

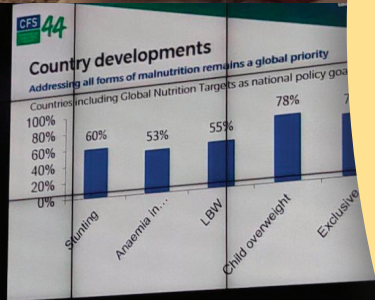


Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



OFFICE OF EVALUATION  
Thematic evaluation series

# Evaluation of FAO Strategic Objective 1: Contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition



April 2018

**THEMATIC EVALUATION SERIES**

**Evaluation of FAO Strategic Objective 1:  
Contribute to the eradication of hunger, food  
insecurity and malnutrition**

**FINAL REPORT**

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF  
EVALUATION**  
*April 2018*

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Office of Evaluation (OED)

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The team of external consultants was composed of: Naresh Singh, development policy and strategic positioning; Ranjani Krishnamurthy, gender and equity; Nathan Morrow, food and nutrition information systems; Anne-Marie Mayer, nutrition. Margarita Lovon, Rose Azuba and Frank Noij acted as regional specialists for Latin America, Africa and Asia, respectively. The evaluation was led by Olivier Cossée, Senior Evaluation Officer in the Office of Evaluation (OED), who also supervised the case studies in Asia. Veridiana Mansour-Mendes acted as Deputy Evaluation Manager and managed the Latin American case studies. Savina Tessitore, Evaluation Officer, oversaw the African case studies, and Alena Lappo supported the entire process as Evaluation Analyst.

## **Acronyms and abbreviation**

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CPF	Country Programming Framework
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIES	Food Insecurity Experience Scale
FIRST	Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation
FNS	Food and Nutrition Security
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
SO	Strategic Objective
SP	Strategic Programme

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose of the evaluation

1. This report outlines the main findings and conclusions from an evaluation of Strategic Objective 1 (SO1) (Contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition) in application of the Indicative Rolling Work Plan of Strategic and Programme Evaluation 2015-17 endorsed at the 116th session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Programme Committee (November 2014).

## 1.2. Scope and objectives

2. The evaluation scope encompasses FAO efforts to contribute to SO1 at the global, regional, and national levels, whether these efforts were supported by the Strategic Programme 1 (SP1) team or not. The period covered by the evaluation is 2014-2017, i.e. the period since the adoption of the new Strategic Framework, but programmes relevant to SO1 that started before 2014 were also considered.<sup>1</sup> The evaluation also reviewed the Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation facility (FIRST). Moreover, the Voices of the Hungry (VoH) project was also evaluated in a coordinated manner with the SO1 evaluation, although the result of this work is described in a separate project evaluation report.
3. The evaluation objectives emphasised accountability towards FAO Members and partners. The evaluation assessed progress towards SO1 and examined its value added to FAO's efforts to promote Food and Nutrition Security (FNS).<sup>2</sup> Given the short history of the SOs, the evaluation was not intended to assess impacts.<sup>3</sup>
4. The evaluation was focused on four overarching evaluation questions:<sup>4</sup>
  - i. **Strength of the result framework and delivery mechanisms:** clarity of FAO's SP1, its relevance to countries' needs, and the degree to which it is likely to be effective.
  - ii. **Progress achieved towards SO1:** how has SO1 added value to FAO's effort to improve FNS and what results are evident in this regard?
  - iii. **Progress achieved under cross-cutting themes:** has the new strategic orientation helped attain results towards cross-cutting issues, in particular gender and nutrition?
  - iv. **Strategic positioning and partnerships:** have FAO's positioning, comparative advantage and effectiveness of partnerships been strengthened under SO1 and SP1?

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<sup>1</sup> Such as the Right to Food, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure, the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger, the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) and National Programmes for Food Security (NPFS).

<sup>2</sup> The phrase "food and nutrition security" is used in this report preferably to the more common "food security and nutrition", as a way to emphasize the need for greater integration of nutrition into food security policies and programmes. Both combinations are in use in FAO English documentation. FAO's publications in Spanish and French tend to favour "*seguridad alimentaria y nutricional*" and "*sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle*", respectively, i.e. the equivalent of "food and nutrition security". For an in-depth review of this issue, see the CFS document CFS 2012/39/4 - Coming to Terms with Terminology.

<sup>3</sup> Strategic Objective 1 came into force in 2014, while the creation of the SP Management Teams dates only from September 2015. FIRST had only been implemented for two years at evaluation time.

<sup>4</sup> Please refer to Appendix 1 for the evaluation sub-questions.

### 1.3. Methodology

5. The evaluation was conducted by the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) with the support of a team composed of external consultants with geographic and thematic expertise. The evaluation benefitted from insights and comments from the SP1 team throughout the evaluation process.<sup>5</sup>
6. The evaluation relied on multiple sources for data collection and mixed-methods: document review and administrative data analysis;<sup>6</sup> meta-analysis of evidence from the Office of Evaluation (OED) and other evaluations<sup>7</sup>; one survey<sup>8</sup>; and almost 500 persons interviewed at global, regional and country levels. The following eight country case studies were conducted during the evaluation process:
  - *Africa*: Ethiopia, Nigeria and Mozambique
  - *Asia and the Pacific*: Nepal and Cambodia
  - *Latin America and the Caribbean*: Brazil, Dominican Republic and El Salvador.
7. The evaluation team also visited the Regional Office for Africa (RAF), the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP), the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC) as well as the Subregional Office for Mesoamerica (SLM), while conducting the country case studies.
8. Case studies were not conducted in countries that had neither a significant pre-2014 portfolio nor have a present SO1 programme. Data collection in the sampled countries was complemented with a synthesis of past evaluation findings in other countries and regions, which amongst other things, shed some light on SO1-related work in Europe and Central Asia, and Middle East and North Africa.

### 1.4. Limitations

9. Hunger eradication has historically been at the core of the FAO's mandate. Due to the broad evaluation scope, it was impossible for the evaluation team to identify and absorb the entire body of literature and documentation available on SO1-related topics throughout the assigned evaluation period. The evaluation does not pretend to be exhaustive in its description of achieved results.
10. Given that many SO1-related activities started before 2014, it was not always possible to attribute achievements in policy work to SO1.
11. The evaluation of the Nutrition Strategy was slightly postponed to allow more profound assessment of activities related to nutrition, which go well beyond SO1. It will be reported in the autumn 2018 session of the Programme Committee.

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<sup>5</sup> Further details on the evaluation team and approach are provided in the evaluation's Terms of Reference (Appendix 1).

<sup>6</sup> Please refer to Appendix 2 for the full list of documents reviewed.

<sup>7</sup> CPEs in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Niger, Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and Barbados, Pakistan, Tanzania, and West Bank and Gaza.

<sup>8</sup> To collect data on FAO's work on gender equality under SO1.

## **2 Description of FAO's Strategic Objective 1**

### **2.1. The Reviewed Strategic Framework**

12. FAO has long been committed to the notion that increasing food production was a sufficient condition for food security, and achievable primarily by technical means, for example in the Special Programme for Food Security initiated in 1995. However, it became increasingly clear that beyond technical issues and solutions, the national and international policy environments were important determinants of investment and productivity in agriculture.
13. The food price crisis in 2007–2008 and the subsequent period of high food prices volatility sparked a global rethink of food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture, and led to the rise of food and nutrition security on the agendas of political leaders in many countries. The Second International Conference on Nutrition held in Rome in November 2014 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development called for bold, transformational change to achieve a world that is more inclusive, fair, sustainable and resilient.
14. Upon taking office in January 2012, the FAO Director-General launched a revision of the Organization's Strategic Framework which led to the Reviewed Strategic Framework 2010-19, endorsed by the FAO Conference in June 2013. The reviewed Framework built a hierarchy of goals and objectives, starting with a vision for the Organization of "a world free from hunger and malnutrition, where food security and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner". The Strategic Framework defines a new way of working for FAO, stressing the importance of greater focus, collaboration across units to achieve corporate goals, and better response to country needs.
15. Its first Strategic Objective was devoted to improving the enabling policy, regulatory and programmatic environment for food and nutrition security, i.e. the design and implementation of policies, laws, regulations, programmes and investment plans contributing to improved food and nutrition security, excluding therefore from SO1 those activities and programmes implemented directly with communities and food producers, meant to be captured by other Strategic Objectives.
16. In September 2015, programmes and associated resources were set-up, led by the respective Strategic Programme Teams to bring coordination, collaboration and focus to the different programmes, policy advice and data collection mechanisms developed by FAO, and facilitate the access of FAO country offices to technical support from headquarters and regional offices.

### **2.2. The SO1 Programme**

#### **2.2.1. The SP1 Programme and Team**

17. The SO1 programme, i.e. Strategic Programme 1 or SP1 is articulated along four outcome areas, namely policy-setting (Outcome 1), inclusive governance (Outcome 2), evidence-based decision-making (Outcome 3) and implementation (Outcome 4).
18. The SP1 team and afferent planning, budgeting and reporting mechanisms contribute to SO1 by bringing coordination, collaboration and focus to the different programmes, policy advice

and data collection mechanisms developed by FAO on FNS, and facilitate the access of FAO country offices to technical support from headquarters and regional offices. It is important to stress that the role of the SP teams is not to manage these other units nor to implement programmes, and that therefore the SP1 team is only responsible and accountable for a fraction of the SO1-related activities reviewed in this report.

### **2.2.2 Regional initiatives and Country Programming Frameworks**

19. Currently, it is in the lead for three regional initiatives in three regions: Africa's 2025 Zero Hunger Challenge, Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative and the Asia and the Pacific's Zero Hunger Challenge. As of date, FAO does not implement hunger-oriented regional initiatives in the Europe-Central Asia region nor in the Near East and North Africa region, and there appears to be limited SO1-related activities in these regions.<sup>9</sup>
20. At the national level, a set of "focus countries" has been identified. A first set was defined by the respective Regional Representatives for each regional initiative in June 2015. Another set was selected by the SP teams based on the presence of documented need, political will to address it, and a sizeable SO-related portfolio in country. Countries selected as "focus countries" by more than one SO/regional initiatives were defined as "countries under closer and active observation and support". For each of them an SP was designated to facilitate, coordinate and monitor support to regional initiatives and country offices. SP1 is the designated "facilitator" for Bangladesh and Laos.
21. At the country level, the primary delivery channel is the Country Programming Framework (CPF), which is an agreement between the Government and FAO defining where FAO should focus its activities over a period of two to four years.

