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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA

Thirty-third Session

Rabat, the Kingdom of Morocco, 26-28 March 2024 and 18-20 April 2024

**Reporting on the recommendations of the 32nd Session of the Regional
Conference for Africa**

Executive Summary

This report presents a follow-up to the progress made on the recommendations stemming out of the 32nd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa (ARC), during 2022-2023.

Reporting on the Recommendations of the 32nd Session of ARC

The report shows the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the 32nd Session of ARC. The order and numbering indicated in the table corresponds to the Report of the 32nd Session of ARC. The recommendations which have been reproduced are followed by key points reflecting accomplishments.

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

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MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE CONFERENCE

III. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Matters	
A. One Health Platform: Prevention of future pandemics through effective cross-sectoral engagement	
Recommendations	Key Points – Accomplishments/Results achieved
18. The Regional Conference: [...] (vi) <u>recommended</u> FAO to:	
a. continue supporting Members to formalize and institutionalize national One Health platforms;	FAO supported 24 countries ¹ in enhancing capacities across various areas, including workforce training (500 persons trained), laboratories, biosafety and biosecurity practices and diseases surveillance; and assisted these countries in updating legislations, strategies and action plans, improving multisectoral coordination and prioritizing diseases.
b. review/align regional and national One Health policies to mainstream One Health approaches at all levels and strengthen One Health systems and healthy ecosystems;	In 2022, FAO mapped over 500 legislations relevant to antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in 15 countries ² mainly in West Africa and three regional economic communities (the Economic Community of West African States [ECOWAS], the West African Economic and Monetary Union [UEMOA], and the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel [CILSS]); and reviewed progress in rabies-death elimination (Quadripartite [QPT]+African Union [AU]+ Global Alliance for Rabies Control [GARC]). In 2023, FAO supported extending the regional One Health (OH) policy to investment plans, capacity development and resource mobilization efforts in Kenya and Senegal.

¹ Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania Zambia.

² Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte D'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

Documents can be consulted at www.fao.org

<p>c. support its Members to include One Health in UNDSF programming and resource mobilization efforts through innovative funding mechanisms, as well as reporting;</p>	<p>In 2022, FAO mobilized USD 12.7 million for AMR mitigation through Fleming Fund, AMR Multi-Partner Trust Fund and own resources in Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe, and to improve policies and capacities for the prevention and control of AMR.</p> <p>FAO, as an implementing entity, supported 31 countries,³ the Africa Union and Greater Virunga Landscape (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda) to prepare, review and ensure quality of the Pandemic Fund project proposals, and four national projects in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Togo and Zambia were successful in mobilizing funds, which together received USD 102 101 527. FAO worked with other United Nations (UN) organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to mobilize these funds. FAO continues working with the Pandemic Fund, the Team Europe Initiative, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and other donors and partners to mobilize additional resources to the region for the OH operationalization.</p>
<p>B. COVID-19 impacts on agrifood systems in Africa: policy priorities for inclusive and resilient recovery</p>	
<p>20. The Regional Conference: (v) <u>recommended</u> FAO to support Members to:</p>	
<p>a. address the short-term needs of vulnerable populations and of their agriculture and food-based livelihoods through social protection schemes, inputs supply and appropriate technologies, as well as promoting peer learning, best practices and approaches;</p>	<p>In Burkina Faso, FAO supported 60 134 vulnerable households through initiatives such as unconditional cash, cash for work, income-generating activities, livestock production and protection, cereals and vegetable production in the North, Centre-North, the Sahel, Boucle du Mouhoun and East regions amounting to USD 4 877 556.</p> <p>In South Sudan, FAO, with the support of Canada and Denmark, is mitigating the effects of COVID-19 to protect food security and livelihoods of vulnerable households in urban centres. In 2022, the Organization facilitated access to 22 500 vegetable production inputs targeting 500 vegetable producer groups.</p> <p>In 2022, FAO reached 20.6 million people in Africa with direct emergency and resilience assistance to households and individuals to save lives and livelihoods. The most significant beneficiary reach in Africa was in South Sudan (4.2 million people), Ethiopia (2.8 million people) and Somalia (2.8 million people).</p>
<p>b. implement response and recovery programmes for</p>	<p>FAO’s Regional Resilience, Emergency and Rehabilitation Office for West Africa/Sahel (REOWA), in collaboration with FAO’s Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER) and FAO Country Offices in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger,</p>

³ Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

<p>agrifood systems, vulnerability reduction measures, invest in storage and processing facilities, strengthen domestic markets and promote intra-regional trade in agrifood products;</p>	<p>coordinated the development of two response plans to contribute to addressing humanitarian and development challenges in the Liptako-Gourma (zone shared by Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger). The response plans targeted 1.63 million people over the period from August 2021 to December 2022, for a total cost of USD 73.4 million. USD 41.4 million were mobilized, by the end of June 2022, to assist 890 000 people, 40.6 percent of whom are women.⁴</p> <p>In 2022, the Subregional Office for Eastern Africa commissioned rapid appraisals on the impacts of COVID-19 on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the agrifood sector in East Africa, specifically in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda. The appraisals focused on five value chains namely, fisheries, horticulture, dairy, poultry, cereals and pulses.</p> <p>In South Sudan, through the Agricultural Markets, Value Addition and Trade Development Project (AMVAT) funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB), 7 200 m² of land has been acquired from the Juba City Council for the construction of a modern urban market that will bring together value chain actors from different parts of the country, particularly for Juba to have access to all food (local) and non-food items. A different infrastructure is being developed as part of the modern market providing a suitable business environment, especially for women and youth. This market is anticipated to financially sustain itself.</p>
<p>c. continue data collection and analysis to enhance risk understanding, guiding risk governance and decision-making for preparedness and the implementation of preventive and anticipatory actions; and</p>	<p>In 2022, FAO in collaboration with Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development published an analytical paper on “The COVID-19 consequences on child labour in agrifood systems” based on national and local studies conducted in Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia and Uganda. Age- and sex-disaggregated data were used to gain insights into the impact of pandemic containment restrictions, particularly school closures, on the increasing numbers of boys and girls in child labour in agrifood systems. Girls were particularly affected, possibly due to girls’ domestic and caregiving responsibilities and, in certain circumstances, the increased likelihood of girls being forced into early marriage. The paper shows the evidence available in various key commodities and value chains including cocoa, livestock and family-based agriculture.⁵</p> <p>FAO is promoting the uptake of locally available healthy and sustainable diets; it has produced a document that profiles African indigenous foods, and drafted a compendium that is currently being validated by stakeholders; it has trained Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme experts on “Ending hunger indicators”; it has adjusted and aligned some Sustainable Development Goal indicators and some FAO indicators; in partnership with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa , it has added new indicators for tracking obesity and cost of healthy diets; and it has supported the Pan-African Parliamentary Alliance (PAP) to train and sensitize their members on legal aspects regarding the right to healthy diets.</p>

⁴ <https://www.fao.org/3/cb7327fr/cb7327fr.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.fao.org/3/cc2136en/cc2136en.pdf>

