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Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals/ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Executive Summary

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda constitutes a shared global vision towards sustainable development of an unprecedented scale, ambition and approach.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) fully recognize the centrality of food and agriculture to sustainable development. Eradicating hunger and poverty and addressing the needs of rural populations are a requisite to attaining the whole set of goals while leaving no one behind. Although member countries hold primary responsibility to achieve the 2030 Agenda, the UN system has committed in the 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) to deliver more coherent and integrated system-wide support to respond to emerging needs from countries.

FAO Technical and Governing bodies discussed the 2030 Agenda, identifying priorities for the Organization to support implementation of the SDGs at all levels. This process helped sharpen the focus of FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework and Medium Term Plan 2018-21 on the SDGs, adopting a holistic approach to address complex and interconnected challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda.

At the outset, countries are looking for suitable institutional arrangements to design coherent policies and ways to deal with the complexity of the 2030 Agenda through manageable policy programmes.

The 2030 Agenda also envisages a broad set of means of implementation where FAO can play a catalytic role, in particular on knowledge transfer and innovation, innovative financial mechanisms and leveraging effective partnerships.

To facilitate mutual accountability, one of the pillars of the 2030 Agenda, countries have also committed to a comprehensive monitoring system in accordance with the broad policy areas covered by the Agenda. In this regard, this document provides an update on the status of the SDG indicators for which the Organization is custodian agency and the statistical support provided to countries in overcoming monitoring challenges.



This document provides an overview on the engagement of FAO in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and shows readiness and effectiveness to deliver support to its implementation, follow-up and review.

Suggested action by the Conference

The Conference is invited to:

- a) Take note of the centrality of food and agriculture in achieving the SDGs and FAO's work, within its mandate and Strategic Framework, to provide norms, concepts, tools and data in support of efforts by Members and their partners to conduct national assessments, select targets, and develop national policies, programmes, and investments to achieve the SDGs;
- b) Review progress made in the development of SDG indicators and the establishment of FAO's role in SDG monitoring, and take note of the complementary nature of national and global indicators, whereby global SDG indicators provide the basis for global monitoring and reporting;
- c) Provide guidance to FAO as regards the implementation of statistical capacity development initiatives on a wider scale in support of SDG monitoring;
- d) Request FAO to continue to work with Members States to review progress on the 2030 Agenda, including cross-cutting issues, feeding into and being aligned with the cycle of the High-level Political Forum, according to the modalities established by the General Assembly;
- e) Request FAO to keep Members regularly informed of the Secretariat's work in support to the achievement of the SDGs, through periodical reports to the Technical Committees and Governing Bodies.

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I. The 2030 Agenda

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in September 2015 as “a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity”¹. The aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for the role of food and agriculture are bold and transformative: an end to extreme poverty, hunger and all forms of malnutrition; a transition to sustainable stewardship and inclusive development of agriculture, natural resources and food systems – all combined with a commitment to combat and build resilience to climate change. These ambitions are rooted in the 2030 Agenda’s promise to “leave no one behind”.
2. The 2030 Agenda offers a vision of development that contrasts sharply with the recent past. Drawing on lessons learned from the MDGs, it recognizes the interdependencies among issues and problems, and calls for holistic, integrated approaches to development that fully reflect the three dimensions – economic, social and environmental –of sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda provides broader policy space, especially for food and agriculture, and has greatly increased the responsibilities and expected roles of FAO as a specialized agency helping Members address many of the most fundamental challenges of the SDGs.
3. The 2030 Agenda presents sustainable development as a universal challenge – and a collective responsibility – for all countries, and for all actors. It calls for new approaches to policies, programmes, and investments, and calls upon governments and their partners to undertake new ways of working together across sectors and disciplines, underpinned by international cooperation and mutual accountability.
4. A distinguishing characteristic of the 2030 Agenda is its expansive view of the requisite “means of implementation” (MoI) – ensuring access to finance and investment, but also to markets, technology and knowledge sharing, capacity development, and policy support. Its expanded reliance upon multi-stakeholder partnerships as a primary means for delivering the necessary resources is both a significant departure from the past and a formidable challenge for the whole UN system whose role must meet the new demands as enablers of action by others.
5. A complementary, but closely related, challenge is to build a broad and comprehensive mutual accountability system capable of directing the attention of governments and other actors to the requirements of success, of promoting awareness and inclusive dialogue at all levels, of tracking implementation as well as measuring impact, and of fostering inclusive and comprehensive political follow-up.
6. Although achievement of the SDGs is a collective responsibility of the Member States as a whole, the 2030 Agenda clearly recognizes that states are in very different situations, with different priority needs, capabilities and resources. The broad scope and high ambitions of the Agenda, including the need for greater data disaggregation, give rise to a complex, multi-layered global monitoring system. Global monitoring and reporting demands considerable commitment of resources and attention, and will inevitably take some time, but many Member States have already demonstrated willingness to establish a system of genuine, mutual accountability.²
7. This paper elaborates on the relation of food and agriculture and the SDGs, and FAO’s engagement supporting integrated and cross-cutting policies, the means of implementation, UN coordination arrangements, monitoring of progress, and follow-up and review process.

