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Organization of the
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Organisation des Nations
Unies pour l'alimentation
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Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

CONFERENCE

Forty-third Session

Rome, 1-7 July 2023

**Report of the 32nd Session of the Regional Conference for Africa
(Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 11-14 April 2022)**



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

REPORT

Malabo, Equatorial
Guinea

11-14 April 2022
(hybrid)

Thirty-second Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa

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FAO Member Nations in the Africa Region

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Algeria | Ethiopia | Niger |
| Angola | Gabon | Nigeria |
| Benin | Gambia | Rwanda |
| Botswana | Ghana | Sao Tome and Principe |
| Burkina Faso | Guinea | Senegal |
| Burundi | Guinea-Bissau | Seychelles |
| Cameroon | Kenya | Sierra Leone |
| Cabo Verde | Lesotho | Somalia |
| Central African Republic | Liberia | South Africa |
| Chad | Libya | South Sudan |
| Comoros | Madagascar | The Sudan |
| Congo | Malawi | Swaziland |
| Côte d'Ivoire | Mali | Togo |
| Democratic Republic of the Congo | Mauritania | Tunisia |
| Djibouti | Mauritius | Uganda |
| Egypt | Morocco | United Republic of Tanzania |
| Equatorial Guinea | Mozambique | Zambia |
| Eritrea | Namibia | Zimbabwe |

Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for Africa

| | |
|--------------|---|
| First | Lagos, Nigeria, 3 – 12 November 1960 |
| Second | Tunis, Tunisia, 1 – 10 November 1962 |
| Third | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 3 – 15 September 1964 |
| Fourth | Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 9 – 19 November 1966 |
| Fifth | Kampala, Uganda, 18 – 29 November 1968 |
| Sixth | Algiers, Algeria, 17 September – 3 October 1970 |
| Seventh | Libreville, Gabon, 14 – 30 September 1972 |
| Eighth | Rose Hill, Mauritius, 1 – 17 August 1974 |
| Ninth | Freetown, Sierra Leone, 2 – 12 November 1976 |
| Tenth | Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, 18 – 28 September 1978 |
| Eleventh | Lomé, Togo, 16 – 27 June 1980 |
| Twelfth | Algiers, Algeria, 22 September – 2 October 1982 |
| Thirteenth | Harare, Zimbabwe, 16 – 25 July 1984 |
| Fourteenth | Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, 2 – 11 September 1986 |
| Fifteenth | Moka, Mauritius, 26 April – 4 May 1988 |
| Sixteenth | Marrakech, Morocco, 11 – 15 June 1990 |
| Seventeenth | Accra, Ghana, 20 – 24 July 1992 |
| Eighteenth | Gaborone, Botswana, 24 – 28 October 1994 |
| Nineteenth | Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 16 – 20 April 1996 |
| Twentieth | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 16 – 20 February 1998 |
| Twenty-first | Yaoundé, Cameroon, 21 – 25 February 2000 |

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Twenty-second | Cairo, Egypt, 4-8 February 2002 |
| Twenty-third | Johannesburg, South Africa, 1 – 5 March 2004 |
| Twenty-fourth | Bamako, Mali, 30 January – 3 February 2006 |
| Twenty-fifth | Nairobi, Kenya, 16 – 20 June 2008 |
| Twenty-sixth | Luanda, Angola, 3 – 7 May 2010 |
| Twenty-seventh | Brazzaville, Congo, 23 – 27 April 2012 |
| Twenty-eighth | Tunis, Tunisia, 24 – 28 March 2014 |
| Twenty-ninth | Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 4 – 8 April 2016 |
| Thirtieth | Khartoum, the Sudan, 19 – 23 February 2018 |
| Thirty-first | Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, (virtual), 26 – 28 October 2020 |
| Thirty-second | Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, (hybrid), 11 – 14 April 2022 |

SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL

Programme and Budget Matters

- *Regional results, priorities, the four betters and the Sustainable Development Goals* (Paragraphs 28 to 31)
- *Update on the development of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy* (Paragraphs 32 and 34)
- *Update on the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change* (Paragraphs 35 and 36)

Other Matters

- *Multi-Year Programme of Work 2022-2025 for the Regional Conference for Africa* (Paragraph 37)
- *Date and Place of the 33rd Regional Conference for Africa* (Paragraph 38)

MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE CONFERENCE

Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Matters

- *Regional results, priorities, the four betters and the Sustainable Development Goals* (Paragraphs 28 to 36)
- *One Health Platform: Prevention of future pandemics through effective cross-sectoral engagement* (Paragraph 16)
- *COVID-19 impacts on agrifood systems in Africa: policy priorities for inclusive and resilient recovery* (Paragraphs 18 and 19)
- *Investing in ecosystem restoration for a more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems transformation in Africa* (Paragraphs 20 and 21)
- *Promotion of investment and trade for competitive agrifood systems: AfCFTA opportunities and progress* (Paragraphs 22 and 23)
- *Placing women, youth and the poor at the forefront of inclusive agrifood systems* (Paragraphs 25 to and 27)
- *Host Country event: experience sharing on challenges related to forest governance* (Paragraph 49)
- *Experience sharing sessions among member countries on better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind* (Paragraph 58)

I. Introductory Items

Organization of the Regional Conference

1. The 32nd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa (ARC) was held from 11 to 14 April 2022. The Session was convened in hybrid modality (both physical presence in the host country of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and virtual participation through videoconferencing), on an exceptional basis, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health concerns and constraints. The Session followed consultations by the FAO Director-General with the host Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and the Regional Group for Africa. As the General Rules of the Organization presuppose in-person sessions of the Regional Conference, the Members agreed to suspend any rules incompatible with the hybrid setting. The Regional Conference included a Senior Officers Meeting, held from 11 to 12 April, and a Ministerial Session held from 13 to 14 April 2022.

2. The Regional Conference was attended by 778 delegates from 54 Members. The delegates were constituted of 62 ministers (including deputy ministers), 20 ambassadors, 28 private sector organizations, 31 civil society and/or non-governmental organizations, 34 intergovernmental organizations, 7 United Nations (UN) organizations and 3 observer nations.

Inaugural Ceremonies

3. The Senior Officers Meeting was opened with addresses by Mr Abebe Haile-Gabriel, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative of FAO, Regional Office for Africa, and Her Excellency Francisca Eneme Efua, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Forests and Environment of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

4. Mr Abebe Haile-Gabriel welcomed participants and thanked the Government of Equatorial Guinea for hosting this important Regional Conference. He praised the collective manner in which countries and partners are dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and invited Members to adopt the same agility and spirit of collaboration in dealing with the silent pandemic of poverty, violence, food insecurity and extreme vulnerabilities to shocks in Africa. He further stressed the need for extraordinary measures to meet the commitments of the African Union Commission of the 2014 Malabo Declaration, in view of the performances reported in the third cycle of Biennial Reviews. He invited participants for much interactions and dialogues to discuss issues of importance to the region and take guidance from the Regional Conference.