### **2.2.3 Thematic areas and resources**

22. SO1 is the third SO in terms of financial size, comprising an estimated 14 percent of all total budgetary and extrabudgetary resources linked to the SOs during the evaluated period. Within SO1, a majority of resources have been spent on Outcome 1 (56 percent); followed by Outcome 3 (30 percent) and Outcome 2 (14 percent).<sup>10</sup> For the 2016-17 biennium, the estimated allocated budget to SP1 was USD 294 million with commitments from extrabudgetary resources amounting to USD 212 million.
23. The agreements signed by the SP1 team with various FAO divisions in 2016-17 amounted to USD 31.5 million, while those with Regional and subregional offices equalled USD 18.7 million. The analysis of service level agreements (SLAs) demonstrates that SP1 closely collaborated, amongst other divisions, with the Nutrition and Food Systems Division (ESN), the Agricultural Development Economics Division (ESA), the Investment Centre Division (TCI) and the Statistics Division (ESS). In terms of agreements signed with FAO regional offices, the largest proportion was allocated for work with the Regional Office for

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<sup>9</sup> There are a few interesting examples in the Near East where FAO has worked on SO1 issues, including FAO's support to the United Arab Emirates to develop a food diversification strategy, and FAO Oman working with the Ministries of Agriculture and of Education to establish a home-grown school feeding programme. Both Oman and United Arab Emirates are higher income countries and exemplify that FAO can mainstream SO1 in these contexts. Europe and Central Asia (REU) is the region with the lowest proportion of countries reporting SO1-related activities. The only country with a significant SP1 presence (through FIRST) in REU appears to be Kyrgyzstan.

<sup>10</sup> Author's calculation based on PIR 2014-15 (Web Annex 5) and Programme of Work and Budget 2016-17.

Africa (RAF), followed by the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC).<sup>11</sup>

24. An analysis of FAO's Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS) shows that there are 352 projects tagged to SO1 Outcomes during the period 2014-2016 with a total budget of USD 773 million. Many of these projects contribute to more than one SO; the estimated budget share dedicated exclusively to SO1 is USD 582 million.
25. Country-level projects represent the largest share of the programme budget (56 percent). Regionally, the majority of the SO1 programme funds have been spent in Africa (34 percent), followed by Asia and Latin America (18 percent), while various global projects accounted for 26 percent of all the resources.
26. Projects funded by bilateral donors (so-called "FAO-Government Co-operation Programmes" or GCP) are the largest in terms of value (68 percent of the total budget), followed by Unilateral Trust Funds projects (17 percent).<sup>12</sup> Nine countries in Africa, six countries in Asia and 16 countries in Latin America signed and funded such Unilateral Trust Fund agreements with FAO to conduct projects related to FNS policies in their own country.

## **2.2.4 Global platforms, products and services**

### **Committee on World Food Security and Voluntary Guidelines**

27. SO1 includes support to a number of global platforms and initiatives of a distinct normative nature, notably the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the promotion and application at country level of various guidelines adopted by the FAO Council and/or the CFS, such as the Voluntary Guidelines on Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food (VGRtF), the Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forestry in the context of National Food Security (VGGT), the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI), and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines).

### **Voices of the Hungry (VoH)**

28. The Voices of the Hungry project was launched in November 2013.<sup>13</sup> Building on prior efforts in the United States and Latin America, the project developed a global food insecurity experience measurement tool called the Food Insecurity Experience scale (FIES), which offers an experience-based measurement of the severity of food insecurity that relies on people's direct responses to questions regarding their access to adequate food. The VoH project was evaluated in a coordinated manner with the SO1 evaluation, but this work reported separately in a dedicated project evaluation report.

### **Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation**

29. The European Union (EU)-funded Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation facility aims to strengthen the enabling environment for food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture in selected priority countries and, when appropriate, regional bodies. The FIRST facility has hired a network of policy officers

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<sup>11</sup> Author's calculation based on PIREs data.

<sup>12</sup> Unilateral Trust Funds are technical assistance projects funded by the recipient country itself.

<sup>13</sup> Project title: PGM/MUL/2013. Funded by the Department for International Development, the Kingdom of Belgium and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and coordinated by the FAO Statistics Division (ESS).

and placed them in country, typically within the Ministry of Agriculture highest echelon, in now 33 countries.

### 3. Assessment of FAO's contribution

#### 3.1. Strength of the result framework and delivery mechanisms

##### 3.1.1. Relevance of the new strategy to countries' needs

**Finding 1.** The rationale behind SO1 is that hunger is a governance issue as much as a technical challenge, and that improving Food and Nutrition Security requires a coordinated and comprehensive effort, better enabling policies and institutional environment for agriculture, and greater protection of the rights of the most vulnerable. This rationale was found sound and relevant.

30. SO1 as designed was found to be very relevant to current food and nutrition security challenges. The number of undernourished people has jumped from 777 to 815 million between 2015 and 2016. The percentage of people globally affected by severe food insecurity has increased from 8.8 to 9.3 percent in the same period. The rates of child stunting and wasting are still alarmingly high. Adult obesity is increasing rapidly in every region. Anaemia among women of reproductive age has increased globally from 30.6 to 32.8 percent between 2005 and 2016.<sup>14</sup> SO1 intends to deliver more coherent policy assistance in food and nutrition security, through greater attention to the governance of land and water tenure, a right-based approach articulated in the right to food, expanded coordination efforts, and dedicated policy support in country, including through the FIRST facility.
31. The high relevance of the SO did not happen by chance. The result framework was designed based on lessons from a series of 'learning grounds': countries like Bangladesh, Brazil and Mozambique where long before SO1 FAO has provided an integrated support to coordination capacity, policies and strategies setting, and data management for food and nutrition security.

##### 3.1.2. Added value of the new strategy and result framework as designed

**Finding 2.** SO1 is integral to the FAO mandate, and as such less amenable to being approached as a stand-alone programme than other SOs. Nevertheless, SO1 is well delimited around improving the design and implementation of policies, strategies, laws, programmes and investment plans aiming to improved food and nutrition security. The SO emphasizes the importance of policy and pushes FAO beyond its traditional technical space. Nutrition concerns also feature more prominently in the new framework than in the past.

32. Food and nutrition security is at the core of the FAO mandate. Under the current Strategic Framework, hunger eradication is at the same time a "strategic objective", a higher "goal", and an important element of the "vision". Moreover, nutrition is approached as a cross-cutting theme across all SOs. This peculiarity of SO1 created a degree of ambiguity about what FAO activities and programmes contribute to SO1 and what pertains to other strategic objectives. SO1 was delimited around the enabling environment for food security, i.e. the design and implementation of policies, laws, regulations, programmes and investment plans contributing to improved FNS, thus leaving work on food security at community level (e.g. Farmer Field Schools) to other SOs.

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<sup>14</sup> FAO. 2017. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World. Rome, FAO. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-l7695e.pdf>

33. The recent reformulation of SO1 embodied in the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2018-2021 strengthened the SO relevance, recognizing that policy implementation and evaluation are the neglected steps in the policy cycle, and broadening the scope of FAO's work in nutrition to cover "all forms of malnutrition", including over-nutrition and obesity.

### 3.1.3. Relevance of knowledge and normative products

**Finding 3.** At the global level the Committee on World Food Security represents the type of multi-stakeholder coordination forum to which Outcome 2 is dedicated. It is recognized as the most inclusive international coordination mechanism for food and nutrition security.

43. FAO's support to the CFS found a natural home in SO1, since at the global level the CFS embodies the type of multi-stakeholder coordination forum to which Outcome 2 is dedicated. Since its reform in 2009, the CFS includes a High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition as its science-policy interface, as well as representation from civil society and the private sector. It is now recognized to be the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for stakeholders to work together in support of country-led processes towards food and nutrition security. This structure makes CFS more inclusive and its normative products more acceptable. The CFS permanent Secretariat is located in FAO headquarters and includes members from the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

**Finding 4.** A large number of states have adopted constitutional or legal amendments to protect the right to food, and FAO has embedded it in its new Strategic Framework. The Right to Food Guidelines remain an important and pertinent tool, promoted by project-funded staff and non-staff human resources in the SP1 team and the Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division (ESP) respectively.

44. FAO has embedded the right to food in its new Strategic Framework and thereby reaffirmed that it is a corporate responsibility of the Organization and its Members. The right to food was also part of FAO's contributions to the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.<sup>15</sup>
45. Today, close to 30 states have adopted constitutional provisions guaranteeing the right to food. Numerous other states protect the right to food indirectly, as a part of the right to an adequate standard of living or as the right to the minimum conditions of life, or treat it as an aspirational goal.<sup>16</sup> From 2006 to 2015, a right to food team was supporting these efforts at FAO headquarters. As support from extrabudgetary resources diminished, the right to food team reduced its scope of intervention, with one of the right to food team members joining the SP1 team and continuing to support the right to food from SP1 and another now working in the Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division (ESP). This effort is entirely project-funded.

**Finding 5.** On a crucial subject, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forestry provide countries with options and best practices in tenure-related policies, laws, strategies and practices in a flexible-enough format to be applicable in a wide range of countries. Other normative products were also found relevant.

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<sup>15</sup> FAO Position Paper - The World Humanitarian Summit, FAO 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Institutionalizing a Fully Realized Right to Food: Progress, Limitations and Lessons Learned from Emerging Alternative Policy Models, by Nadia Lambek and Priscilla Claeys, Vermont Law Review [Vol. 40:743], 2014.

34. The tenure of natural resources is a major determinant of food security worldwide, and land distribution is a global issue. Customary land tenure systems also tend to entrench gender inequalities, with women typically having very limited access/control over land. The Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forestry in the context of National Food Security provide countries with a framework for best practices in tenure-related policies, laws, regulations, strategies and practices. This work is obviously relevant in a right-based approach to food security. The VGGTs is the best-known CFS product, precisely because it addresses an important and timely issue.
35. Another important CFS product is the *Principles on Responsible Agricultural Investment and Food Systems*<sup>17</sup>. Investing in agriculture and food systems is essential to improve food and nutrition security. However, not all investments contribute equally to improving the living conditions of the poorest, nor to preserving natural resources. The Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems principles attempt to mitigate possible negative impacts, notably on smallholders. Given the size and geographic extent of the phenomenon, this product is certainly very relevant.
36. Last but not least, the SP1 team and technical units have developed a series of FSN Policy Guidance Notes<sup>18</sup> in 2016-2017, with a view to help disseminate the basic principles underpinning SO1 – and notably the use of a political economy approach to policy support – within technical units. The reviewed guidance notes were of high quality, but it is too early to assess their uptake at regional and country level.

#### 3.1.4. Cross-cutting themes in programme design

**Finding 6.** While the SP1 result framework does not explicitly mention gender equality, the gender team in the Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division (ESP) has worked with the SP1 team to systematically identify entry points for gender-related work within SO1.

37. Women constitute a large proportion of the global agricultural labour force, and this proportion is growing, but they are still disadvantaged in terms of access to productive resources, services and opportunities.
38. FAO's commitment to gender equality is reflected in the Reviewed Strategic Framework, where gender is treated as a cross-cutting theme quite comprehensively. However, the SP1 result framework does not explicitly mention gender equality in its outcomes and outputs, and only one out of eight output indicators integrates gender.<sup>19</sup> Gender-specific indicators on strengthening partner capacities, gender-disaggregated evidence for decision-making, and coordination and knowledge management could have been considered.
39. In 2013, the SP1 gender team conducted an analysis to identify the gender-related areas of work within SP1 activities, such as work with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the CFS, VGGT and VGSSF; FIRST; the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement and the Renewed Efforts against Child Hunger and

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs1314/rai/CFS\\_Principles\\_Oct\\_2014\\_EN.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs1314/rai/CFS_Principles_Oct_2014_EN.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> The series, funded from the FIRST programme, is called "Strengthening sector policies for better food security and nutrition results"; see <http://www.fao.org/publications/policy-guidance-series/en/>

<sup>19</sup> Indicator for Output 1.1: "number of policy processes with enhanced incorporation of food security and nutrition objectives and gender considerations in sectoral policies, investment, plans and programmes as a result of FAO support".

