



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

KEY MESSAGES

FAO Strategic Programmes

FAO STRATEGIC PROGRAMMES: KEY MESSAGES

Overview of the FAO Strategic Objectives and Programmes

Today, member states face an increasing myriad of demands and challenges in agricultural development. To support them, FAO has identified five key priorities on which it is best placed to intervene. These priorities or Strategic Objectives represent the main areas of our work to achieve a world without hunger, malnutrition and poverty and do so in a sustainable manner – contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

To help accomplish our Strategic Objectives, FAO works through five Strategic Programmes, leveraging on the Organization's core functions to achieve concrete results. Our technical knowledge underpins everything we do, while fully integrating gender, governance, nutrition and climate change impacts in all aspects of our work.

Our Strategic Objectives



Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.



Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable.



Reduce rural poverty.



Enable Inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems.



Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises.

Our Strategic Programmes



Strategic Programme 1: HELP ELIMINATE HUNGER, FOOD INSECURITY AND MALNUTRITION

Summary description

FAO supports governments in the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition. This is done through continuous assistance to countries in the development of coherent and evidence-based policies and programmes with a stronger focus on food security and nutrition. Support is provided also to achieve greater commitment, improved governance and allocation of adequate resources for programme implementation.

Contextualizing our work: global key messages

- ➔ The past two decades have seen many developing countries achieve the MDG hunger target and several others meet the more stringent goal to halve the number of hungry people set out at the World Food Summit in 1996. Building on the success and momentum of the MDGs, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) go further, calling for an end to hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030.
- ➔ Despite significant achievements in many parts of the world, hunger and malnutrition still remain a real obstacle to development: nearly 800 million people suffer from chronic hunger; one in four children under five years of age is at risk of dying from malnutrition-related diseases; over two billion people lack the vitamins and minerals they need to grow, develop and lead healthy lives.
- ➔ Gender equality is essential if we want to achieve food security and nutrition for all. However, inequalities still exist in our societies. Political commitment followed by substantial policy action, must be the first step to produce a lasting and sustainable change in this respect.
- ➔ Climate change has a direct and increasingly significant impact on food security and nutrition. In a context of increasing demand for food and water, climate change will exacerbate competition for the limited natural resources upon which the poor rely for their livelihoods and food security.
- ➔ Globally, around 1.9 billion adult people are overweight. Of them, 600 million are obese. This has a high cost in terms of increased prevalence of diet-related non-communicable diseases and the associated health expenditure. It is expected that 11% of children below the age of five will be obese by 2025 if the current trend does not change.
- ➔ The world already produces more than enough food for all, yet many people either cannot afford to purchase good quality food in sufficient quantities or they do not have the means to produce it. Wars, natural disasters or economic crises keep people from accessing food.
- ➔ Eating enough food is only part of the picture. People need to eat well-balanced, safe and nutritious food regularly if they are to lead productive lives.
- ➔ In recent years, governments and the development community have strengthened their commitment to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, progressively acknowledging that the right to adequate food is a right that everyone is entitled to.

- ➔ National policy and legislative changes and are now heading towards more partnership with other countries at the regional and continental level.
- ➔ Efforts translated into national policy and legislative changes contributing to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its call to end hunger once and for all. FAO is constantly supporting these processes, ensuring that no one is left behind.

What FAO is doing: corporate key messages

FAO supports countries in turning political will into concrete action, by:

- ➔ Assessing and addressing current and evolving problems related to food security and nutrition;
- ➔ Identifying options for overcoming obstacles to the achievement of food security and nutrition for all;
- ➔ Formulating and implementing effective and efficient policy and programming response to address the immediate and underlying causes that trap the hungry, food insecure and malnourished in a vicious circle of chronic deprivation.

Using data to inform policies and programs, FAO works to:

- ➔ Develop the capacity of countries to uptake relevant information and analysis for decision related to food security and nutrition;
- ➔ Establish and maintain well-functioning government structures to monitor, map and assess policies, strategies and national programmes on food security and nutrition on a regular basis;
- ➔ Develop standards and harmonizing methods and tools to evaluate policies, programmes, legislations and investments and allow dissemination of results to governments and development partners.

FAO promotes the enhancement of governance and coordination, by:

- ➔ Inter-sectoral dialogue to develop a common understanding of FSN problems and solutions and reach consensus over FSN issues;
- ➔ The establishment of inclusive FSN coordination mechanisms to ensure policy coherence;
- ➔ Inclusive platforms and new spaces allowing a broad range of committed actors and stakeholders to work together in a coordinated manner.



Strategic Programme 2:

MAKE AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES MORE PRODUCTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE

Summary description

Agriculture, forestry and fisheries production systems in both developing and developed countries need to adapt to rising demands and shifting lifestyles in a sustainable way. FAO supports countries in strengthening integrated approaches towards more productive and sustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries, taking into account the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability.

