Welcome to the latest edition of *FAO in Africa*, from FAO’s Regional Office for Africa. So far this year we welcomed the FAO Director-General back to Africa and celebrated the International Year of Millets at a special event with African chef Fatmata Binta. We led the way on National Water Roadmaps, renewed our partnership with the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), and put gender and trade in the spotlight with our partners.

I was also pleased to represent FAO at the Regional Preparatory Meeting in Niger ahead of the global food systems Stocktaking Moment coming up in Rome in July. My message there, and always, is that the top priority for Africa’s development must be transformation of agrifood systems – for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind. This was also echoed at the annual meeting of the new Regional Collaborative Platform with the UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed and regional leaders of all UN agencies.

In the following stories, you’ll learn more about the work we are doing in Africa, with our partners, to achieve this transformation.

As always, our newsletter is tailored to mobile phones and easily shareable so please feel free to forward to your contacts.

*Abebe Haile-Gabriel*
FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa
Inside

FEATURE
Qu Dongyu on African mission ........................................... 3
Celebrating Africa’s millets super foods ............................. 4

NEWS
Better Production ................................................................ 5
Livestock scholarships in Somalia .................................... 5
Better fish production in Zambia ...................................... 5
Ending hunger in CAR .................................................. 6
One Country One Priority Product advances
in Africa ........................................................................... 6
Better Nutrition ................................................................ 7
Building momentum for better nutrition
in Africa ........................................................................... 7

Better Environment ................................................................ 8
National Water Roadmaps for Africa ............................... 8
Operationalizing GEF projects ...................................... 8

Better Life ............................................................................. 9
More countries join ambitious Initiative .......................... 9
FAO and Japan support drought-hit communities .................. 10
Plane to help Desert Locust control efforts ....................... 10
Accelerating women’s access to land in
Guinea-Bissau ..................................................................... 10
African model law for gender equality ............................ 11

Partnerships ........................................................................ 11
FAO and FARA renew partnership .................................. 11
FAO and African Risk Capacity Group ......................... 12
US Congressional delegation visit .................................. 12
Empowering women under the AfCFTA ......................... 13
Better investments in Liberia .................................... 14
Youth in focus in West Africa ...................................... 14

What's New .......................................................................... 15
Qu Dongyu on African mission

The FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu returned to Africa in February for a four-country visit to speak with Heads of State and Government and other leaders on the pressing issues of food security and nutrition in Africa. In the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Director-General attended the 36th Ordinary Session of the African Union Summit and spoke at a side event on nutrition with African Heads of State, co-hosted by FAO, the African Union and the African Development Bank. The Director-General also visited a large irrigated wheat farm and commended Ethiopia’s exemplary efforts towards better production of wheat, underlining the importance of sustained supply of improved seeds to enhance productivity.

In the Republic of Kenya, the Director-General lauded government efforts to mitigate climate change impacts by promoting forest conservation and green cities, during a visit to the Karura Forest in Nairobi. He also visited the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) where he toured veterinary laboratories, and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)-World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) research institute where he toured soil and seed laboratories, noting that effective collaboration with science and innovation centres is vital for agrifood systems transformation.

In the Republic of Zimbabwe, the Director-General gave the opening address at the first FAO regional workshop on National Water Roadmaps (read on for more details), and toured national laboratories. In the Kingdom of Eswatini, he handed over to national authorities equipment to test for aflatoxins in food, met Mswati III the King of Eswatini, and toured a youth-owned commercial farm.
Celebrating Africa’s millets super foods

At a special event with renowned chef Fatmata Binta, millets were celebrated for their potential in addressing climate change, boosting nutrition and increasing farmers’ incomes. Ghana-based ambassadors, high-commissioners, government ministers, UN and development partners and other guests took part in the ‘Dine on a Mat’ event at the FAO Regional Office for Africa as part of the International Year of Millets 2023.

“Millets have a lot of potential for agricultural transformation,” said FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa Abebe Haile-Gabriel at the event. “If we can increase productivity and add value along the supply chain through processing it will benefit those who are producing, especially a lot of women, as well as consumers.”

Millets include sorghum, pearl millet, finger millet, fonio and teff, among others. These small grains are packed with iron, fibre, antioxidants and protein, have a low glycaemic index, are gluten-free and can grow in arid climates. But despite their enormous potential, they account for less than 3 percent of the global trade in grains.

Chef Binta is a strong advocate for fonio and is collaborating with FAO throughout the International Year of Millets.

“Right now we are talking a lot about sourcing local, connecting with farmers, and I think it’s important now to start using ingredients that are underutilized – that’s the way forward,” she said.

Read more.

Share your favourite millet recipe on Instagram using the hashtag #IYM2023
Livestock scholarships in Somalia

Over 100 young people have been awarded scholarships to study livestock veterinary sciences in the Federal Republic of Somalia to enhance technical capacity in the key sector, supported by FAO and the European Union under the RAAISE project (Resilient Fisheries and Livestock Value Chain for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in Somalia).

The scholarships cover tuition at the Somali National University in Mogadishu for three years, and students will graduate with a BSc in Veterinary Medicine or BSc Animal Husbandry.

