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COUNCIL

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The Food Coalition

Executive Summary

The COVID-19 related crisis demonstrated the urgency to take action as well as the need to apply lessons learned from previous food crises. Coordinated collective action, global and multi-stakeholder policy dialogues and exchange of experience, effective policy assistance and appropriate technical expertise need to be made available to countries with no delay. With this aim, the Food Coalition was launched as response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and became a vital element of the food security agenda of the G20 under the Italian Presidency.

As a result of exceptional cooperation between FAO and the G20 Italian Presidency, the Joint Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Development, held in Matera, placed food security at the centre of the agenda. The endorsed declarations of the G20 Matera as well as the G20 Rome Leaders' Summit introduced the Food Coalition as a flexible coordination mechanism for COVID-19 response and recovery, while encouraging countries and partners to join and collaborate to address challenges posed by the pandemic on food security and nutrition.

Suggested action by the Council

The Council is invited to acknowledge the progress made by the Food Coalition since its launch in November 2020.

The Council acknowledged the G20 Rome Leaders' Summit, the leadership of FAO and the role of the Food Coalition and encouraged FAO to further implement the Initiative.

Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

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THE FOOD COALITION

1. The COVID-19 related crisis demonstrated the urgency to take action as well as the urgent need to apply lessons learned from previous food crises. Most important of these is the need for coordinated collective action at the global level to avoid precipitous acts that can add the compounding effects of food crisis to those of pandemic and recession. Global and multi-stakeholder policy dialogues and exchange of experience can do much to identify emerging challenges and build support. Effective policy assistance and appropriate technical expertise need to be made available to countries with no delay.
2. With this aim, **The Food Coalition**; a response to COVID-19, was established and launched in November 2020 and in 2021 became a vital element of Food Security Agenda of the G20 process under the Italian Presidency.
3. The Food Coalition is open to a broad range of partners, such as national governments, international organizations, civil society organizations, academia and private sector entities. FAO leads the alliance, facilitates exchanges of knowledge, mobilizes support and acts as a neutral convener for open and transparent dialogues among Members.
4. The G20 Matera Declaration, signed by the G20 Foreign Affairs and Development Ministers and the United Nations agencies in June 2021, included a paragraph endorsed by its Members, where the Food Coalition was suggested as a flexible coordination mechanism to provide political leadership. The Matera Declaration further encouraged partners and stakeholders to collaborate with or join this Coalition, the goal of which is to build a global alliance to trigger coordinated action in response to COVID-19, with a focus on the thematic priorities identified.
5. In the context of the G20 Call to Action for Food Security, on 29 June 2021 at Matera's Ministerial Meetings, FAO launched an official "Food Coalition - Call for proposals" (closed at the G20 Ministers of Agriculture Meeting on 18 September 2021) and encouraged all Members to join efforts and submit proposals offering their political, financial and technical support.
6. The Call for proposals was designed around four priority areas of work related to FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme (including Global Humanitarian Response Plan; Economic Inclusion and Social Protection to Reduce Poverty; Reduction of Food Loss and Waste; and Food Systems Transformation), in addition to the thematic areas proposed by the Matera Declaration. The proposals considered through this call adhered to the minimum requirements of multilateralism, multi-stakeholder, country owned and thematic focus.
7. A number of interested Members and partners have submitted proposals and taken steps with the technical support of FAO to build cross-country coalitions. A portfolio of ten selected projects, including work plans and budgets, have been selected. These will be presented to Members and provide successful examples for interested countries and partners to join and advocate for the active involvement of stakeholders wishing to offer their political, financial and technical support in response to concrete needs and demands on the ground.
8. More importantly, on the occasion of the G20 Rome Leaders' Summit, the final declaration¹ endorsed by the Leaders of the G20 endorsed the following item: *"Food security, nutrition, agriculture and food systems. We are committed to achieving food security and adequate nutrition for all, leaving no one behind. To this end, we endorse the Matera Declaration and its Call to Action. We encourage partners and stakeholders to collaborate with or join the Food Coalition launched by the FAO as a means to respond to the impacts of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition."*
9. The inclusion of the Food Coalition as a flexible coordination mechanism provides an opportunity to further mobilize G20 and non-G20 countries in support of the most vulnerable, and to build strategic coalitions across countries, as well as with non-state actors around priority areas of work.

¹ <https://www.g20.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/G20-ROME-LEADERS-DECLARATION.pdf>