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Food and Agriculture
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Продовольственная и
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Organización de las
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منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Twenty-seventh Session

28 September - 2 October 2020

Multi-Year Programme of Work of the Committee

Executive Summary

This document provides the progress report of the COAG Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2018-2021 and the draft COAG MYPOW 2020-2023. The current COAG MYPOW has been developed on the basis of guidance received from the Committee and intends to provide a solid basis for guiding its work in the 2020-23 period. The document is presented as a rolling plan, presenting the method of work of the Committee and follows the format already set out by the Committee in 2012.

Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to:

- Review the progress report of the implementation of the approved MYPOW 2018-21 in accordance with its overall objectives and mandate.
- Approve the proposed MYPOW 2020-2023 as set out in the Annex.

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

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II. Background

1. At its 23rd Session (21 - 25 May 2012), the Committee reviewed, amended and approved its draft MYPOW 2012-2015. As a rolling plan, the Committee adopted its second MYPOW 2014-2017 at its 24th Session (29 September - 3 October 2014), its third MYPOW 2016-2019 at its 25th Session (26-30 September 2016) and its fourth MYPOW 2018-2021 at its 26th Session (1-5 October 2018). The development of the COAG MYPOW conforms to the recommendations embodied in Actions 2.70 to 2.72 of the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal (IPA), and adheres to the periodicity specified by the IPA in terms of the timeframe covered by the programme as well as the submission of timelines of progress reports to Governing Bodies.

2. As underscored by the Committee, the first four MYPOWs of the Committee provided an important step towards the improvement of COAG's efficiency and transparency. The MYPOW guided the work of COAG and the Secretariat over the last eight years. The Secretariat provided regular progress reports to the Bureau, the Committee, Council and Conference.

3. The current document has been developed based on the guidance received from the Committee, the Council and the Conference and intends to provide a solid basis for guiding the work of the Committee in the 2020-2023 period.

III. Progress Report on the MYPOW: Results for 2018-2020

A. Strategy, priority setting, and budget planning

4. The Committee organized its 26th Session from 1-5 October 2018¹. In view of global emerging challenges, the Committee held substantive discussions on matters related to: *Sustainable pathways to engage food and agriculture for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sustainable food systems, Agroecology: from advocacy to action, Revitalizing rural areas for youth, Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), FAO's activities on livestock, including the proposal for a sub-committee on livestock, Climate and Natural Resources (biodiversity, land and water), Implementing the FAO Climate Change Strategy: driving a global transformation to sustainable agriculture, Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture, Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform, Update on the Global Soil Partnership, including the Code of Conduct for the Management of Fertilizers, FAO's Programme of Work in Agriculture under the FAO Strategic Framework, Implementation of the recommendations of the 25th Session of the Committee, including the outcome of the informal open-ended working group on food safety scientific advice programme, Multi-Year Programme of Work of the Committee, Proposal for an International Year for Fruit and Vegetables, Proposal for an International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste and Proposal for an International Year of Millets.*

5. The Committee endorsed the proposal by the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Group (GRULAC) to establish the observance by the United Nations system of an International Year of Fruits and Vegetables on an exceptional basis in 2021; the proposal by the Government of Argentina to establish the observance by the United Nations system, of an International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, to be celebrated on 29 September each year; and the proposal by the Government of India to establish the observance by the United Nations system of an International Year of Millets on an exceptional basis in 2023. The Committee organized fourteen side events of relevance to priority or topical issues on the agenda: Food Security in the 2030 Agenda – Private Sector Initiatives; Promoting Biological Diversity for Improved Food Security and Nutrition: The Trondheim Conferences on Biological Diversity; Multi-stakeholder mechanisms for the implementation of food and agriculture related targets of the 2030 Agenda: the 10YFP Sustainable Food Systems Programme; Anti-Microbial Resistance in Developing Countries; Smart Soil Information as base for Water Efficient Agriculture; The Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock; International Year of Plant Health; Bioeconomy: Why it Matters to FAO and What FAO is doing about it; Smart Incentives and cross-sectoral dialogue for sustainable management of soils; Sustainable

¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/my349en/my349en.pdf>

food and agriculture: Towards a global partnership in support of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development; Monitoring progress towards achieving the SDGs in agriculture; Farmer Field Schools facilitate farmer innovations for sustainable livelihoods and climate change adaptation; Recognizing the role of Agricultural Heritage Systems in Promoting Sustainable Agriculture; and Rural Development and Application of genome sequences for sustainable agriculture and food security.

