



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



# **REPORT**

## **Fifth Meeting of the Steering Committee of the FAO Global Action for Fall Armyworm (FAW) Control**

**24 November 2021**

**FAW Secretariat, Global Action for FAW Control**

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## 1. Introduction

[1] Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol, Co-Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the Global Action for Fall Armyworm Control (GA) and moderator of the meeting, thanked outgoing members of the Steering Committee (SC) and welcomed new members. She also congratulated SC member Mr Martin Kropff on his appointment as Global Director, Resilient Agrifood Systems Science Group, CGIAR and SC member Mr Kongming WU, on his appointment as President, Chinese Academy of Agriculture Science (CAAS). Ms Bechdol also thanked outgoing SC members Ms Christina Owen, Senior Programme Officer, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Mr Hanns-Achim Krebs, Senior Policy Officer, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), European Commission. Ms Bechdol welcomed new members, including: H.E. Thomas John Kelly, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to FAO (who was represented at the meeting by Mr Neil Fourie, First Secretary and Agriculture Attaché, Permanent Representation of the United Kingdom to FAO in Rome); Mr Christophe Larose, Head of Sector, Sustainable Agriculture, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG INTPA), European Commission; and Mr Neil Hausmann, Senior Programme Officer, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

## 2. Opening Remarks

[2] Mr QU Dongyu, FAO Director-General and Chairperson of the SC, opened the meeting and welcomed the 58 participants and observers. He expressed appreciation for their commitment to mitigate the damage due to fall armyworm (FAW) and noted that in the two years since the Global Action (GA) was inaugurated, in December 2019, FAW has continued to spread around the world. Increasing evidence shows that the FAW invasion is causing significant maize yield losses, reduced incomes, food insecurity, as well as intensification of pesticide use and associated health problems.

[3] The financial burden caused by FAW, in terms of yield losses, has been estimated at USD 9.4 billion in Africa alone. This also illustrates the clear need for the GA, which is yielding results in controlling FAW in many parts of the world, observed Mr QU. For example, at the global level, the GA Technical Committee (TC) has produced major guidelines on both integrated pest management (IPM) and on prevention and preparedness. Members of the TC have also conducted a series of technical seminars, facilitated by the FAW Secretariat. Mr QU said that efforts over the last two years have proven that through strong and effective coordination at all levels, FAW is predictable, manageable and preventable in terms of high level damage.

[4] Such significant progress must be continued, supported by increased funding and an extended mandate for the GA beyond its current end date of 2022, Mr QU said. Work must continue to support the technical partners that are delivering science-based control solutions for farmers. He said the SC meeting must take stock of key achievements of the GA; analyze major challenges; provide strategic inputs for GA implementation in 2022; and discuss the way forward beyond 2022.

## 3. Adoption of the Agenda

[5] Deputy Director-General (DDG) Beth Bechdol presented the agenda, which was adopted (*Appendix 1*).

## 4. Update from the FAW Secretariat

[6] Mr Jingyuan Xia, Director of the Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP) and Executive Secretary of the FAW Secretariat, provided an overview of the invasion and spread of FAW since it was first reported in Africa in 2016. He noted that FAW attacks a range of plants – particularly striking maize crops in all reporting countries; sorghum and ginger in Africa and South Asia; and sugar cane in Australia, China, India, and the Philippines. Mr Xia described multiple achievements under the GA between 2019 and 2021, including coordination mechanisms established at multiple levels, including global, regional, geographic zones, national and farmer field levels, leaving no one behind.

[7] In addition, globally-vetted General Guidelines for Developing Regional IPM Strategies have been written, with the TC's contributions, and published while the Prevention and Preparedness Guidelines were also

written with help from the TC. With regard to other activities under the GA, Mr Xia noted that: five meetings of the SC and five meetings of the TC have been held; resource mobilization work at the global level has reached USD 9,633,665; while eight demonstration countries and ten pilot countries were supported. Furthermore, 31 Director-General Notes and six Fall Armyworm Control in Action Newsletters were produced.