“It is critical for Somalia’s development that we develop the capacity and skills of young Somalis and this is at the heart of the RAAISE project,” said the European Union Head of Section Jens Hoegel.

Better fish production in Zambia

A ten-year strategy to make the Republic of Zambia’s kapenta (a type of small sardine) value chain stronger and more sustainable has been endorsed by public and private sector stakeholders. It aims to produce better food to reduce poverty, better protect women, and preserve Lake Tanganyika’s aquatic resources. “FAO is happy to support this comprehensive and collective effort towards a blue transformation of kapenta fishing in Zambia,” said Suze Percy Filippini, FAO Representative in Zambia.

Read more.
Ending hunger in CAR

In April, the FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa Abebe Haile-Gabriel visited the Central African Republic (CAR) to strengthen collaboration, assess the current challenges of food insecurity and malnutrition, and explore ways to bolster the agricultural sector in the country.

Greater investment is needed in the agricultural sector, Haile-Gabriel stressed, if it is to play its full role in the fight against poverty and food insecurity.

“Above all, agriculture needs to be seen as a business to be able to create jobs and allow small holder farmers to make a living from their work by investing in the necessary infrastructure, equipment and technology,” he said.

One Country One Priority Product advances in Africa

A new phase has started for the One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) initiative in Africa, with the first meeting of the Regional Organizing Group (ROG).

High-level FAO participants including FAO Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol joined key regional stakeholders and technical experts, including representatives from the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the Pan-African Farmers Organization (PAFO). The ROG will provide technical advice and enhance partnerships and resource mobilization for OCOP-participating countries.

Twenty-eight countries have so far joined the initiative in sub-Saharan Africa.

OCOP aims to promote agricultural development by identifying and prioritizing one special agricultural product per country that has the potential for green development.

Find out more about OCOP in Africa.
Leaders including the FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu (centre) at an event on ending malnutrition in Africa.

Building momentum for better nutrition in Africa

A side event of the 36th Session of the African Union Assembly brought together African Heads of State and Government to review the momentum on addressing malnutrition in Africa, and was co-organized by FAO, the African Union Commission, and the African Development Bank.

“If we can accelerate investments and improve the coordination of efforts, Africa will advance nutrition and improve food security outcomes,” King Letsie III of Lesotho said via video message. The King is an ambassador for nutrition of both FAO and the AU.

Read more.

“It is now more crucial than ever to support vulnerable communities with multiple and innovative solutions to build their resilience and transform agrifood systems to deliver better nutrition,” FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu told the gathering.
National Water Roadmaps for Africa

In February, Africa became the first FAO region to carry out a regional workshop on National Water Roadmaps which will see countries develop plans to strengthen the inter-sectoral coordination of sustainable water resource management.

The Roadmaps fall under FAO’s broader commitments to the Water Action Agenda.

At the African workshop, held in Harare, the FAO Director-General urged countries to rethink water use in a sustainable and equitable way, with innovations in agriculture at the forefront. “More crop per drop,” he said, adding that it is also necessary to cut greenhouse emissions from agriculture through the sustainable management of soils, to prevent further disruption to the water and climate cycle.

Anxious Jongwe Masuka, Minister for Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development of Zimbabwe, who represented the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Emmerson Mnangagwa, said that Africa must present a unified voice on water management.

Operationalizing GEF projects

In a first of its kind for FAO in Africa, a webinar on operationalizing projects financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was held online in March for all FAO colleagues in the region. FAO’s work on GEF-funded projects

Read more.
in the Africa region has grown significantly. FAO currently holds nearly a third of the GEF-7 portfolio in Africa and remains a key player for Least Developed Countries programming.

Chaired by the FAO ADG Abebe Haile-Gabriel, and coordinated by the Deputy Regional Representative Yurdi Yasmi and the FAO Africa Senior Regional Operation and Partnership Officer Samy Gaiji, more than 140 participants reviewed the efficiency and effectiveness of GEF projects. The participants also explored better practices and lessons learned from country offices to achieve the objectives set by FAO in Africa for the 2023 Year of Excellence.

News
BETTER ENVIRONMENT

Four more African countries have joined the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HiHI) so far this year, the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire, Eswatini, the Kingdom of Lesotho and Zambia, bringing the total to 34 African participating countries, including the first sub-regional proposal covering the Sahel.

During a visit by the FAO Sub-regional Coordinator for Southern Africa Patrice Talla to Zambia in March, the Minister of Agriculture Hon. Reuben Mtolo affirmed that Zambia would expedite the country’s participation in the Initiative to support the implementation of nationally-led, ambitious programmes to accelerate agrifood systems transformations.

More countries join ambitious Initiative

The Republic of Mali successfully organized a national Hand-in-Hand Investment Forum in early May, and Zimbabwe held its national HiHI Investment Forum in mid May. Both events showcased
the Initiative at national level for stakeholders and potential investors.