<p>d. accelerate innovation and Africa’s digital transformation as a priority for the continent’s recovery and growth agenda, and build resilience and sustainability in food and agricultural systems;</p>	<p>In Burkina Faso, FAO conducted insecticide spraying using drones on 15 ha of vegetable crops, which benefitted internally displaced persons and 1 035 households in Mané. The objective of this operation was to improve the efficiency of spraying, while solving the problem of manpower shortage. The precision and homogeneity of the treatment with the help of drones have also ensured a better quality of the harvested product.</p> <p>In Uganda, FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries are implementing a project on “Blockchain and related digital technologies for sustainable agri-food value chain development in Uganda”. The project aims to increase knowledge and improve the capacity for the use of blockchain technology for agrifood value chain development by stakeholders in the public and private sectors.</p>
<p>Investing in ecosystem restoration for More efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems transformation in Africa</p>	
<p>22. The Regional Conference: (iv) <u>recommended</u> that FAO:</p>	
<p>a. continue its technical and resource mobilization support, through e.g. the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to Members for the formulation and implementation of large-scale restoration investment programmes toward increasing agricultural production and resilience of livelihoods; and</p>	<p>In 2022, the Subregional Office for West Africa and FAO GEF Unit, in consultation with the 15 FAO County Offices in West Africa, the FAO Regional Office for Africa and the GEF Operational Focal Points in West Africa, identified national and subregional project ideas, developed roadmaps for their formulation and two Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCPs) (TCP/SFW/3902 and TCP/SFW/3904) to support the formulation of projects on international water management and on climate resilient agropastoral farming systems to be submitted to the GEF. In 2023, 12 projects funded by GEF and GCF for a total value of USD 42 000 000 are “Operationally Active”, and 25 projects to be funded by GCF and GEF are in the pipeline, including 14 in “Active Pipeline” phase for a value of USD 80 000 000 and 11 in “Final Consultation” phase for a value of USD 160 000 000.</p>
<p>b. promote knowledge and experience sharing in all areas related to ecosystem restoration among communities, countries and regions;</p>	<p>FAO, under the project “Global transformation of Forest for People and Climate: Focus on West Africa” (GCP/GLO/977/SWE), supported Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in analysing and reviewing their forest-related legal frameworks to promote climate-resilient agriculture. The analyses focused on the main drivers of deforestation and land degradation, considering a community-based approach and transboundary issues. The reports on the following countries were finalized and validated in 2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Côte d’Ivoire - https://www.fao.org/3/cc7476fr/cc7476fr.pdf. b. Ghana - https://www.fao.org/3/cc8658en/cc8658en.pdf.

	<p>c. Guinea - https://www.fao.org/3/cc7877fr/cc7877fr.pdf.</p> <p>d. Liberia - https://www.fao.org/3/cc7992en/cc7992en.pdf.</p> <p>e. Sierra Leone - https://www.fao.org/3/cc9004en/cc9004en.pdf.</p> <p>Through the “One million cisterns for the Sahel” Initiative, FAO has contributed to reducing the vulnerability of 3 500 beneficiaries, including 2 900 women in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau with the dissemination and scale-up of good resilience practices, including the implementation of water cisterns technology. The cisterns technology has also enhanced local capacities (construction, use and maintenance) and access to water.</p>
Promotion of investment and trade for competitive agrifood systems: AfCFTA opportunities and progress	
<p>24. The Regional Conference: (iv) <u>recommended</u> FAO to:</p>	
<p>a. enhance its technical support to member countries and RECs in promoting investment and trade for improving agrifood systems in the context of the AfCFTA;</p>	<p>FAO is working with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat to implement a project focusing on advocacy and mainstreaming food security and agriculture in national trade policies, including working with state and non-state actors. This includes strengthening the institutional capacity of the AfCFTA Secretariat to implement the AfCFTA Agreement and conduct the outstanding negotiations; supporting MSMEs and informal cross-border traders in the implementation of the AfCFTA; and resource mobilization and investment strategies for industrial development and boosting intra-African trade.</p> <p>FAO is supporting Ghana, the host country of the AfCFTA Secretariat, to roll out the free trade area in the agricultural sector by building awareness of the opportunities and challenges of the AfCFTA for farmers and other economic operators, developing knowledge products, strengthening competent authorities, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, by building capacity, establishing a trade desk for farmers and other actors, and developing profiles of key commodities targeting the AfCFTA market.</p> <p>The Subregional Office for West Africa prepared a concept note for a programme titled “Supporting the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in West Africa for sustainable agrifood systems transformation and inclusive growth” to facilitate resources mobilization under <i>la Zone de libre-échange continentale africaine</i> (ZLECAF) and regional partnerships. The programme will support West African countries and sub-regional organizations to successfully implement the AfCFTA by accelerating policies and priority actions in agrifood systems and contribute to strengthening the subregion's food supply and export capacities, across Africa and globally, while fostering jobs and opportunities for an inclusive growth and shared prosperity for all citizens, as expected in the African Union's <i>Agenda 2063: The Africa We want</i>.</p>