- [8] Other main outputs of the GA between 2020-2021 include management activities such as support for National Task Forces, helping to develop their workplans, IPM packages, and capacity development as well as demonstration and scaling up of activities among the eight demonstration countries and the 54 pilot countries. Dissemination of the Prevention and Preparedness Guidelines helped to slow down FAW spread and prepare countries for the possibility of FAW introduction, he said.
- [9] In terms of forecasting and early warning, Mr Xia said that a sound example can be seen in China's migration monitoring and early warning system for landscape-scale monitoring and early warning systems in 27 provinces. It is incorporating population monitoring, population forecasting and population management, and includes weekly risk predictions actionable at field level. Mr. Xia also mentioned that at field level, FAO Fall Armyworm Monitoring and Early Warning System application (FAMEWS) is functional for field-scale scouting in all three target regions. FAMEWS has helped produce 15 490 reports on FAW scouting, and traps from 49 countries and FAW data sets are available on both FAW and Hand-in-Hand platforms in near-real time.
- [10] Technical support and capacity development were provided to countries involved in global level activities, such as technical webinars attended by 2 656 participants; at geo-zone level, including technical trainings attended by 367 participants; and IPM strategies developed in the eight demonstration countries within eight geo-zones. At the national level, practical technical trainings were attended by 5 985 farmers in the eight demonstration countries.
- [11] FAW control was exhibited as levels of infested acreage fell and yield losses were reduced in some pilot and demonstration countries – some demonstration countries reported yield losses below five percent, well within the goals of the GA. Positive potential outcomes were also seen as biocontrol and biopesticide-based IPM packages that resulted in increased yields and profitability, said Mr Xia, citing statistics from sources including India's National Bureau for Agricultural Insect Resources (NBAIR). IPM packages may also contribute to reduced use of high-risk pesticides and increased activities of FAW natural enemies.
- [12] Challenges include a lack of capacity for farmers to react in time and in an appropriate manner, a lack of availability and affordability of applicable IPM products, and a lack of resources in both demonstration and pilot countries. The way forward for the GA in 2022 involves more capacity development for farmers through Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) and other methods; more technical innovation for applicable and affordable IPM products; and more resource mobilization at regional and national levels.
- [13] Mr Xia said that FAW is predictable, manageable and high level damage preventable through effective coordination at global, regional and national levels. The work plan for 2022 will include IPM technology promotion through large-scale demonstration and increasing farmers' capacities to boost adoption of various technologies. Technical support is needed in all these efforts.

## **5. Updates from the Technical Committee**

- [14] The Chairperson of the Global Action Technical Committee (TC) and Chief Scientist with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Mr Robert Bertram, outlined progress made to date by the TC. That includes providing guidance to impacted countries through the aforementioned IPM General Guidelines and the Prevention and Preparedness Guidelines. Also, knowledge transfer has been achieved through global technical webinars. Furthermore, a USAID IPM Guide for Asia was developed with partners.
- [15] Furthermore, an IPM strategy for FAW control and technical support in developing IPM plans have been provided to each demonstration country through its FAW National Task Force. In addition, prevention and preparedness plans in areas where the pest is still absent have been supported, including detailed factsheets concerning the distribution and biology of FAW that have been provided by several organizations. Mr Bertram

said that information on phytosanitary measures to be applied to contain or limit the spread of FAW has also been shared.

- [16] Research is underway across Africa and Asia to better understand management practices, technologies, and IPM approaches, said Mr Bertram. Many GA partners have published findings regarding FAW-related yield loss projections, including the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI). Additionally, research is ongoing into FAW-resistant maize by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), and information is being developed with regard to good agronomic and agro-ecological approaches and use of natural enemies and biopesticides, by CABI and by the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (icipe).
- [17] Mr Bertram described a TC initiative to develop globally standardized technology evaluation protocols. The initiative will allow demonstration countries to adapt the protocols, use a shared data collection tool, and pool the data together for a common analysis and learning.
- [18] He also described an Impact Assessment of the GA on FAW Control which is being led by CABI in collaboration with TC members, GA partners, and the FAW Secretariat. The impact study aims to document changes in FAW's impacts in two GA target countries – India and Kenya – and describe the GA's contributions to these changes. Research questions will include: how the FAW yield losses and farmer practices to manage FAW have changed over time between 2018 (or earlier where possible) and 2022 in Kenya and in one state in India; what are the socio-economic impacts of these changes; what kind of interventions the GA and its partners have introduced in Kenya and India from 2018 to 2022; how these interventions have contributed to the observed changes in yield losses and farmers practices. The methodology developed through this initiative will be kept open for other partners or demonstration countries to conduct their own impact assessment.
- [19] Mr Bertram raised the topic of extending the GA beyond the current three-year phase that ends in 2022. If it were extended, in 2023 the GA could deepen engagement with demonstration countries, and concentrate on scaling up adoption of IPM technologies as well as broaden support activities to 56 pilot countries. Furthermore, it could look beyond FAW to other invasive pests by seeking alignment across many partners and initiatives to facilitate shared objectives and collective impact, said Mr Bertram.