Undernutrition (REACH) platform; and support to the Zero Hunger Initiatives.<sup>20</sup> All SO1 outcomes were found to be amenable to gender mainstreaming. The identified areas of work were translated in 2016 into specific milestones and Service Level Agreements between the Social Policies and Rural Institutions Agreement (ESP) and the SP1 Management Team.

**Finding 7.** FAO has reinforced its commitment to nutrition. A new Strategy and Vision for FAO's Work in Nutrition has been endorsed. The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) organized by FAO and World Health Organization (WHO) in 2014 and the launch of the United Nations Decade on Nutrition (2016-2025) were important testimonies to this renewed commitment.

40. In 2011, the evaluation of FAO's role and work in nutrition concluded that FAO lacked the vision and corporate commitment accorded to nutrition in its original mandate. A new Strategy and Vision for FAO's Work in Nutrition was endorsed at the end of 2012; its three outcomes align well with SO1's own outcomes. An implementation plan was never developed to detail the specifics of activities, products and services to mainstream nutrition, including integration into the various SOs and regional and country activities, particularly CPFs. A first attempt was made in 2017 with the document entitled "Pillars of Action for mainstreaming nutrition in FAO's work"<sup>21</sup> but the document has not been approved yet.
41. As of January 2016, nutrition was integrated into the new Strategic Framework as a cross-cutting theme mainstreamed in the work of all Strategic Objectives.<sup>22</sup> Nutrition also featured more prominently in FAO's Medium Term Plan for 2018-2021.<sup>23</sup> The emphasis changed to "*all forms of malnutrition*", as reflected in the SO-level indicators.<sup>24</sup>
42. FAO Management has also reinforced the Organization's commitment to nutrition by restructuring the FAO technical unit in charge of Nutrition (Nutrition and Food Systems Division (ESN), formerly AGN), and committed to a more visible engagement of FAO in the global nutrition architecture. Nutrition has increasingly been addressed in FAO Council and FAO Conferences, as well as FAO technical committees on Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Commodities Problems, as well as at the 2016 FAO Regional Conferences. An important milestone was the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2, November 2014), which endorsed the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and its Framework for Action and the launch of the United Nations Decade on Nutrition (2016-2025).

## 3.2. Capacity to translate the framework into action

### 3.2.1. The SP1 Team

**Finding 8.** Links between the SP1 team and technical divisions at headquarters were found to be generally strong. An important achievement in this respect was the development of a series of FNS

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<sup>20</sup> SO1 and Gender Equity and Empowerment of Women. Contribution of the Cross-Cutting Theme on Gender (CCTG).

<sup>21</sup> Developed by the Nutrition and Food Systems Division (ESN) with all the SP leaders, various divisions and field officers. Details provided on specific actions to be undertaken, responsible units, indicators and means of verification.

<sup>22</sup> See Outcome 6.5 of Objective 6 in the FAO Medium Term Plan for 2018-2021: Mainstreaming of nutrition in the Strategic Framework and Strengthening FAO's contribution in the international nutrition architecture.

<sup>23</sup> Extract from CLL155/3 - Reviewed Strategic Framework and Outline of the MTP2018-21 (pp 39/40).

<sup>24</sup> Two SO-level indicators were added on: the prevalence of wasting and overweight in children under the age of five (SDG 2.2.2); and the mortality rate due to non-communicable diseases (SDG 3.4.1).

Policy Guidance Notes, which the SP1 team developed with a dozen technical units. In contrast, insufficient connections were maintained with country offices to provide conceptual leadership and foster greater coherence in policy assistance for FNS across the Organization, with the exception of countries with a FIRST policy officer.

43. Links between the SP1 team and technical divisions were found to be generally good, although not uniformly so. An important endeavour from mid-2015 to mid-2017 was the development of a series of FNS Policy Guidance Notes,<sup>25</sup> which the SP1 team developed in cooperation with about a dozen technical units.
44. The SP1 team has been working with regional offices to provide conceptual leadership and foster coherence in policy assistance for FNS across the Organization. This is appropriate given that it is the primary role of regional offices to backstop country offices. In particular, the Regional Office for Africa (RAF) benefited from significant support from SP1.
45. The visibility of the SP1 team at subregional and country levels was found to be much lower than at regional level. As orientators, facilitators and animators of the FNS policy work in FAO, the SP1 team must codify, systematize, maintain and animate a certain body of knowledge learned from experience in the field, and it must help share that body of knowledge from one country and one region to the next, not as one-size-fits-all prescriptions but as options to consider and that have worked well in precise, well-documented circumstances. If the SP1 team is to fulfil its role as a facilitator of active learning, knowledge transfers and awareness raising, it cannot afford to be disconnected from country offices where the real policy work happens.
46. Countries with a FIRST policy officer were found to be in a better position regarding links with SP1: not only can they count on the expertise of the FIRST policy officer to help them in their work, but they can also use the FIRST officer as a way to liaise with SP1 (and vice versa) since FIRST is managed by the SP1 team.

**Finding 9.** Most of the SP1 team is funded from secondments and projects, which has led to a rapid staff turnover and loss of key expertise and, at times, momentum. The SP1 team was also left without a team leader for over a year after its forming, initially depriving SP1 of a high-level corporate champion of its approach.

47. The only regular resources allotted to SP1 in the PWB are for the team leader and two administrative support staff. Most of the team is funded from secondments and projects, which has led to a rapid turnover of staff and loss of key expertise and, at times, momentum. The idea of relying on secondments from other units<sup>26</sup> was to strengthen the team with hard technical know-how and help it liaise with the units of origin of the seconded staff.
48. For over a year after its forming, the Deputy Team Leader of the SP1 team acted as Team Leader ad interim. This initially deprived SP1 of a high-level corporate champion. The nomination in 2017 of an SP1 Team Leader with a political background should help make the programme more visible than it is at the moment, both within FAO and outside.

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<sup>25</sup> The series, funded from the FIRST facility, is called "Strengthening sector policies for better food security and nutrition results"; see <http://www.fao.org/publications/policy-guidance-series/en/>

<sup>26</sup> Such as the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management (OSP) and the Investment Centre Division (TCI).

### 3.2.2. Planning, management and reporting arrangements

**Finding 10.** “Matrix management” and related “Service Level Agreements” prepared between Strategic Programme and technical divisions and regional offices to plan for technical support to the SPs appear to generate a level of effort not commensurate with the potential benefit.

49. Systems and processes for planning, budgeting and reporting are not specific to SO1, and therefore this report does not explore this area in detail. However, the general feedback seems to be that the planning procedures and systems introduced with the Reviewed Strategic Framework have often outweighed their advantage.
50. The Service Level Agreements entered between the SP teams and other units to plan for joint work are a case in point. They have been described as “a good idea gone wrong”, with both sides of the agreement feeling flouted: the SP1 team tend to think it is not getting enough technical support from technical units, and the technical units find that the amount of effort necessary to develop and manage a service level agreement is not commensurate with the potential benefit. The planning and budgeting processes often pertain to small financial resources, which could be planned or reported for in lesser detail and effected through simpler or more informal means.<sup>27</sup> These transactions are also processed through complex information systems, which are recommended to be merged into one encompassing multi-functional management information system.
51. The SO reporting structure is well understood by FAO Representatives (FAORs) and their staff. However, reporting for different audiences generates an additional workload for country offices. When reporting to their regional office, they need to use the ‘RI language’ i.e. they report against the results frameworks of regional initiatives. When reporting to headquarters, they must translate the same information into ‘SO language’. And when reporting to governments (e.g. national authorities, donors), they ought to couch their work as contributions to either national programmes, objectives and plans, or express them in ‘Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) language’.

### 3.2.3. Policy support at headquarters

**Finding 11.** SP1 is considered the nucleus of FNS policy work in the Organization. It has worked well with other headquarter units involved in policy, such as the Investment Centre Division (TCI) and the Economic and Social Development Department (ES) Governance Unit, and has identified potential areas of collaboration with SP3 and SP4.

52. Policy assistance is now primarily carried out through: a) regional policy officers placed in regional offices; b) the Strategic Programme teams; c) the Investment Centre Division (TCI); d) the Legal Office which supports the drafting of legal instruments by Member Countries and monitors legislative developments relevant to FNS through FAOLEX;<sup>28</sup> and e) technical

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<sup>27</sup> As MTP 2018-21 suggests, the staff costs consume approximately 75 percent of FAO’s assessed contributions, which FAO allocates strategically through the Strategic Framework planning and budgeting systems. Only a small fraction of the non-staff resources is channeled through the SP teams and regional initiatives. This means that most of the transactions involved in the service-level agreements are relatively small in size and involving limited fiduciary risks. Source: C 2017/3 - The Director-General’s Medium Term Plan 2018-21 and Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19, paragraph 103.

<sup>28</sup> FAOLEX is one of the world’s largest electronic collections of national laws, regulations, policies and bilateral agreements on food, agriculture and natural resources management. It is managed by the FAO Development Law Service (LEGN), it is constantly being updated with an average of 8 000 new entries per year and contains legal and

departments in their area of competence, notably the Economic and Social Development Department (ES). SP1, whose Theory of Change mainly comprises the design of FNS policies and investment plans, is considered the nucleus of FNS policy work in the Organization. Other SPs support policy in their respective areas of competence.

53. Efforts have been made towards building 'policy shops' to support the development of corporate tools and approaches. A small Policy Unit was created within the Economic and Social Development Department (ES) in 2012. It has set-up a policy portal<sup>29</sup> providing a one-stop shop for FAO policy documents. A Governance Unit was also established in 2017 within the Economic and Social Development Department (ES) It aims to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and foster a corporate approach to addressing governance issues. The Governance Unit has worked well with SP1, more than with any other SP teams, particularly on backstopping the FIRST policy officers, meeting with them in small regional groups to identify issues of common concern.
54. The overlaps of mandate between SP1, SP3 (Reduce Rural Poverty) and SP4 (Enabling Inclusive and Efficient Agricultural and Food Systems) are well recognized by the respective SP teams and highlighted in the Medium Term Plan 2018-21.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, so far the degree of active collaboration falls short of the potential for synergy building.

#### **3.2.4. The Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation**

**Finding 12.** The Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation – a policy assistance facility co-funded by the European Union and FAO and administered by the SP1 team, which assigns policy officers to selected priority countries and regional organizations – has developed strong partnerships at country level.

55. An external review of the FIRST facility in 2017 found it well-designed and usefully building upon a strong partnership between FAO, the European Union and programme countries.<sup>31</sup> FIRST policy officers fill a key capacity gap and are seen in FAO as strategic assets.
56. FIRST is still a relatively recent initiative. Policy officers were hired between January 2016 and June 2017. It is too early for any substantive evaluation of its effectiveness. However, early observations suggest that in many countries it is being received very positively, where FIRST policy officers are actively supporting multi-sectoral coordination, evaluation and review of national FNS plans and strategies, and contributed to high level policy dialogue.
57. There was strong support among policy officers for better communication between headquarters, the country offices, including FAOR, and regional offices, including through regional or host country meetings or field visits by headquarters). In terms of overall governance of FIRST, the co-decision-making between FAO and European Union delegation

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policy documents drawn from more than 200 countries, territories and regional economic integration organizations in over 40 languages. See: <http://www.fao.org/faolex/>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.fao.org/policy-support>

<sup>30</sup> The MTP 2018-21 and PWB 2018-19 says that "increased attention will be given to promoting a more "nutrition-sensitive food systems" agenda (...). Social protection and education, when designed to contribute to furthering nutrition and food security goals, are important target sectors for SP1 (...). This is an important area for collaboration with SP3" (p.41).