Contextualizing our work: global key messages

- ➔ Satisfying the needs of a growing and increasingly urban population – projected to reach 9 billion by 2050 – requires significant increases and changes in the provision of products from different agricultural sectors, including crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture.

- ➔ More productive and sustainable agriculture has the potential to satisfy this growing and diversified demand while maintaining the natural resource base and key ecosystem services, including pollination, soil fertility, water management, biodiversity and carbon sequestration.
- ➔ To be sustainable, production systems need to be economically viable for producers while also contributing to livelihood security and rural economies in inclusive ways. This requires securing access to resources, know-how, finance, markets and techniques for production that use inputs, such as water, fertilizers and pesticides, more efficiently.
- ➔ There is a clear need to build resilience and adapt to climate change as part of broader sustainable agricultural development strategies. Climate related interventions can enhance productivity, income and resilience; while providing mitigation benefits such as reducing deforestation, reversing land degradation and contributing to water and energy security. The agricultural sector is uniquely able to deliver these benefits.
- ➔ Effective transition towards more integrated, sustainable agricultural production systems requires changing how sectors are governed. It entails better dialogue and policy coherence with all stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society, academia and research institutions, and developing partnerships and accountability at different levels. Achieving the SDGs makes it necessary to align and enhance investments in agriculture and to prioritize those actions that achieve measurable results on the ground.

What FAO is doing: corporate key messages

FAO supports countries in making agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable, adapting to changing demands and lifestyles and enhancing the agricultural sectors' contributions to sustainable development goals. This transition is being mainstreamed through supporting countries to adopt a common vision for sustainable food and agriculture, and translating it into actions through the following five interconnected principles:

- Principle 1: Improving efficiency in the use of resources
- Principle 2: Direct actions to conserve, protect and enhance natural resources
- Principle 3: Protect rural livelihoods and improve equity and social well-being
- Principle 4: Enhance the resilience of people, communities and ecosystems, especially to climate change and market volatility
- Principle 5: Promote responsible and effective governance mechanisms

This common vision can be used as an entry point for discussion on more coherent and effective actions in agriculture, forestry and fisheries in support of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

FAO supports producers in the adoption of more productive, sustainable and climate-resilient production systems, by:

- ➔ Helping producers test and adopt production systems that increase productivity and resilience while preserving natural resources through participatory approaches;
- ➔ Working with public and private institutions to enhance their capacities to promote the adoption of more integrated, sustainable and resilient production systems.

FAO promotes the transition to sustainable and climate-resilient agricultural policies and governance mechanisms, by:

- ➔ Working with countries on reviewing their policies and investment strategies and helping them align their policies and programmes in support of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the Paris Agreement on climate change;
- ➔ Helping countries to strengthen cross-sectoral dialogue, promoting the transition to sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture and a stronger role of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in national sustainable development.

FAO supports countries in building capacities to implement policies and instruments, including international instruments, by:

- ➔ Working with public and private institutions to strengthen capacities in developing and implementing legal and institutional frameworks and incentive mechanisms needed for the transition to sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture, forestry and fisheries;
- ➔ Helping countries in their work in contributing to and implementing international instruments and partnerships that promote productive, sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture.

FAO provides knowledge and information and promotes evidence-based decision-making, by:

- ➔ Gathering and sharing information and knowledge needed to support the transition to productive, sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture at all levels;
- ➔ Working with public and private institutions to strengthen capacities to collect data, analyze and produce evidence for informed decision making on the management of natural resources in agricultural systems across production sectors.



**Strategic Programme 3:
REDUCE RURAL POVERTY**

Summary description

FAO helps countries achieve SDGs 1 and 2 by supporting the development and implementation of evidence-based pro-poor policies, strategies and programmes that promote inclusive sustainable growth, income diversification, decent employment, access to social protection and empowerment of women and men in agriculture and in rural areas.

Contextualizing our work: global key messages

- ➔ Poverty is one of the biggest obstacles to human development. Although progress has been made in reducing the number of the world's poor in the past decades, there is still much to be done. With about 900 million people in the world considered extremely poor, too many are still struggling for the most basic human needs.
- ➔ The majority of the world's extreme poor (some 75 percent) are concentrated in rural areas, depend on agriculture and are responsible for producing most of the world's food.
- ➔ In most low- and middle-income countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture remains the largest employer of the poor and the main source of livelihoods. This makes agriculture a key sector for effective poverty reduction and hunger alleviation.

