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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA

Thirty-first Session

Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 23-27 March 2020

Summary Report of Recommendations of FAO Regional Statutory Bodies (statistics, wildlife/forestry, fisheries)

Executive Summary

FAO's regional programme includes four thematic regional statutory committees and commissions. These provide a platform for countries across the Africa region to engage in dialogue and deliberate the collective direction of the thematic area of work of the committees and/or commissions. The commissions further synthesize the discussions and identify priorities and recommendations aimed at streamlining national and/or regional agendas in the concerned thematic areas.

This document provides an overview of the topics discussed, achievements and relevant recommendations for the Regional Conference for Africa during the 2018-2019 biennium, arising from the following four committees/commissions:

- The 26th Session of the African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS)
- The 21st and the 22nd Sessions of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC)
- The 22nd Session of the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF)
- The 18th Ordinary Session of the Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa (CIFAA)

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I. Background

A. 26th Session of the African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS)

1. The 26th Session of the African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS) took place in Libreville, Gabon, from 4 to 8 November 2019. In all, 112 delegates from 46 AFCAS member countries, as well as 12 regional and international organizations/institutions participated in the Session. The new bureau composed of Gabon as Chair, Senegal as Vice-Chair, and Kenya and Tunisia as Rapporteurs was elected.

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2. The theme of the 26th Session of AFCAS was “Enhancing evidence-based food and agriculture policy in Africa through cutting-edge statistics”. In accordance with this theme, and to assist member countries in improving data collection, processing, analysis, dissemination, comparability and development of SDG indicators, the 26th Session of AFCAS focused on eight key topics: (i) FAO’s activities in food and agricultural statistics relevant to the Africa region since the last session of the Commission; (ii) measuring the SDG Indicators ; (iii) measuring food security statistics; (iv) World Programme for the Census of Agriculture and Gender; (v) 50 x 2030 Initiative; (vi) open data in agricultural statistics; (vii) water use, fisheries and forestry statistics; and (viii) Partners.
3. Of the 87 recommendations approved by the 26th Session of AFCAS, the key priorities identified are:
 - a) implementation by member countries of their Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SPARS);
 - b) the need for FAO to accelerate its efforts to mobilize resources to fund the second phase of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics;
 - c) review by member countries of the results of the survey, their country profile and the list of national focal points for each SDG indicator, and to provide related comments to: SDG-questionnaires@fao.org;
 - d) the need for FAO, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Union Commission (AUC), to continue advocacy for the mobilization of resources and the necessary commitments for the adoption, production and use of global SDG indicators;
 - e) the need for FAO to promote a broader use of the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), translate the Food Balance Sheets (FBS) Compilation Tool into French, ensure the publication of the best practices of countries in the preparation of FBS, support the establishment and dissemination of clear procedures and methodology to estimate the percentages of food losses (post-harvest survey) and the integration of fishery and aquaculture products in the compilation of FBS;
 - f) the need for FAO to continue to collaborate with regional economic communities and organizations to strengthen the coordination of capacity development activities to support the region to compile, analyse, disseminate and use FBS data in decision-making;
 - g) the need for member countries to make use other platforms for data dissemination on Open Data Format, in particular the Country Data Portal hosted in the African Information Highway (AIH/AfDB), to compensate for the stopping of the FAO technical support for the CountrySTAT platform;.
 - h) member countries not to abandon the operational Technical Working Groups (TWGs) of the CountrySTAT project as it is a mechanism to foster standardization and sharing of good practices;
 - i) member countries to promote the implementation of a household consumption survey and data collection, which allows, among other things, the estimation of parameters for the calculation of the prevalence of undernourishment indicator;
 - j) taking into account the usefulness of Volume 2 of the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 as a reference document, member countries are encouraged to use it in order to support census technical preparation and implementation, and to mobilize government resources for its conduct, rather than relying on donor funding;
 - k) the organization by FAO of the Round Table on Volume 2 of the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 for English-speaking countries;
 - l) the use by member countries of Survey Solution for the questionnaires of the various modules of the agricultural census, as well as the need for political support on integrating gender in the agricultural census data;
 - m) member countries welcomed the launch of the 50x2030 Initiative by the strongest partners in agricultural development (FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], the World Bank, etc.), which aims to support 50 low- and lower middle-income countries in Africa, Asia, the Near East and Latin America in strengthening their agricultural statistics systems by giving support to the data collection of relevant agricultural data through surveys by the year to 2030;