5. Her Excellency Francisca Eneme Efua opened the Senior Officers Meeting by thanking FAO and Members for the responsibility conferred to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea to organize the Regional Conference. She invited participants to use the opportunity of this platform to discuss issues and priorities of the Africa region, focusing on FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, African Union Commission (AUC) Agenda 2063, the Malabo Commitments and other AUC declarations.

Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, and appointment of Rapporteur

6. Delegates endorsed Her Excellency Francisca Eneme Efua, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Forests and Environment of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea to chair this Session. The Chairperson thanked delegates for electing the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and FAO for the excellent preparation in organizing the meeting.

7. The Conference elected the Kingdom of Morocco as first Vice-Chair and the Republic of Zimbabwe as second Vice-Chair. The Regional Conference appointed the Republic of the Niger and the United Republic of Tanzania as first and second Rapporteurs, respectively.

Adoption of Agenda

8. The Conference adopted the Agenda, which is provided in *Appendix A*.

Statement by the FAO Director-General

9. Dr QU Dongyu, Director-General of FAO, conveyed his appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for the excellent organization of this Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa and for the warm hospitality. He highlighted the existing potential on the African continent and emphasized the need to transform the agrifood systems to be more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient and more sustainable. He welcomed the AUC's decision to declare 2022 the Year for Nutrition, and highlighted the importance of this conference to achieve tangible results toward the *four betters*, in the context of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, the FAO Corporate Initiatives as well as the Science and Innovation and the Climate Change strategies under development. Dr QU Dongyu invited Members to “stand tall, like the *ceiba* tree”, as important agents for change in the face of the many overlapping challenges in the region, and continue to work together efficiently, effectively and coherently, and in a more innovative way for *The Africa We Want!* (ARC/20/INF/4).

Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council

10. Mr Hans Hoogeveen, Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council conveyed his appreciation to the Government and people of Equatorial Guinea for the excellent organization of this Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa. He underlined the current threats, which aggravate human suffering and food insecurity. He applauded the region for progress made to date and stressed the urgent need for a transformative change through, among others, leveraging opportunities offered by science and innovation, adopting a more systemic and coordinated approach among key sectors and stakeholders. Mr Hoogeveen concluded by highlighting the unique role of the Regional Conference for Africa in helping FAO to achieve its most noble mandate and be an effective agent in the struggle to free the world of hunger and malnutrition, leaving no one behind (ARC/20/INF/5).

Statement by the Chairperson of the 31st Session of the Regional Conference for Africa

11. His Excellency Anxious Jongwe Masuka, Chairperson of the 31st Session of the Regional Conference for Africa, delivered his statement, highlighting the key recommendations made to help Members to safeguard food security and sustainable agriculture development in Africa. He also shared some landmark events that shaped and influenced his activities since the 31st Session of the Regional Conference for Africa. The statement was made available to delegates (ARC/22/INF/6).

Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

12. His Excellency Gabriel Ferrero y de Loma-Osorio, Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) addressed the Regional Conference with a highlight of the food security and nutrition challenges in Africa, and shared some reflections on how the agreements governments reached in the CFS can be useful for achieving at country level the improvements articulated in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31. He warmly invited countries in Africa not yet members of CFS to join and be part of the family (ARC/22/INF/7).

Statement by the African Union Commission

13. Her Excellency Ambassador Josefa Sacko, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment of the African Union Commission (AUC) thanked the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for the excellent organization of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa and conveyed greetings from the Chair of the African Union Commission to participants. She shared the trend in

several factors threatening food systems, food security and nutrition on the continent, and emphasized the need to aim for food sovereignty through effective and efficient agrifood systems transformation. She referred to AUC commitments and its special attention this year to build resilient food security and nutrition and to foster change. In view of the poor progress reported in the last Biennial Review report, she expressed the renewed commitment of AUC to increase collaboration with FAO and to implement the game changing solutions as defined in the AUC Common Position delivered at the UN Food Systems Summit.

Statement by the Spokesperson of the Civil Society Organizations

14. Ms Nse Mico Henriqueta, Vice-president, National Federation of Farmer Organizations of Equatorial Guinea (FENOCGE) delivered the statement of the Civil Society Organizations. She appreciated the engagement of the civil society in the Regional Conference to discuss issues that are relevant in the Africa region and made recommendations to the attention of FAO and Members. The Statement is made available to the delegates on Conference site (<https://www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/arc32/documents/>).

Statement by the Spokesperson of the Private Sector

15. Mr Nana Prempeh, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of GrowForMe delivered the declaration of the private sector that was issued from the second African Agribusiness Leadership Dialogue (AALD 2022) held virtually on March 3rd 2022. The Statement is made available to the delegates on Conference site (<https://www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/arc32/documents/>).

II. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Matters

A. One Health Platform: Prevention of future pandemics through effective cross-sectoral engagement

16. The Regional Conference considered the document “One Health Platform: Prevention of future pandemics through effective cross-sectoral engagement” (ARC/22/6). It discussed the mechanisms and progress towards tackling the increasing threats to global health and socioeconomic progress posed by zoonotic diseases and towards preventing future pandemics.

17. The Regional Conference:

- i. acknowledged the need for Africa to improve multi-sector engagement and coordinated efforts to understand the complexity of, and effectively respond to, health risks at the human-animal-ecosystems interfaces;
- ii. recognized the importance of incorporating the One Health approach/Global Plan of Action for One Health (GPAOH) into overarching policy documents and cooperation frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF);
- iii. emphasised the need to enhance synergy between technical and financial partners to take charge of issues linked to the One Health approach;
- iv. appreciated the role of FAO at global and regional level, working at the human-animal-environment interface, and in the preparation of the GPAOH;
- v. endorsed the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, African Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as the continental One Health policy and coordination mechanisms;

- vi. recommended FAO to:
 - a. continue supporting Members to formalize and institutionalize national One Health platforms;
 - b. review/align regional and national One Health policies in order to mainstream One Health approaches at all levels and strengthen One Health systems and healthy ecosystems;
 - c. support its Members to include One Health in UNDSFC programming and resource mobilization efforts through innovative funding mechanisms, as well as reporting;
 - d. establish One Health policy coordination platforms at all levels (regional, national and sub-national levels), including all relevant sectors; and
 - e. support Members to develop evidence-based tools for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of One Health projects and interventions;
- vii. invited Members to:
 - a. consider the Global Plan of Action for One Health (GPAOH) as a framework for action and adapt it to country level specificities;
 - b. establish One Health governance and multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms, and improve sectoral integration;
 - c. ensure political commitment, sustained financing, coordinated efforts and increased visibility for the use of the One Health approach;
 - d. support One Health operationalization at community level with context-specific policy and institutional settings;
 - e. implement National Action Plans for Health Security (NAPHS) and outcomes of National Bridging Workshops (NBWs) to foster regional and national capacity for global health risk reduction on enhancing regional preparedness to respond to emergencies and future pandemics; and
 - f. consider engaging the private sector and agribusinesses in order to strengthen the One health approach.