<sup>31</sup> Review of FAO-European Union Partnership Programmes: FIRST and INFORMED, TANGO International, October 2017.

presents a number of advantages, but often slows down implementation and may blur accountability on the long-term.

58. The financial resources available to the policy officer are minimal and there is no apparent leverage on the European Union investment portfolio and budget support. Policy change takes time, whether it be formulation, reform, implementation or monitoring and evaluation, or a combination of these. The initial duration of the assignment of the policy officer is two years and this would most likely turn out to be very short to achieve lasting impact.<sup>32</sup> Plans to ensure continuity of this work should be put in place.

### 3.2.5. SO1 in regional and country offices

**Finding 13.** Appropriately, the regional initiatives related to the 'Zero Hunger Challenge' take different shapes in different regions.

59. At the regional level, FAO is implementing SO1 through a variety of means but mainly under the aegis of the three Regional Initiatives supporting the 'Zero Hunger Challenge' in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. These initiatives are generally appreciated by regional partners and national governments and seen as relevant.
60. Appropriately, the regional initiatives related to the 'Zero Hunger Challenge' in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean take different shapes in different regions: channelled through the right to food, support to the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Plan for Food and Nutrition Security and the Eradication of Hunger 2025 (SAN-CELAC) and various Parliamentary Forums against Hunger in Latin America; and connected to the African Union regional agricultural policies, notably the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) in Africa. In Asia and the Pacific, regional collaboration around food and nutrition security has been less active. Nevertheless, the Regional Initiative on Zero Hunger worked with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to organize the first-ever multi-sectoral consultation involving Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Rural Development, Planning and Social Welfare of ASEAN Members on food security and nutrition policies and governance. Besides, the Regional Initiative has started to support agricultural diversification into national food and nutrition security strategies.
61. In Latin America and the Caribbean,<sup>33</sup> the regional initiatives have shaped the organigrams of FAO regional, subregional and country offices. Each regional initiative has a leader who also responds for the SO-related work. Likewise, at country level technical teams are usually allocated by project but structured according to regional initiatives. This structure makes it easier to coordinate interconnected projects in order to ensure a more programmatic

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<sup>32</sup> One of the lessons from the National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme (NFPCSP) in Bangladesh was that a critical mass of highly qualified resident expertise was necessary to make a difference. In 2011, the NFPCSP had ten resident international and national professionals, mostly trained at PhD level, covering availability, access, nutrition, management and communication and supported by other 15 staff. The programme has been carried forward for over ten years with significant funding from the European Union and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This contrasts with the situation of most FAO country offices that lack a dedicated donor-funded project on policy, and as a result have almost no policy engagement capacity.

<sup>33</sup> The evaluation team did not visit the Anglophone Caribbean. Previous evaluations and data collected during the SO1 evaluation indicate that FAO's Subregional Office for the Caribbean (SLC, located in Bridgetown, Barbados) tends to follow different strategies than the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC) largely because of SLC's inability to access RLC's knowledge products and capabilities.

approach. Africa and Asia have opted for a different approach, whereby most of the regional office structure was left unchanged but a specific unit or division was created to deal with Regional Initiatives.

62. The FAO policy officers positioned in regional and subregional offices tend to be very experienced and qualified. However, policy officers in regional and subregional offices are often seen as generalists and asked to contribute to many different tasks. This decreases their capacity to backstop country offices on policy.
63. At country level, FAO's capacities to effectively deliver on SO1-related interventions are generally minimal, absent a dedicated donor-funded project on policy. FAO is lacking in policy officers or equivalent, especially outside of headquarters, and yet a background in policy and a political mindset are evidently required to deliver technical support on SO1 outputs and outcomes.

### 3.2.6. Resource mobilization

**Finding 14.** The FAO capabilities in policy are almost entirely funded out of extrabudgetary projects, resulting in fragmentation and frequent interruptions. With a few exceptions, FAO has found it easier to raise funds for global and regional policy initiatives than to mobilize resources for policy assistance at country level.

64. At country level, FAO's policy support capacity is entirely funded out of extrabudgetary projects. Yet mobilizing resources for policy work in food and nutrition security represents a challenge. Cases similar to Bangladesh, where FAO was able to develop a sizable national policy programme, are quite rare.
65. In Latin America and the Caribbean, traditional donors are no longer interested in funding FNS-related interventions, with a few exceptions in Honduras and Guatemala. In countries with a high prevalence of undernourishment, resources can be easier to mobilize from traditional donors, at least for field-level livelihood support, but coordination and policy assistance remain unattractive topics for many donors even in low income countries. In Asia and Africa, FAO has occasionally been selected as a technical assistance provider in large national projects funded by the World Bank's Global and Agriculture Food Security Program, a multi-donor trust fund that emanated from the G8 Summit in 2009 (Sierra Leone, Nepal, Malawi).
66. The problem with funding policy work from donor-funded projects or even Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCPs) is that policy works takes time – given the length of the policy cycle itself as well as the need to develop trust between partners before any progress can be made – while projects are always short-term endeavours.

### 3.2.7. Capacity for cross-cutting themes: Gender and Nutrition

**Finding 15.** Gender and nutrition were reflected in the result framework and in the work programme of SP1. There is a tight link between SP1 and the Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division (ESP) on gender, and the SP1 team acts as the main channel between the Nutrition and Food Systems Division (ESN) and country offices, with half of the FIRST country programmes having a strong nutrition focus.

67. SP1 supports FAO's engagement in global policymaking processes and strengthening governance systems for nutrition (e.g. CFS, SUN, United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition - UNSCN) and capacity development support in countries.
68. The Nutrition and Food Systems Division (ESN) and the Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division (ESP) work closely with the SP1 management team and take part in SP1 coordination meetings, having a voice in strategic and programming decisions. This directly contributed to the good planning and positive results found by the evaluation.
69. There are dedicated gender officers and some nutritionists in regional offices, expected to backstop country offices. However, there is very limited technical capacity for nutrition and gender at country level. Interestingly, half of the FIRST country programmes have a strong nutrition focus, and 30 percent of the FIRST policy officers are female.

### 3.3. Progress achieved towards SO1

70. SO1 Outcomes – largely defined along the lines of the 'steps' in the 'policy cycle' – are evidently not sequential in practice; they constantly inform and feed into one another. Therefore, it is artificial to report results under specific outcomes. To avoid repetitions, this section presents a non-exhaustive overview of results in a consolidated manner, with findings allocated under the most relevant outcome for it.<sup>34</sup>

#### **Outcome 1: Countries make explicit political commitment to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition by 2030**

**Finding 16.** Three Regional Initiatives leveraged the Zero Hunger Challenge in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia and the Pacific, with different areas of emphasis. Results were uneven across the regions, and very much depended on the degree of engagement with regional integration bodies.

71. At the regional level, FAO has developed three Regional Initiatives to leverage the Zero Hunger Challenge in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia and the Pacific. The Hunger-Free Latin American and the Caribbean Initiative Support Project engaged regional bodies, governments, networks of parliamentarians, civil society and the private sector to promote responsive and cross-sectoral FNS policies, legislations and programmes. For instance, FAO has contributed to the development of Plan SAN-CELAC and its gender strategy.<sup>35</sup> The approach contributed to increasing the political commitment of countries in the region to fight against hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition by deepening the impact of regional and subregional pacts, agreements, plans and strategies for FNS. FAO has also supported the expansion of the Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger (PFH). To date, there are 4 PFH in regional and subregional parliaments<sup>36</sup> and 17 in national parliaments.

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<sup>34</sup> The Outcomes refer to those of the MTP 2018-21, in which a fourth Outcome was dedicated to policy implementation support.

<sup>35</sup> Approved in 2015, the Plan serves as a social policy guideline that can be easily adapted and replicated at country level as well as a platform to channel financial and technical resources. It builds upon the successful FNS initiatives developed by Latin American countries and has become the main roadmap related to SO1 in the region.

<sup>36</sup> Parlamento Latino-Americano (PARLATINO), Parlamento Centro-Americano (PARLACEN) and Parlamento Andino (PARLANDINO).

72. In Africa, FAO is supporting the Renewed Partnership to End Hunger in Africa by 2025, intimately connected to African Union regional agricultural policies such as the CAADP.<sup>37</sup> Forty-two of the 55 African Union Member States adopted the CAADP principles, targets and processes and signed a compact. FAO has long supported this continental effort to raise public investment in agriculture. During the period under review the Investment Centre Division (TCI), the Regional Office for Africa (RAF) and the SP1 team supported the drafting of a nutrition-sensitive National Agricultural Investment Plans. FAO has also supported the establishment of the Pan-African Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, and in some cases has worked with African parliaments at national level.
73. In Asia and the Pacific, the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) supported the United Nations Secretary General Zero Hunger Challenge<sup>38</sup> through the formulation and implementation of various national food security strategies, policies and programmes. The region is extremely diverse culturally and politically, and is less inclined to regional approach. Nevertheless, the second iteration of the Integrated Food Security Framework and an associated Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security, which was launched in 2015, counted on a good collaboration between ASEAN, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) to include the nutritional component. Besides policy support, this initiative has stepped forward to support crop diversification through the Future Smart Food Initiative implemented in eight countries, in collaboration with 21 national and international research institutes and others, including FAO Special Ambassador on International Year of Pulses and research centres from the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). This is a relevant orientation to the degree that agriculture and diets are often rice-dominated in Asia, with an accepted need for agricultural diversification to make progress on dietary diversification.

**Finding 17.** The CFS products were found highly relevant, but not always easy to promote in country. FAO's relationships with both government and civil society was found to be an important determinant for the quality of its support to Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forestry in the context of National Food Security implementation. The most promising results so far were achieved in countries where land reform was already part of the political priorities, and FAO helped raise awareness about the guidelines and build capacity to implement them.

74. CFS products such as VGGT and Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems are seen as highly relevant globally, but rarely figure among policy priorities at country level. Principles endorsed are voluntary and not legally binding; national priorities within the political agenda are key for sustained progress.
75. Evidently, it is not the sole responsibility of FAO to promote these in country, but FAO has done a lot in this regard. In conducive environment, FAO's relationships with both government and civil society was found to be an important determinant for the quality of its support to VGGT implementation. In Africa, e.g. in Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda, national authorities were prioritizing agrarian reforms or considering a land titling effort to

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<sup>37</sup> CAADP is a strategic framework for agricultural sector transformation in Africa. It was ratified by African Union Heads of State and Government in 2003 in Maputo, Mozambique, and essentially sets two targets: i) to achieve 6 percent annual growth in agricultural productivity by 2015; and ii) to increase the allocation of national budgets directed to the agricultural sector to at least 10 percent. In June 2014, the Malabo Declaration reaffirmed the same commitments and reinforced the importance of nutrition within the CAADP framework.