	<p>Furthermore, FAO is contributing to the implementation of the AfCFTA through several other initiatives, including providing support to the private sector and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) on food control measures through regional strengthening of food safety standards for trade and public health promotion in three countries in West Africa (Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal) and five countries in East Africa (Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania) with financial support from the AfDB.</p> <p>FAO is supporting Rwanda in conducting a comprehensive performance evaluation of its National Cross-Border Trade Strategy (2012-2017) implementation and developing a new one, in line with the objectives of the AfCFTA and Rwanda's fifth Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation (PSTA-5).</p> <p>FAO's work on standards, food controls and safety to support the implementation of the AfCFTA includes support to the African Union Commission and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) efforts for trade facilitation and harmonization of food standards and controls in the region; support to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa trade facilitation programme, through capacity development on food safety risk assessment and facilitation of stakeholder consultation on priority food commodities (most traded) and the associated food controls in the region; support to Mali and Senegal in strengthening the processes for the development of international and regional food standards; and strengthening the capacity of Members to participate in the activities of Codex Alimentarius through the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund⁶.</p>
<p>c. support Members to design social protection and appropriate market-oriented programmes to enable smallholder producers, women, the youth and other vulnerable people to benefit from investment and trade opportunities;</p>	<p>In South Sudan, FAO, through the AfDB funded UTF/SSD/017/SSD and UTF/SSD/018/SSD projects, is ensuring that farmers and traders, particularly women and youth, have new skills and knowledge in production, post-harvest handling and agroprocessing operation and management. FAO mobilized 6 597 farmers to participate in AMVAT capacity development activities through 224 farmer groups and 27 cooperative societies, and in 2022, distributed quality and certified seeds to 6 957 farmer households.</p> <p>During the 6th edition of the YouthConnekt Africa Summit held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 8 to 12 December 2023, FAO organized a masterclass on Export Readiness for young agripreneurs. The masterclass fit under focus five of the Summit on "Enterprise Development: The Future of Africa's Borderless Commerce". The topics covered in the masterclass included business preparation, market development and market entry. The session attracted an audience of over 120 youths.</p>
<p>Placing women, youth and the poor at the forefront of inclusive agrifood systems</p>	
<p>27. The Regional Conference <u>recommended</u> that FAO assist Members to:</p>	

⁶ <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/about-codex/faowho-codex-trust-fund/pt/>

<p>i. introduce appropriate, accessible and gender-responsive digital technologies, targeted to meet the needs and address the specific constraints of the poorest and most vulnerable, so they can benefit from, and contribute to, inclusive and gender-responsive transformation;</p>	<p>In 2022 and 2023, through training sessions held in Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, and the United Republic of Tanzania, under the joint FAO- International Trade Centre (ITC programme <i>Empowering women and boosting livelihoods through agricultural trade</i> [EWAT]: <i>Leveraging the AfCFTA</i>, 247 women agripreneurs and traders have been introduced to business formalization and trade-related mobile apps and online portals. In 2023, the EWAT project reinforced the investment readiness knowledge and capacities of 36 women through the online course on “Raising Funds for your Business” developed by ITC SheTrades Initiative. The course provided guidance on how to assess one’s business financial needs, the variety of financial products and services, and how to approach capital providers. The EWAT project also facilitated discussions on free messaging platforms, allowing women agripreneurs and traders benefitting from the project to share information, experience and tips for business development.</p> <p>With support from the Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget, the Regional Office for Africa (RAF), supported Ghana, Malawi and Mali, through mobile digital solutions, in disseminating information and using the same medium to build the capacity of over 400 targeted stakeholders and communities members with tools to addressing hazardous child labour in fishing. This initiative opened up the countries to new partners to combating child labour agriculture. Significant to climate change actions, the ongoing initiative also provides timely voice calls on weather update for key beneficiaries to mitigate the issues of climate change.</p> <p>In 2022 and 2023, FAO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. continued to generate evidence on youth digital readiness in Eastern Africa⁷ to inform the regional African Youth Agripreneurs (AYA) platform. AYA, supported by FAO and the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation, offered opportunities for networking and peer learning to more than 4 500 youth members, of which 30 percent are women. Through the AYA ambassadors’ programme, 24 African young women and men have been empowered as digital community leaders in the agrifood systems, and in promoting training on growing businesses using Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. b. launched the virtual course “Agripreneurship 101” targeting African youth agripreneurs, reaching over 859 young people in its piloting, and leading trainees to become more entrepreneurially active, to adopt valuable business practices and to increase planning activities for their businesses. The course is available in both French and English.
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⁷ see <https://www.fao.org/3/cb8026en/cb8026en.pdf> and <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb9297en>