B. COVID-19 impacts on agrifood systems in Africa: policy priorities for inclusive and resilient recovery

18. The Regional Conference considered the document “COVID-19 impacts on agrifood systems in Africa: policy priorities for inclusive and resilient recovery” (*ARC/22/8*) and discussed best practices and experiences from countries following a keynote presentation on the macroeconomic and food systems impacts of the pandemic.
19. The Regional Conference:
- i. recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the deteriorating food security situation and persistent malnutrition in sub-Saharan Africa, driven by multiple and often overlapping shocks and stresses (conflict/insecurity, climate extremes, economic swings and shocks, plant and animal diseases, etc.);
 - ii. noted the negative effects of the pandemic on crop, livestock and fisheries productions, on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in food processing and on staple food prices;
 - iii. acknowledged the role FAO played to help countries take decisive actions in response to the pandemic through its COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme and the mobilization of initial investments to provide an agile and coordinated global response;
 - iv. appreciated FAO’s role in Africa, in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC) and other key partners, to convene high-level regional dialogues and meetings to identify concrete actions and solutions in response to the pandemic;

- v. recommended FAO to support Members to:
 - a. address the short-term needs of vulnerable populations and of their agriculture and food-based livelihoods through social protection schemes, inputs supply and appropriate technologies, as well as promoting peer learning, best practices and approaches;
 - b. implement response and recovery programmes for agrifood systems, vulnerability reduction measures, invest in storage and processing facilities, strengthen domestic markets and promote intra-regional trade in agrifood products;
 - c. continue data collection and analysis to enhance risk understanding, guiding risk governance and decision-making for preparedness and the implementation of preventive and anticipatory actions; and
 - d. accelerate innovation and Africa’s digital transformation as a priority for the continent’s recovery and growth agenda, and build resilience and sustainability in food and agricultural systems;
- vi. urged Members to:
 - a. review and consider adopting, where feasible, the policy priorities for inclusive and resilient recovery from the pandemic;
 - b. consider increasing the public expenditure on food and agriculture, supporting and facilitating the scaling-up of financing mechanisms and investments; and
 - c. provide enabling institutional and policy environments for a vibrant private sector to create businesses and quality jobs, which are necessary for an inclusive and sustainable pathway towards recovery.

C. Investing in ecosystem restoration for a more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems transformation in Africa

20. The Regional Conference considered the document “Investing in Ecosystem Restoration for a more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agrifood systems transformation in Africa” (*ARC/22/9*).
21. The Regional Conference:
- i. acknowledged the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 as a unique opportunity to transform food, fibre and feed production systems to the needs of the 21st century, and to eradicate poverty, hunger and malnutrition through effective and innovative landscapes and seascapes management;
 - ii. recognized FAO’s active role in framing a vision for the implementation of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 for agricultural systems that people rely on for food, feed and fibre production;
 - iii. acknowledged that ecosystem restoration will contribute to managing the threat of climate change and land degradation;
 - iv. recommended that FAO:
 - a. continue its technical and resource mobilization support, through e.g. the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to Members for the formulation and implementation of large-scale restoration investment programmes toward increasing agricultural production and resilience of livelihoods; and
 - b. promote knowledge and experience sharing in all areas related to ecosystem restoration among communities, countries and regions;
 - v. encouraged Members to:
 - a. move away from unsustainable agricultural practices and scale-up their actions and funding allocations for ecosystem restoration while addressing drivers of degradation;

- b. seize the opportunity of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 to strengthen country- and regional-level action and coordination across sectors and countries, for example through the Great Green Wall and the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100);
- c. invest in innovations, technologies to generate data and knowledge to support ecosystem restoration, the management of natural resources and all productive sectors in agriculture (crops, livestock and fisheries, forestry, etc.) toward a resilient and sustainable agrifood systems transformation;
- d. put in place policies and enabling environment for investing, promoting adoption of technologies and managing ecosystems; and
- e. expand partnerships, coordination and strengthen institutions at all levels.

D. Promotion of investment and trade for competitive agrifood systems: AfCFTA opportunities and progress

22. The Regional Conference considered the document “Promotion of investment and trade for competitive agrifood systems: AfCFTA opportunities and progress” (ARC/22/10) and discussed the key issues and opportunities involved in promoting trade and investment to enhance the agrifood systems and the implications of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) from implementation to impact.

23. The Regional Conference:

- i. recognized the importance of mainstreaming food security and nutrition in the AfCFTA processes at the policy, institutional, financing and social levels;
- ii. acknowledged the importance of de-risking investment and promoting private sector participation in priority projects using blended finance and public-private partnership modalities, as necessary;
- iii. encouraged Members and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to:
 - a. make use of the African Union Framework for Boosting Intra-African Trade in Agricultural Commodities and Services as they engage the AfCFTA;
 - b. pursue export-led growth through increased intra-African trade within the AfCFTA, backed by domestic and foreign investment, for example, by establishing special economic zones, industrial parks and clusters, and modernising trade corridors to expedite the movement of agrifood products across borders;
 - c. coordinate their trade and investment policies affecting agrifood markets (e.g., fiscal incentives, non-tariff and technical barriers, etc.), and ensure that their investment laws are designed to spur national and regional investment;
 - d. invest and manage projects to shoulder risk with or without private sector participation in situations of market failure in the provision of public goods;
 - e. grant a greater role to the Private sector and Civil Society Organizations in the design, enforcement, monitoring and evaluation of all legal, policy and investment instruments in order to enhance inclusiveness, attractiveness, effectiveness and ownership of the business environment; and
 - f. mainstream the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI Principles) in their investment policies and strategies.

- iv. recommended FAO to:
 - a. enhance its technical support to member countries and RECs in promoting investment and trade for improving agrifood systems in the context of the AfCFTA;
 - b. promote peer learning, exchange of best practices and experiences for improving policy environments, developing capacity and institutions etc., in order to scale up agriculture investment and trade; and
 - c. support Members to design social protection and appropriate market-oriented programmes to enable smallholder producers, women, the youth and other vulnerable people to benefit from investment and trade opportunities;
- v. encouraged Members to:
 - a. increase national budgets for capacity building, modernization of infrastructure, domestic production of inputs to improve production, the quality of food products and generate surpluses for intra-regional trade;
 - b. put in place enabling policy environments and innovative approaches to promote investment in agrifood systems and intra-regional trade; and
 - c. ensure the implementation of all measures defined in the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

