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Developments in *Fora* of Importance for the Mandate of FAO

Executive Summary

In keeping with established practice, the Council is informed of developments in other *fora* of importance for FAO's mandate. Presentations will be made on the following topics at the 155th Session of Council:

1. Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
2. Outcome of the 22nd Conference of the Parties (COP22);
3. Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III);
4. Development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction;
5. The Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition - Foresight report: Food systems and diets: facing the challenges of the 21st century;
6. High level meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) (Nairobi, 28 November – 1 December 2016); and
7. High-Level Segment of the 13th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Suggested action by the Council

The above topics are presented to the 155th Session of the Council for information only.



I. Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

1. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in September 2015, came into force in January 2016. The FAO Council has been provided with regular updates on FAO's engagement in the Post-2015 process and negotiations, including on the preliminary phases of engagement, in particular on the work being conducted on the global SDG indicators.
2. FAO's Governing Bodies and Technical Committees have also contributed to the follow-up and review architecture through submission to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), mandated to consolidate global reporting, and for the conduct of political follow-up and review. The HLPF, hosted under the auspices of United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), met for the second time in July this year and the inputs provided by FAO on the global monitoring framework, including the inputs provided by its Governing Bodies and Technical Committees, were taken into consideration by the decision makers participating in the HLPF.
3. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the main framework for country programming used by all stakeholders, and in particular, for shaping UN activities at country level.
4. FAO will be providing a strong contribution in supporting countries in three main areas: i) to end hunger, malnutrition and poverty; ii) to enable sustainable development through its Common Vision for Sustainable Food and Agriculture; and to responsibly and effectively address climate change. The Organization will also be providing policy assistance, as well as assisting countries in monitoring SDGs with expanded responsibilities on global reporting on progress.

II. Outcome of the 22nd Conference of the Parties (COP22)

5. The 22nd Conference of the Parties (COP22) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC - the Framework Convention) was held in Marrakech, Morocco from 7-18 November 2016. This was also the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 1) which came into force on 4 November 2016, after it was ratified by about 55 Parties to the Framework Convention accounting in total for at least 55 percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Marrakech was an important transitional moment, pivoting from the years of negotiation that produced the Paris Agreement to a new phase focused on implementation. The Conference successfully demonstrated to the world that the implementation of the Paris Agreement is underway and the constructive spirit of multilateral cooperation on climate change continues. FAO will continue to support countries as they move forward to implementing the Paris Agreement.
6. Agriculture, sustainable development and food security featured prominently during COP22, as reflected in the Marrakech Action Proclamation for our Climate and Sustainable Development¹ adopted at COP22, which states: *"We call for all Parties to strengthen and support efforts to eradicate poverty, ensure food security and to take stringent action to deal with climate change challenges in agriculture."* This reinforces the language in the Paris Agreement and under the Framework Convention to ensure that food security is not threatened in responding to climate change exigencies. The Proclamation also makes strong linkages to supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.
7. At the request of the UNFCCC High-Level Global Climate Champions, FAO co-organized three high-level thematic action events on Forestry, Oceans, and Agriculture and Food Security. All contributed to the final outcome document, the "Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action",² which is complementary for negotiations among Parties, and serves as indicative priority focus areas for action that will be advanced in 2017. FAO will continue to support and engage with the High-Level Champions in advancing the Marrakech Partnership to support climate action undertaken by Parties and non-Party stakeholders.

¹ http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/marrakech_nov_2016/application/pdf/marrakech_action_proclamation.pdf

² http://unfccc.int/files/paris_agreement/application/pdf/marrakech_partnership_for_global_climate_action.pdf

8. The Paris Agreement calls for a significant boost of transparency of action, including for measuring and accounting emissions' reductions, the provision of climate finance, and technology development and transfer. In this context, a crucial outcome of the Marrakech climate conference was to move forward on writing the rule book, or operational manual, of the Paris Agreement.