<p>ii. use and adopt profiling and targeting tools, complemented by robust intersectional gender, age and vulnerability analysis to support and sustain rural transformation processes in an efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable manner;</p>	<p>FAO is supporting country gender analysis of the agriculture and rural development sectors and has finalized Country Gender Assessments (CGAs) for Angola⁸ and the United Republic of Tanzania,⁹ and is currently supporting the development/update of CGAs for Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and South Africa.</p> <p>In early 2023, RAF, in collaboration with the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, developed and disseminated two knowledge products to support gender integration in agribusiness models in Africa: Inclusive is not enough: agrifood value chains need gender-responsive business development and The gender-responsive Business Model Canvas. These publications contribute to reinforcing FAO's knowledge production efforts on gender-responsive agribusiness and provide concrete recommendations to integrate gender in agrifood business development in Africa.</p>
<p>iii. collect and use science-based data and information to produce gender- and age-sensitive evidence to guide the development of effective, gender-responsive and inclusive policies and investments; and</p>	<p>FAO is promoting gender-responsive agricultural policy making, including on agrifood trade in the context of the AfCFTA, in National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIPs) processes and on gender and disaster-risk management, among others, through the execution of five national mapping exercises of gender data and indicators in agriculture in Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Senegal and United Republic of Tanzania, and three training workshops, targeting relevant actors, on improving the use of sex- and age-disaggregated data in agriculture under the Technical Cooperation project on supporting the use of sex disaggregated data in agriculture to make second generation NAIPs and Regional Agriculture Investment Plans (RAIPs) gender responsive.</p> <p>In 2022, FAO published methodological guidelines for assessing the state of youth financial inclusion in developing contexts,¹⁰ and these were informed by previous assessments conducted in Kenya and Uganda.</p> <p>As part of RAF's continued work on gender and climate change and disaster -risk management, and under FAO's Memorandum of Understanding with the African Risk Capacity, a gender analysis of the disaster -risk management sector was carried out in Senegal and validated with relevant national bodies and development partners in April 2023. This analysis presents the constraints and challenges that hinder gender responsiveness in disaster management in Senegal and provides recommendations to overcome them.</p> <p>In 2023, RAF supported the Democratic Republic of the Congo under the TCP/DRC/3901/C1 by providing gender technical support to the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children to develop and validate the National Women's Empowerment Strategy for the Agricultural Sector, which paves the way for gender-responsive policymaking, programming and investment in the country's agrifood systems.</p>