E. Placing women, youth and the poor at the forefront of inclusive agrifood systems

- 24. The Regional Conference considered the document “Placing women, youth and the poor at the forefront of inclusive agrifood systems” (*ARC/22/11*).
- 25. The Regional Conference:
 - i. acknowledged that inequality and power imbalances constrain the ability of agrifood systems to reduce poverty and deliver sustainable and equitable livelihoods and food security for all;
 - ii. recognized the centrality of gender equality, youth empowerment, social justice and socio-economic inclusion for the realization of more efficient, inclusive, resilient, equitable and sustainable agrifood systems; and
 - iii. noted the role of young women and men, including migrant and refugee youth, as agents of change, resilience builders and innovators in agrifood systems transformation.
- 26. The Regional Conference recommended that FAO assist Members to:
 - i. introduce appropriate, accessible and gender-responsive digital technologies, targeted to meet the needs and address the specific constraints of the poorest and most vulnerable, so they can benefit from, and contribute to, inclusive and gender-responsive transformation;
 - ii. use and adopt profiling and targeting tools, complemented by robust intersectional gender, age and vulnerability analysis to support and sustain rural transformation processes in an efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable manner;
 - iii. collect and use science-based data and information to produce gender- and age-sensitive evidence to guide the development of effective, gender-responsive and inclusive policies and investments; and
 - iv. promote tripartite agreement schemes that will facilitate agriculture financing and capital accessibility among women, youth and the poor without dependence on collaterals.
- 27. The Regional Conference encouraged Members to:

- i. increase efforts to address the root causes of rural poverty and inequalities, including the challenges and the unequal access to natural, productive and financial resources, decent job opportunities, gender and age inequality and social discrimination, and to create incentives for inclusive and gender-transformative policies, multi-sectoral coordination and partnerships in agrifood systems;
- ii. recognize and safeguard the role of Indigenous Peoples' food systems to tackle emerging global challenges, address structural barriers, harmful gender norms and unbalanced power dynamics that keep women and girls behind, through the adoption of gender- and age-transformative approaches;
- iii. invest in the development of technical capacity and leadership skills, gender-responsive agrifood value chains and support women-run businesses by establishing business-development services and agro-processing centers;
- iv. learn from good practices and experiences of Members on innovative and transformative approaches for building inclusive and equitable agrifood systems;
- v. promote peer learning and exchange programs among women, youth and Small and Medium Enterprises in the agricultural sectors; and
- vi. provide enabling environment to facilitate access to farm inputs, finance and inclusion in decision-making processes.

III. Programme and Budget Matters

A. Regional results, priorities, the *four betters* and the Sustainable Development Goals

28. The Regional Conference considered the document "Results of FAO in the region - 2020-21" (*ARC/22/2*) and examined the major developments and main results achieved by FAO in the Africa region, and the highlights of FAO's contribution to supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 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.
29. The Regional Conference:
 - i. recognized FAO's new ways of working modalities and corporate initiatives as well as the modular and flexible structure that allows for optimal cross-sectoral collaboration;
 - ii. appreciated FAO's aim for a stronger and more coordinated focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
 - iii. recognized the full alignment of FAO's country-level planning with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) process;
 - iv. noted the achievements in the implementation of FAO's corporate initiatives in the Africa region, including the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, the Green Cities Initiative, the 1 000 Digital Villages Initiative, the One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) Initiative and the Regional Technical Platform on Common Agricultural Policies and Practices;
 - v. appreciated FAO's focus on evidence-based, country-led and country-owned actions in the region to accelerate agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development for the eradication of poverty (SDG 1), hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG 2), as well as to the attainment of all other SDGs in the region;
 - vi. noted the achievements on the implementation of the Regional Initiatives in the Africa region, including the demonstrated importance of adopting innovative approaches and using science and technologies, including digital solutions to address new situations and challenges; and

- vii. noted the importance of strengthened partnerships with smallholder producers and their organizations, as well as with the private sector, including SMEs, agrifood companies and consumers.
30. The Regional Conference further considered the document “Priorities for FAO in the region under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31” (*ARC/22/3*).
31. The Regional Conference:
- i. welcomed the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and its strategic narrative of supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 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, which will guide FAO’s work within the approved budgetary appropriations for the 2022-23 biennium;
 - ii. recognized the re-organization of regional structures in Africa, the programmatic approach and the reinvigorated business model to deliver FAO’s programmes efficiently with concrete and tangible results and greater impact at the country level;
 - iii. noted FAO’s Strategies on Science and Innovation, and Climate Change as well as other corporate initiatives and their implementation at the regional and country levels, and the critical contribution of these corporate strategies and initiatives to accelerate agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development for the eradication of poverty (SDG 1), hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG 2) and reduced inequalities (SDG 10) and in doing so, noted these efforts will contribute to the attainment of all other SDGs in the region;
 - iv. noted the refinement of the three Regional Initiatives and their further elaboration into four Regional Priorities and endorsed the move from the three Regional Initiatives to four Regional Priorities for all priority-setting, programme operations and reporting on results;
 - v. recognized the close linkage between the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, the Regional Priorities and national development strategies and priorities of Members;
 - vi. endorsed the programme work areas aligned with the 20 Programme Priority Areas for FAO’s work in Africa in 2022-23 as presented in the document *ARC/22/3*, based on major trends and developments, as well as emerging challenges and opportunities in the region, within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, other corporate strategies and initiatives and the UN development system (UNDS) repositioning.
 - vii. recommended FAO to:
 - a. support Members to implement diligently its Strategic Framework defined by the four Regional Priorities in the Region, the four accelerators and all cross-cutting themes, as relevant to national contexts; and
 - b. double its effort to support inclusiveness especially with respect to women, youth, and other vulnerable populations in the implementation of the Regional Priorities.

B. Update on the development of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy

32. The Regional Conference considered the document “The outline and roadmap of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy” (*ARC/22/4*), as well as the Information Note on the Strategy (*ARC/22/INF/13*).
33. The Regional Conference:
- i. acknowledged the complex challenges facing sustainable agrifood systems development in Africa and the critical roles science and innovations can play in finding solutions;

- ii. underlined that science and innovation underpin a wide range of approaches, technologies and practices that can contribute to transforming agrifood systems to nourish people, nurture the planet, advance equitable livelihoods and build resilient ecosystems;
 - iii. welcomed the development of FAO’s first-ever Science and Innovation Strategy as a key tool to contribute to the implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and commended its transparent and inclusive consultation process;
 - iv. highlighted that while science and innovation is critical for agrifood systems transformation, innovations need to account for national circumstances;
 - v. stressed that science and innovation can be a powerful engine to transform agrifood systems when accompanied by strong institutions, good governance, political will, enabling regulatory frameworks and effective measures to promote equity among agrifood systems actors; and
 - vi. welcomed FAO’s commitment to strengthening its leadership role on science and innovation for the transformation of agrifood systems through the development of this strategy.
34. The Regional Conference recommended FAO to:
- i. consider certain elements in the Strategy, including the specificities of local contexts and disparities between countries in the region, facilitate access and technology transfer, in particular intellectual property rights, capitalize on local knowledge and pay attention to the role of small-scale producers, small and medium-sized enterprises, women and youth;
 - ii. focus on providing analyses of critical advances in science and technology and the resulting innovation, as well as on foresight exercises on key issues;
 - iii. promote science-based approaches at the country level and ensure that knowledge, science and innovation are easily accessible and locally adapted;
 - iv. strengthen knowledge management and exchange as critical issues, including for local/traditional knowledge, through platforms (including digital ones) and forums for sharing technology, South-South and Triangular Cooperation as well as international *fora*; and
 - v. support Members to develop appropriate policies and partnerships, to strengthen capacities, including those of agricultural extension systems, and to mobilize resources for the implementation of the Strategy at country level.