<sup>38</sup> Launched in the region at ESCAP's 69th Commission Session in April 2013.

strengthen land tenure security within the political agenda. FAO was appreciated for its capacity to encourage policy convergence on land tenure among different actors and assisted in either drafting new legislation or in supporting capacities for land administration.

**Finding 18.** FAO has promoted the integration of the right to food into national legislation, policies and programmes in a number of countries. However, the right to food is not always actionable. The poor and landless may experience considerable difficulties in accessing judicial redress mechanisms, and legal recognition is not always followed by policies and programmes explicitly designed, implemented and monitored to address territorial and social inequalities.

76. FAO has promoted the integration of the right to food into national legislation, policies and programmes in a small number of countries and through regional organizations such as Caribbean Community Market (CARICOM), Organization of American States (OAS), Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). However, the right to food is not always actionable. The poor and landless may experience considerable difficulties in accessing judicial redress mechanisms, and legal recognition is not always followed by policies and programmes explicitly designed, funded, implemented and monitored to address territorial and social inequalities.

**Finding 19.** By providing policy support, FAO contributed to the design and approval of several policies and legal frameworks on FNS. However, the current problem often resides not in the absence of policies, but in the challenges related to their implementation. Consequently, the demand from Member Countries is shifting to other steps in the policy cycle, covered by SO1 Outcomes 2, 3 and 4.

77. Strengthening the political commitment through support to the formulation, reformulation and establishment of policies and legal frameworks for FNS remains a continuous process. However, the problem often resides not in the absence of policy or legal frameworks, but in their implementation. Consequently, the demand from Member Countries is shifting to other steps in the policy cycle, namely coordination (covered by SO1 Outcome 2), monitoring and evaluation (Outcome 3) and implementation (Outcome 4).

## **Outcome 2: Countries implement inclusive governance and coordination mechanisms for eradicating hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition by 2030**

**Finding 20.** At global level, FAO supports inclusive multi-stakeholder platforms (e.g. the CFS) and acts as an 'honest broker' within a number of technical sectors relevant to food and nutrition security. At national level, FAO actively supports coordination forums devoted to food security and/or agriculture in all country case studies.

78. Inclusive governance and coordination mechanisms promote a better policy enabling environment that will support the achievement of results throughout the entire policy cycle. At global level, FAO continues to play a key role as facilitator of inclusive multi-stakeholder platforms (e.g. the CFS), convener of policy-setting meetings (e.g. Committee on Agriculture – COAG; Committee on Fisheries – COFI; and Committee on Forestry – COFO) and 'honest broker' within a number of technical sectors relevant to food and nutrition security. It acts as the secretary to countless global and regional networks, commodities and natural resource management bodies.

79. At national level, FAO was found to be actively supporting coordination forums devoted to food security and/or agriculture in all country case studies, for instance Secretariado Técnico

de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional (SETSAN) in Mozambique, Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional (CONASAN) in El Salvador, Comisión Nacional de Soberanía y Seguridad Alimenticia y Nutricional (CONASSAN) and its provincial level equivalent REDSSAN in Dominican Republic, and the Food Security Theme Group (FSTG) in Nigeria.

80. In some countries, FAO is widely recognized for its convening power of bringing the different sectors involved in the FNS together. El Salvador and Dominican Republic are two examples where FAO has promoted the creation of inter-sectoral groups to discuss about FNS strategies, including in the consultation process of the FNS bills.

**Finding 21.** There is a proliferation of coordination spaces, making it difficult for FAO country offices to follow them all. In particular, FAO was insufficiently present in nutrition-specific coordination forums to promote Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture.

81. There is a proliferation of coordination spaces, making it difficult for FAO country offices, typically understaffed, to follow - and engage in - them all. This may be why FAO was perceived as insufficiently present in nutrition-specific coordination forums in all country case studies. The effectiveness of coordination forums depends on whether or not stakeholders engage in them beyond formalism. In Mozambique, for instance, a large number of coordination platforms compete in the areas of agriculture, food and nutrition security.
82. The institutional disconnect between Ministries of Agriculture and Ministries of Health, and between the corresponding United Nations agencies, is still observed in many countries. Such a presence would help promote nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems approaches to nutrition, and push back against a tendency to see nutrition as a purely health-related concern.

**Finding 22.** With the exception of the CFS, these coordination platforms do not typically engage with farmer organizations and the private sector.

83. There is a need for better engaging farmers' and women's organizations in coordination platforms in countries and at the regional and global levels, even in the CFS, where farmer organizations are not directly represented.<sup>39</sup> The same is true at the country level, where non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – and not such organizations - are generally seen as the legitimate representatives of civil society in coordination forums.
84. Private sector engagement in these coordination spaces is also insufficient and this is likely to affect the ways in which FAO can work on nutrition-sensitive agriculture. The CFS provides an interesting model here as it includes representation from this sector. Chile too offers a good example: the private sector became supportive to change food labelling practices to combat overweight after an advocacy work by the Government, with the support of Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and FAO. In contrast, in El Salvador the final approval of the new FNS law is still depending on the consent of representatives of the private sector. Sustained coordination, negotiations and exploration of conflicts of interest are necessary to achieve FNS.

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<sup>39</sup> They are represented indirectly through both the civil society and the private sector mechanisms.

### **Outcome 3: Countries make decisions based on evidence for the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition by 2030**

**Finding 23.** FAO maintains SDG indicators such as the Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU) and the Food Insecurity Experience Scale, and publishes credible global outlooks and regional panoramas through The State of Food Security and Nutrition (SOFI). FAO also supports national statistical offices in a number of countries. However, in all countries there is a need to ‘make sense’ of the data collected in order to assess policy and implementation gaps. Evidence-based decision-making goes beyond data management. It is about interpretation, synthesis of data streams and context-specific assessments, leading to learning and motivation. In this respect, the capacity to assess policy impact emerged as a key function within the policy cycle, one for which FAO has limited capabilities.

85. At the global level, FAO contributes to the supply side of evidence by generating and disseminating high quality and timely data on FNS. The Prevalence of Undernourishment was introduced by FAO in 1974 and is widely accepted by countries as a measure of insufficient energy intake. From 2013 onward, FAO developed the Food Insecurity Experience Scale as an effort to address some of the shortcomings of the Prevalence of Undernourishment.<sup>40</sup> The FIES was found to be a robust and cost-effective tool to measure economic access to food.<sup>41</sup> In July 2017, both the PoU and FIES were endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly as official indicators to measure SDG2, Target 2.1.
86. SOFI is FAO’s flagship report for informing the situation and causes of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition worldwide. Since 2010, FAO has been involving other partners in the production of SOFI as a way to boost its visibility and uptake, i.e. WFP, IFAD, UNICEF and WHO. This is an example on how FAO has been working through a more collaborative and coordinated approach towards raising the coherence and credibility of FNS data. SOFI is well disseminated<sup>42</sup> and fits to its purpose by increasing technical knowledge and raising the awareness about hunger in the world.<sup>43</sup> Separate “regional overviews of food insecurity” have been produced, starting with Latin America in 2015.<sup>44</sup> So far, there are similar publications in Africa,<sup>45</sup> Asia<sup>46</sup> and Near East.<sup>47</sup>
87. The promotion of experiences’ exchange on FNS policies and legal frameworks among countries is another key source of evidence and motivation. In this respect, South-South Cooperation is a strong mechanism for knowledge and know-how’s exchange. Under the school feeding framework, many countries were motivated to learn from the Brazilian experience,<sup>48</sup> or learned from each other’s experience.<sup>49</sup> However, insufficient

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<sup>40</sup> The Prevalence of Undernourishment has been subject to a number of criticisms, primarily around its supposed underestimation of hunger. The methodology has evolved, in part as a response to such criticism, the last time in 2012. See for instance: Peter Svedberg, 1999, 841 million undernourished?, *World Development* 27 (12): 2081-98.

<sup>41</sup> Evaluation of the Voices of the Hungry Project.

<sup>42</sup> According to data provided by the Internet and Internal Communication Branch (OCCI), SOFI 2015 was downloaded more than 330 000 times between September 2015 and December 2016.

<sup>43</sup> Evaluation of FAO’s contribution to knowledge on food and agriculture.

<sup>44</sup> FAO. 2015. Panorama de la Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional en América Latina y el Caribe. Santiago, FAO.

<sup>45</sup> FAO. 2016. Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition. Accra, FAO. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/a-i7967e.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> FAO. 2017. Asia and the Pacific Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition. Bangkok, FAO.

<sup>47</sup> FAO. 2017. Near East and North Africa Overview of Food Security and Nutrition. Cairo FAO.

<sup>48</sup> E.g. Dominican Republic, Sao Tome and Principe.

<sup>49</sup> E.g. between Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.

systematization and/or dissemination of good and bad practices prevent the scaling up of these initiatives.

88. Regarding FAO's role in strengthening national capacities for monitoring and analysing FNS, the level of support provided is uneven, and very much depends on both the country office's capacities and the countries' demands. Three country profiles were traced: strong support;<sup>50</sup> support not needed;<sup>51</sup> and insufficient support.<sup>52</sup> Even when data is available, capacities to interpret within the context and alongside other indicators are generally insufficient.
89. Availability of high quality FNS information is not enough to a strong-enough evidence base for improved decision-making. Knowledge, interpretation, synthesis of data streams and context-specific assessments are also needed, leading to motivation and learning. Evidence-based decision making, as correctly described in the SO1 result framework, focuses on learning and feedback, which is more demanding than information gathering. There is a need to qualitatively make sense of the quantitative data collected at national level on nutrition and food security.<sup>53</sup>
90. In particular, the causal pathways between agricultural production and FNS outcomes appear understudied.<sup>54</sup> The capacity to assess policy impact therefore emerges as a key function within the policy cycle, a function for which capacities are very scarce, including within FAO. The Organization may need to gear up its capacity for qualitative and quantitative policy impact assessment in an effort to inform policymaking not only with food security data, but also with the voices, ideas and concerns of rural communities themselves through participatory evaluation methods.

#### **Outcome 4: Countries implement effective policies, strategies and investment programmes to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition by 2030**

**Finding 24.** Supporting policy implementation is sorely needed and some good practices are already in place, but it requires far more resources than policy setting and calls for different skills. The FIRST programme could bring a useful complement in this regard, as many FIRST policy officers are already focusing on implementation support.

91. Many countries already count on comprehensive and cross-sectoral policies and legal frameworks on FNS but experience an 'implementation gap'. Policy implementation is the responsibility of national governments, but FAO can assist by identifying constraints and bottlenecks, mobilizing resources, recommending resource allocations commensurate with policy priorities and commitments, and building capacities in central and decentralized governance systems in charge of implementation.

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<sup>50</sup> E.g. assistance provided to the Ethiopian Public Health Institute aimed at including FNS indicators in national surveys; FIES became a key indicator for the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture in monitoring their joint efforts to reduce malnutrition.

<sup>51</sup> E.g. El Salvador and Brazil. In the first example, there are other relevant actors filling this gap; in the second, national capacities are already solid.

<sup>52</sup> National capacities require strengthening in FNS data, and FAO is not providing sufficient support (e.g. Dominican Republic, Nepal).

<sup>53</sup> Corporate Outcome Assessment undertaken by FAO in 2015.