## **6. Update from the Working Group for Resource Mobilization**

- [20] Mr Alexander Jones, Director of the Resource Mobilization and Private Sector Partnerships Division of FAO, noted that between 2020-2021, apart from the USD 9.6 million mobilized at the global level, a further approximately USD 3 million had been mobilized under the GA through FAO funding in the form of regional and national Technical Cooperation Projects. He said that the Working Group on Resource Mobilization (WG RM) has recommended that FAW should not be seen in isolation but as part of a wider body of concerns, including crop loss, food and livelihood insecurity, as well as the need for green job creation. Subsequently, these must link with larger, global initiatives, such as the UN Food Systems Summit and the One Health approach. Mobilizing resources should be seen in the context of achieving solutions, rather than focusing on problems. Some solutions may be found through collaborations and strategic partnerships as well as collaboration between FAO and research institutions, other leading agencies and governments; this should be better highlighted in communication material. Furthermore, these critical collaborations may include public-private partnerships.
- [21] Since it was founded in March 2021, the WG RM has worked to link FAW with larger programmes, prepared information on FAW and other invasive pests for donors, aimed to meet requirements from development partners as well as strive to capitalize on partnership and achievements of the GA, said Mr Jones. In addition, it has recommended to National Task Forces issue an open call for private sector collaborators under the GA. Mr Jones said that the process is continuing. Additionally, an MoU was signed with Grow Asia and a resource mobilization, marketing and outreach consultant will be recruited to support the WG RM.
- [22] Challenges include global declines in donor support generally in the wake of COVID-19, economic challenges and an increased focus by key donors on domestic concerns. Donors are also shifting focus from single issues

(such as FAW) to more broad-based challenges, and to human health priorities as well as a large number of major humanitarian crises around the world.

[23] Mr Jones said that the next steps for 2022 include: finalizing a resource mobilization, outreach and marketing guide; providing resource mobilization training at regional and country levels; and greater engagement with regional offices and demonstration countries to support and nurture local resource mobilization opportunities.

## **7. General Discussion: the Way Forward**

[24] Several SC members expressed appreciation for the progress reported on the GA and some asked questions, which were answered collectively. H.E. Morten von Hanno Aasland, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway to FAO, noted that FAW's ability to spread rapidly, combined with its numerous host plants, means that the pest has become a real challenge to food security and people's livelihoods. Hence, it is extremely important that the scientific community across the globe continues to work with FAO in developing sustainable solutions suitable to the diversity of farming and agro-ecological systems. Financing is a critical concern and fast action is necessary, he said. That includes considering if FAW-related efforts should be integrated into more holistic IPM programmes while ensuring that solutions fit with national plant protection research agendas, needs and strategies.

[25] Mr Bommakanti Rajender, Committee on Agriculture (COAG) Chairperson and Permanent Representative of the Republic of India to FAO, asked for updated information with regard to biological control of FAW and whether progress is being reported in development of host-plant resistant strains.

[26] Ms Jennifer Harhigh, Chargé d'Affaires, United States Mission to the United Nations Agencies, thanked the TC and the FAW Secretariat for supporting farmers in implementing and adapting sustainable management practices, such as IPM. She noted that additional resources are needed to upscale results and impact. Ms Harhigh urged the FAW Secretariat to continue its geographic focus on the areas of need, especially in Asia and Africa. In order to ensure representation of those areas, she suggested that regional organizations such as the African Union or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) might be given access to the GA's governing or technical bodies.

[27] Mr Andrew Ward, representing CropLife International, suggested that it may be useful to deepen relationships with the research partners in the GA, especially to help with scaling-up work and supporting small-scale farmers to a greater degree.

[28] Mr Kongming WU, Professor and President, Chinese Academy of Agriculture Science (CAAS), emphasized the importance of pest monitoring and early warning systems and said these should be included in an effective IPM project. He also suggested the GA should be extended for one to two years, to provide time to further strengthen its work.

[29] Mr Keith Tyrell, Director, Pesticides Action Network United Kingdom (PAN UK), noted that the data on pesticide use by small-scale farmers demonstrates high levels of poisoning risks among farmers and underscored the importance of scaling up IPM strategies to provide better options.

[30] Mr Martin Kropff, Global Director of the Resilient Agrifood Systems Science Group, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), noted the question from Mr Rajender and stated that national performance trials are ongoing for three host-plant resistant varieties in several countries in eastern and southern African. He added that the release of these new varieties is anticipated in 2022 and that plant health rapid responses is one of 32 initiatives in the CGIAR's research portfolio.

