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# PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

**Hundred and Thirty-eighth Session**

**Rome, 20-24 May 2024**

**Preparation for the Medium Term Plan 2026-29 -  
Regional Priorities**

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This document is the first step in the development of the Medium Term Plan 2026-29 and presents priorities and guidance as expressed by the three 2024 Regional Conferences held during February-March.<sup>1</sup>
- These priorities guide implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-25 and contribute to the corporate planning process for the 2026-27 biennium and beyond, in particular as a critical input for the update of the FAO results framework.<sup>2</sup>
- The 2024 Regional Conferences endorsed Regional Priorities under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, aligned to the Programme Priority Areas under the *four betters*.
- Overarching themes covered in the 2024 Regional Conferences included corporate initiatives and strategies, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and/or Land-locked Developing Countries (LLDCs), strategic foresight, financing to end hunger, resilience, and food loss and waste.

### GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

- The Programme Committee is invited to:
  - a) take note of the regional priorities presented in this document; and
  - b) provide any guidance to inform the Council's consideration of the reports of the three Regional Conferences held to date.

#### Draft Advice

##### **The Committee:**

- **welcomed document PC 138/2 *Preparation for the Medium Term Plan 2026-29 - Regional Priorities*, summarizing guidance from the Regional Conferences in Asia and the Pacific, Near East, and Latin America and the Caribbean;**
- **supported the priorities identified by the three Regional Conferences to guide the preparation of the MTP 2026-29, and**
- **looked forward to reviewing the full set of Regional Priorities, including those of Africa, Europe and Central Asia, and North America, as well as the technical priorities stemming from the Technical Committees, at its November session.**

<sup>1</sup> Asia and the Pacific, Near East, Latin America and the Caribbean

<sup>2</sup> *Annex 1*: Updated results framework 2022-25, Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25 (CL 174/3)

## I. Introduction

1. In line with the schedule for Governing Body input and oversight as described in FAO's Basic Texts,<sup>3</sup> the Regional Conferences and Technical Committees provide inputs on FAO's programming priorities to inform the preparation of the Medium Term Plan 2026-29 for submission to the relevant Governing Body Sessions in 2024.
2. The current document is the first step in the development of the Medium Term Plan 2026-29 and review of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31. The document consists of a summary of priorities and guidance expressed by the three 2024 Regional Conferences which have taken place prior to the preparation of this document, namely Asia and the Pacific, the Near East, and Latin America and the Caribbean.
3. Guidance from the Africa Regional Conference, Europe Regional Conference, Informal North America Regional Conference and Technical Committees in 2024 will be incorporated into a subsequent document to be presented at Governing Body meetings scheduled for November and December 2024.
4. The 2024 Regional Conferences piloted a new format to elevate their impact and foster greater Ministerial engagement by conducting Senior Officer Meetings (SOMs) virtually before each Regional Ministerial Conference, thereby freeing up time during the main event for debates among Ministers, special events and in-depth dialogues.

## II. Regional priorities expressed by Regional Conferences held in 2024

5. The following Regional Conferences were held to date in 2024:

Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC) 37th Session	<b>Senior Officers Meeting (virtual):</b> 31 January -2 February 2024 <b>Ministerial Session:</b> Colombo, Sri Lanka, 19-22 February 2024
Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC) 37th Session	<b>Senior Officers Meeting (virtual):</b> 5-8 February 2024 <b>Ministerial Session:</b> Amman, Jordan, 4-5 March 2024
Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC) 38th Session	<b>Senior Officers Meeting (virtual):</b> 11-13 March 2024 <b>Ministerial Session</b> Georgetown, Guyana 18-21 March 2024

6. Regional Priorities represent the approaches towards achieving FAO's vision, the Global Goals of Members, through the transformation to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for *better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life*, leaving no one behind. Regional Priorities were presented to the Regional Conferences through the 20 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) and associated SDG targets in the documents outlining the priorities for FAO in the region under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31.<sup>4</sup> All new and updated Regional Priorities and their association with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 were endorsed by the 2024 Regional Conferences as outlined below:

<sup>3</sup> FAO Basic Texts, Volume II, Section F, *Implementation of the IPA regarding the reform of the programming, budgeting and results-based monitoring system, Schedule for Governing Body input and oversight under the reformed programming, budgeting and results based monitoring systems.*

<sup>4</sup> These documents are, respectively: [APRC/24/10](#); [NERC/24/3](#); and [LARC/24/2](#).

### **Regional Priorities for Asia and the Pacific**

1. Transforming agrifood systems for sustainable production and healthy diets
2. Accelerating sustainable natural resources management for biodiversity conservation and climate action
3. Supporting inclusive rural transformation for sustainable agrifood systems and equitable rural societies
4. Building sustainable and resilient agrifood systems in the Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

### **Regional Priorities for the Near East and North Africa**

1. Rural transformation and inclusive value chains
2. Food security and healthy diets for all
3. Greening agriculture: addressing water scarcity and climate action
4. Building resilience to multiple shocks

### **Regional Priorities for Latin America and the Caribbean**

1. Efficient, inclusive and sustainable production
2. End hunger and achieve food security and nutrition
3. Sustainable management of natural resources and adaptation to climate change
4. Reduction of inequalities, poverty and promotion of resilience

The following sections summarize guidance provided by the Regional Conferences under a number of common themes.