<sup>54</sup> Research has shown the 'income pathway' to nutrition has identifiable caveats, related to the characteristics of markets, gender related decision-making and social and cultural norms. Yet for many of the reviewed agriculture policies and programmes, the income pathway to nutrition is assumed without being demonstrated.

92. Policy implementation is far more resource-intensive than policy setting. In Uganda, FAO is helping the cadastre office in Kasese District to issue land titles for customary land in a small pilot project related to the VGGT. It was estimated that it would cost over USD 50 million to roll out the same system nationally. In some countries such as Nepal, FAO helped implement large investment projects through technical expertise, and thus strengthened the implementation of policies in partnership with the government and its resource partners.
93. The Regional Office for Africa (RAF), the SP1 team and the FAO Investment Centre Division (TCI) assisted in drafting the investment plans for CAADP and mainstreamed nutrition concerns into a number of planning and assessment tools for use by international development banks. After the Second International Conference on Nutrition, SP1 and the Investment Centre Division (TCI) also supported the integration of nutrition into a number of tools for international development banks (TCI's traditional partners), such as guidelines for World Bank and IFAD Country Programme Managers, support in mainstreaming nutrition in the second generation of National Agriculture and Investment Plan (NAIP) derived from the CAADP process, an analysis of the degree to which a sample of 60 World Bank projects were nutrition-sensitive, and a set of indicators to use in this regard.
94. Supporting policy implementation requires different skills than the ones needed for policy setting (less analytical, more relational), and few FAO policy officers or technical staff seem to have them. The FIRST policy officers could prove useful in this respect. Support to implementation is for instance the focus of FIRST in Mozambique; similarly in Ethiopia the FIRST officer is working on the implementation plan for the nutrition strategy developed with the Ministry of Agriculture.

**Finding 25.** FAO has achieved significant success in its collaboration with local governments on topics such as school feeding and nutrition education.

95. Federal systems of governance introduce an opportunity to work with local governments in budget allocation as decentralization. In programmes such as school feeding, FAO has achieved significant success in its collaboration with municipalities and local governments. In Dominican Republic, for example, FAO is providing technical assistance and capacity development to the Ministry of Education and the Student Welfare Institute to implement the reformed National School Feeding Programme. At local level, the programme has already been implemented in 70 schools in the province of Monte Plata. FAO has supported cross-sectoral coordination at decentralized level (Education, Agriculture, Health, Social Protection) with the participation of civil society and local authorities.
96. Likewise, in El Salvador FAO is providing support to the Ministry of Education to implement components of the National School Feeding Programme. The country has made very good progress on linking school meals with procurement from local producers, thus providing schools with fresh and local products but also empowering local cooperatives. FAO also provided technical advice and capacity development to local governments in terms of resource allocation for FNS and family farming, thanks to Mesoamerica without Hunger regional programme. As a result, 21 municipalities reportedly allocated USD 500 000 in total to the creation of FNS local units, the hire of extension workers and purchase of agricultural inputs to support family farming.

### 3.4. Progress achieved under cross-cutting themes

#### 3.4.1. Gender

**Finding 26.** The SP1 team and the Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division (ESP) are making a substantial collaborative effort to implement the FAO Policy on Gender Equality. Support to CEDAW accession and implementation by countries appears particularly worthwhile, and some progress was reported on the availability of sex-disaggregated data through the development of the Food Insecurity Experience Scale and Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W) indicators.

97. The evaluation found that SP1 and the Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division (ESP) are making a substantial collaborative effort to implement the minimum standards (MS) of the FAO Policy on Gender Equality, and that notable progress has been made towards the application of those Minimum Standards pertaining to assessment and planning: MS3 on developing a gender action plan for SO1, MS5 on country gender assessments, and MS7 on gender analysis in the formulation of field projects.
98. The resulting SO1 Gender Action Plan has been progressively implemented,<sup>55</sup> including through the FIRST policy facility. SP1 supported the implementation of CEDAW at country level, e.g. in Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Tanzania and Botswana.<sup>56</sup> Since 2015, FAO has been conducting country gender assessments (CGA)<sup>57</sup> – 50 countries have concluded the required preliminary steps to the preparation of CPFs. In the eight countries visited for the SO1 evaluation, six had already conducted a CGA, while four of them incorporate CGA findings into the new CPFs. However, FAO could strengthen the use of gender analysis in programme and project design (MS7).
99. The use of gender-disaggregated data in FNS policy setting remains low, but progress has been achieved in establishing new indicators and capacities within national institutions to collect and analyse sex-disaggregated data (MS1 and 2), notably through new indicators such as FIES and MDD-W. There is room for improving the dissemination and use of these indicators, including within FAO.
100. At regional level, impressive efforts are ongoing on engendering agricultural investment within ECOWAS to ensure that agricultural transformation and inclusive agricultural growth fully benefit women and young farmers in the ECOWAS region.<sup>58</sup>
101. The analysis of SO1 gender-related work at country level demonstrated that the majority of the contributions relate to policy support to governments (SO1 Outcome 1). Efforts in promoting gender-inclusive governance for FNS (Outcome 2) were uneven across regions, with few women's institutions and organizations participating in coordination spaces for FNS. Less progress has been achieved towards Outcome 3 (support to evidence-based decision-making), and 4 (support to effective implementation and financing).

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<sup>55</sup> SO1 and Gender Equity and Empowerment of Women (GEEW). Contribution of the Cross-Cutting Theme on Gender (CCTG).

<sup>56</sup> Specifically, on CEDAW Committee's General Recommendations 34 on the Right of Rural Women.

<sup>57</sup> CGAs are required to be conducted since 2015.

<sup>58</sup> TCP/RAF/3509 - Gender Responsive National and Regional Agricultural Investment Plans for meeting the Zero Hunger Challenge in ECOWAS member countries (2015-2017).

102. In terms of their contribution to the Gender Equality Objectives, 18 percent of SO1-tagged projects were found to contribute to Gender Equality Objective 2 (Equal access to and control over decent employment and income, land and other productive resources); followed by 11.5 percent contributing to Objective 3 (Equal access to goods, services and markets); and 10 percent to Objective 1 (Equal decision-making power). No project contributes to Objective 4 (Work burden reduced by improved technologies, services and infrastructure).
103. Roughly about a third of all SO1-tagged projects reviewed aimed to contribute to equal access to adequate nutritious food by both genders. This objective is extremely relevant to achieve FNS, and although it is mentioned in the text of the FAO Policy for Gender Equality as a general goal, it does not formally figure in its list of Gender Equality Objectives for FAO's work, which means that projects and country offices cannot report against it.

### 3.4.2. Nutrition

**Finding 27.** SO1 has mainstreamed nutrition to a significant extent as compared with other SOs. FAO tools on nutrition-sensitive agriculture are widely used and referenced. Interestingly, the Nutrition and Food Systems Division (ESN) invested in building the capacity of FAO staff themselves to include nutrition within FAO's work, an approach which the SP1 team could usefully emulate.

104. SO1 has mainstreamed nutrition to a significant extent, especially as compared with other SOs. FAO's normative work in nutrition is very diverse. The core of this work is an integrated package of guidance and training modules composed of the FAO toolkit<sup>59</sup> and the e-learning modules on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems<sup>60</sup> launched in April 2017. FAO tools on nutrition-sensitive agriculture are widely used and referenced. The Nutrition and Food Systems Division (ESN) has so far delivered a total of 32 bi-monthly seminars, with the aim to help FAO headquarters staff understand what nutrition entails and how nutrition can contribute to their work.
105. School meals and nutrition programmes are being supported by FAO, with multiple potential benefits for nutrition and health, education and the local agricultural economy. The Zero Hunger Challenge and related regional initiatives, while providing a potentially useful framework for concerted action on nutrition, risk underplaying the importance of 'the multiple forms of malnutrition by instead emphasizing hunger' *stricto sensu*.

**Finding 28.** At country level, there is still a strong disconnect between agriculture and health policies, as well as between health and agriculture actors, coordination spaces, and even target populations. FAO needs to expand its focus beyond pregnant women and young children and meet the needs of women as laborers, farmers and decision makers rather than as child bearers.

106. A number of Country Programming Frameworks have explicitly addressed nutrition outcomes and reported progress on nutrition-related indicators. Depending on the priorities of national governments, CPFs tend to reflect nutrition in a variety of ways. However, there is no clarity on FAO's role and activities to address over nutrition yet, and more guidance is required from headquarters.
107. There is still a strong disconnect between agriculture and health policies. Health-focused nutrition policies tend to lack food security objectives, whilst most agriculture policies lack

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<sup>59</sup> <http://www.fao.org/nutrition/policies-programmes/toolkit/en/>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.fao.org/nutrition/policies-programmes/elearning/en/>

nutrition objectives. Even nutrition policies that are explicitly branded as multi-sectorial often pay lip service to non-health sectors.

108. Some FAO projects and documents in nutrition were found to target narrow population groups, such as lactating and pregnant women. FAO and SO1 should go beyond the approach of women as mothers; given its mandate, FAO's work ought to target women as labourers, farmers and decision makers.

### 3.5. Strategic positioning and partnerships

#### 3.5.1. Comparative advantage

**Finding 29.** FAO's overall comparative advantage includes convening power, high visibility, data custodianship and statistical strength, technical capacity including in a number of areas – agriculture, food systems, food safety – which are gaining in importance in the global debate on nutrition, opportunities for advocacy, a leadership position in the area of its mandate and a role in setting international norms and standards. These comparative advantages are typically stronger at the global level than at the national level, where FAO's capacity is often limited and the space for policy support varies with the governance systems of countries.

109. FAO is seen as the main global convener on food security and agriculture, and related policies.<sup>61</sup> It is still recognized as a global authoritative forum for the discussion and possible resolution of challenges in this sector. The convening power is also perceived as one of FAO's main comparative advantages at country level, where stakeholders generally recognized that FAO plays an important role in bringing different sectors and actors together to discuss FNS-related issues, as well as to impulse policy design and implementation at both national and local levels.
110. FAO is well trusted by governments and this creates a special opportunity for FAO's role in policy support. Both at global and country levels, FAO is recognized as a neutral partner able to depoliticize issues by bringing together scientists and technical experts, policymakers and civil society. In some regions such as Latin America this neutrality is considered the main factor contributing to FAO positioning itself as an important – and sometimes the only – international development actor in the FNS policy arena. However, the room for such support varies significantly with the national priorities and governance systems of the particular country.<sup>62</sup>
111. FAO is also perceived as technically capable in a number of areas – agriculture, food systems, food safety – which are gaining in importance in the global debate on nutrition. Its role in the development of relevant policies, norms and related instruments as well as its data custodianship and statistical strength are well recognized. Although many actors are working on FNS at country level, FAO is often perceived as the one with the best capacity to address

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<sup>61</sup> At the global level the evaluations of FAO's knowledge function (2015) and of FAO's policy work (2012), together with the MOPAN review (2014) confirm FAO's strength as a global convener of governments, experts, scientists, private sector and civil society in FNS.

<sup>62</sup> E.g. in Ethiopia, the Government decides on public policy and turns to development partners for support in implementation. In other countries like Nigeria and El Salvador, FAO has been at the forefront of partnering with Governments in establishing policies.

the agricultural aspects of the issue. This generally positive perception evidently varies locally from one country or region to the next.