- n) member countries welcomed the launch by FAO, IFAD and the World Bank of the Rural Livelihood Information System (RULIS), which will enable the production and compilation of data on income, livelihoods and rural development, and the dissemination of household and farm-level survey data from the 50x2030 Initiative for policy formulation;
 - o) member countries welcomed the new FAO platform for the dissemination of microdata files on food and agriculture, the African Development Bank's (AfDB) Feed Africa Initiative and related Agriculture Transformation Agenda as an opportunity to support the production of agricultural statistics;
 - p) the Commission further recommended FAO to: (i) continue its capacity building activities in support of countries to set proper collection systems of fisheries and aquaculture according to appropriate and accurate international standards; (ii) provide support and develop proper methodologies for the collection of data in inland fisheries, due to the challenges being faced in this sector by several countries in the region; (iii) work towards enhancing integration of forest and trees in agricultural statistics data collection and improving socio-economic data of forest use, including their contribution to employment, income, food security, nutrition and development; (iv) work closely with subregional, regional and international organizations on issues related to data collection and analysis; and (v) intensify efforts to improve response rates in order to have an updated list of focal points in charge of providing responses to the different FAO questionnaires at the country level, to work with regional organizations and, if necessary, to strengthen and maintain a closer and constant communication between the staff of FAO in charge of the questionnaire and the focal points;
 - q) considering the critical role of leadership training, UNECA should continue to lead the leadership training programme, pursuing potential partnerships to assist with implementation as well as providing a strong steer for incorporating the programme within Phase 2 of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics Action Plan; and
 - r) the Commission approved the proposed date and venue of the 27th Session of AFCAS (Dakar, Senegal, in November 2021).
4. The documents of the 26th Session of AFCAS are available at: <http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/ess-events/afcas/afcas26/en/>

B. 21st Session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC)

- 5. The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC) held its 21st Session in Dakar, Senegal, from 19 to 23 June 2018. The Session was attended by 187 participants, including: 110 representatives from 26 member countries, three countries with observer status and six representatives of the United Nations and Specialized Agencies. Eleven representatives from nine intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations also attended.
- 6. The 21st Session of the Commission was held together with the 5th African Forestry and Wildlife Week (AFWW) under the common theme "Restoring Forests, Landscapes and Wildlife Resources: Unleashing Opportunities for Sustainable Development in Africa". Through this theme, the 21st AFWC and related activities during the week aimed to highlight the key role of sustainable management and restoration of forests, landscapes and wildlife resources, in tackling the interconnected environmental and socio-economic challenges in the region, in particular food and nutrition insecurity, climate change, land degradation and desertification.
- 7. As part of the recommendations relevant to the FAO Regional Conference for Africa, the Commission:
 - a) recognized the critical role of forests and forestry for achieving SDG 2 and invited Members to implement the recommendations of the HLPE and the CFS, in an inclusive manner;
 - b) requested FAO to facilitate a high-level cross-sectoral dialogue between forestry and relevant sectors on this matter at country and regional levels, and called on Members to invest the necessary resources