6. The decisions and recommendations by the 26th Session of COAG were reported, reviewed and adopted by the 161th Session of Council, the 41st Session of Conference, as well as the 163th Session of Council providing a solid basis for the strategy, priority setting and budget planning of the Organization.

Intersessional activities

7. During the intersession period, the Secretariat and the Bureau conducted several activities as follows:

- i) At its 41st Session, the FAO Conference endorsed the International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers². In addition, the Conference adopted the following resolutions: Resolution 7/2019 “Further integration of sustainable agricultural approaches, including agroecology, in the future planning activities of FAO”³; Resolution 8/2019 International Year of Fruits and Vegetables⁴; Resolution 10/2019 International Year of Millets⁵; and Resolution 11/2019 International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste⁶.
- ii) The Conference at its 41st Session requested that an inclusive consultation process under the leadership of the Chairpersons of the Programme Committee (PC) and the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) be put in place to further develop the Ten Elements of Agroecology, to be submitted for review by the Programme Committee at its next session, and thereafter for consideration and approval by the Council at its December 2019 Session, where the revised version was approved⁷.
- iii) Following the request from the COAG, the former Climate Change and Biodiversity Department (CB) presented a draft strategy on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors at the FAO Conference in 2019. The Conference mandated Council 163 (December 2019) to consider and adopt the FAO Strategy on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors following an inclusive consultation process. The revised draft was submitted to consultations via the FAO Members Gateway supplemented by an informal seminar called by the Chairperson of the PC (September 2019). A second revised draft was discussed at a second informal seminar called by the Chairperson of the PC in October, and a third revised draft presented to the 127th Session of the PC (4-8 November), further adopted by the 163rd Session of the Council⁸. In addition, PC 127 requested a first draft of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy, proposed in Appendix of CL 163/11⁹ which was reviewed by the Technical Committees’ Secretariats. A task force was established to prepare a draft action plan for the implementation of the Strategy presented to the PC Session in June 2020¹⁰, which requested its presentation to COAG and other Technical Committees.

² <http://www.fao.org/3/na421en/na421en.pdf> (para 49 (b))

³ <http://www.fao.org/3/na421en/na421en.pdf> (para 49 a) Appendix D)

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/3/na421en/na421en.pdf> (para 59, Appendix E)

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/3/na421en/na421en.pdf> (para 61, Appendix G)

⁶ <http://www.fao.org/3/na421en/na421en.pdf> (para 62, Appendix H)

⁷ <http://www.fao.org/3/nb990en/nb990en.pdf> (para 10 (h))

⁸ <http://www.fao.org/3/nb990en/nb990en.pdf> (para 10 (g))

⁹ <http://www.fao.org/3/ca7175en/ca7175en.pdf> (Section IV Development of an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy)