112. However, policy work on nutrition in countries is largely dominated by the health specific agenda led by Ministries of Health with long-term support from actors such as UNICEF and WHO, with a few exceptions. This may be because FAO's present capacity to translate effectively its mandate in nutrition-sensitive agriculture into acts at country level is limited. All the nutritionists met by the team in country offices were funded out of specific projects, to which they naturally devote most of their attention.

**Finding 30.** FAO does policy work and advocacy in a quiet way, especially at country level. Its normative work and policy advice tends to be measured and discreet, and grounded in data rather than ideology, appropriately so for a technical agency of the United Nations. As a result, the Organization's policy role is more visible globally than at country level.

113. Many peer organizations interviewed referred to FAO's role in policy debates as low profile and even passive. The nature of FAO as a multilateral Organization accountable to its membership leads to normative work and policy advice that – quite appropriately – tends to be more cautious and discreet. FAO does policy and advocacy work in a quiet way. It relies on the CFS and other similar bodies for explicitly voluntary policy content; tries to encourage policy convergence and compromise around trade-offs; offers options rather than obligations; produces reports that are seen as measured, balanced and authoritative but that seldom raise controversies; acts as the diligent secretary for countless global and regional initiatives, networks and commissions, but rarely as the chair.
114. As a result, FAO's policy role is more visible globally than at country level. This may explain why FAO seems to find it easier to raise funds for policy initiatives at the global level – for instance FIRST, or the multi-donor trust fund supporting the implementation of the VGGTs – than at country level.
115. FAO's capacity building and knowledge products to support countries appear quite relevant. The Nutrition-sensitive Agriculture guidelines have raised the attention of professionals, and the Policy Guidance Notes series is of high quality. However, there is still little awareness in country offices and national partners of these resources, and consequently their use is below their potential so far.

### 3.5.2. Strategic use of the new Strategic Framework

**Finding 31.** The evaluation identified insufficient systematization, translation and dissemination of good practices as a bottleneck. The innovative aspects of SO1 are not well known in country offices and could have been disseminated more broadly within the Organization.

116. SO1 is well conceptualized, at the right strategic level. It pushes FAO beyond its traditional technical space and stresses the need to coordinate and collaborate with 'non-traditional partners' e.g. Ministries of Finance, Health and Education. Nutrition concerns also feature more prominently in the new framework than they did in previous frameworks.<sup>63</sup>
117. Country level assessments revealed a mixed picture of awareness, understanding and use of the SO1 in particular. In many country offices the FAOR is aware of the Strategic Framework

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<sup>63</sup> For which credit has to be shared with the Nutrition Strategy.

and has a reasonable understanding of the intent of SO1. This was typically not shared with working level country office staff, who were found to have little or no understanding of its implications for programming at country level. They were mainly involved in delivering projects, and therefore have low perception about the value added of SO1 or related tools and guidelines developed at headquarters. The nomination of an SP1 Team Leader in 2017 should help make the programme more visible.

118. The evaluation was unable to assess whether, as a result of SO1, FAO's work has moved more upstream at the policy and institutional level than in the past. It is clear that FAO is involved in policy and institutional work in nearly every country, but the share of its effort between supporting the enabling environment and more downstream project delivery varies depending on local priorities. Even where FAO is clearly supporting the enabling environment, and results towards it have been achieved, it is hard to attribute this outcome to SO1 as this type of work preceded the Strategic Framework.
119. At both headquarters and regional level there have been significant efforts in producing materials for supporting policy work.<sup>64</sup> However, FAO's role as a global knowledge Organization is diminished if it is not able to broker knowledge from one culture, one country or one continent to the next, and in this respect the evaluation identified insufficient systematization and/or dissemination of good and bad practices as a bottleneck. There was also a need for more translations of FAO knowledge products.

### 3.5.3. Partnerships

**Finding 32.** FAO has leveraged its partnership with Ministries of Agriculture to support policy development and is beginning to establish relationships with Ministries of Health, Education and Women's Affairs in the area of nutrition. FAO's engagement with Ministries of Finance and Ministries of Foreign Affairs is still insufficient in all visited countries.

120. FAO continues to enjoy a special position of trust with Ministries of Agriculture in virtually all countries. This partnership offers an excellent channel for supporting policy development which FAO has utilized quite well in most countries as reflected by the range of laws, policies, strategies and investment plans which governments have formulated with FAO's support.
121. The SO1 focus on ending hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition requires a range of partnerships beyond Ministries of Agriculture. FAO has established solid partnerships with Ministries of Education in countries where school feeding programmes were supported. It is now beginning to establish relationships with Ministries of Health in the area of nutrition.<sup>65</sup> Direct collaborations with Ministries of Women's Affairs or equivalent have also been few. FAO's engagement with Ministries of Finance remains weak in all visited countries. The importance of this relationship is to help articulate the need and importance of adequate resources allocation in national budgets to nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

**Finding 33.** Regional collaboration has been an entry point of choice for FAO's policy support under SO1, through the development of regional policies, legal frameworks and strategies. The Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger have played an important role to encourage the passing of

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<sup>64</sup> E.g. policy guidance series, web portal on policy support and governance, online capacity building materials, courses, model laws and south-south exchange of experiences.

<sup>65</sup> E.g. to articulate the importance of nutrition-sensitive agriculture or implement school feeding programmes.

FNS-related laws. Local governments and municipalities are also key partners in countries with decentralized systems of governance.

122. FAO has played a critical role in the development of regional policies, legal frameworks and strategies. In Africa, FAO contributed to the Malabo Declaration (2003) and its related Action Plan CAADP. In Latin America, CELAC's Plan for Food Security Nutrition and Hunger Eradication 2025 was developed with FAO's technical support, Parlamento Latino-Americano (PARLATINO) served as a conduit for the right to food, and FAO has started working with Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR) on family farming. Asia is perhaps too diverse for such a cohesive approach. Nevertheless, ASEAN did request the help of FAO and UNICEF in 2012 to update its Integrated Food Security Framework and add an explicit nutritional component.
123. The various Parliamentary Fronts Against Hunger have been innovative and important vehicles for SO1 to support and encourage parliaments to pass FNS-related laws. Even though FAO engagement with Parliamentarians has started in Latin America before the new Strategic Framework, its strengthening and expansion were promoted under SO1 in Africa as well, with promising results.
124. Local governments and municipalities are also key partners to fight hunger and malnutrition, especially in the context of decentralization. FAO's collaboration with local governments was so far limited to a few examples, e.g. in El Salvador or in Nepal, as the Organization is typically not well positioned at subnational level, for lack of a large programme portfolio to implement at that level.

**Finding 34.** Collaboration between FAO, IFAD and WFP on FNS policy, strategies and programming has increased in some regions. There are also real incentives for competition. School feeding is both an area of overlap and collaboration between FAO and WFP. A stronger engagement in United Nations Country Team coordination and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process could help FAO push for some resolution of these issues.

125. Encouraging developments took place over the last two years, including a new Memorandum of Understanding between WFP and FAO, which is being expanded to include IFAD. Recent joint visits by the Director-General of FAO and the Executive Director of WFP to South Sudan and of all three heads to Ethiopia are steps in the right direction. The three Agencies have different core mandates – although there is also overlap – which lead to different organizational cultures, as well as different structures.
126. School feeding is both an area of overlap and collaboration between FAO and WFP, with FAO having the lead in Latin America, and WFP keeping a stronger footprint in Africa. The relationship with IFAD is generally good at country level, especially where FAO is helping IFAD establish its field presence through direct logistical and administrative support. Closer collaboration in country on FNS policy, strategies and programming is likely to become more feasible and indeed is happening in many African countries, but can be improved in others.
127. WFP has been moving into policy support, with *inter alia* partnerships with regional centres of excellence, the publication of the Cost of Hunger in Africa series, and currently the roll out of SDG 2 reviews at national level. FAO country offices reported limited success when trying to collaborate with WFP on their national SDG 2 reviews.
128. FAO as part of the United Nations Country Team engages in the development and delivery of UNDAF. This represents an opportunity for FAO to advocate for SO1 priorities consistent

with country needs and could help find some resolution of these United Nations coordination issues.

**Finding 35.** Among resource partners, FAO's most important partnerships are with the European Union, and to a lesser extent the World Bank, with the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) emerging as a strategic partner for FAO in FNS. Latin America, Brazil and Mexico funded most of FAO's regional work under SO1.

129. Among multilateral actors, FAO's most important partnerships are with the European Union, and to a lesser degree the World Bank, IFAD and regional development banks. These Agencies have significant human, financial and knowledge resources that can be brought to bear on SO1 priorities. The European Union most important partnership with FAO in the context of SO1 is the FIRST programme. The European Union also funds numerous FAO projects at regional and national levels.
130. There has been limited cooperation with the World Bank. FAO has not fully exploited its own complementary comparative advantage which could result in partnership synergies. However, the GAFSP, hosted by the World Bank, is emerging as a strategic donor for FAO in FNS. FAO implements numerous GAFSP projects or technical assistance components of projects, in countries such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mongolia, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste.
131. Bilateral agencies' engagement with FAO in country is driven by their corporate and country priorities, as well as by the specific challenges they need to focus upon in a given context. Overall bilateral donors' perceptions of FAO's contribution in the SO1 space are quite mixed. While they all recognize FAO's standard areas of comparative advantage, there are concerns about capacity to support governments in policy and programme implementation and monitoring and evaluation, as well as technical capacity and efficiency in projects delivery on the ground. Nevertheless, there is increasing recognition of possible FAO role in the areas of nutrition-sensitive agriculture and climate-smart agriculture and FAO should use the opportunity to engage non-traditional donors more intensively.
132. In Latin America, traditional FAO donors in FNS such as the European Union or the Department for International Development (DFID) are no longer funding SO1-related interventions. South-south cooperation came up as a welcomed and logical alternative. Brazil and Mexico funded important FNS-related projects aimed at improving policies in the region. Overall, these non-traditional donors are satisfied with the achievements and appreciative of FAO's policy work on FNS in the region.

**Finding 36.** There is room for improvement in liaising with national academic and technical training institutions and with the CGIAR system (notably International Food Policy Research Institute - IFPRI), for information and analysis on FNS policy at the country level, as well as with the private sector, civil society organizations (CSOs) and producer organizations to engage them in efforts to achieve FNS policy goals.

133. With the rapid increase in the growth of research and knowledge products on food and nutrition security, agriculture development policies and food systems, FAO needs to be quite strategic in what it seeks to do and how best to use its comparative advantage and limited resources. While there are notable examples of collaboration between FAO and IFPRI and a

current rapprochement between the two Organizations,<sup>66</sup> there is little or no collaboration at country level. Relationship with national academic institutions, research centres and 'think tanks' could also be better explored.

134. In countries, CSO partners are often engaged during policy consultation processes when approved by governments. However, there are very few formal partnerships with NGOs or CSOs at country level under SO1. Most of the CSOs involved in FAO's projects and programmes are cooperatives and producer's associations engaged as project deliverers or beneficiaries. FAO consults and works with the private sector, complementing its work with public agencies and with farmers in value chain development projects, though it is careful not to accept funding from private sector entities if this could cause a conflict of interest. There are some interesting examples of private sector financing at the global level.<sup>67</sup>
135. Nevertheless, at country level there is room for improvement in liaising with the CSO and private sector to engage them in efforts to achieve FNS goals by utilizing the value added of these relationships. If managed carefully at the political level, the relationship with producer organizations can be particularly useful for advocacy and policy incidence. For instance, the Nepal Country Office has worked productively with farmer organizations in the forums and debates about the right to food being inserted in the country's constitution.