### **Priorities for FAO in the Region**

7. Common *themes* arising from the discussion on Priorities for FAO in the Region included the importance of continued delivery of normative and knowledge products and services, evidence-based policy dialogue, FAO's work on strategic foresight and its relevance to the country-level planning processes, and strengthening partnerships with key stakeholders, including through South-South and Triangular Cooperation. The Regional Conferences also welcomed the implementation of FAO's key corporate initiatives. Other specific priority areas by Region included:

8. *Asia and the Pacific*: promoting conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of soils, land, water, and biodiversity; promoting sustainable fisheries and aquaculture; addressing Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, antimicrobial diseases and other invasive pests; ensuring access to nutritious diets; establishing acceleration zones, incubators and hubs to promote uptake of innovation and technology; supporting integrated water resources management; and, promoting gender equality and youth involvement in sustainable agrifood systems.

9. *Near East and North Africa*: supporting innovative approaches such as data analytics and capacity developments for agrifood systems transformation; continuing strategic initiatives, such as the Regional Leadership Development Academy; and, furthering analytical work in the form of regional and subregional observatories on food security and nutrition, and country-level food security monitoring dashboards.

10. *Latin America and the Caribbean*: addressing urgent challenges including hunger, malnutrition, and rural poverty; reducing inequalities and bolstering resilience, especially among vulnerable rural groups; combating IUU fishing; promoting sustainable technologies across various sectors; supporting the bioeconomy and sustainable aquaculture, particularly in the Caribbean; promoting policies for sustainable livestock systems and addressing disease outbreaks; supporting digital innovations for family farmers and vulnerable rural communities; supporting biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, climate resilience, water management, and early-warning systems; and enhancing frameworks and statistics on food loss and waste.

**Hand-in-Hand Initiative / Investment Forum**

11. Each Regional Ministerial Conference included a dedicated session on the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative. The Regional Conferences welcomed the HIH Initiative as an important means to scale up investments for sustainable agrifood systems and appreciated its role in helping countries to develop programmes and investment plans targeted towards raising incomes, reducing inequities and alleviating vulnerabilities among rural populations. The Regional Conferences urged the mobilization of timely, effective, and country-led investments and support for countries for sustainable agrifood investments, in coherence with local contexts and priorities.

**Science, innovation, and digitalization**

12. The Regional Ministerial Conferences welcomed the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy and its role in strengthening science and evidence-based decision making. The Regional Conferences noted the significant role of science and innovation in transforming agrifood systems, boosting food security, reducing food loss and waste, and leveraging rural transformation. They highlighted the importance of digital innovations and context-specific technological innovations in transforming agrifood systems, the important role of traditional knowledge, and the need to foster innovative financing mechanisms and partnerships, including with the private sector.

**SIDS, LDCs and/or LLDCs**

13. As a follow up to the High-Level Ministerial Event “Transforming agrifood systems to increase resilience and achieve the 2030 Agenda: Harnessing the potential of Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries” held in Rome in June 2023, each Regional Ministerial Conference organized a session dedicated to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and/or Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) focused on regional priorities toward agrifood systems transformation. The Regional Conferences underscored the need to support these countries, particularly SIDS, to: mobilize resources from the Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility and others; develop investment plans through, among others, the HIH Initiative; and provide technical assistance to: i) build their resilience to climate change and to food insecurity, ii) ensure increased access to healthy diets, and iii) support the Blue Transformation Roadmap.

**Strategic foresight**

14. Ministerial foresight simulation roundtables were organized during the Regional Ministerial Conferences of the Near East and Latin America and the Caribbean, where participants engaged with short- and long-term challenges facing governments in the regions, related priority driving forces, regional barriers, alternative regional future scenarios and triggers for transformation. The Regional Conferences appreciated FAO’s foresight work for the transformation of agrifood systems and emphasized the importance of strategic foresight planning in the face of an uncertain environment.

**Financing to end hunger for today and tomorrow (SDG 2)**

15. The Regional Conferences emphasized the urgent need to address malnutrition and achieve SDG 2 targets, while also recognizing the interconnectedness of SDGs and the various factors driving hunger and malnutrition. The Regional Conferences underscored the need for affordable finance, especially for climate-vulnerable and resource-poor countries and called for a comprehensive approach to mobilize additional financing, and highlighted the importance of private sector involvement and the need to prioritize smallholder family farms and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in agrifood systems transformation. The Regional Conferences called for support in data development, monitoring and evaluation, investment strategy and prioritization, technical recommendations, experience exchange, and capacity building, and urged FAO to facilitate meetings between Members and potential resource partners, and ensure effective resource mobilization to address SDG targets.