C. Update on the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change

35. The Regional Conference considered the document “Update on the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change”, including the proposed outline of the new Strategy, vision, principles, Theory of Change and pillars of action (*ARC/22/5*), as well as the Information Note on the Strategy (*ARC/22/INF/14*).
36. The Regional Conference:
- i. acknowledged that climate change is a key driver of change in African agrifood systems and that it poses a serious threat to achieving food security, nutrition, improved livelihoods and to national economies;
 - ii. appreciated the urgency of addressing climate change impacts as part of agrifood system transformation to increase climate resilience. It recognized that agrifood systems are fundamental components of climate action as they are heavily affected by climate change as well as responsible for a significant part of total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions;
 - iii. welcomed the initiation of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change, its vision and Theory of Change and its alignment to the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and other international agreements, and

expressed appreciation for the inclusive and consultative process that has been adopted to develop the strategy;

- iv. emphasized how agrifood systems can contribute to climate change mitigation and noted the opportunities across the region to consider innovative solutions under this strategy;
- v. further noted that implementing the strategy should be tailored to specific circumstances at the national and local levels;
- vi. called upon Members to:
 - a. participate actively in the regional consultation on the Strategy on Climate Change to provide inputs on regional and country needs and priorities on climate change and agrifood systems;
 - b. capitalize on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 27th and 28th Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC COP 27 and COP 28) to accelerate concrete actions to tackle the impacts of climate change that represent a major threat to the region; and
 - c. join hand to fight climate change through sharing of experiences, local knowledge, and cooperation.
- vii. recommended FAO to:
 - a. ensure that the Strategy goes beyond business as usual and promote a shift that will tackle the root causes of climate change impacts on agrifood systems and address the vulnerability of countries and communities in the region;
 - b. use the role and comparative advantage of FAO to support learning and exchange across countries in the region and globally on new innovations, technologies and partnerships to address climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation, and scaling up adoption of these measures through facilitating access to climate finance and providing guidance to processes such as the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture;
 - c. ensure that the local knowledge and specific needs of Members and agrifood systems stakeholders from the Africa region are considered in the new strategy and future work during implementation of the strategy on the ground; and
 - d. support and strengthen capacities of Members to establish early warning and meteorological systems, and of stakeholders including small-scale farmers to use climate information and data for better management of their activities.

IV. Other Matters

A. Multi-Year Programme of Work 2022-2025 for the Regional Conference for Africa

37. The Regional Conference took note of the “Multi-Year Programme of Work 2022-2025 for the Africa Regional Conference” (*ARC/22/7*) presented to the Regional Conference for information.

B. Concluding items

Date and place of the 33rd Regional Conference for Africa

38. The Regional Conference agreed to hold the 33rd Session of the Regional Conference for Africa in Morocco in 2024. The date will be agreed jointly by Morocco and the Secretariat of the Regional Conference. The Regional Conference appreciated and thanked Morocco for its willingness to host the next Regional Conference.

C. Any other matters

MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLES: Delivering on *better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life*

39. Ministerial Roundtables were held on 13 and 14 April 2022, which provided a platform for discussion on the *four betters: better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life*. The Roundtables focused on the following four themes: i) COVID-19 impacts on agrifood systems in Africa: policy priorities for inclusive- and resilient recovery; ii) Investing in ecosystem restoration for a more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agrifood systems transformation in Africa; iii) Promotion of investment and trade for competitive agrifood systems: AfCFTA opportunities and progress; and iv) Placing women, youth and the poor at the forefront of inclusive agrifood systems.

40. The Investment Guidelines for Youth in Agrifood Systems in Africa, developed jointly by FAO and AUC, were launched during the Ministerial Session. The guidelines aim to accelerate investments in and by youth in agrifood systems by providing practical guidance – including tools and examples – to design, develop, implement, monitor and evaluate youth-focused and youth-sensitive investment programmes, and to engage youth fully as partners in the entire process. The guidelines are for those involved in designing and implementing agrifood investment programmes, including governments, financial and technical partners, the private sector, civil society, and young women and men themselves.

Special event to facilitate experience sharing on the *four betters*

Launch of the Africa Regional Technical Platform (RTP) on Common Agricultural Policies and Practices

41. The RTP is an online portal and focuses on a package of country programme solutions, lessons learned and best practices that would be useful for adaptation and context sensitive adoption for Members. It showcases support to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), scaling up technology and innovation for sustainable agricultural mechanization, engagement of parliamentarians for policy actions, and promoting regional value chains and virtual learning platforms.

Host country event: Experience sharing on challenges related to forest governance

42. Forests are important resources in the host country and Africa. As such, experience sharing on the key achievements, challenges and lessons learnt on forest governance in the host country and in Central Africa is crucial to further inform policy actions and programmes.

43. The event was officially opened by Mr Miguel Mba Nsang on behalf of Her Excellency Francisca Eneme Efua, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Forest and Environment, Equatorial Guinea. Four panelists shared their experiences on different aspects of forest governance in the context of their countries or organizations.

44. Mr Gabriel Ngua Ayecaba, Director-General of Environment, Climate Change and Conservation, Equatorial Guinea presented the achievements, challenges and lessons learnt on forest and environmental governance in Equatorial Guinea. He intervened on behalf of Mr Diosdado Obiang Mbomio, Director-General of Nursery and Reforestation, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forest and Environment, Equatorial Guinea.

45. Mr Maidou Herve delivered a presentation on the main achievements, challenges and lessons learned from the implementation of Central Africa Forests Commission (COMIFAC)'s convergence plan on improving forest governance in Central Africa.

46. Dr Honore Kabuna, Commissioner for Environment at the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) intervened on behalf of His Excellency Ambassador Gilberto Da Piedade Verissimo, Chairperson of ECCAS. He shared experiences on key measures, incentives or tools promoted by ECCAS to improve governance of natural resources in ECCAS countries.

47. The Executive Secretary of COMIFAC, on behalf of His Excellency Minister Jules Doret Ndong, Chairperson of COMIFAC, shared some best practices drawn from COMIFAC countries concerning to policy, legal and institutional factors conducive to improve forest governance in Central Africa.

48. Overall, very concrete and useful ideas and pathways towards solid political commitment for improving forest governance in Central Africa were presented and discussed.