- ➔ Poverty is worsened by lack of economic opportunities for rural people. Most of the rural poor are smallholders and family farmers, who lack access to resources, services and markets. These constraints reduce their ability to cope with economic and natural risks and shocks that threaten their livelihoods, lowering their agricultural productivity and perpetrating poverty.
- ➔ With the adoption of the new 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, countries have renewed their efforts to fight against poverty, hunger and malnutrition, acknowledging that inclusive and equitable growth is key for achieving sustainable development and move people out of poverty.
- ➔ As part of its mandate, FAO is supporting countries to achieve the goals of poverty reduction by promoting inclusive rural development and making sure no one is left behind.

What FAO is doing: corporate key messages

- ➔ FAO helps countries achieve SDG1 (No extreme poverty) and SDG2 (Zero Hunger) by improving the livelihoods of poor and extreme poor rural people, including smallholders and family farmers;
- ➔ FAO supports governments in the design of pro-poor policies, strategies and programmes that promote inclusive and sustainable agriculture, increased productivity, income diversification, decent employment and access to social protection in rural areas;
- ➔ FAO helps countries improve access to technologies, services and markets, as well as access to and sustainable management of natural resources for poor rural people, including smallholders and family farmers, to increase their productivity and income in the context of adaptation and mitigation to climate change;
- ➔ FAO works to empower the rural poor and strengthen rural institutions, including producer organizations, to enhance access to, and control over, productive resources, services and markets, as well as to enable them to influence the formulation of rural development policies that affect their livelihoods;
- ➔ FAO assists countries in the design of policies and programmes that promote decent employment creation and entrepreneurship among the rural poor, especially family farmers, youth and women, including by addressing the root causes of migration;
- ➔ FAO helps countries build synergies among social protection, food security and nutrition, and small-scale agriculture with a view to building resilient rural livelihoods and reducing poverty;
- ➔ FAO supports countries in the collection and analysis of rural poverty and development trends, as well as knowledge generation on approaches with a proven poverty reduction impact, and we contribute to monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals related to rural poverty.



**Strategic Programme 4:
ENABLE INCLUSIVE AND EFFICIENT AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SYSTEMS**

Summary description

FAO helps build inclusive, efficient and sustainable food systems that support all stakeholders, including farmers, agribusinesses, and consumers. For developing countries to benefit from globalization and commercialization, FAO assists in building capacities to access global and regional markets, develop local markets, meet international food safety standards, and improve processes along entire value chains.

Contextualizing our work: global key messages

- ➔ In our increasingly inter-connected world, strengthened agriculture and food systems have a critical role to play in ensuring that countries are better placed to meet their objectives of eliminating hunger, reducing rural poverty, and increasing resilience to climatic and economic shocks.
- ➔ Globalization, urbanisation and commercialization have brought revolutionary changes to agricultural and food systems. Opportunities for trade for developing countries will increase with the need to expand food production to meet the needs of a growing planet.
- ➔ Countries require assistance and capacity building along the value chain, to access international and regional markets, promote local markets development, to meet international standards for food safety and hygiene, and to improve processes and increase investments in order to produce better quality products that ensure that nutritional needs are met.
- ➔ The increasing demand for high-value products on international and domestic food markets provides an opportunity for developing countries to generate economic growth and gainful employment.
- ➔ Inadequate public and private investments continue to hamper the development of inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems. An estimated average of 83 billion USD of net investment in developing country agriculture would be required annually to increase production by 60% by 2050, yet agricultural investment has been stagnant or declined in recent years.
- ➔ Large quantities of food loss and waste occur around the world. This is a significant source of GHG emissions and a lost opportunity to enhance food security and nutrition.

What FAO is doing: corporate key messages

Supporting developing countries in the implementation and enforcement of standards

FAO works with countries in:

- ➔ Ensuring countries are active members of the FAO and WHO Codex Alimentarius and have capacity to apply the Codex Alimentarius food standards, guidelines and codes of practice;
- ➔ Boosting capacity to meet the necessary standards and procedures for accessing markets;

- ➔ Strengthening regulatory frameworks and policies for plant and animal health, food safety and quality;
- ➔ Promoting public-private dialogue and collaboration on voluntary standards.

Assisting countries to benefit from trade

FAO works with countries in:

- ➔ Developing capacities for evidence-based decision making and facilitating neutral dialogue on issues related to the formulation and adoption of trade agreements;
- ➔ Assisting in the design of appropriate trade policy, raising awareness of the implications of policy changes and assisting in strengthening regulatory frameworks;
- ➔ Producing and analysing international market data and information as a basis for tracking and understanding commodity market and trade developments;
- ➔ Creating awareness of international market information and analysis and its use in the formulation of trade and market policies.

Developing value chains

FAO works with countries in:

- ➔ Formulating and implementing food industry and agribusiness development strategies;
- ➔ Providing policy guidance and related capacity development to promote effective policies;
- ➔ Supporting market linkages through inclusive business models, including institutional procurement models linking smallholders to large buyers;
- ➔ Promoting the participation of women, strengthening capacities of producer organisations and fostering public-private partnerships;
- ➔ Encouraging South-South cooperation, allowing countries to learn from the successful experiences of other developing countries.