¹ “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” September 2015.

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030_Agenda_for_Sustainable_Development_web.pdf

² In 2017, 44 countries will present National Voluntary Reviews in the High level Political Forum, the apex UN forum for political follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. The number and distribution of participating countries, including from all regions and all income levels, confirms the universality of the 2030 Agenda.

II. Food and Agriculture and the SDGs

8. Food and agriculture are critical to achieving the SDGs, allowing for integrated approaches and addressing challenges of sustainable development in its three dimensions. In fact, the sustainable development of food and agriculture systems is recognized as a key enabler for SDG implementation, and identified as priority cross-cutting issue in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, identifying the financial and non-financial means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda, and complementing SDG 17, dedicated to the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development and Means of Implementation.

9. A strong focus on rural development ensures that no one is left behind, contributing to eradication of poverty, still mainly concentrated in rural areas; sustainable rural development also contributes to environmental sustainability, substantially contributing to restoration and sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity, as well as ensuring economic growth, with agriculture development identified as the most effective. In fact, although agriculture can be the lead sector for overall growth in the agriculture-based countries, it has been vastly underused for development.³

10. FAO's Strategic Objective programmes promote holistic approaches to food security, nutrition, poverty eradication and sustainable management and use of natural resources and ecosystems, providing tools for integrated implementation of SDGs, and allowing FAO to deliver comprehensive support to its Members. This is the result of FAO's full engagement in Post-2015 negotiations, with the knowledge and expertise of FAO fully recognized by negotiators and equally fully reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

11. FAO has reviewed its Strategic Framework and prepared its Medium Term Plan 2018-21⁴ to ensure that all of FAO's work is harmonized with the 2030 Agenda. The work of FAO's five Strategic Programmes contributes to 40 SDG targets measured by 52 SDG indicators, with a focus on SDG 2 ("zero hunger") as well as SDGs 1 ("no poverty"), 8 ("decent work and economic growth"), 13 ("climate action"), 14 ("life below water") and 15 ("life on land").

III. Policy dialogue at global, regional and country levels.

12. The SDGs represent a paradigm shift in sustainable development, moving from a silo approach across the different areas of development to closely interconnected and intrinsically multidimensional set of Goals requiring integrated and cross-cutting policies and institutional arrangements at country, regional and global levels. The breadth of knowledge, experience and expertise required also implies the need to mobilize a broad range of competences and the participation of all actors.

13. In this regard, countries are facing challenges in ensuring strategic country planning in relation to the SDGs, especially in determining national priorities, and allowing for greater integration of sectoral policies and strategies, identifying nationally-tailored targets, and establishing concrete roadmaps, as well as national modalities for monitoring of progress and evaluating results.

14. The UN System is called to support global, regional and national processes with increased coordination, facilitate dialogue among state and non-state stakeholders, and foster coherent policies and programmes at global, regional, national and sub-national levels, allowing for integrated implementation of the SDGs. This is particularly relevant for specialized agencies, who have the strongest expertise on policy, normative and institutional development in the UN System.