49. The Regional Conference:

- i. appreciated the experience sharing from the Central Africa context;
- ii. acknowledged the nexus of forest governance with deforestation, climate change and poverty reduction;
- iii. underlined that improving forest governance is essential to ensure the durability of forest in Central Africa, to mitigate climate changes impacts, contribute to national economies and improve the livelihoods of forest dependent local communities;
- iv. welcomed FAO support in Central Africa to ensure sustainable forest management;
- v. recommended FAO to support Members in their efforts to promote afforestation programmes and to implement best practices of forest governance;
- vi. invited Members to:
 - a. consider the use of agroforestry, resilient agricultural practices and eco-agriculture as options to prevent deforestation and desertification;
 - b. consider Carbon Credit and other innovative financing schemes for resource mobilization for forest and climate change nexus; and
 - c. share more experiences on policy, legal and institutional environment to boost forest governance.

Experience sharing sessions among member countries on *better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind*

50. Members and stakeholders shared powerful stories around the best practices and success stories that could shape and transform agrifood systems. This interactive session brought various best practices to the table that can be useful for Members to inform short- and medium-term strategies towards realizing the vision of transforming agrifood systems and achieve the SDGs across Africa.

51. The Session started with opening remarks by Ms Maria Helena Semedo, FAO Deputy Director-General. She highlighted how FAO's *four betters* can contribute to agrifood systems transformation and presented the narrative guiding the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, which targets 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*.

52. Four distinguished speakers shared their insights to illustrate how Africa and its development stakeholders are effectively changing the narrative as a response, not only to a global development agenda as articulated in the SDGs, but to how transformation is an imperative and a realistic goal.

53. In a message to the Regional Conference, His Majesty King Letsie III of Lesotho and FAO Special Goodwill Ambassador for Nutrition underscored the importance of food security and nutrition and the achievement of SDGs that inspired the new FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 as well as AUC's choice of nutrition as the theme of the year 2022. He recounted the experience of Lesotho in mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic. He made an appeal to Members to strengthen collective efforts and more solidarity towards agrifood systems transformation to free people from hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

54. On behalf of His Excellency Gabriel Mbairrobe, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Cameroon, experience on *better production*: One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) initiative through the promotion of bananas value chain was shared.

55. His Excellency Anxious Jongwe Masuka, Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development of Zimbabwe shared his country's experience on *better life* by implementing the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. Interventions on the ground focused on the tomato value chain through the establishment of production, aggregation and processing centers supported with data and information platforms, new technologies, science-based management and partnerships with the private sector. He concluded the initiative provided a unique opportunity to identify areas with development and investment potentials, and indicated that Zimbabwe plans to scale it up with the aim of "leaving no household and no villages behind".

56. Her Excellency Angela Thoko Didiza, Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development of South Africa shared the experience of South Africa on *better environment*, which combined the ecosystem approach, soil conservation, pests and diseases control, enabling policies and financial support to productive, resilient, and sustainable agrifood systems in rural communities. She recognized that the agroecology approach connecting all aspects of production and the introduction of climate resilient technologies help farmers to improve productivity, soil fertility conservation and increased availability of nutritious food to rural households. She insisted on the need to improve agricultural practices for sustainable agriculture, capacity development programmes, and to produce and consume indigenous foods.

57. Ms Chantal Ingabire, Director of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, presented on behalf of Her Excellency Gerardine Mukeshimana Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Rwanda. She shared experiences on *better nutrition*, engaging the youth in agrifood systems. She highlighted interventions made by establishing youth in agribusiness forum and capacity building and engaging youth in policy. She further shared some challenges with youth participation and priorities such as agriculture de-risking, access to finance, market linkages for promoting more youth employment in agriculture.

58. The Regional Conference:

- i. appreciated the opportunity offered by this platform for Members to share best practices and experiences on the *four betters*;
- ii. recognized FAO's Strategy, particularly its interconnected approach through the *four betters*, to
 - i) transform agrifood systems, ii) reverse the hunger trend, iii) invest in rural transformation and empower vulnerable and marginalised populations;
- iii. noted the progress made and challenges faced by Members on the implementation of agrifood systems transformation, and how they relate to the *four betters*;
- iv. appreciated the value addition of FAO technical assistance and support;
- v. recommended FAO to:
 - a. assist Members to identify possible solutions to foster the institutionalization of the *four betters* at regional, sub-regional and country levels;
 - b. continue its technical support to Members to implement and localize the *four betters*;
 - c. provide suggestions and guidance on financial options to support country-level actions to domesticate and localize the *four betters*;
 - d. continue its support to promote the exchange of experiences on best practices and lessons learnt; and
 - e. support Members on food fortification.
- vi. invited Members to:

- a. consider using the best practices drawn out of the experiences on the *four betters* to inform their efforts in transforming agrifood systems and achieve the SDGs;
- b. develop short to medium-term strategies to achieve the vision of agrifood systems transformation in their countries;
- c. use the understanding of the options for resources mobilization, partnerships development and collaboration to support the localization of the *four betters*; and
- d. consider blue transformation and rural-urban linkages in the options for localizing the *four betters*.

Adoption of the Report of the Regional Conference

59. The Regional Conference unanimously adopted the Report and the Ministerial Declaration (*Appendix C*) as presented by the Rapporteur.

Closure of the Regional Conference

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Agenda

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, and appointment of Rapporteur

Adoption of Agenda

Statement by FAO Director-General

Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council

Statement by the Chairperson of the 31st Session of the Regional Conference for Africa

Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

Statement of the African Union Commission

Statement by the Spokesperson of the Civil Society Organizations

Statement by the Spokesperson of the Private Sector

II. REGIONAL AND GLOBAL POLICY AND REGULATORY MATTERS

One Health Platform: Prevention of future pandemics through effective cross-sectoral engagement

COVID-19 impacts on agrifood systems in Africa: policy priorities for inclusive and resilient recovery

Investing in ecosystem restoration for a more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems transformation in Africa

Promotion of investment and trade for competitive agrifood systems: AfCFTA opportunities and progress

Placing women, youth and the poor at the forefront of inclusive agrifood systems

III. PROGRAMME AND BUDGET MATTERS

Regional results, priorities, the *four betters* and the Sustainable Development Goals

Update on the development of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy

Update on the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change

IV. OTHER MATTERS

Multi-Year Programme of Work 2022-2025 for the Regional Conference for Africa

Concluding items

Any other matters

Ministerial Sessions: Delivering on *better production, better nutrition, a better environment* and a *better life*

Launch of the Africa Regional Technical Platform (RTP) on Common Agricultural Policies and Practices

Host Country event: experience sharing on challenges related to forest governance

Experience sharing sessions among member countries on *better production, better nutrition, a better environment* and a *better life*, leaving no one behind

Review and endorsement of the Report and the Ministerial Declaration of the Regional Conference

Appendix B. List of documents

(<https://www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/arc32/documents/en/>)