[31] Mr Christophe Larose, Head of Sector, Sustainable Agriculture Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG INTPA) European Commission, emphasized the importance of bearing in mind issues of food security and insecurity as well as food safety. He also asked for more information on how Kenya and a province of India were chosen as case studies for the Impact Assessment of the Global Action on FAW Control.

- [32] Mr Fernando Hercos Valicente, Senior Scientist in the maize and sorghum division of the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA), reminded participants that Brazil is developing biopesticides through a project dealing with biological management of FAW, achieving excellent results.
- [33] Ms Isabel Calderón, Counsellor, Agriculture and Commodities Division of the World Trade Organization (WTO), noted that the organization has received very few notifications on FAW-related trade issues.
- [34] In response to the statements and questions, Mr Bertram thanked countries from the Americas that have a long history with FAW and have shared their experience and knowledge. He emphasized that South-South Cooperation should be a strong part of the GA. Responding to Mr Larose's query, he also explained that Kenya and India were selected for the GA Impact Assessment due to availability of a baseline of data in those locations.
- [35] Mr Xia thanked participants for their comments and questions and emphasized the importance of collaboration through the GA with World Agroforestry (ICRAF), CropLife International and CABI, and said that through such cooperation, even more support can be offered to the demonstration and pilot countries under the GA. Responding to Ms Harhigh's suggestion, he noted that there is now significant representation from regional bodies in the GA's global and regional coordination structures, but inclusion of other bodies could be considered.
- [36] Mr Xia emphasized the value of the initiative on globally standardized protocols, data collection tools and data platforms for technology evaluation. Furthermore, the impact study initiative, previously described by Mr Bertram, is extremely important to get feedback on the TC efforts and to support resource mobilization efforts. The food safety impact of FAW may be incorporated in the scope of the impact study. Mr Xia noted that CABI was asked to take the lead on this while coordinating with all National Task Forces and TC members.
- [37] Pesticide use is a concern because a significant amount of data demonstrates the dangers from chemical pesticides, which can be poisonous to human and to plant life, said Mr Xia, responding to Mr Tyrell's point. Mr Xia also noted that the impacts of FAW control on international trade, including border controls, must be well understood and indicated that IPPC is looking into this.

## **8. Closing Remarks**

- [38] Ms Bechdol closed the meeting by thanking the SC for providing a rich set of suggestions that should be included in future work. That work will involve a continued focus on reducing pest risks, scaling up science, and further engagement with more regional organizations. The TC and FAW Secretariat are asked to continue the work with regard to integrated pest management which may include monitoring and early warning in the GA.

**Appendix 1: Agenda**

**FIFTH MEETING**  
**GLOBAL ACTION FOR FALL ARMYWORM CONTROL STEERING COMMITTEE**  
**24 November 2021**  
**14.30–16.30 (Rome time, GMT +1)**  
**AGENDA**

AGENDA ITEMS		DOCUMENTS	PRESENTER	PROPOSED TIME (min)
1	<b>Opening Remarks</b>		QU Dongyu, FAO Director-General, SC Chairperson	10
2	<b>Adoption of the Agenda</b>	01_GA-5th SC_Nov2021	Beth BECHDOL, FAO Deputy-Director General	5
3	<b>Update from the FAW Secretariat</b>	Presentation (PPT)	Jingyuan XIA, NSP Director and Executive Secretary of the FAW Secretariat	15
4	<b>Updates from the Technical Committee:</b> Report of the fifth TC meeting;	02_GA-5th SC_Nov2021	Robert BERTRAM, SC Vice-Chair USAID Chief-Scientist	15
5	<b>Update from the Working Group for Resource Mobilization</b>	Presentation (PPT)	Alexander JONES, Director PSR and Vice- Chair of WG RM	10
6	<b>General Discussion: the Way Forward</b>		Beth BECHDOL, FAO Deputy Director- General	30
7	<b>Closing Remarks</b>		Beth BECHDOL, FAO Deputy Director- General	5