- in forestry and wildlife sustainable management to sustain and enhance forest and wildlife contributions to food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture;
- c) encouraged countries to participate actively in the Forest Resource Assessment 2020 reporting process and to collaborate with FAO and partner institutions to achieve synergies in data collection, analysis and management, and to reduce duplication of effort;
 - d) reiterated the importance of forest concessions in tropical countries as a vehicle for delivering sustainable forest management and welcomed the Voluntary Guidelines for forest concessions in the tropics, and requested countries to implement them and ensure that the costs related to their implementation were kept affordable by forest concessionaires;
 - e) requested Members to consider use of other existing forms of partnerships in Africa, in addition to concessions, to boost sustainable forest management and to generate economic, social and environmental benefits;
 - f) encouraged Members to take part in the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), a country-led effort to bring 100 million hectares of land in Africa into restoration by 2030, and requested FAO's support in the preparation of restoration plans, in the formulation of national and transboundary projects and in resource mobilization;
 - g) acknowledged efforts made by member countries in sustainable wildlife management (SWM) and recommended that wildlife be fully integrated into national forest-related policies and strategies, for a better conservation and sustainable management of the resources;
 - h) requested Members to ensure that SWM national strategies and plans and implementation thereof were aligned with relevant African and global programmes, strategies, frameworks and initiatives;
 - i) recognized FAO's championing role in raising the profile of Africa's drylands and commended FAO for its support in the assessment, monitoring, sustainable management and restoration in the region, in particular through the Action Against Desertification project in support of the Great Green Wall (GGW). The Commission recommended that member countries expand its implementation and promote the GGW concept and related large-scale restoration efforts in all dryland countries including North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa;
 - j) commended member countries, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and AUC for efforts made to extend the GGW concept to the SADC region and recommended that member countries and SADC further develop the Miombo programme, as part of the GGW with FAO and partners for GEF-7 financing, and urged Members to look for opportunities to scale up these initiatives and to make use of available options for resources and funding;
 - k) called for FAO's support in identifying sustainable fuelwood and charcoal production systems and technologies;
 - l) encouraged countries to further develop non-wood forest products value chains in order to enhance rural economies; and
 - m) agreed that the 22nd Session of the AFWC would be held in South Africa from 9 to 13 March 2020.

C. The 22nd Session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC)

8. Originally planned for November 2019, the AFWC held its 22nd Session in Skukuza-Mpumalanga, South Africa, from 9 to 13 March 2020. The Session was attended by 331 participants, including representatives from 25 member countries, and from three institutions of the United Nations system. Observers from intergovernmental, Regional Economic Communities, international and regional non-governmental organizations, youth organizations, academia and research institutions also attended.
9. The 22nd Session of the Commission was held together with the 6th African Forestry and Wildlife Week (AFWW) under the common theme "Forests and Wildlife: Africa's Diversity for Shared Prosperity and Security". Through this theme, the 22nd AFWC and related activities during the week aimed to highlight the richness of the region's forests, landscapes and wildlife resources in terms of biodiversity, all of which are key for building resilient landscapes and livelihoods, promoting sustainable development, and enhancing food, energy and nutrition security.