Session documents

| Symbol | Title |
|----------------|---|
| ARC/22/1 Rev.1 | Provisional Annotated Agenda |
| ARC/22/2 | Results for FAO in the Africa Region – 2020-21 |
| ARC/22/3 | Priorities for FAO in the Region under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 |
| ARC/22/4 | The outline and roadmap of the “FAO Science and Innovation Strategy” |
| ARC/22/5 | Update on the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change |
| ARC/22/6 | One Health Platform: Prevention of future pandemics through effective cross-sectoral engagement |
| ARC/22/7 | Multi-Year Programme of Work 2022-2025 for the Regional Conference for Africa |
| ARC/22/8 | COVID-19 impacts on agrifood systems in Africa: policy priorities for inclusive and resilient recovery |
| ARC/22/9 | Investing in Ecosystem Restoration for a more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems transformation in Africa |
| ARC/22/10 | Promotion of investment and trade for competitive agrifood systems: AfCFTA opportunities and progress |
| ARC/22/11 | Placing women, youth and the poor at the forefront of inclusive agrifood systems |

Information documents

| Symbol | Title |
|--------------------|---|
| ARC/22/INF/1 | Information Note |
| ARC/22/INF/2 Rev.1 | Provisional Timetable |
| ARC/22/INF/3 Rev.1 | Provisional List of Documents |
| ARC/22/INF/4 | Statement by the Director-General |
| ARC/22/INF/5 | Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council |
| ARC/22/INF/6 | Statement by the Chairperson of the 31st Session of the Regional Conference for Africa |
| ARC/22/INF/7 | Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) |
| ARC/22/INF/8 | Reporting on the recommendations of the 31st Session of the Regional Conference for Africa |
| ARC/22/INF/9 | Summary Report of recommendations of FAO Regional Statutory Bodies (statistics, fisheries) |
| ARC/22/INF/10 | Synthesis of evaluations conducted in the Africa region 2019-2021 |
| ARC/22/INF/11 | Experience sharing sessions among member countries <i>on better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind</i> |
| ARC/22/INF/12 | Improving forest governance in Central Africa: achievements, challenges and lessons learnt |
| ARC/22/INF/13 | Update on the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy – Information Note 1 – December 2021 |
| ARC/22/INF/14 | Update on the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change – Information Note 1 – December 2021 |

Appendix C. Ministerial Declaration

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegation, assembled at the 32nd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 11 to 14 April 2022 on the theme: “Achieving better results, actualizing transformation of agrifood systems in Africa”;

Having deliberated on the state of food security and agriculture in Africa, and *noting* the multiple and overlapping shocks and threats induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate extremes, pests and diseases, political instabilities and conflicts and economic downturns, among others, that undermine the efforts of the Continent towards agrifood systems transformation, while national capacities and systems remain inadequate to mitigate and manage the impacts of these crises;

Concerned that recovery from these crises is likely going to be slow in Africa, partly due to the impacts of emerging global threats, which are adding to the burden with their debilitating impacts on global trade, energy and agricultural commodity prices, including foodstuffs and important agricultural inputs (e.g. inorganic fertilizer), further aggravating complexities in agrifood supply chains;

Mindful of protracted crisis in many parts of our region creating situations of civil unrest and marginalization of communities, poverty and inequality;

Recalling the African Union theme of the year for 2022 “Strengthening Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security on the African Continent: Strengthening Agro-Food Systems, Health and Social Protection Systems for the Acceleration of Human, Social and Economic Capital Development”;

Appreciating the entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and the immense opportunities that it can avail towards transforming agrifood systems in Africa;

Recognizing the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 as a great opportunity for better production of food, feed and fiber through effective and innovative landscapes and seascapes management;

Further recognizing the momentum created by the UN Summit on Transforming Agri-Food Systems to Make Them More Effective, more Inclusive, more Resilient and Sustainable, and the resulting coalitions;

Acknowledging FAO’s focus on stronger and coordinated efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a view to eradicating poverty (SDG 1), ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG 2), reducing inequalities (SDG 10), as well as attaining all the other SDGs in the region;

Noting the full alignment of FAO’s country-level planning with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) process, which itself is aligned with national development plans;

Commending FAO for its efforts in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC) and other strategic partners in promoting high-level regional dialogues and engagements involving Ministers for Agriculture, Ministers for Trade and Ministers for Finance of member countries, in support of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme;

Recognizing the relevance of CFS’s global platform, its policy tools and Panel of Experts reports as high-value instruments in food security and nutrition;

Welcoming the 27th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 27) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that will be hosted by the Arab Republic of Egypt in 2022;

Further welcoming the upcoming 15th Session of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) COP 15 that will take place in Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire in May 2022;

1. On the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, FAO Results and Priorities in Africa:

- a. **Welcome** the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, which will guide FAO's work in supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- b. **Further welcome** the roll-out of FAO flagship initiatives, including the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, the Green Cities Initiative, the 1000 Digital Villages initiative, and the One Country One Priority Product initiative, noting the progress being made in the implementation of those initiatives in the Africa region;
- c. **Note** with appreciation the results achieved in the Africa region in the 2020-21 biennium, including the implementation of the recommendations of the 31st Session of the Regional Conference for Africa, as well as the demonstrated importance of adopting innovative approaches using science and technologies, such as digital solutions, to address new situations and challenges;
- d. **Encourage** and **urge** FAO to take into consideration the AU Agenda 2063, its first ten year action plan, the Malabo strategy as well as the Africa common position on food systems as delivered at the September 2021 UNFSS, to better articulate its programme of work in Africa;
- e. **Further encourage** FAO to expand and sustain its partnership with African regional institutions with expertise in agriculture, food and nutrition security and environment, as stipulated in their mandates;
- f. **Endorse** the four proposed Regional Priorities for FAO in the Africa region - (1) *Sustainable agrifood production systems*; (2) *Efficient and equitable food and nutrition systems*; (3) *Climate action and sustainable natural resource management*; and (4) *Building resilience and ending poverty*; and
- g. **Welcome** FAO's reinvigorated business model that allows for optimal cross-sectoral collaboration, including the restructuring of Regional and Subregional Offices in Africa.

2. On the theme of the high-level Ministerial Round Tables "Delivering on better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind",

- a. **Commend** the collaboration between FAO and the AUC in the formulation and publication of the *Framework for Boosting Intra-African Trade for Agricultural Commodities and Services*;
- b. **Further commend** the collaboration between FAO and the AUC in formulating *Investment Guidelines for Youth in Agrifood Systems in Africa*, and note its launching at this 32nd Session of the Regional Conference for Africa;
- c. **Acknowledge** FAO's efforts in collaboration with the AfCFTA Secretariat in engaging the Ministers for Agriculture and Trade of its Members on the state of play of the AfCFTA as relates to agrifood systems, in preparation for this Regional Conference;
- d. **Reaffirm** the centrality of gender equality, youth empowerment, social justice and socioeconomic inclusion for a successful agrifood systems transformation in Africa, recognizing the roles of young women and men as agents of change and resilient builders and innovators in agrifood systems;
- e. **Support** the ongoing CFS works on gender equality and women and youth empowerment.
- f. **Welcome** the development of FAO's first-ever Science and Innovation Strategy as a powerful tool to contribute to the implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31;