15. FAO is fully-engaged in deploying its expertise, in close collaboration with the UN and other stakeholders, in particular to facilitate policy dialogue for increased coherence at global, regional and national levels (see Section V).

³ World Bank Group. 2008. World Development Report. Agriculture for Development.

⁴ C 2017/3 and C 2017/7

Country level

16. A key challenge is to support country efforts to define new national ambitions in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda. Both developed and developing countries are expected to use the new goals, targets and indicators to monitor their progress. Many countries are putting in place innovative institutional arrangements reflecting a “whole of Government” approach. These new coordination entities vary from inter-ministerial committees/commissions, National Councils for Sustainable Development, oversight by the Ministries of Planning, Finance or the Prime Minister’s offices themselves.

17. In most cases, the SDG implementation platforms also extend to parliament, local authorities, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders. National Statistics Offices (NSOs) have also been gearing up for the monitoring tasks and face challenges (see Section VI).

18. Governments, through the above-mentioned institutions, are requesting the active participation and engagement of the UN Country Teams where FAO has found strong synergies with other UN actors, especially the Rome-based Agencies.

19. In this context, FAO engages in the SDG process at country level principally through its country programmes. FAO country priorities are agreed with governments and reflected in a new generation of Country Programme Frameworks (CPFs) meant to increasingly align with the SDGs and form the basis for resource mobilization and programme design.

20. Typically, priorities might include poverty eradication, tackling food insecurity and under-nutrition, sustainable use of natural resources, resilience and adaptation to climate change. Through active engagement with the institutional innovations put in place by countries, FAO’s efforts at country level aim to achieve greater policy coherence by increasing governments’ capacities to foster synergies across the many policy areas where FAO has both mandate and capacity.

Box 1: Examples

In **Pakistan**, in early 2016 FAO began working with the federal and provincial governments on a strategy to build SDG policy ownership across the country. Consultations were first held with the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms, the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, the parliamentary task force on SDGs, governments in four provinces and three regions, and related UN agencies. In May 2016 a five-step Road Map was developed to integrate the food and nutrition security, agriculture-and natural resources-related SDGs into the planning process. This approach can serve as a model to be used by other members of the Pakistan UN Country Team to develop similar road maps on other topics such as health or education.

In **Kenya**, FAO is supporting the Government to adopt a more coherent, inclusive and evidence-based policy formulation process that will provide the necessary enabling environment for sector transformation and growth. This is currently being done through support to the formulation of the Agriculture Growth and Transformation Strategy and National Agriculture Investment Plan (AGTS/NAIP). The strategy will provide a framework for the national implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by identifying corresponding national goals, targets and indicators of key food security and value chain priorities on which the country's agricultural sector planning and investments would be based.

Support is also planned towards strengthening human and organizational capacities of government staff, institutions and other stakeholders through training workshops on identifying and consolidating national, regional and global targets, as well as associated M&E systems. As the strategy and NAIP will provide the basis of sector planning at national and county levels, it is expected to play a major role in mobilizing resources for the sector.

El Salvador is one of 14 countries with accelerated implementation of the SDGs. FAO in El Salvador has supported the government with actions such as:

- a) Training officers and high authorities from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock(MAG), the Ministry of Environment (MARN), the Technical Secretariat and Planning of the Presidency (STPP), the National Council of Food and Nutritional Security (CONASAN), and from local governments to prepare the Five Year Development Plan (PQD 2014-2019), and Institutional Strategic Plans. Together with the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO has developed in 2017 the national strategies on Forestry, Climate Change and Watershed Management that constitute effective public policy tools to achieve the SDGs.
- b) Participating in, and supporting, the establishment of, the National Sustainable Development Agenda for the medium term (to 2019) and the active engagement with the National Council for Environmental Sustainability and Vulnerability where FAO has an advisory role.
- c) Undertaking awareness-raising training and communication activities aimed at the general public, journalists and communicators from the Salvadoran Network of Communicators on Food and Nutritional Security (REDCOSAN), as well as the organizations of the Permanent Forum on Food and Nutritional Security.