⁸ <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en?details=CC7104EN>

⁹ <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/CC4557EN>

¹⁰ <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc3272en>

<p>iv. promote tripartite agreement schemes that will facilitate agriculture financing and capital accessibility among women, youth and the poor without dependence on collaterals.</p>	<p>Under the EWAT programme, implemented in collaboration with ITC, FAO hosted two in-person investment-readiness boot camps for women agripreneurs in Ghana and Nigeria, in 2023, to strengthen their financial and managerial capacities, and increase their awareness on financial and non-financial services. FAO also hosted two gender-lens investing virtual round tables targeting financial institutions that facilitated dialogue on financial inclusion gaps and opportunities in Ghana and Nigeria. The programme also selected 20 boot camp participants (ten from each country) that were mentored with the RuralInvest tool to develop bankable and sustainable business plans to be presented to financiers in the region. These preliminary results demonstrate the efforts to promote gender-responsive financing for women-led MSMEs in the agrifood sector in the region.</p>
<p>III. Programme and Budget Matters</p>	
<p>Regional results, priorities, the <i>four betters</i> and the Sustainable Development Goals</p>	
<p>32. The Regional Conference: (vii) <u>recommended</u> FAO to:</p>	
<p>a. support Members to implement diligently its Strategic Framework defined by the four Regional Priorities in the Region, the four accelerators and all cross-cutting themes, as relevant to national contexts; and</p>	<p>FAO supports Members in developing their Country Programming Framework, ensuring alignment with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and Regional Priorities. FAO also provides financial support for this endeavour. All new projects undergo a thorough review by the Programme and Project Review Committee to ensure their relevance and alignment with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31.</p> <p>In 2022, the inaugural Hand-in-Hand Initiative Forum brought together representatives from various countries, including seven African countries. During this event, participating countries showcased investment opportunities with substantial social and economic impacts on multilateral development banks and agribusinesses. Prospective investors also had the chance to familiarize themselves with regional initiatives.</p> <p>As a follow-up to the integrated work planning process, RAF has created quality assurance criteria, restructured processes at various levels, and developed tools to improve data quality. These improvements have enhanced the quality of reporting in 2023, increased visibility of country work, and strengthened monitoring and evaluation systems in the region in the long term.</p> <p>FAO has conducted the Stakeholder Survey, a new exercise aiming to collect perception-based feedback from key stakeholder groups at country level, to assess the effectiveness of FAO's delivery. The first survey has collected information relative to the first biennium of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, measuring the 2-year period 2022-2023. The Stakeholder Survey serves to help "bridge" the gap between FAO's outputs and intended outcomes. This is</p>

	in line with the approach to Monitoring and Reporting under the new Strategic Framework, as approved by Members in the Medim Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 and the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25.
b. double its effort to support inclusiveness especially with respect to women, youth, and other vulnerable populations in the implementation of the Regional Priorities.	<p>FAO continues to integrate gender considerations into all aspects of its work, including policy development, programme design, and monitoring and evaluation. FAO has developed and promoted gender-sensitive indicators and tools to track progress towards gender equality and inclusiveness. Gender, youth and inclusion are critical areas to take into account across all of FAO's programmatic work to adhere to the principle of leaving no one behind.</p> <p>Under the <i>Empowering women and boosting livelihoods through agricultural trade: Leveraging the AfCFTA</i> programme, implemented in collaboration with ITC, FAO contributed to increasing trade facilitation knowledge and skills of more than 400 women agripreneurs and traders, through capacity building sessions and investment-readiness boot camps for women, and gender-lens investing virtual round tables targeting financial institutions.</p> <p>Through the "Empowering young women and men in agribusiness to spearhead inclusive rural transformation in Africa" project under the FAO Regional Office for Africa's Decent Employment in Agrifood Systems Programme, over 350 youth-led agribusinesses received capacity building financial literacy, investment readiness, access to grants, technologies and markets in Ghana, Kenya and Zambia, in partnership with local incubation hubs. Youth advocacy and participation in policy forums were also enhanced leveraging on FAO's flagship youth in agribusiness networks and platforms.</p>
Update on the development of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy	
35. The Regional Conference <u>recommended</u> FAO to:	
i. consider certain elements in the Strategy, including the specificities of local contexts and disparities between countries in the region, facilitate access and technology transfer, in particular intellectual property rights, capitalize on local knowledge and pay attention to the role of small-scale producers, small and	<p>FAO's e-locust and FAMEWS digital platforms, for monitoring and eradication of desert locusts and fall armyworms respectively, have been rolled out in Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In the Sudano-Sahelian belt, in countries such as Chad, FAO is implementing activities to improve land management and help build capacity on water productivity using FAO's platform to monitor Water Productivity through Open-access of Remotely sensed derived data. In Mozambique, FAO has been implementing a grant from the European Union to develop and operate an e-voucher intervention focused on access to agricultural inputs. In partnership with governments (in Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique and South Sudan), the FAO's Identification Delivery and Empowerment Application digital platform is being leveraged to create farmers' digital registries in order to provide them with inputs, cash or other resilience support, more efficiently and effectively.</p>

