

175th Session of the FAO Council

Sub-Item 8.5: Report of the 37th Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East (Amman, Jordan, Senior Officers Meeting 5-8 February 2024 and Ministerial Session 4-5 March 2024)

Under the theme of “Accelerating Transformation of Agrifood Systems in the Near East and North Africa” the 37th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC 37) was organized in two parts: the Senior Officers Meeting (SOM), organized virtually from 5 to 8 February 2024, and the Ministerial Session, conducted in-person in Amman, Jordan, with virtual participation, from 4 to 5 March 2024.

The Regional Conference was attended by 335 participants, including ministers, deputy ministers, and senior officers from the ministries of agriculture, water, environment and health from 19 countries – including 17 Members of the region, as well as permanent representatives of governments to FAO, FAO staff and representatives of regional organizations, the private sector, civil society, and academia.

NERC 37 elected H.E. Eng. Khaled Hneifat, Minister for Agriculture of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as Chairperson of the Ministerial Meeting; Dr Nizar Haddad, Director-General of the National Agriculture Research Centre, Jordan, as Chairperson of the SOM; and Mr Zaid Al-Ani, Counsellor, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Rome, as Rapporteur.

FAO Director-General, Dr QU Dongyu, and H. E. Dr Bisher Khasawneh, Prime Minister of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan attended the inaugural ceremony of the Ministerial Meeting and delivered statements. H.E Eng. Khaled Hneifat and Mr Abdulhakim Elwaer, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative, FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, provided opening remarks at the SOM.

While discussing *the Strategic Framework, Priorities, and Results in the Region*, NERC 37:

- valued FAO’s efforts towards restructuring the Regional and Subregional Offices; the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the NERC 36; the results achieved under the four Regional Priorities within the overarching FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31; and the strategic initiatives by FAO such as the Regional Leadership Development Academy and the observatories on food security and nutrition at regional, subregional and country levels;
- endorsed the four Regional Priorities for the 2024-2025 biennium; and
- urged FAO to fully incorporate the Biennial Theme 2024–25 “Water resources management for the four betters: better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

The Regional Conference supported proposed measures and models to adjust FAO Country Offices to better respond to Members’ expectations for FAO’s support and delivery under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31; endorsed the overarching guiding principles to guide the strengthening of FAO work at country level; endorsed maintaining the overall regional budgetary allocation to the FAO Country Office network; and requested FAO to proceed with a transparent consultation process with countries for the progressive implementation of the proposed arrangements.

NERC 37 appreciated the progress made in the implementation of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy and FAO Strategy on Climate Change, and recommended FAO to continue monitoring, learning, adapting, and refining the implementation of the Science and Innovation Strategy to respond to the context-specific needs of Members.

His Excellency Eng. Khaled Hneifat

Chairperson of the 37th Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East

Minister for Agriculture of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan