

43rd Session of the Conference

Secretariat Response to sub-item 12.1: Report of the 28th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (18-22 July 2022)

FAO thanks Members for highlighting the importance of addressing plastics in agriculture to move towards sustainable and resilient food systems and reaffirms its commitment to continue working on this issue in line with the 28th Session of the Committee on Agriculture's (COAG 28) guidance. We thank Members for their comments related to the development of a Voluntary Code of Conduct on the sustainable use of plastics in agriculture and take note of the comments on its scope. We confirm the emphasis on the ongoing work on sustainable management of plastics in land-based agriculture.

FAO is carrying out a transparent and inclusive consultation process with technical experts, Members and other stakeholders working on plastics, at the global and regional levels. We will ensure that the issues addressed by the Voluntary Code of Conduct will fall within FAO's mandate while complementing and integrating relevant processes taking place in other UN agencies, to avoid overlap and duplication of efforts.

FAO thanks Members for their appreciation of the importance of the COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock and its work, ensuring open dialogue that is science-based, context appropriate and considers all dimensions of sustainability. FAO takes this opportunity to thank Australia, France, Ireland and Switzerland for their voluntary contributions to the work of the Sub-Committee on Livestock.

We thank Members for their comments on the progress in the implementation of the FAO Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) 2021-2025 and take note of the feedback and recommendations provided in the Report of COAG 28 to further advance FAO's work on AMR following a One Health approach.

FAO will continue providing support to strengthen the implementation of international standards and guidelines on AMR, such as the Codex Alimentarius texts on AMR and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) standards on AMR under the terrestrial and aquatic animal codes. FAO thanks the United Kingdom for their interest in the 10-year initiative "Reduce the Need for Antimicrobials on Farms (RENOFARM), and will engage with Members for its successful launch and regularly update on the implementation. In this context, the European Union's call to support the implementation of good production practices and AMR management to reduce the need for and promote prudent and responsible use of antimicrobials in food systems, is well noted.

FAO thanks Members for recognizing the importance of governance of water resources and the role of water and soil for One Health as well as the joint Global Soil Partnership (GSP) endeavours in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). FAO as a member of UN-Water also contributes collectively to achieving SDG 6 and is the custodian agency for the SDG indicators 6.4.1 and 6.4.2. We appreciate Argentina's points on highlighting FAO's comparative advantage in promoting sustainable irrigation technologies and overall system sustainability. We appreciate the European Union's recognition for FAO to address water scarcity in the context of achieving food security and nutrition under conditions of climate change. We will advance on the work of sustainable water management and the assessment of principles for the responsible governance of water tenure.

FAO greatly appreciates the support of Switzerland and the United Kingdom to the activities of the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG), and will provide a progress report on water tenure and WASAG to the next session of COAG.

FAO appreciates the support from Australia to the work of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) and its multistakeholder approach to sustainable soil management and governance. FAO takes note of Australia's support to retaining the GSP in all its components and of Chile's support for "option 5" (establishing a Sub-Committee on Soils and maintaining the GSP in its current structure). As requested by COAG 28,

FAO will provide information on the financial implications and an in-depth analysis of the potential benefits or any shortcomings and practical implications of “option 5” at the upcoming 11th GSP Plenary Assembly.

FAO takes note of the five points highlighted by Switzerland. In relation to biodiversity, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) recognizes the importance of food systems for the achievement of its objectives, which will be reflected in FAO’s work. FAO acknowledges Chile’s comment on the need to consider the GBF. We will provide support to countries, upon their request, to implement the GBF as foreseen in the FAO draft Action Plan 2024–27 of its Strategy for Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors.

FAO thanks Members for their support to the Organization’s work on the linkages between agriculture and forestry.

We appreciate the support from Members regarding the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031 and the valuable feedback on the Action Plan, and reiterate our commitment to regularly update Members on the progress made in implementation. FAO further appreciates the support expressed for the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy and its implementation.

FAO would like to thank Australia for recognizing its role in safeguarding food safety in the global efforts to achieve food security, and the Russian Federation in supporting the FAO Strategic Priorities for Food Safety within the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031. FAO remains committed to supporting the Codex Alimentarius Commission by hosting its Secretariat and through the provision of impartial, sound and effective scientific advice, and invites Australia for discussion on how additional joint efforts to further strengthen these activities may best serve Members in accelerating the goals laid out in the FAO Strategic Priorities for Food Safety within the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031.

In this connection, and in relation to the European Union’s comments, FAO would like to refer to the Report of the 171st Session of the FAO Council,¹ stating the Council’s endorsement of the FAO Strategic Priorities for Food Safety within the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031, following the recommendation of the 134th Session of the Programme Committee.

FAO would like to highlight its cross-divisional Foresight Network. Within the analytical framework set in the recently published FAO flagship report “The future of food and agriculture – Drivers and triggers for transformation”, FAO is organizing strategic foresight activities in various regions and subregions, to identify context-specific transformation patterns and actions, in synergy with the UN Futures Lab and the UN Strategic Foresight Network, to address, *inter alia*, the negative impacts of instability and conflicts on agrifood systems, given that the conceptual framework highlights “Geopolitical instability and the increasing impact of conflicts” as a key driver of agrifood systems that may prevent achieving Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

FAO appreciates the comments provided by the United States of America and will continue the technical work on addressing the impact of the war in Ukraine on global food security.

FAO acknowledges Switzerland’s comments in reference to the Rural Youth Action Plan and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Policy Recommendations on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems. The active participation of youth and their empowerment as agents of change has been prioritized across a wide range of FAO’s work programmes, including through strengthening organizations and networks of youth in the agrifood system; supporting the empowerment of subgroups of youth in situations of higher vulnerability; advocating for the inclusion of youth representatives in national policy dialogues and technical working groups; and by regularly engaging youth representatives in global, regional and national events organized by FAO and its partners.

¹ CL 171/REP, paras. 29 (f) and 30.

Since 2021, FAO facilitates the World Food Forum (WFF), an independent global network of partners, created for and led by youth, to spark a global movement that empowers young people to actively shape agrifood systems.

Furthermore, FAO is advancing its work on mainstreaming youth as a crosscutting theme in FAO's work programme under the Strategic Framework 2022-31 and by sharing selected good practices.²

² <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en?details=cc3942en>