10. The Session provided also the opportunity for member states to endorse an action programme focused on the following priorities: (i) Advocating for, and profiling, Africa's forests and wildlife; (ii) Sustainable financing for forestry and wildlife programmes in Africa; (iii) Restoration for resilience; (iv) Enhancing action against deforestation and illicit exploitation and trade of forest and wildlife products for sustainable development in Africa and; (v) Promoting forest and wildlife education and professions.
11. As part of the recommendations relevant to the FAO Regional Conference for Africa, the Commission:
- a) expressed concerns regarding deforestation, illicit exploitation and trade of forest and wildlife products and requested members to: (i) develop and implement, with support of FAO or other partners when requested, strategic actions and programmes promoting legal and sustainable use and transboundary trade of forest and wildlife products; (ii) address deforestation and agricultural impact through cross-sectoral partnerships and multisectoral dialogues; and (iii) explore alternative sources of energy and ways to reduce the pressure on the native trees and forest resources.
 - b) requested FAO to continue its support to member countries in the assessment and analysis of drivers of deforestation and developing strategies to address them.
 - c) expressed concerns that Africa may not meet its nationally determined contribution targets; requested members to be more ambitious in the mitigation and prevention of climate action and strengthen institutional frameworks and cross-sectoral collaboration at national, transboundary and regional levels to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and to enhance the multiple benefits generated by sustainable forest management and restoration.
 - d) appreciated countries' efforts in advancing the African Forest Landscape Restoration (AFR100) as part of their own national development and resilience strategies and encouraged Members to build synergies between AFR100, the Great Green Wall Initiative (GGW) and other ongoing restoration activities, and consolidate these as an integral part of their contribution to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) and the Pan-African agenda on ecosystem restoration for increased resilience.
 - e) called upon FAO to support AFR100 Secretariat and countries in strengthening cross-sectoral coordination and engagement of different sectors in restoration efforts.
 - f) invited Members to mainstream biodiversity across agricultural sectors and urged them to implement international agreements relevant to biodiversity and forests, as well as the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources.
 - g) requested FAO to initiate appropriate forestry-related follow-up actions in relation to the development and implementation of the action plan of the FAO Strategy for Mainstreaming Biodiversity Across Agricultural Sectors, and report on progress made at the next appropriate session.
 - h) invited countries to adopt a multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral approach when implementing sustainable wildlife management strategies, as recommended in decision 14/7 of the Convention on Biological Diversity and in the FAO Strategy for Mainstreaming Biodiversity Across Agricultural Sectors;
 - i) recommended that countries continue developing sustainable wildlife management of transboundary nature and cooperate in exchange of wildlife species for restocking and restoration of wildlife resources and corridors between protected areas
 - j) recommended FAO to build capacity on sustainable wildlife management, in particular, the issues at human-wildlife-livestock-ecosystem interface, by facilitating South-South exchange, organizing additional multi-stakeholder dialogues, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, as well as improving access to already existing knowledge and tools.

D. The 22nd Session of the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF)

12. The 22nd Session of the Committee was held in Libreville, Gabon, from 17 to 19 September 2019 with the participation of 21 members of the Committee, including the European Union, together with observers from different regional and subregional fisheries organizations, cooperation agencies and non-governmental organizations.
13. The Committee endorsed the assessment and management advice from the 8th Session of its Scientific Subcommittee (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, October 2018) while stressing the continued need to improve research and data collection in the region, to review the format of the scientific advice and the management recommendation and to enhance the dialogue between scientists and managers.
14. Regarding the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, the Committee noted that the strengthening of monitoring, control and surveillance at country level was an important condition for the development of a more efficient cooperation to combat IUU fishing at subregional and regional levels. All CECAF member countries were encouraged to become parties to the Agreement on Port State Measures.
15. The Committee expressed concern about the reoccurring issue of inadequate financial and human capacities of the CECAF Secretariat to pursue its mandate across the region. Increasing these capacities will also address the issue of infrequent and limited management advice provided by CECAF to its member countries. A preliminary report on Cost and Benefit Assessment (CBA) was reviewed by the Committee. The general conclusion was that with financial and organizational enhancements, the economic costs related to a strengthening of CECAF should be much less than its benefits.
16. The Session called upon all partners, especially African countries, to enhance their commitment to CECAF activities, including implementation of decisions on management advice and financial support.

E. The 18th Ordinary Session of the Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa (CIFA)

17. The 18th Ordinary Session of the Committee took place in Bamako, Mali, from 26 to 28 November 2019. Forty-seven (47) delegates from 29 member countries and three observers participated in the session, including high-level participation of senior country managers, who had not been able to participate previously due to funding issues.
18. The Session covered the topics of the sustainability of aquaculture production (profitability and socio-economic considerations); the role of organizations in the management of inland fisheries; the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines); fish disease and environmental constraints.
19. The Committee invited members to:
 - a) promote aquaculture, including small-scale and large-scale private farms and all environments/systems; support research, including in feed and seed; enforce research-extension linkages; promote digital aquaculture; post-harvest/marketing; and enhance experience-sharing, including exchange visits; and
 - b) support small-scale inland fisheries to increase the contribution of the subsector to food security, sustainable development and poverty eradication by promoting the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and organization of a workshop to raise awareness and develop action plans to facilitate the implementation of SSF Guidelines for inland fisheries in Africa.