

43rd Session of the Conference

Introduction to Item 11.1: Report of the 32nd Session of the Regional Conference for Africa (Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 11-14 April 2022)

Chairperson of the FAO Conference,

Director General of FAO,

Distinguished members of the Conference,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the African Countries, I have the distinguished honor and privilege to present to you the outcomes of the 32nd Session of the Regional Conference for Africa of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The Conference recorded the participation of 778 delegates from 54 Members, consisting of 62 ministers (including deputy ministers), 20 ambassadors, 28 private sector organizations, 31 civil society and/or non-governmental organizations, 34 intergovernmental organizations, seven United Nations (UN) organizations and three observer nations. Allow me to submit to the Conference a summary of the main recommendations on regional and global policy and regulatory matters.

The Regional Conference discussed several key documents related to the prevention of future pandemics, COVID-19 impacts on agrifood systems, investing in ecosystem restoration, promoting trade and investment, ensuring inclusivity in agrifood systems and experience sharing sessions among Members on better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind.

Regarding the prevention of future pandemics, the conference recognized the importance of multi-sector engagement and the incorporation of the One Health approach into policy documents. The role of the FAO and recommended actions included supporting the establishment of national One Health platforms, aligning policies at regional and national levels, and including One Health in programming and resource mobilization efforts.

In terms of COVID-19 impacts on agrifood systems, the conference acknowledged the negative effects on food security and nutrition, as well as on crop, livestock and fisheries production. FAO's role in response and recovery efforts was appreciated, and recommendations were made to address short-term needs, implement recovery programmes, collect data for risk understanding and promote digital transformation and resilience in food and agricultural systems. The conference also discussed the importance of investing in ecosystem restoration for sustainable agrifood systems transformation. FAO's role in providing technical support and promoting knowledge sharing was acknowledged. Members were urged to move away from unsustainable practices, seize the opportunities of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, invest in innovations and technologies and strengthen partnerships and institutions.

Regarding trade and investment, the conference emphasized the need to mainstream food security and nutrition in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) processes. Recommendations included de-risking investment, promoting private sector participation, coordinating trade and investment policies, and implementing measures defined in the AfCFTA. The conference recommended FAO to enhance technical support, promote peer learning and assist in designing social protection and market-oriented programmes.

The conference also highlighted the importance of inclusivity in agrifood systems, recognizing inequality and power imbalances as constraints. In particular, gender equality, youth empowerment and social justice were emphasized. FAO was recommended to introduce gender-responsive technologies, use profiling and targeting tools, collect gender-sensitive data and promote tripartite agreement schemes. Members were encouraged to address root causes of rural poverty and inequalities, safeguard Indigenous Peoples' food systems, invest in capacity development and promote peer learning and inclusivity.

During the experience sharing sessions on better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, Members and stakeholders exchanged powerful stories and success stories that could shape and transform agrifood systems. The session provided an interactive platform to discuss best practices and strategies for

achieving the vision of transforming agrifood systems and attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa.

Overall, the Regional Conference addressed various aspects of preventing future pandemics, recovering from COVID-19 impacts, restoring ecosystems, promoting trade and investment and ensuring inclusivity in agrifood systems. The recommendations highlighted the importance of multi-sector engagement, policy alignment, innovation, partnerships and addressing inequalities for a more sustainable and resilient future.

With regard to the next Regional Conference for Africa, I am pleased to inform you that the 33rd Session will be hosted by the Kingdom of Morocco from 15 to 19 April 2024.

I wish you all the best for the FAO Conference.

The Honourable Francisca Eneme Efua, Chairperson of the 32nd Session of the Regional Conference for Africa