africa's landmark initiative to combat climate change and desertification and address food insecurity and poverty, supported by FAO and other partners, is a good illustration of the importance of land restoration, together with water and trees management at a large scale to enhance the resilience of agrifood systems. It is a major intervention of nature-based solutions by restoring land, conserving and managing scarce water resources, and planting trees by the local actors and communities, thus contributing to enhance the resilience of agrifood systems and food security, by reducing the risk of desertification, and prolonged and recurrent drought.

39.   Diversification of livelihoods for rural communities to reduce their dependence on agriculture production, enhance food value chains and improve their income-generating opportunities is another approach to reducing risk and vulnerabilities and providing opportunities for (youth) employment. This can include supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, promoting value chains and providing training and technical assistance and access to finance to create new income streams in non-agricultural sectors. It also entails connecting food insecure smallholders to markets, ensuring better functioning of local and regional food markets and supply chains, and supporting local capacity development through knowledge and skills transfer with the involvement of local actors (including communities). The African

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[17] United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel: Non paper on deep dive on water as an Accelerator for Development in the Sahel

Continental Free Trade Area agreement offers an opportunity of USD 2.5 trillion market for African Small and Medium Enterprises that is estimated to handle 80 percent of the food consumed in Africa.[18]

40.   In view of strengthening the resilience of livestock-based livelihoods and addressing feed and fodder scarcity, FAO's interventions employ innovative approaches including fodder value chain and business development, youth and women agripreneurship, drought-resistant fodder technologies, business development and management, and digital technologies to enhance producers and value chain actors' access to climate services (weather, price and inputs forecasts). FAO's interventions include the development of fodder markets to promote a steady supply of quality fodder, capacity development, animal nutrition and income, thus improving household and community resilience. Additionally, FAO supports capacity development of countries in data analysis, livestock value chains and sector analyses to encourage informed decisions and planning of longer-term livestock master plan and medium-term investment plans, and on feed inventory and balance sheets development.

41.   Expanding social safety nets and social protection schemes to provide support to the most vulnerable during times of crisis, as well linking to early warning systems for risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection programmes enhance communities' resilience, protect livelihoods, minimize negative coping strategies and mitigate the impact of crisis. FAO supports nascent and established social protection programmes to ensure social protection is incorporated in local, national and regional plans, integrating agricultural livelihoods perspectives, agricultural insurance for risk around agricultural risk financing, early warning and anticipatory action including conflict prevention.

42.   In terms of preparedness and response to humanitarian crises, in 2023, FAO reached at least 46.3 million people with direct emergency and resilience assistance to households and individuals in 122 countries worldwide to save lives and livelihoods, out of which, 17.5 million people are in Africa. This assistance was delivered in partnership with international and national partners. The main emergency and resilience interventions included support of crop production (assistance with quality and climate-smart inputs, and technical assistance/capacity development), the livestock sector and animal health (assistance with vaccinations of more than 35 million animals, emergency feed distributions, value chain assistance and technical assistance/training); as well as support to beneficiaries through cash and voucher assistance , including training of farmers, partners and government staff. The most significant beneficiary reach in Africa was in Ethiopia (4.4 million people), South Sudan (3 million people) and Chad (2.4 million people).

43.   Partnership among the humanitarian, development and peace actors (government, United Nations, donors, as well as the private sector, farmers organization and communities) is thus key for crisis and risk management in the face of shocks and threats to the agrifood system. The Rome-based Agencies are one example of partnership that brings together the three UN agencies, FAO, WFP and IFAD for joint programming to achieve collective outcomes to enhance the resilience of communities for agrifood transformation, leaving no one behind. FAO has also partnership arrangements with a range of national, local, international and private sector actors to support local capacity to manage crisis and risks.

44.   To address the financial gap for long-term resilience enhancing investments, International Financial Institutions, the private sector and blended financing partnership present an important strategic opportunity for Africa to scale up innovative and transformative practices to boost agricultural production and productivity, and increase the income of small-holder farmers for resilient agrifood systems transformation. A recent example is the African Development Bank USD 1.5 billion fund for the African Emergency Food Production Facility to mitigate the short-, medium- and long-term risks aggravated by the war in Ukraine. The objective of this short-term intervention was to raise local production of wheat, maize, rice and soybean to compensate for supply loss due to the war in Ukraine, and ensure food and nutrition security, by producing 37.6 million metric tonnes of these staple food

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[18] Africa Common Position on Food Systems.
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/246156/AU%20Common%20Position%20on%20Food%20Systems%20-%20English%2011-2021.pdf

crops by 2024. Public-private partnership is a financial innovation conducive to cutting edge ideas and practices to manage risks as well as to promote digital solutions for resilient agrifood systems.

45.   Overall, Africa needs to step up investments in agriculture for resilient agrifood transformation in the face of increasing disasters, conflicts and crises. There is an urgent need to move from policy commitment to grounded action to enhance resilience through agrifood transformation.[19] This should be done by addressing the systemic nature of risk to agrifood systems. There is need to translate successful approaches into action and at scale, including data collection and analysis, to enhance the understanding of risks , anticipatory actions and support to enable local food production and productivity, social protection schemes , medium to longer-term risk management measures, including post-harvest loss management, and to address food loss from production to consumption, infrastructure for water security, strengthening domestic markets and promoting intraregional trade in agrifood product, climate-smart livestock feed and scaling up financing mechanism. Partnerships, including with FAO, are crucial to meeting resilience challenges through the transformation of African agrifood systems.

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[19]https://www.resakss.org/sites/default/files/2023_ator_individual_chapters/Chapter%2014_ReSAKSS_AW_ATOR_2023.pdf