**Building Resilience through agrifood systems transformation**

16. The Regional Conferences emphasized the importance of a systemic resilience-building approach to address interconnected threats to agrifood systems, including disasters related to weather

and climate, conflicts, food chain crises, and economic shocks. The Regional Conferences recommended that FAO scale up support for the collection and analysis of risk- and impact-related data and builds capacities to do so, facilitate the mainstreaming of resilience-building and risk reduction into national policies, and support the establishment of multi-hazard management mechanisms across different ministries and entities involved in agriculture and food sectors. The Regional Conferences emphasized the importance of interventions being conflict-sensitive, peace-responsive, and risk-informed, as well as the importance of empowerment and active participation of all vulnerable groups. They urged the mobilization of timely, effective, and context-specific investments and support for countries in mobilizing international finance to enhance the transition to sustainable, climate-resilient agricultural systems.

### **Fight against food loss and waste**

17. The Regional Conferences collectively emphasized the significant impact of Food Loss and Waste (FLW) on food insecurity, greenhouse gas emissions, and environmental challenges, requiring a comprehensive, collaborative approach involving all stakeholders. They acknowledged the multifaceted causes of FLW, including inadequate policies and strategies, limited access to finance and technologies, and low levels of knowledge and awareness. The Regional Conferences stressed the importance of reducing FLW for transitioning towards sustainable agrifood systems, and acknowledged that while technology is key in reducing food loss and waste, its success depends on comprehensive strategies and public awareness at all levels. The Regional Conferences appreciated FAO's work towards developing regional strategies on FLW reduction, and urged countries to integrate FLW reduction into their agrifood systems strategies, addressing food security, nutrition, climate change, and investment. The Regional Conferences recommended FAO support countries in adopting efficient and sustainable practices to reduce FLW, help overcome challenges such as data scarcity and lack of knowledge, expand efforts to facilitate the incorporation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Voluntary Code of Conduct for Food Loss and Waste Reduction,<sup>5</sup> and strengthen the implementation of integrated solutions for FLW prevention and reduction.

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<sup>5</sup> Endorsed by the 42nd Session of the FAO Conference in June 2021.

### Annex 1: Regional Priorities endorsed by the 2024 Regional Conferences

#### Overview of Regional Priorities and PPAs

Asia and the Pacific	Better Production					Better Nutrition					Better Environment				Better Life					
	BP1 Green Innovation	BP2 Blue Transform	BP3 One Health	BP4 Small Scale	BP5 Digital Agriculture	BN1 Healthy Diets	BN2 Most Vulnerable	BN3 Safe Food	BN4 Loss and Waste	BN5 Markets and Trade	BE1 Climate Change	BE2 Bio Economy	BE3 Eco system	BE4 Urban Food	BL1 Gender Equality	BL2 Rural Transform	BL3 Food Emergency	BL4 Resilient Systems	BL5 Hand in Hand	BL6 Scaling up Investment
Regional Priority 1																				
Regional Priority 2																				
Regional Priority 3																				
Regional Priority 4																				

- Regional Priority 1** Transforming agrifood systems for sustainable production and healthy diets
- Regional Priority 2** Accelerating sustainable natural resources management for biodiversity conservation and climate action
- Regional Priority 3** Supporting inclusive rural transformation for sustainable agrifood systems and equitable rural societies
- Regional Priority 4** Building sustainable and resilient agrifood systems in the Pacific SIDS

Near East and North Africa	Better Production					Better Nutrition					Better Environment				Better Life					
	BP1 Green Innovation	BP2 Blue Transform	BP3 One Health	BP4 Small Scale	BP5 Digital Agriculture	BN1 Healthy Diets	BN2 Most Vulnerable	BN3 Safe Food	BN4 Loss and Waste	BN5 Markets and Trade	BE1 Climate Change	BE2 Bio Economy	BE3 Eco system	BE4 Urban Food	BL1 Gender Equality	BL2 Rural Transform	BL3 Food Emergency	BL4 Resilient Systems	BL5 Hand in Hand	BL6 Scaling up Investment
Regional Priority 1																				
Regional Priority 2																				
Regional Priority 3																				
Regional Priority 4																				

- Regional Priority 1** Rural transformation and inclusive value chains
- Regional Priority 2** Food security and healthy diets for all
- Regional Priority 3** Greening agriculture: addressing water scarcity climate action
- Regional Priority 4** Building resilience to multiple shocks

Latin American and Caribbean	Better Production					Better Nutrition					Better Environment				Better Life					
	BP1 Green Innovation	BP2 Blue Transform	BP3 One Health	BP4 Small Scale	BP5 Digital Agriculture	BN1 Healthy Diets	BN2 Most Vulnerable	BN3 Safe Food	BN4 Loss and Waste	BN5 Markets and Trade	BE1 Climate Change	BE2 Bio Economy	BE3 Eco system	BE4 Urban Food	BL1 Gender Equality	BL2 Rural Transform	BL3 Food Emergency	BL4 Resilient Systems	BL5 Hand in Hand	BL6 Scaling up Investment
Regional Priority 1																				
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- Regional Priority 1** Efficient, inclusive and sustainable production
- Regional Priority 2** End hunger and achieve food security and nutrition
- Regional Priority 3** Sustainable management of natural resources and adaptation to climate change
- Regional Priority 4** Reduction of inequalities, poverty and promotion of resilience