9. Among the broad range of decisions adopted by COP22, it is worth noting the following outcomes and initiatives of relevance for FAO's work in support of countries:

- a) The NDC³ Partnership, a coalition of developing and developed countries and international institutions launched at COP22 and joined by FAO. This partnership will work together to ensure countries receive the technical and financial support they need to speedily meet their climate and sustainable development goals.
- b) The Adaptation Committee and the Least Developed Countries Expert Group were requested to continue their respective engagement with the Green Climate Fund that approved up to USD 3 million per country at its 13th Meeting of the Board, to support the formulation of national adaptation plans and/or other national adaptation planning processes.
- c) Regarding long-term climate finance, the COP noted the increase in adaptation finance to-date as identified in the 2016 biennial assessment and overview of climate finance flows, and the need to continue efforts to significantly scale up adaptation finance, while stressing the need to strive for a greater balance between adaptation and mitigation finance. In this regard, it recognized that country-driven processes for the assessment of adaptation needs in developing countries are fundamental for scaling up adaptation finance; and that the nationally determined contributions and adaptation communications could constitute a good opportunity for supporting the scaling up of adaptation finance.
- d) A new five-year framework under the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage (WIM) will deal with impacts that are not addressed through planned adaptation, including displacement, migration and human mobility and comprehensive risk management.
- e) Countries operationalized the Paris Agreement's "Paris Committee on Capacity Building" whose objective is to address gaps and needs, both current and emerging, in implementing capacity-building in developing country Parties and further enhance capacity-building efforts, including with regard to coherence and coordination in capacity-building activities under the Convention.
- f) Regarding Gender and Climate, governments took an important step towards achieving their goals on gender balance and gender-responsive climate policy by agreeing an extended work programme that includes civil society, businesses and others.

III. Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)

10. The Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) took place in Quito, Ecuador, from 17 to 20 October 2016). In line with the bi-decennial cycle (1976, 1996 and 2016), HABITAT III was the first and will be the only global conference on urban issues during the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

11. In the context of the current global urbanization process and the forecasted 70 per cent of urban population by 2050, the outcome document of the conference, the New Urban Agenda (NUA), is envisaged to catalyse local implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change (COP21).

12. While the first zero draft of the New Urban Agenda did not adequately address food related issues, FAO in collaboration with WFP and IFAD, ensured that food security and nutrition were integrated into the document which now recognizes the importance of: i) integrating the food and

³ Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)

nutrition needs of urban residents, particularly the poor, in urban development planning; ii) promoting the coordination of food policies with other urban policies across urban and rural areas; and iii) also considering the food-water-energy nexus.⁴

13. Urban food security and nutrition challenges fall within the mandate of FAO and the Organization is therefore optimally positioned to be a collaborator for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, addressing food security and nutrition, and rural-urban linkages, by promoting sustainable food systems.⁵

IV. Development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction

14. In November 2004, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 59/24 and established an Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group (WG) to study the feasibility of an implementing agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ WG). The BBNJ WG agreed on a set of recommendations provided in Resolution 69/292 of June 2015 to develop an implementing agreement on BBNJ. This resolution established a Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) to make substantive recommendations to the UN General Assembly on the elements of a draft text of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea by end 2017.

15. The PrepCom is considering elements of the “2011 Package” identified in the Annex of Resolution 66/231, namely: marine genetic resources, including questions on the sharing of benefits; measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas; and environmental impact assessments, capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.

16. The first and second session of the PrepCom were held in New York from 28 March to 8 April 2016 and from 26 August to 9 September 2016, respectively. The sessions considered the objective and scope of an internationally legally binding instrument and its relationship with other instruments, guiding approaches and principles, as well as the elements of the “2011 Package”. The second session of the PrepCom started a new informal working group on cross-cutting issues.

17. For the BBNJ, the scope of these discussions has the potential to impact global fisheries management in the areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). In particular, the proposed international legally binding instrument could have significant implications for existing instruments and institutional arrangements, such as regional fishery bodies, as well as on the ‘freedom’ of fishing on the high seas, marine scientific research and the Common Heritage of Mankind.