Regional level

21. Regional coordination of SDG implementation and monitoring plays a key role in the 2030 Agenda architecture, allowing countries to share lessons, identify common priorities, enforce regional commitments with harmonized approaches, as well as capitalize on regional experiences to monitoring of progress and evaluating results. At regional and sub-regional levels, discussions focused on ensuring harmonization of SDG work with already existing commitments. The UNGA mandated the UN Economic Commissions to support regional coordination, facilitating policy convergence and coherence, as well as monitoring of progress and impact at regional and country levels.

22. FAO is fully-engaged in regional processes, incorporating SDGs in its regional technical and governing bodies, as well as supporting UNECs in SDG regional activities.
23. In 2015 all FAO Regional Conferences discussed the importance of SDGs vis-à-vis regionally-agreed priorities and frameworks, and identified key areas for FAO's contribution at regional level including through its regional initiatives.⁵
24. In Latin America, the CELAC Plan constitutes the vehicle to achieve the food security and nutrition aims of Agenda 2030 in the region, with the Zero Hunger regional initiative leading the coordinated and harmonized implementation of SDGs supported by FAO, in collaboration with other stakeholders at regional and national levels.
25. In Africa, mutual reinforcement is found between Agenda 2030, the Malabo Declaration Goals and Agenda 2063 "Africa We Want".
26. In 2014 the Third International Conference on Small Island Development States (SIDS) endorsed the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway, which invited FAO to facilitate a biennial forum in order to develop an action programme to address food and nutrition challenges in SIDS. In response to member countries request, FAO, together with DESA and OHRLLS, facilitated the development of a "Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition for the SIDS" (GAP)⁶. The GAP, by providing guidance to strengthen the coherence and coordination of global and regional support for food security, nutrition and sustainable development in SIDS, is a concrete contribution to the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Global level

27. The 2030 Agenda emphasizes the need for coherent strategies and well-integrated policies across sectors, with close collaboration among Member States and other stakeholders. SDGs and targets should be linked in coherent ways that reflect their interdependencies and enable meaningful synergies. FAO advocates for more policy integration across the food and agricultural sectors to ensure that social, economic and environmental objectives are mutually supportive and beneficial, particularly to contribute to the eradication of poverty, hunger and malnutrition. Different approaches and policy frameworks promoted by FAO, such as the emphasis on nutrition-driven food systems, the vision for sustainable food and agriculture, the Blue Growth initiative, One Health concept, the ecosystem approach and the positive role of social protection schemes, offer powerful means to stimulate positive sectoral interactions.
28. The last sessions of FAO's Technical Committees⁷ discussed FAO's principles for a common vision for Sustainable Food and Agriculture and recognized it as a suitable framework to address interactions and trade-offs across policy areas in the agricultural sectors. FAO is now putting the principles into concrete and simple guidelines that can be easily applied at country level for programme design and policy support.
29. FAO and its several intergovernmental bodies have been remarkably active in developing global policy instruments whose objectives are shared by the 2030 Agenda. These include the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Land Tenure (VVGTL), Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture (RAI), Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF), Port State Measures Agreement to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA). These instruments directly contribute to various SDG targets and respond to the overarching principle of leaving no one behind. FAO is strengthening its efforts at country level to assist members in embedding these normative instruments and standards into national policy frameworks.

⁵ See C 2017/14, C 2017/15, C 2017/16, C 2017/17, C 2017/18, C 2017/LIM/1

⁶ http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/faoweb/Sids/Global-Action-Programme-on-FSN-SIDS-Draft.pdf

⁷ C 2017/21, C 2017/22, C 2017/23, C 2017/24

IV. Partnerships and Means of Implementation

30. The 2030 Agenda includes a robust set of financial and non-financial “means of implementation” – including finance and investment, but also access to markets, technology, capacity development and policy support – required to achieve the SDGs. The means of implementation (MoI) for specific SDGs have been identified as specific targets under each Goal (the alphabetical targets, e.g. 2a, 2b, 2c), and are also identified more generally in SDG 17, which defines an updated Global Partnership for Development.

Financial means of implementation

31. In addition, the Financing for Development (Ffd) Process negotiated a comprehensive framework on the MoI required to achieve sustainable development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), mapping key drivers and financial and non-financial means necessary to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions. The AAAA is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, reviewed annually in a dedicated Financing for Development Forum (FfD Forum), with outcomes presented at the HLPF. An interagency task team prepares the annual FfD report, which serves as a principal input to the FfD Forum and the HLPF.