**Appendix 2: List of Participants**

	<b>Name, Last name</b>	<b>Organization name, Address</b>
		<b>Steering Committee (SC) Members</b>
1.	Mr QU Dongyu, SC Chair	FAO Director-General
2.	Ms Beth Bechdol, SC Co-Chair	FAO Deputy Director-General
3.	Mr Kongming WU, SC Vice Chair	President, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS)
4.	Mr Robert Bertram, SC Vice Chair, Chair of the Technical Committee	Chief Scientist, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Washington,D.C., United States of America
5.	Ms Isabel Calderón, Alternate	Economic Affairs Officer, Agriculture and Commodities Division (AGCD), World Trade Organization (WTO)
6.	Ms Giulia Di Tommaso, SC Member	President and CEO, CropLife International
7.	Ms Regina Eddy, Observer	Coordinator, Interagency Task Force on FAW, USAID
8.	Mr Neil Fourie, Alternate	First Secretary and Agriculture Attaché, Permanent Representation of the United Kingdom to FAO
9.	Mr Martin Fregene, SC Member	Director, Agriculture and Agro-Industry, Africa Development Bank Group (AfDB)
10.	Ms Jennifer Harhigh, SC Member	Deputy Permanent Representative and Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Mission to the UN Agencies in Rome
11.	Mr Neil Hausmann, SC Member	Senior Program Officer, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
12.	Mr Fernando Hercos Valicente, SC Member	Senior Scientist, Embrapa Maize and Sorghum Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA)
13.	Mr Martin Kropff, SC Member	Global Director, Resilient Agrifood Systems Science Group, CGIAR

14.	Mr Christophe Larose, SC Member	Head of Sector, Sustainable Agriculture, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG INTPA), European Commission
15.	Mr John Myer, Observer	Senior Humanitarian Advisor, United States Mission to the UN Agencies, Rome
16.	Mr Bommakanti Rajender, SC Member	COAG Chairperson, Alternate Permanent Representative of the Republic of India to FAO, Embassy of the Republic of India
17.	Ms May-Guri Sæthre, Observer	Senior Advisor, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)
18.	Mr Keith Tyrell, SC Member	Executive Director, Pesticides Action Network, United Kingdom
19.	H.E. Morten Von Hanno Aasland, SC Member	Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Norway to FAO
20.	Mr Andrew Ward, Alternate	Stewardship Director, Crop Life International, Brussels, Belgium
21.	Mr Jingyuan Xia, SC Member	Director, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP) and Executive Secretary of the FAW Secretariat
		<b>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)</b>
22.	Mr Shoki AlDobai	Senior Agricultural Officer, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
23.	Mr Deng Arop	Agricultural Officer, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
24.	Mr Giuseppe Carotenuto	Photographer, OCC
25.	Ms Sandra Cordon	Communications Consultant, FAW Secretariat, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
26.	Ms Selene Dibiagio	Meeting support specialist, FAO CSGM Audiovisual Services - SDB
27.	Mr Yubak Dhoj GC	Senior Agriculture Officer, FAO RAP
28.	Ms Ariella Glinni	Senior Technical Officer, Office of Deputy Director-General (DDCB)
29.	Mr Baogen Gu	Senior Agricultural Officer and Team Leader, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)

30.	Mr Buyung Hadi	Agricultural Officer, FAW Secretariat, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
31.	Mr Abebe HaileGabriel	ADG/Regional Representative FAO RAF
32.	Mr Paul Howard	Office Assistant, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
33.	Mr Alexander Jones	Director, Resource Mobilization and Private Sector Partnerships Division (PSR)
34.	Mr Haekoo Kim	Technical Advisor, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
35.	Mr Jongjin Kim	ADG/Regional Representative, FAO RAP
36.	Ms Natasha Little	Communications specialist, Office Corporate Communications (OCC)
37.	Mr Mohamed Manssouri	Director, FAO Investment Center (CFID)
38.	Ms Natalia Merkusheva	Coordinator, Office of Director-General (ODG)
39.	Mr Mirko Montuori	Communication Officer, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
40.	Mr Jimmy Owani	Emergency and Rehabilitation Programme Officer, Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER)
41.	Mr Gianni Palmerio	Office Assistant, FAW Secretariat Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
42.	Ms Gabriella Piacentini	Communication Coordinator, Office of Director- General (ODG)
43.	Ms Dina Rahman	Senior Coordinator, Office of Director- General (ODG)
44.	Ms Elisabetta Tagliati	Chief Technical Advisor, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
45.	Ms Madeleine Taylor	Communications Consultant, Office of Deputy Director-General (DDCB)
46.	Ms Irinia Utkina	Information officer, Office Corporate Communications (OCC)
47.	Ms Verena Wilke	Programme Specialist, FAW Secretariat, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)
48.	Ms Hua Yang	Deputy Director Cabinet, Office Corporate Communications (OCC)

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49.	Mr Puyun Yang	Agricultural Officer, FAO Research and Extension Unit Office for Innovation (OINR)
50.	Mr Qingpo Yang	Associate Professional Officer, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSPD)
51.	Mr Thaer Yaseen	Regional Plant Protection Officer, FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (RNE)