¹⁰ <http://www.fao.org/3/nc439en/nc439en.pdf>

- iv) Bureau meetings: the COAG Bureau held sixteen meetings to monitor COAG 26 recommendations and actions and prepare the COAG 27 agenda. Three informal meetings of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) formed for the revision of the "Ten Elements of Agroecology" for submission to the 127th Session of the Programme Committee and the 163rd Session of the FAO Council were held in September and October 2019. An informal meeting of the Bureau with relevant technical divisions and Strategic Programme teams was held on 29 October 2019 for reviewing potential topics proposed for the COAG 27 agenda. The draft agenda was prepared in a consultative process with contributions from technical divisions, FAO Regional Offices and Bureau Members, under the overall guidance of the Bureau. The draft provisional agenda was approved by the Director-General on 1 May 2020.
- v) Joint Bureau meetings: since 2015, the FAO Technical Committees (TCs) have embarked on strengthening collaboration and coordination to respond to the recommendation of the Evaluation of FAO Governing Bodies. This includes discussion of common topics during their respective sessions with the aim of enhancing collaboration to provide coordinated inputs to the FAO Council and Conference. On 28 June 2019, an informal meeting of the Chairpersons of TCs was held and reconfirmed the continuing collaboration among the TCs and proposed meeting with the new Director-General on the work and priorities for each Committee and joint endeavours.
- vi) The Chairpersons of the Technical Committees met with the Director - General on 24 January 2020 to review the TC's work, the organization's priorities and the areas for strengthened collaboration and support to FAO activities.
- vii) Two follow-up meetings were convened by Deputy Director-General, Ms Maria Helena Semedo, on 14 February and 5 March 2020. Noting that the cooperation had proven to be very successful to discuss common items on the agendas of the 2018 Sessions, the themes of biodiversity mainstreaming, Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) (for COFI, COFO and COAG), innovation and digitalization, the UN Decade on ecosystem restoration and the *Hand-in-Hand initiative* were identified as crosscutting items to be discussed by each Committee during their 2020 sessions. It was agreed that the Secretariats would prepare relevant background notes on three information items (i.e. on the International Digital Platform for Food and Agriculture; Ecosystem Restoration of production ecosystems, in the context of the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030; and the UN SDG Decade of Action: an integrated approach to accelerate progress across SDGs) to be discussed under the agendas of the Committees.

8. Report to the High Level Policy Forum (HLPF) 2020: the Bureau of COAG with the assistance of the Secretariat reported to the HLPF 2020 with the theme "Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development" as part of FAO's corporate submission. FAO corporate input summarizes policy deliberations related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of FAO Technical and Governing bodies and other intergovernmental bodies hosted in FAO, including evidence, main gaps, key challenges and opportunities and recommendations stemming from individual bodies' contribution.

9. Following the request by COAG 26, the Animal Production and Health Division (NSA) prepared the document "Proposal for establishing a COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock" (COAG/2020/7), in collaboration with the COAG Secretariat, and relevant FAO Divisions and under the guidance of the COAG Bureau. The document reviews COAG's ongoing working arrangements for issues related to livestock, highlights the need for such a Sub-Committee in the light of the criteria adopted by the Conference through its Resolutions 13/97 and 11/2015, and describes the administrative and financial implications of its establishment. It also provides, in its appendices, draft Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Sub-Committee on Livestock. The document was reviewed and cleared by the Legal Office and the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management (OSP). A concept note for the establishment of a multilateral trust fund in support of the operationalization of the sub-committee was submitted to the FAO's Business Development and

Resource Mobilization Division (PSR) as basis for exploring funding support. The proposal for the sub-committee on livestock will be submitted to the COAG 27th Session.

B. Advise on global policy and regulatory matters

10. The Committee presented its recommendations to the Conference including those related to the Strategic Objectives. The recommendations were fully endorsed by the Conference at its 41st Session.

C. Work planning

11. The deliberations at the 26th Session of COAG have enabled the formulation of a concise report embodying specific action-oriented recommendations to be presented to the FAO Council and Conference.

12. During that session the Committee approved its MYPOW for the period 2018-21 and the Progress Report of MYPOW 2016-18.

13. As a rolling document, the MYPOW 2018-21 was submitted to the 26th Session and the report of 2018-2021 is presented for approval to the present session of the Committee.

14. The agenda for the 27th Session of COAG has been elaborated by the Bureau in close consultation with Membership, Regional Groups, FAO Technical Divisions (NSA, NSP, AGFF, AGDR, OCB, NSL, ESN, EST, PSU and others), Strategic Programme teams, FAO Regional Offices, FAO Management, and the Secretariat.

D. Working Methods

15. In line with the endorsed MYPOW 2018-21, sixteen regular intersessional Bureau meetings have been facilitated by the Chairperson and the Bureau composed of representatives of all seven Regional Groups with support from the Secretariat. In addition, the Chairperson participated in the joint meeting of the Technical Committees' Chairpersons with the Director-General and two subsequent joint meetings with FAO Senior Management, which discussed the strengthening of collaboration by addressing common themes and cross cutting topics as well as the organization of joint side events. Five of the Bureau meetings were devoted to the preparation of the agenda of the 27th Session of COAG, with the first one held with relevant technical divisions on 29 October 2019 for reviewing potential topics proposed for the COAG 27 agenda.