medium-sized enterprises, women and youth;	
ii. focus on providing analyses of critical advances in science and technology and the resulting innovation, as well as on foresight exercises on key issues;	Under the 1000 Digital Villages Initiative (DVI) in Africa, FAO is implementing pilot activities in Liberia, Senegal, and Zimbabwe (where three localities will benefit from digital agriculture services in the framework of a joint UN project). Key findings from seven country scoping assessment reports have been synthesized into recommendations for effective implementation of the DVI and similar rural digital undertakings. The DVI aims at accelerating rural transformation, leveraging digital tools.
v. support Members to develop appropriate policies and partnerships, to strengthen capacities, including those of agricultural extension systems, and to mobilize resources for the implementation of the Strategy at country level.	<p>FAO is supporting capacity strengthening of the national agricultural innovation system (NAIS) in Burkina Faso and, under the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP)-AIS project, has conducted an assessment of the NAIS to understand the policy action needed in the short term, and to propose an overall long-term strategic framework for building the capacity of the NAIS actors. The results of the assessment have been published,¹¹ and a strategic and policy framework for strengthening capacities to innovate at the national level have been proposed in a policy brief entitled <i>Comment créer un environnement plus favorable à l'innovation agricole au Burkina Faso? Une approche par le renforcement des capacités du système national d'innovation agricole</i>.¹²</p> <p>RAF is implementing its strategy designed to better provide digital agriculture support to Members and is providing advice to FAO Country Office teams and country stakeholders on how to effectively adopt digital tools for food system transformation, and on emerging digital agriculture innovations. This has included technical advice for the development of the African Union's Digital Agriculture Strategy (DAS) and Implementation Plan 2024-2030¹³; technical support for digital agriculture needs assessment and landscape analysis in Madagascar; and technical contributions to the development of national digital agriculture strategies in Ghana and Niger (in liaison with the FAO Office of Innovation).</p>
Update on the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change	
37. The Regional Conference: (vii) <u>recommended</u> FAO to:	

¹¹ <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/fr/c/cc3824fr>

¹² <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/fr/c/cc2700fr>

¹³ <https://au.int/en/documents/20240212/au-digital-agriculture-strategy-das-and-implementation-plan-2024-2030>

<p>b. use the role and comparative advantage of FAO to support learning and exchange across countries in the region and globally on new innovations, technologies and partnerships to address climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation, and scaling up adoption of these measures through facilitating access to climate finance and providing guidance to processes such as the Koro Nivia Joint Work on Agriculture;</p>	<p>The Subregional Office for West Africa coordinated and facilitated training on the carbon benefits of forest and landscape restoration, and contribution to nationally determined contributions, using the EX-Ante Carbon-balance Tool¹⁴ and the Nationally Determined Contribution Expert Tool for more than 80 participants from the 15 ECOWAS countries during a webinar held in November 2022.</p>
<p>d. support and strengthen capacities of Members to establish early warning and meteorological systems, and of stakeholders including small-scale farmers to use climate information and data for better management of their activities</p>	<p>Through funding from Switzerland under the OSRO/SSD/006/SWI project, FAO in South Sudan has completed and disseminated the land cover map for South Sudan, which is important for sustainable management of natural resources in the country. The project also funded weekly radio programmes, reaching more than 200 000 listeners, and providing farmers with weather updates and guidance on proper management of agriculture, livestock and fisheries in their context, within South Sudan.</p>

¹⁴ <https://www.fao.org/in-action/epic/ex-act-tool/suite-of-tools/ex-act/es/>

IV. Other Matters

Any other matters

59. The Regional Conference:
(v) recommended FAO to:

e. support Members on food fortification

FAO, in collaboration with the European Commission, has supported Sudan in improving the nutritional status of vulnerable populations across the country, particularly women, girls and children, through increased availability, access and consumption of fortified foods, micronutrient powders and bio-fortified crops; creating an enabling legislative and policy environment for food fortification in Sudan, through improved governance, coordination, evidence generation and enhanced capacities for advocacy and law enforcement; developing the private sector's capacity to produce fortified foods, in line with national standards, distribution of micronutrient powder, and production of bio-fortified crops; and promoting healthy food choices and increasing the demand for fortified food, micronutrient powder, nutrient-rich crops and bio-fortified varieties of crops.