32. FAO has been active in the FfD follow-up process, focussing on the importance of mobilizing the necessary means of implementation for promoting transformative change, especially in rural areas, to ensure that no one is left behind. The Organization has collaborated with RBAs by organizing a variety of events in New York and presenting joint papers throughout the HLPF preparatory process.

33. The 2030 Agenda places strong emphasis on partnerships, especially with the private sector, as a primary modality for mobilizing real resources as means of implementation. In this regard, FAO can leverage its long history and experience in this area.

Partnerships

34. Beyond facilitating country access to MoI, new, different and more dynamic cooperation mechanisms can contribute to more sustainable development pathways. Multi-stakeholder partnerships, especially when convened by governments, can help align all stakeholders around the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda. FAO participation, as an enabler of partnerships, contributes norms, standards, policy guidance and shared data providing all actors with guidance and clear benchmarks for success.

35. In addition, the Organization has promoted successful platforms and alliances with the potential of accelerating progress and mobilizing actors to advance SDGs in an integrated way. The newly-launched Biodiversity Platform and the Global Framework on Water Scarcity join other FAO fostered multi-stakeholder platforms that precede the 2030 Agenda, such as the Global Soil Partnership, the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock or the Mountain Partnership, which simultaneously address key environmental, social, and economic challenges and constitute essential means to catalyse coherent and collective action to achieve multiple SDGs.

36. The 2030 Agenda requires a massive move from traditional Official Development Assistance models. In this context, some major donors are shifting to new development approaches that complement grant-based assistance modalities with other innovative financial mechanisms such as blending in which the private sector plays a more relevant role.

37. Although commonly used in the area of infrastructure, the implementation of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in agriculture is at early stages. In the context of SDGs, FAO is placing more emphasis on exploring this modality as PPPs are considered an instrument that can pool resources together with the public sector, and as well can foster technology development, knowledge transfer, and the provision of alternative income sources. In the context of agriculture, these innovative partnerships bring together different actors from business, government, smallholder farmers and civil society, which has the potential to improve productivity and drive inclusive growth in the agriculture and food sectors around the world.

38. Looking at past experiences, there are a number of limitations and success factors identified in the implementation of agri-PPPs. For the successful implementation of agri-PPPs, a number of aspects must be considered. Good governance should be ensured through a system of checks and balances in order to guarantee transparency and accountability and risk-sharing amongst both parties. Furthermore, establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms is essential for the success of agri-PPPs.

39. With regards to the aforementioned factors and limitations, FAO will strengthen its support to Member States with the creation of enabling environments, facilitation of policy development and dialogues, with the provision of institutional and regulatory frameworks, judicious land governance system, and ensuring transparency in legal instruments. For example, FAO's work on institutional models, used by developing countries to provide public sector support for inclusive agribusiness development, has also been instrumental in building understanding on how public-private collaboration fits into broader institutional and policy frameworks for agriculture and rural development.

40. In the context of the 2030 Agenda, South-South and triangular Cooperation present key means, not only to mobilize additional financial resources, but to support capacity building and knowledge transfer. FAO stands as one of the pioneer UN organizations catalysing and facilitating these exchanges at scale and is actively pursuing opportunities to further expand the range and number of partners involved.

V. FAO's engagement in UN coordination in support to 2030 Agenda implementation

41. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda presents the United Nations Development System with the opportunity and responsibility to provide its knowledge, convening power and experience to Members States in support of its implementation.

42. Since the approval of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, FAO has been actively engaged in UN coordination efforts in support of its implementation. Through its participation in the UN Development Group (UNDG) Working Groups, FAO has contributed to the development of guidelines and dedicated tools for use by UN country teams (UNCTs) in support of countries' implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Of particular relevance for FAO is the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) approach and guidance to UNCTs. The MAPS are complementary to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and recognize the need for specialized agencies' technical expertise on norms, standards, policy, and monitoring of progress. FAO also contributed to preparation of UNDG Guidelines on monitoring of SDGs at country level.