16. The onset of COVID-19 pandemic led, among different consequences to a rescheduling of various FAO meetings, including FAO Regional Conferences in 2020, which were foreseen to be held before the Technical Committees meetings and provide guidance on regional priorities. In addition, further to the Ministerial Decrees on the COVID-19 emergency issued by the hosting country, whereby a lockdown and strict preventing measures were put into force, the periodic Bureau meetings were held as virtual meetings (1st April, 21st May and 2nd July 2020) as well as the related consultations. The Bureau reviewed in its meetings the potential implications of the prevailing COVID-19 situation on the COAG 27 session preparations and priorities for the agenda. Following the endorsement of the FAO Governing Bodies' meeting calendar by the 164th Session of the FAO Council (6-10 July 2020), the 27th Session of COAG was confirmed to be held at the originally planned dates and in a virtual format. The Session preparations have been adjusted accordingly.

ANNEX - Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) of the Committee on Agriculture (2020-2023)

I. Overall Objectives for the Committee on Agriculture

The Committee on Agriculture (COAG) conducts periodic reviews and appraisals, on a highly selective basis, of agricultural and nutritional problems, with a view to proposing concerted action by Member Nations and the Organization. It advises the Council on the overall medium- and longer-term work programme of the Organization relating to agriculture and livestock, food, natural resources and nutrition, with emphasis on the integration of all social, technical, economic, institutional and structural aspects related to agricultural and rural development in general¹¹. It provides well-founded advice and action-oriented recommendations to the Conference on global policy and regulatory matters, in its areas of mandate.

II. Results for 2020-2023

A. Strategy, priority setting, and budget planning

Result: The Organization has a clear strategy, well-defined priorities and programmes on issues of relevance to the Committee, and the international community at large is provided with up-to-date information on the world situation, global major trends and drivers of change in agriculture, livestock, food and nutrition, natural resources management and for food systems.

Indicators and targets:

- Key global and regional developments including global major trends and drivers of change in the areas of mandate identified, including through the Regional Conferences and part of the regular sessions of COAG;
- Committee's recommendations made on the pertinent aspects of the Strategic Framework, the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) reflected in the Council Report.

Output: Clear, precise and consensual recommendations on strategy, priorities, programmes and budget for the Organization made by the Committee are favorably considered by Council and provide a solid basis for its guidance and decisions.

Activities:

- Review the current situation in its areas of mandate, including issues of topical significance to Regional Groups and the international community;
- Address issues of high priority and emerging issues identified by the Regional Conferences and other FAO's bodies;
- Review decisions and recommendations from other FAO governing and statutory bodies and committees;
- Review implementation of the PWB in areas falling within the committee's competence and advise on the formulation of FAO's new Strategic Framework;
- Formulate clear consensual, timely and well-developed recommendations on the strategies, priorities, programmes, and budget in areas falling within the committee's competence;
- Organize side events of relevance to priority or topical issues on the agenda;
- Specific issues of topical significance are addressed during the scheduled sessions.

Working methods

- Chairperson continuously and effectively liaises with the Secretariat;
- Intersessional work by the Bureau, supported by the Secretariat to identify topics of significance for the agenda;
- Chairperson and the Bureau, through consultations, to facilitate Member Nations participation during intersessions.

¹¹ Rule XXXII 6 a) and b) of the Basic Texts

- Collaboration with other relevant FAO Governing (in particular Council, and other Technical Committees) and statutory bodies.

B. Advice on global and regulatory matters

Result: Based on the Committee's recommendations, the FAO, through its Conference, and taking into consideration regional priorities, gives clear, relevant and useful advice on major policy and regulatory issues confronting the globe, regions, and individual Member Nations, within the areas of competence.

Indicators and targets:

- Member Nations obtain value from the deliberations of COAG, using the advice and recommendations to guide domestic and regional actions and policies as reported by FAO;
- Clear and specific recommendations made in a timely manner by COAG to the Conference regarding global policy and regulatory matters in its areas of mandate;
- Committee's recommendations made on global policy and regulatory matters are reflected in the Conference Report.

Output: Clear, precise and consensual recommendations for Conference on policy and regulatory frameworks or instruments.

