

175th Session of the Council

Item 16: Developments in fora of importance for the mandate of FAO

FAO expresses its gratitude to the Governments of New Zealand, Canada and Australia for their comments, support, and encouragement to further involve Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Youth in discussions on agrifood systems transformation.

In relation with the biennial UN Global Indigenous Youth Forum (UNGIYF), FAO reaffirms its commitment to support the implementation of the UNGIYF outcomes, in particular the 2021 *Rome Indigenous Youth Global Declaration on Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems* and the 2023 *Rome Declaration on Safeguarding Seven Generations in times of Food, Social, and Ecological Crisis*. During the current 2024 intersessional year, FAO will continue engaging with Indigenous Peoples to ensure sustainable agrifood systems transformation, as well as to properly address climate change, biodiversity loss and food insecurity. FAO would welcome the support of New Zealand, Canada, Australia, and other FAO Members in the organization of the 2025 III Session of UNGIYF.

FAO thanks the Government of New Zealand for its support in enabling the participation of Indigenous Youth from the delegation of the Pacific socio-cultural region, which was the second-most represented in the UNGIYF. FAO is grateful for the support received from the Government of New Zealand to continue pursuing its work with Indigenous Youth in the region, particularly in the frame of the fourth Pacific Ocean Pacific Climate Change Conference (4POPCCC), held on 20-24 May 2024 in Apia, Samoa, and its linkages with the work of the Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems.

FAO remains fully committed to continuing to increase the visibility of Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems in all its works, and thanks the FAO Members who joined the Coalition on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems, and the Rome Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples.

FAO thanks Canada for its support in digitalization initiatives that are crucial to addressing global food security challenges while promoting sustainability and inclusivity at the broadest scale, leaving no one behind. FAO will continue its work in steering the use of digital technologies for good while ensuring responsible and ethical use, including new and emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence.

With regard to the comments by Australia, FAO is continuously keeping its Members informed about the implementation of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy, including its Action Plan 2022-2025 through updates to the Governing Bodies, for example, in the recent update to the Programme Committee (Sources: CL 175/10 point 15 [here](#) and C 2025/8 Annex 4 [here](#)).

The Secretariat appreciates the interest of New Zealand, Canada and Australia in FAO's work on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators and will examine all the issues raised during its intervention on this agenda item.

Regarding the new proposed indicator on the "Prevalence of minimum dietary diversity", the measurement approach is well established, with data being collected through the Minimum Dietary Diversity for Children (MDD-C) and Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W) questionnaire modules. The modules are simple, quick to enumerate, easy to interpret and have been successfully integrated into large-scale multi-topic survey questionnaires with relative ease and low cost. Each module simply asks respondents to state whether they have consumed at least half out of a predefined list of food groups in a recent given period. MDD-W measures the proportion of women aged 15-49 years who have consumed at least five out of ten predefined food groups, whereas MDD-C measures the proportion of children aged 6-32 months who have consumed at least five out of eight predefined food groups.

Indeed, the MDD-C and MDD-W indicators are already used as part of monitoring and evaluation to inform policy and programmes in many countries. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) global

nutrition databases currently have MDD-C estimates from more than 250 surveys in 110 countries and is updated every year. MDD-C data has been collected for over 50 percent of UN Member States since 2015, covering 78 percent of the global population. Regarding MDD-W, by the end of 2024, MDD-W data will have been collected for 92 countries, representing 47 percent of UN member countries and covering 86 percent of the global population. The Global Diet Quality Project aims to collect MDD-W data through the Gallup World Poll for 140 countries in subsequent years.

MDD-C was first released as part of the UNICEF-World Health Organization (WHO) infant and young child feeding (IYCF) indicator guidance in 2008 and has been routinely collected through household surveys ever since. Major household survey programs like the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) Program, as well as national nutrition surveys have been collecting data aligned with the global standard indicator for over a decade.

MDD-W was developed in 2015, with official guidance by FAO released the same year. Nationally representative statistics on MDD-W have been collected through the DHS, the Gallup World Poll, and by several international organizations through their monitoring and evaluation frameworks, including the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the African Union's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). Several countries are also using in their measures of development assistance, such as Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ/GIZ) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Regarding New Zealand's query on the low data coverage of food and agriculture-related SDG indicators in the Pacific, the Secretariat would like to point out that this is indeed an issue that was at the epicentre of discussions in the recent 30th Session of the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS), held on 22-24 May 2024 in Kathmandu, Nepal. As can be seen in the forthcoming APCAS report, the Commission paid special attention to the Pacific's low reporting rate and, *inter alia*, recommended FAO to "provide dedicated support to Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to fill relevant data gaps, including SG indicators under FAO custodianship". The APCAS also recommended FAO to "highlight this recommendation in the 2024 Pacific SIDS Solutions Forum". FAO is already investing heavily in statistical capacity development initiatives in the wider Pacific region through an array of national and regional Technical Cooperation Projects (TCPs), including TCP/SAP/3903,¹ TCP/SAP/3906,² and TCP/VAN/3904.³ FAO is also currently in discussions with Australia and other resource partners with a view to expand the coverage of the Global Strategy to improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics (GSARS) to the Pacific region.

¹ USD 500,000 to support 13 Pacific Island Countries' capacity to accurately gather, analyze and interpret national level data pertaining to the SDGs and other important measurements.

² USD 400,000 to assist National Statistics Offices (NSOs) and the Ministries responsible for agriculture from 13 Pacific countries to strengthen their capacities to identify, develop, monitor and disseminate relevant and compiled agrifood systems statistics to support cross-sectoral policy and decision-making.

³ USD 225,000 to provide technical and methodological support, including capacity building and training on data collection to track agriculture resources and productivity and strengthening institutions to regularly monitor agriculture development programs.