43. In line with the new holistic vision of the 2030 Agenda, the UN has committed to deliver and practice more coherent and integrated system-wide strategic planning, implementation and reporting. FAO has actively supported the development of new UN system guidance for a new generation of UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) that are founded on the underlying principle to "leave no one behind."

44. The 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) is a major undertaking of the UN General Assembly that provides guidance to the UN development system, including FAO, to strengthen and harmonize common operational activities. FAO has been engaged in the process leading to the adoption of the 2016 QCPR, which calls upon the UN system agencies, funds and programmes, within their respective mandates, to mainstream the SDGs in their strategic planning documents and their work at all levels.

45. It also recommends that agencies make use of QCPR as a tool for better integration and coordination of work of the UN system. FAO engaged actively in the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Dialogues on the longer-term positioning of the UN system in 2015/16, which informed the deliberations on the 2016 QCPR. FAO is now actively involved in the system-wide

implementation of the QCPR, including through the UNDG mechanisms. Further information on QCPR is provided to the FAO Conference under agenda item 15.⁸

VI. Monitoring of progress

46. The new monitoring framework represents an enormous opportunity as well as a massive challenge. When crafting the new sustainable development agenda, Member States recognized that having expanded the policy space, they would also need to expand the number of targets and indicators to ensure that action is fully aligned to the new vision of sustainable development.

47. Recognizing the Organization's capacities and responsibilities, FAO is currently designated as the custodian agency for 21 SDG indicators and a partner agency for six others. The increase in the number of indicators from the MDGs to the SDGs intends specifically to capture the new vision and policy demands embedded in the Agenda. The UN Statistical Commission, at its 48th Session (March 2017), formally endorsed the global indicator framework and recognized the role of custodian agencies, which includes advancing methodologies, collecting data from national sources and reporting the indicators at global level, as well as providing statistical capacity development support to countries in data collection and analysis.

48. FAO is working on all these fronts and has created the Office of Chief Statistician to coordinate fulfilment of its responsibilities as a custodian agency. The Interdepartmental Working Group on Statistics Sub-group on SDG indicators convenes the technical focal points for each indicator under FAO custodianship under the overall leadership of the Chief Statistician, and is the main interface for the SDG reporting work.

49. The work related to methodological development has focused on upgrading the Tier categorization of SDG indicators so that the indicator methodologies are cleared for release to countries, and countries can begin reporting on those indicators. Through its work with the Interagency and Expert Group on SDG indicators (IAEG-SDG), a 28-member country working group of the UN Statistical Commission mandated to develop the global SDG framework, FAO has succeeded in upgrading four Tier III indicators and is accelerating the related methodological work and plans to apply for the upgrade of all remaining Tier III indicators under its custodianship by the next IAEG-SDG session in October 2017.

50. FAO country data, regional and global aggregates, graphs and storylines will be used by the UN Statistical Division to compile the 2017 edition of the global SDG progress report, which feeds into the HLPF follow-up and review process. FAO is currently developing an SDG reporting platform featuring related data and metadata as well as indicator scorecards, training materials and publications.

51. FAO has been assisting countries by supporting national consultations related to the monitoring of food insecurity and nutritional indicators; conducting technical work to define and measure areas under sustainable agricultural production, or food losses and waste; and building capacity through work with NSOs. This is also linked to the global work to define methodologies for some of the new indicators. Overall support is particularly important for those countries committed to producing Voluntary National Reports on SDG progress.

52. Partnerships are also critical to tackling the challenges of the global indicators framework. In this regard, the Global Rural and Agricultural Integrated Surveys (GRAInS) Partnership established by FAO, World Bank and other partners to facilitate the governance and implementation of integrated household and agricultural surveys will contribute to inform a number of food and agricultural SDG indicators.

53. To facilitate capacity development in countries, e-learning courses and supplementary methodological guides are being developed for each SDG indicator under FAO custodianship. Training workshops will be organized will develop the capacities of country experts involved in data collection and analysis.