Reducing food loss and waste

FAO works with countries in:

- ➔ Providing evidence and support to countries in developing strategies to reduce food losses and waste;
- ➔ Promoting better linkages between industry, research, governments, civil society organizations and consumers in the fight against food loss;
- ➔ Building capacity in developing countries to improve harvesting practices, transport, processing and storage facilities to minimize food loss and waste.

Promoting agribusiness finance and investment

FAO works with countries in:

- ➔ Mobilizing investments required in food and agricultural system;
- ➔ Developing capacities to design and implement investments, improve the efficiency of public expenditures, strengthen policy and governance processes, and develop investment statistics;
- ➔ Promoting principles for responsible agricultural investment.



Strategic Programme 5: INCREASE THE RESILIENCE OF LIVELIHOODS TO THREATS AND CRISES

Summary description

Together with its partners, FAO works to increase the resilience of agricultural livelihoods at risk of disasters and crises. People with resilient livelihoods are better able to withstand damage, recover and adapt when disasters cannot be avoided. The increasing frequency and intensity of disasters caused by climate change reinforces the urgency to build the resilience of agricultural livelihoods of vulnerable communities.

Contextualizing our work: global key messages

- ➔ Enhanced resilience enables people to prevent or reduce the impacts of disasters and crises on their lives and livelihoods. They can better withstand damage, recover and adapt when crisis situations cannot be avoided.

- ➔ Worldwide, the livelihoods of 2.5 billion people depend on agriculture. These small-scale farmers, herders, fishers and forest-dependent communities generate more than half of the global agricultural production and are particularly at risk from disasters that destroy or damage harvests, equipment, supplies, livestock, seeds, crops and stored food.

- ➔ Disasters and crises don't just have immediate, short-term effects, they undermine livelihoods and national development gains that have taken years to build.

- ➔ As the magnitude and impact of crises and disasters increase – aggravated by the overexploitation of natural resources and climate change – more and more households, communities and governments of developing countries are less able to absorb, recover and adapt, making them more vulnerable to future shocks.

- ➔ Our ability to eradicate hunger and feed a growing population by 2030 depends on fostering the unique skills of farmers, fishers, herders and forest-dependent communities to produce food and manage the environment we all rely on.

- ➔ The resilience of agricultural livelihoods is key to making sustainable development a reality by ensuring that agriculture and food systems are productive, risk sensitive and capable to withstand the impacts of climate change in order to feed present and future generations.

- ➔ We must ensure that years of step-by-step agricultural development gains are not wiped out by shocks and/or crises. Increasing the resilience of agricultural livelihoods is a powerful lever to reach the Sustainable Development Goal pledge “to leave no one behind”.

What FAO is doing: corporate key messages

- ➔ FAO helps countries develop and implement appropriate legal, policy and institutional systems and regulatory frameworks including Food Chain Crisis Management, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management for the agricultural sectors and the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises.

- ➔ FAO builds national and local capacities to reduce the risks and impacts of natural and climate hazards, food chain threats, conflicts and protracted crisis, and to enhance resilience.
- ➔ FAO promotes knowledge, guidelines, standards and good practices of disaster and crisis risk governance, risk monitoring and early warning, vulnerability reduction, preparedness and response.
- ➔ FAO supports countries and regions to mobilise adequate resources for disaster risk reduction and management to increase resilience and nutrition security.
- ➔ FAO helps countries and communities to develop mechanisms for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data to monitor, warn and act on crisis, risks and threats to agriculture, food safety and nutrition.
- ➔ FAO advocates and provides assistance for humanitarian action to protect the livelihoods of vulnerable farmers, herders, fishers and tree-dependent communities before, during and after emergencies.
- ➔ FAO builds and promotes partnerships and synergies with academic, UN, civic, and private sector agencies to join forces for increasing resilience in order to achieve sustainable development.

The FAO Strategic Programmes

In its work to end hunger, malnutrition and poverty, FAO has identified five key priorities or Strategic Objectives. To help accomplish each objective, efforts are channelled through a dedicated Strategic Programme.



**HELP ELIMINATE HUNGER,
FOOD INSECURITY AND MALNUTRITION**



**MAKE AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES
MORE PRODUCTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE**



REDUCE RURAL POVERTY



**ENABLE INCLUSIVE AND EFFICIENT
AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SYSTEMS**



**INCREASE THE RESILIENCE OF LIVELIHOODS
TO THREATS AND CRISES**

FOOD and AGRICULTURE in the 2030 AGENDA

From ending poverty, hunger and malnutrition to sustaining our natural resources to responding to climate change, food and agriculture lie at the very heart of the 2030 Agenda. The FAO Strategic Framework is aligned with the SDGs, geared towards tackling root causes and building a fairer society.