Activities:

- Report to the Conference on global policy and regulatory issues arising out of its deliberations;
- Review the status of relevant international instruments, including codes of conduct in areas of competence for the Committee;
- Consider possible solutions with a view to support concerted action by Members themselves or collectively through FAO and other relevant bodies on issues or concerns in areas of competence for the Committee;
- Identify and review new trends and emerging issues in the areas of competence;
- Develop recommendations and guidance for the consideration of the Conference.

Working methods

- Close collaboration with relevant FAO Offices and Streams through the Chairperson and the Bureau;
- Chairperson and the Bureau, through consultations, to facilitate Member Nations participation during intersessions.

III. Work planning

Result: COAG works effectively and efficiently, in an action-oriented, transparent and inclusive way.

Indicators and targets:

- COAG agendas are focused and responsive to emerging needs;
- COAG agendas are coordinated with other Technical Committees as appropriate;
- COAG reports are concise and contain specific, action-oriented recommendations to both Council and Conference;
- COAG documents are made available in all FAO languages four weeks before the Session commences;
- Continuity in terms of inter-sessional work;
- Level of participation of COAG members in the planning and inter-sessional work of the Committee.

Outputs

- Multi-year Programme of Work 2020-2023 for COAG adopted in 2020;
- Progress report on COAG's MYPOW approved in 2020.

Activities:

- Consider ways to improve the conduct of sessions, including more efficient use of the time available;
- Focus side events on key topical issues;
- Facilitate coordination with other Technical Committees as well as Regional Conferences;
- Work out clear modalities for the election of members and operation of the Bureau with a view to enhancing continuity between sessions;
- Pay continued attention to effective arrangements for the formulation of agendas and drafting of the final report;
- Enhance consultative participation of COAG members in planning and inter-sessional work of the Committee including by holding informal meetings with the wide Membership;
- Regular review of methods of work, including through indicators and targets specified in the MYPOW.

IV. Working methods

The work of the Committee is based on the review of global trends in sectoral policies and regulations within the areas of competence. It collaborates with statutory and other bodies under FAO auspices, liaises with the Programme Committee on strategy and priority matters, and with the Finance Committee on financial and budgetary matters. It collaborates with other relevant FAO Governing Bodies, liaises with other international organizations active in the areas of agriculture, food and nutrition. It undertakes regular inter-sessional activities facilitated by the Chairperson and the Bureau and with proactive support from the Secretariat. It encourages and facilitates participation of farmer's, private sector's and civil society's organizations as observers. Enhance the participation of COAG members in planning and inter-sessional work of the Committee, through consultations, in order to facilitate Member Nations participation during intersessions.

V. Outstanding and strategic issues to be tracked overtime by COAG future sessions

The critical analysis of the agendas of the past COAG sessions as well as the analysis of the global trends, the emerging issues in the global agricultural development agenda and need to accelerate progress and scale up efforts in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 1 and 2, showed that a number of global concerns will remain important as potential issues for future discussions by the Committee as they relate to FAO's strategies. In this context, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and nutrition, and food systems, and related responses, which are unprecedented in scale and complexity, will need to be considered, as well as the process leading to the United Nations Secretary General Food Systems Summit in 2021 and its outcomes.

The proposed establishment of the COAG Livestock Sub-Committee is foreseen to strengthen work and coordination on livestock issues and contribute to COAG Sessions. The agenda will consider relevant regional developments and trends discussed in the Regional Conferences. Further, FAO is developing its new Strategic Framework through a consultative process during 2020-21¹², taking into consideration global, sectoral and regional trends in agricultural development and the main challenges expected to be faced by countries and development actors in food and agriculture over the medium term.

Although it is a challenge to predict future COAG agenda in the next 4 to 6 years, issues such as the need to enhance productivity and sustainable production, food security and nutrition for a growing population, sustainable agriculture and food systems, environmental degradation and climate change, increased competition for natural resources, biodiversity, science and technology innovations, increased interdependency of food systems, and rapid urbanization with implications for rural areas, women and youth empowerment, smallholder farmers, family farmers, sustainable livestock development, and addressing transboundary pests and diseases would remain in the centre of COAG discussions and deliberations, and should be tracked over time.

¹² <http://www.fao.org/3/nc850en/nc850en.pdf>