⁸ C 2017/27

54. Direct technical assistance to countries for adapting their national monitoring framework to the SDG indicators or for implementing FAO guidelines and standards for data collection/compilation is also being provided. This could for instance help in collecting and analysing food consumption data to estimate undernourishment and in introducing the Food Insecurity Experience Scale module into national surveys; supporting countries in designing and implementing integrated agricultural surveys that collect data to monitor many of the agriculture-related SDG targets; supporting countries in developing and strengthening integrated monitoring systems to provide reliable forest, tree resource and land use/change information; and supporting countries in collecting and processing data on water withdrawals by industrial sector according to international standards.

VII. FAO's engagement in the follow-up and review process

55. Mutual accountability is a main pillar of the 2030 Agenda and countries are showing an encouraging commitment towards this principle through their participation in the follow-up and review process that culminates in the annual High Level Political Forum (HLPF). The HLPF meets annually at Ministerial level under the auspices of the President of ECOSOC; every fourth year it meets at the level Heads of State and Government under the aegis of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). In 2017, it will meet at Ministerial level.

56. The HLPF Ministerial is conceived as the culmination of a large number of local, national, regional and global review processes designed to gather information and evaluate actions taken by Member States and their partners to foster the transformational change called for by the SDGs.

57. These processes include the preparation of mandated global reports, requested inputs from all UN System intergovernmental bodies, reports of more than 40 National Voluntary Reviews, events such as the Regional Sustainable Development Fora organized by the five UN Regional Economic Commissions, and annual UNGA mandated global forums, such as the Forum on Financing for Development; the Multistakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation; and the ECOSOC Special Meeting on Infrastructure, Industrialization and Innovation. Progress on the 2030 Agenda is reviewed as a whole, complemented by in depth thematic reviews of selected SDGs, with SDG 17 revised yearly. In 2017 SDGs 1, 2, 5, 8, and 14 will thematically reviewed.

58. FAO, as a neutral forum with universally-recognized technical expertise and knowledge, is experiencing increasing demand to engage in and support this process throughout the different preparatory stages and streams that converge in the HLPF.

59. As illustrated above, FAO, in close collaboration with the UN system (in UNCTs), in particular RBAs, has answered requests for support from several Member countries in the preparation of the Voluntary National Reviews through, *inter alia*, statistical support in defining baselines for target indicators, carrying out policy analyses of areas related to FAO's mandate and convening national consultations and/or validating multi-stakeholder consultations.

60. At regional level, FAO has also been actively engaged in supporting preparation of the five Regional Forums on Sustainable Development convened by the Regional Economic Commissions, through the provision of evidence, including data analysis on SDG indicators, the preparation of issue papers and background documents and in the organization of thematic roundtables, in particular on SDG 2 and 14.

61. FAO also supported preparations of regional meetings in preparation of HLPF, providing technical and logistical support, as well as mobilizing non-state actors and facilitating multi-stakeholder consultations and dialogues.

62. At global level, FAO has contributed to thematic reviews for HLPF 2017, responding to a request from the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA) to develop and coordinate the preparation of two issue papers to provide an overview on the status of progress on the SDGs under review. One paper, jointly developed by the Rome-based Agencies, reviews SDG 2⁹ a second paper provides a status assessment of SDG 14¹⁰.

⁹ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14371SDG2_format.revised_FINAL_28_04.pdf

¹⁰ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14375SDG14format-revOD.pdf>

63. FAO has also been supporting and contributing to the high-level United Nations Oceans Conference to be convened at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 5 to 9 June 2017, as adopted under UNGA Resolution 70/226, to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. In this regard, FAO has worked closely with the host countries as well as with other Member States and stakeholders in developing focus partnership dialogues. As custodian agency for 4 indicators under SDG 14, FAO is providing countries with information, support and capacity towards achieving SDG 14.

64. *FAO's State of the World...* flagship publications constitute key means for the organization to contribute to the global monitoring, follow-up and review process by providing global data on the indicators for which FAO is custodian agency as well as policy analysis on the measures adopted to promote progress towards achieving the SDGs. In this regard, FAO-led Regional Panoramas on Food Security and Nutrition will also constitute a key input into the regional follow-up and review dimension and its publication cycle is being aligned with the Regional Forum calendar.