- g. **Welcome** the elaboration of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change, aligned with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, and **urge** FAO to pursue such approach at country and regional levels in assisting to better shape and/or mainstream related home-grown initiatives into national and regional agriculture investment plans;
- h. **Look forward** to the adoption of both Strategies, namely the Science and Innovation Strategy and the Strategy on Climate Change by the FAO Council at its 170th Session; and
- i. **Call on** Members to seize the opportunities across the region to adopt innovative solutions and building the capacity of national systems by focusing, inter alia, on harnessing the potential of traditional knowledge and South-South cooperation;
- j. **Renew our commitments** to:
 - i. *Raise our ambitions*, accelerate our action and mobilize all stakeholders in the framework of the Decade for Action to achieve the development agenda by 2030 and to reach the MDGs, as well as the effective implementation of the Maputo (2003) and Malabo (2014) commitments;
 - ii. *Implement* the four betters under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, in consonance with the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) follow-up actions to accelerate actions towards the attainment of the SDGs including, in particular the Africa’s game changing solutions and the Post-Summit rollout plan as set up in the Africa Common position on food systems paper;
 - iii. *Implement* policies, measures and solutions that will modernize agriculture and rural transformation to address the vulnerabilities of our economies and improve the livelihoods of our people to multiple risks and shocks, including those impacting global trade, with significant impact on our economies;
 - iv. *Prioritize and implement* inclusive and resilient recovery initiatives, including creating and sustaining the enabling conditions to create businesses and quality jobs for youth and women through public-private partnerships;
 - v. *Follow-up on* the discussion at this Conference of specific topics under the CFS Platform pertaining to “Placing women, youth and the poor at the forefront of inclusive agrifood systems” as well as on the launching of Investment Guidelines for Youth in Agrifood Systems in Africa;
 - vi. *Actively engage* in national and regional AfCFTA processes and structures, bearing in mind it meant to further boost intra-regional food trade, to seize opportunities for investment and trade for agrifood systems transformation, and create and strengthen incentives for inclusive and gender-transformative policies, multisectoral coordination and partnerships in agrifood systems that can facilitate FAO Members’ access to natural, productive and financial resources and decent job opportunities, while also safeguarding the rights of Indigenous Peoples;
 - vii. *Adopt and implement* multisectoral approaches such as the ‘One Health Platform’ to address agrifood systems transformation in a holistic, integrated and coordinated manner, recognizing the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention of FAO Members, the African Union Inter-Africa Bureau for Animal Resources, the African Food Quality and Safety Control Agency under establishment and Regional Economic Communities as the continental One Health policy and coordination mechanisms, and welcoming the FAO, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Quadripartite Alliance on One Health;
 - viii. *Support* concerted actions and investments at all levels, seizing the opportunity of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 and building on relevant initiatives such as the Great Green Wall and the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100);

- ix. *Accelerate* concrete actions to tackle the impacts of climate change, which represent a major threat to the African region, capitalizing on the upcoming UNFCCC COP 27 and UNCCD COP 15, which will be hosted respectively by two African countries, Egypt and Côte d'Ivoire, and rallying behind the host countries, to mobilize maximum support for the success of these meetings for the benefit of Africa and the world;
- k. **Encourage** FAO to:
 - i. *Promote* multistakeholder and multisectoral platforms, such as the Regional Technical Platform (RTP) on Common Agricultural Policies and Practices launched during this Conference, to facilitate and strengthen dialogues to enhance investments, experience-sharing and innovation for sustainable agrifood systems development, also strengthening the One Health policy coordination and governance platforms at national, subregional and regional levels in an inclusive manner;
 - ii. *Be more intentional* in its Science and Innovation Strategy in highlighting the specificities of local contexts and disparities between countries in the region, facilitation of access and technology transfer and knowledge sharing, in particular intellectual property rights, capitalizing on local knowledge, while paying particular attention to the role of small-scale producers, women and youth, and envisaging monitoring and performance indicators for the specific strategy for Africa;
 - iii. *Continue to support* national governments and other relevant stakeholders in strengthening capacities for innovation in all its dimensions, including promoting and adopting new technologies, practices, policies and institutions to advance the agenda of agriculture and agrifood systems transformation, as well as innovative financing and risk sharing mechanisms;
 - iv. *Also be more intentional* in its Strategy on Climate Change on how to leverage the mandate, roles and comparative advantage of FAO to support learning and exchange across countries in the region, particularly in the Small Islands Developing States and Land Locked countries, and globally on new innovations, technologies and partnerships to address climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation, and scaling up the adoption of these measures through facilitating access to climate finance and providing guidance to processes such as the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture;
 - v. *Continue to support* Members, Regional Economic Communities and the African Union Organs in scaling up agriculture investment and trade through improved policy, capacity strengthening and facilitating experience-sharing of best practices, while stepping up its technical and resource mobilization supports, including through vertical funds (e.g. the Green Climate Fund [GCF] and the Global Environment Facility [GEF], among others), to formulate and implement large scale investment programmes in Africa that contribute to more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient and more sustainable agrifood systems transformation;
 - vi. *Use* the platform of the African Union theme of the year 2022: “Strengthening Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security on the African Continent: Strengthening Agro-Food Systems, Health and Social Protection Systems for the Acceleration of Human, Social and Economic Capital Development”, for enhanced advocacy in support of agrifood systems transformation in Africa; and
 - vii. *Strengthen* the Hand-in-Hand Initiative in Africa, seeking to extend it to all countries and mobilize the partnerships and resources necessary for its implementation.
 - viii. *Pursue* its efforts in supporting African member states, the African Union Commission and the AUDA-NEPAD, to improving the mechanism for monitoring, evaluation and reporting, including development of indicators, in a more aligned manner, on the progress made in implementing the commitments of the Malabo Declaration, (score card based on data collection, analysis, reporting format, biennial review report);

- ix. *Identify, organise and disseminate or transfer* the good practices in the areas of the Four Betters and others to countries where it is ecologically and economically relevant;
 - x. *Streamline*, across all its Sub-Regional Bureaus in Africa, the follow-up process to the Africa Regional Conferences;
- l. **Call on** our partners to support our efforts through enhancing investments as we step up our efforts towards the transformation of agrifood systems through the implementation of the four betters in support of the 2030 Agenda, the Africa Agenda 2063, and in synch with the UNFSS follow-up actions, the Africa common Position Post-Summit Rollout Plan and in particular the outcome of individual Country National Dialogues;
 - m. **Express** our gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for its proactive and leadership role in supporting the ASTF (Africa Solidarity Trust Fund);
 - n. **Further Express** our thanks and appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for hosting the thirty-second FAO Regional Conference for Africa and its excellent organization in Malabo; and
 - o. **Invite** the Africa Group of Permanent Representatives to the UN Rome-based Agencies, the Secretariat of the Regional Conference for Africa and the Chairperson of the 32nd Session of the Regional Conference for Africa to consult in order to make a final decision on the theme for the 33rd Session of the Regional Conference for Africa to be held in Morocco in 2024.

14 April 2022 Malabo, Equatorial Guinea