Find out more about the Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

**FAO and Japan support drought-hit communities**

A new FAO project funded by Japan will provide urgent support to drought-affected herders and agro-pastoralists in Djibouti, Kenya and Uganda through access to food, cash and other basic goods and services, while protecting and restoring their productive assets. Close to 70,000 people will directly benefit.

The Horn of Africa is experiencing severe drought after five consecutive poor rainy seasons, and forecasts that the current sixth season will also fail.

**Plane to help Desert Locust control efforts**

FAO has handed over a spray aircraft to the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA) to strengthen the response capacity in combatting desert locusts and other migratory pests in the region. The aircraft was procured with financial support from the Governments of Denmark and the United States of America, and the MasterCard Foundation.

**Accelerating women’s access to land in Guinea-Bissau**

With the European Union, FAO in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau has launched the ParteMulher
African model law for gender equality

Under a partnership agreement with the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), FAO has engaged with African member states to propose a model law on gender equality. It comes after a model law on food and nutrition security was approved by the PAP in November 2022.

The new proposal aims to be a catalyst for legal reform in Africa, providing an authoritative framework for national legislative bodies to strengthen laws and regulations and achieve gender equality.

FAO and FARA renew partnership

FAO’s Regional Office for Africa has signed a new five-year partnership agreement with the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) that renews and formalizes the two organizations’ long collaboration.

The objective is to facilitate greater collaboration for improved production and productivity in Africa, focusing on capacity development for agricultural innovation systems, agriculture policy and advocacy including the domestication of the Common Africa Agroparks (CAAPs), agrifood systems transformation at the country and regional level, climate-smart agriculture and agroecology-based production systems, youth empowerment, response to crises, among others.
**News**

**PARTNERSHIPS**

**FAO and African Risk Capacity Group**

FAO and the African Risk Capacity (ARC) Group have signed a new partnership agreement to integrate gender dimensions in climate action and disaster risk management in sub-Saharan Africa.

The five-year agreement consolidates the ongoing partnership between FAO and ARC which has already demonstrated solid results in awareness-raising and data-generation. At the signing ceremony, FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa Abebe Haile-Gabriel said, “with the right targeted technical, financial support and enabling environment, rural women can be climate action champions. We believe that our partnership is a big step in the right direction towards promoting a truly transformative agenda that places women as equal partners in climate action and disaster risk management”.

“Through this partnership, we will continue to consolidate the gains of our strong collaboration with FAO and pave the way for more smart initiatives geared towards protecting the food security, lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable populations affected by extreme weather conditions and other perils,” said Ibrahima Cheikh Diong, UN Assistant Secretary-General and ARC Director-General.

**US Congressional delegation visit**

Cindy McCain, former US Ambassador to the UN Rome-based Agencies and now Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), with FAO Zambia Country Representative Suze Percy-Filippini.

In February, a high-level bipartisan United States Congressional
PARTNERSHIPS

Empowering women under the AfCFTA

An online high-level roundtable hosted by FAO brought together partners from across Africa to share good practices and lessons learned on promoting women’s empowerment under the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA).

The European Union (EU) Delegation to the African Union (AU), the United States Mission to the AU, the Embassy of Canada to Ethiopia, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the CGIAR GENDER Impact Platform, the International Trade Centre (ITC), the Trade Law Centre, and the African Women Agribusiness Network (AWAN) Afrika took part. The main take-away message was that partners are active in ensuring women are not excluded from the AfCFTA and that it is critical to maintain momentum towards this goal.

FAO also presented its Empowering women and boosting livelihoods through agricultural trade: Leveraging the AfCFTA (EWAT) programme with the ITC. Find out more about EWAT.
**Better investments in Liberia**

FAO and the Embassy of Germany in the Republic of Liberia brought together partners to review ways to boost responsible investments in agrifood systems in Liberia for sustainable development. The partners, including high-level government representatives, validated and recommended a new investment and investor screening tool developed by the Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) for Responsible Agriculture Investment (RAI) with the technical support of FAO.

Find out more.

**Youth in focus in West Africa**

The Sub-regional Office for West Africa (SFW) held its 14th Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Meeting in March with a focus on youth employment in agrifood systems. More than 200 partners and stakeholders discussed opportunities for agrifood systems transformation, with youth at the core of solutions.

Likewise, the Sub-regional Office for Central Africa (SFC) held its 15th MDT meeting in April, focusing on innovative and green financing opportunities. Partners discussed recommendations to intensify efforts towards seizing opportunities for transforming agrifood systems in the Central Africa sub-region.

Annual MDT meetings are held in every sub-region to bring together FAO representatives and technical officers to review progress on programme implementation, and engage members, partners and stakeholders to refine priorities and accelerate actions for enhanced delivery of results.
What’s New

Publication: The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems

Publication: FAO in Africa: Highlights in 2022 report

Story: A new lease on life for Internally Displaced Persons in Mozambique

Video: Empowering women in fisheries in Cabo Verde

Story: Discover the FISH4ACP programme in Tanzania

Story: Discover the KnoWat water project in Senegal

Publication: The International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYIFA) 2022 in Africa – final report

English

French

Contact us: If you have feedback or a story suggestion, contact the FAO Africa Communications Team.