V. The Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition - Foresight report: Food systems and diets: facing the challenges of the 21st century

18. The Foresight Report: [*Food systems and diets: facing the challenges of the 21st century*](#), of the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition was launched at FAO on 23 September 2016. The report was commissioned by the Global Panel, an independent group of influential experts with a commitment to tackling global challenges in food and nutrition security, in 2015 and considers the diverse challenges that decision-makers face as they try to ensure healthy and nutritious diets in the coming years, inter alia through action and investment to create food systems that promote health and deliver quality diets. The report highlights that an estimated 3 billion people across 193 countries have low-quality diets which contribute to poor nutrition and health outcomes, while also slowing economic and development progress. The report provides a guide for governments and decision-makers to change course through action and investment to create food systems that promote health and deliver quality diets.

⁴ Para 123 of the Draft Document of the New Urban Agenda

⁵ Par. 95, 164,165 and 171 of the Draft Document of the New Urban Agenda

19. Without immediate action, the situation is set to worsen over the next 20 years as powerful drivers of change such as population growth, climate change and urbanization converge on our food systems. Without significant changes in policies and investments by 2030, the number of overweight and obese people will have increased from 1.33 billion in 2005 to 3.28 billion, or one-third of the projected global population. This is a major concern as no country to date has successfully reversed growth in obesity once it has been allowed to develop.

20. The report calls on governments, donors and global partners to put food systems at the centre of global action, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This important report provides a timely opportunity for the FAO to increase its efforts to assist Members to promote and improve nutrition-sensitive food systems as the sustainable solution to hunger and malnutrition.

VI. High level meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) (Nairobi, 28 November – 1 December 2016)

21. The Second High-Level Meeting (HLM2) of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 28 November to 1 December 2016. FAO is a member of the GPEDC core group working on preparations for the Plenary meeting on “Inclusive and effective development co-operation – lessons learned from South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation”. FAO is also jointly participating with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the governments of Germany and Indonesia in the organization of a side event entitled “Inclusive development partnerships for the future”.

22. The HLM2 aims to: take stock of the implementation of development effectiveness principles and commitments; provide a learning space on development effectiveness, showcasing successful examples; identify innovative approaches to sustainable development that can be scaled up; and position the Global Partnership to effectively contribute to implementation of the SDGs and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The Nairobi Outcome Document, based on an inclusive participatory process, will help to shape how existing and new development actors can partner to implement Agenda 2030 and attain the SDGs, especially with regard to SDG17 “Partnerships for Goals” focused explicitly on development cooperation.

VII. High-Level Segment of the 13th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

23. The 13th Conference of the Parties (COP13) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (Cancun, Mexico, 4-17 December 2016) will address *inter alia* mainstreaming and the integration of biodiversity across relevant sectors, including agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Mexico, as host country, will hold a high-level segment from 2 to 3 December 2016, which will focus on the same issue.

24. The high-level segment is expected to adopt the Cancun Declaration on Mainstreaming the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for well-being⁶. The Declaration stresses the important role of biodiversity in offering solutions to pressing development and societal challenges the world is currently facing. On the other hand, it also expresses concerns about the negative impacts on biodiversity caused by degradation and fragmentation of ecosystems, unsustainable land use changes and pollution, overexploitation of natural resources and other factors. The Declaration calls for mainstreaming of biodiversity across all sectors, for the adoption of integrated approaches and the reduction of the global ecological footprint. The Declaration also encourages “closer cooperation and synergies among relevant organizations of the United Nations system *inter alia* the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Tourism Organization, multilateral environmental agreements, and other organizations and international initiatives and processes, including at the regional level.”

⁶ <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/2016/cop-13-hls/documents>

25. FAO contributed during the preparatory phase and will contribute during COP13 and the high-level segment through advice, keynote presentations and specific inputs and contributions on issues of relevance to food and agriculture. COP13 and its high-level segment provide an important opportunity for the Organization to showcase the role of the agricultural sectors in managing natural resources and biodiversity in a sustainable manner, taking full account of the various ecosystem functions that underpin agricultural production. The meeting provides an opportunity for FAO to strengthen strategic alliances for sustainable food systems and agriculture and to offer FAO as a neutral platform for governments to negotiate and agree on global policies needed to integrate biodiversity across food and agriculture.