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<sup>66</sup> E.g. recent work with SP1 on the policy guidance series and in FNS policy impact assessment.

<sup>67</sup> E.g. Google is financing an FAO programme on forest mapping.

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

### 4.1. Conclusions

**Conclusion 1. Strategic Objective 1 was well designed, based on lessons learned from a variety of contexts, with a realistic Theory of Change, and implemented through a set of relevant initiatives, e.g. the Zero Hunger Challenge. Premised on the assumption that hunger is as much a governance issue as a technical challenge, SO1 pushes FAO beyond its traditional technical space, tries to integrate right-based advocacy and stresses the need to work with 'non-traditional partners' such as Ministries of Finance, of Health and of Education. Nutrition concerns also feature more prominently in the new framework and SO than they did in previous ones.**

136. SO1 tries to stimulate, upscale and adapt good practices in FNS policy support, understood as policy formulation, coordination, evidence for policy and support to resource allocation and policy implementation. In doing so, it inevitably built upon a series of older lines of work, such as assistance to the adoption of the right to food in national legislations, support to CAADP formulation and financing, support to the CFS, etc. Even the Zero Hunger Challenge predates SO1. The evaluation found that this pre-existing body of policy work had been consciously capitalized upon in the design of SO1, leading to a well-designed and truly strategic SO1.
137. Positioning FAO's support at the 'upstream' policy level, SO1 stresses to a greater extent than before the primacy of political commitment, the connection between policy implementation and investment, the need to ground policy support in solid political economy analysis, while also assisting in the application and use of CFS products (right to food, Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forestry in the context of National Food Security, Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems, etc.) and principles at country level through a right-based approach, where and when the environment is conducive.

**Conclusion 2. The adoption of the most innovative aspects of SO1 has been uneven throughout the Organization, with a high heterogeneity observed in the approaches followed in different countries and regions. Thanks to the FIRST facility, the SP1 team set-up a strong and direct link with 33 countries where a FIRST policy officer is present. However, beyond FIRST countries the team did not establish and maintain strong-enough linkages with regional and country offices to provide conceptual leadership and foster a better coherence in policy assistance for FNS across the Organization.**

138. Links between the SP1 team and technical divisions were found strong at headquarters, where FAO has made several encouraging efforts to strengthen the coherence of the policy advice provided by various FAO units, such as the recent launch of the policy portal.
139. The FIRST facility helped set-up a strong and direct link between the SP1 team and some 33 countries where a FIRST policy officer is present, through the development of country profiles describing in some detail the policy framework in countries prioritized by FIRST, and through dedicated staff in the SP1 team following and backstopping the FIRST policy officers in real time.

140. However, beyond FIRST countries the SP1 team did not establish and maintain strong-enough linkages to provide conceptual leadership and foster a better coherence in policy assistance for FNS across the Organization. The innovative aspects of SO1 highlighted in Conclusion 1 could have been disseminated more broadly within the Organization, as they are not well known in country offices. Links could be strengthened between SP1 and regional, subregional and country offices, where the capacity of FAO to support policy is often quite low, resulting in slow implementation of SO1 and other SOs at a country level.
141. Many FAO staff at country and regional level see the SO framework primarily as a reporting framework, a means to 'tell a better, more consistent story' of FAO's programmes and results. The view is not without merit, given that a well-designed strategic framework does help communicate a sense of common purpose externally, but the new Strategic Framework is also meant to build a sense of common purpose internally. FAO's role as a global knowledge Organization is diminished if it is not able to broker knowledge effectively from one culture, one country or one continent to the next.
142. Strong support continues to be provided by the FAO Investment Centre Division (TCI) to the CAADP process in Africa. However, there is still room for improvement in terms of coordinating the work of the Investment Centre Division (TCI) at country level with that of FAO country offices, with missed opportunities of collaboration and exchange of views at the policy level between visiting or resident TCI officers and the FAOR and/or FIRST policy officer, and between FAO and the development banks working with the Investment Centre Division (TCI).<sup>68</sup>

**Conclusion 3. Income levels largely explain the observed differences across regions and countries in terms of demand for SO1. However, the 'nutrition transition' and rise of overweight and obesity as global public health problems are generating more requests from middle- and high-income countries on nutrition education or food labelling, and therefore the role of FAO in nutrition is evolving.**

143. Significant progress has been achieved on mainstreaming nutrition in FAO's and singularly in SO1's work. The technical division dealing with nutrition (Nutrition and Food Systems Division - ESN) has been strengthened by filling vacant nutrition officer posts. A strategy and vision for FAO's Work in Nutrition was released in 2014. The Investment Centre Division (TCI) has started reviewing its tools and approaches to mainstream nutrition in programme design and analytical work has taken place on the links between agriculture, food systems and nutrition. A few country offices have started supporting policy processes related to food labelling and overweight, often in collaboration with WHO and/or Pan American Health Organization in Latin America. Supporting countries in counteracting overweight and obesity through a food system approach is emerging as a critical issue where FAO, traditionally focused on undernutrition, needs to step-up its efforts.
144. A few other emerging issues were identified, related to urbanization, decentralization, migration and in some countries the resulting 'feminization of agriculture', that may deserve greater attention in the SP1 Theory of Change and in work at country level.

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<sup>68</sup> Already in 2013, the Evaluation of FAO's Role in Investment recommended to better link investment support through the Investment Centre Division (TCI) with FAO's policy assistance and analytical work at global, regional and country levels. See: PC 113/2: Evaluation of FAO's Role in Investment for Food and Nutrition Security, Agriculture and Rural Development, FAO-Office of Evaluation (OED) January 2013.

**Conclusion 4. There is a proliferation of actors, policy initiatives, approaches, coordination spaces and knowledge products in FNS, sometimes leading to confusion and competition rather than building a critical mass for sustained progress. In this context, FAO could play a greater role in policy convergence, support to policy implementation and the synthesis of multiple data streams into narratives that make sense for decision-making.**

145. FAO has contributed to the formulation and approval of policies, strategies and legal frameworks in many countries. Countries' demand is shifting to policy implementation, as rightly emphasized in the latest FAO Medium Term Plan 2018-2021, with the addition of a new Outcome dedicated to policy implementation (Outcome 4). Supporting policy implementation may help FAO promote greater attention to important food and nutrition security issues in a variety of national contexts. Action speaks louder than words. Experience shows that successful implementation of a programme or policy in a particular country often generates interest among its neighbours. Better implementation of existing policies could help demonstrate their value and generate greater momentum for tackling persistent food insecurity worldwide.
146. The provision of evidence for decision-making is an area of strength for FAO. However, as rightly pointed out by SO1 documentation, evidence-based decision-making is not primarily about data collection and publication. Rather, it is about knowledge, learning and motivation to act. In this respect, the capacity to assess policy impact emerged as a key function within the policy cycle, one for which FAO has very limited capacity. In all countries there is a need to make sense of the data collected by various partners in order to assess policy incidence and implementation gaps.

**Conclusion 5. Through the CFS, Member States provided FAO with legitimate policy content on FNS in the form of a suite of right-based, equity-focused voluntary guidelines on the right to food, land tenure or responsible investment, and calls for FAO and other agencies to support the application of this policy content at country level. FAO's support to the application of CFS products at the country level has reached some notable successes but requires conducive political environment, and ought to be approached with balance and due attention to national political priorities. While FAO has made commendable efforts to mainstream gender equity in its programmes, projects and knowledge products related to SO1, efforts to promote gender-inclusive governance for food and nutrition security were uneven across regions, with few women's institutions and organizations participating in coordination spaces for FNS.**

147. The space for advocacy in FAO is defined by its mandate to help Member States improve their levels of FNS. FAO's normative work, advocacy and policy advice tend to be measured, discreet, and grounded in science and data rather than in ideology, appropriately so for a technical agency of the United Nations. FAO has supported the application of CFS products in a growing number of countries. This work requires a conducive political environment and ought to be approached with the appropriate balance between different stakeholders and due attention to national political priorities. On the critical topic of land and natural resource tenure, encouraging results were witnessed in the application of the VGGT at country level, with a larger share of the activity and the most promising results observed in Sub-Saharan Africa.
148. Prior to that, the right to food was also promoted by FAO, although the present level of support is lower than it once was. Needless to say, even when enacted in laws the right to

food is not always actionable; actual court cases have been very few, but it remains an important aspirational goal and a good entry point for FAO to stress the importance of raising levels of food and nutrition security in societies receptive to right-based arguments.

149. FAO has also made commendable efforts to mainstream equity, gender and nutrition concerns in its FNS programmes and projects, *inter alia* through the production of specific policy guidance on gender and on nutrition, support to CEDAW reporting process and implementation, the development of sex-disaggregated indicators such as FIES, the diffusion of the ENACT curriculum, the expansion of the evidence base on what people actually eat through the development of the Global Individual Food Consumption Data Tool and the Indicator for Women's Dietary Diversity, etc. However, efforts to promote gender-inclusive governance for FNS were uneven across regions, with few women's institutions and organizations participating in coordination spaces for FNS. Only 10 percent of project documents reviewed by the evaluation team included equal decision-making power of men and women in their objectives.
150. Some FAO projects and documents in nutrition were found to target mothers, pregnant women and their youngest children, a frequent focus of nutrition projects in the health sector. Given its sphere of activity, FAO could do more to meet the broader needs of women beyond their role as child bearers and caretakers, and in particular help respond to their needs as farmers. According to the State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11 entitled: *Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap*, women farmers produce less food than male farmers on average, because they tend to have less access to extension services, farm inputs, mechanical equipment and credit than men.

## 4.2. Recommendations

**Recommendation 1. While the programme design was largely validated, a number of potential partners deserve better and greater emphasis in the result framework and activities of SP1: municipalities and local governments (implementation capacity, rural-urban linkages); national academia and training institutes (for capacity building and policy analysis); IFPRI and the CGIAR (policy analysis and evaluation); farmer organizations (for advocacy, participation in coordination spaces and policy evaluation), consumer organizations and the private sector (to work on food systems). Exploration of non-traditional donors and particularly national and regional funding opportunities, as well as links with development banks and the resource mobilization mechanisms agreed in the Financing for Development (FFD) conference in Addis Ababa (2015) could be better exploited.**

151. Contributing to policy impact assessment would allow FAO to make sense of the available data, contribute to policy setting from a position of analytical strength and give the poor a voice in the process through qualitative approaches. In practice, however, good policy impact assessments are rare and costly; and the capacity of FAO to assess policy impact is limited and project-funded (e.g. the Monitoring and Analysing Food and Agricultural Policies programme – MAFAP) rather than supported by core resources.
152. A deeper collaboration with the CGIAR system and notably IFPRI would seem useful on information and analysis on FNS policy, including at country level. FAO's focus ought to be on defining knowledge needs and synthesizing relevant knowledge and data streams into fact-based, coherent narratives, leaving the generation of knowledge to others such as the

CGIAR, the World Bank, or national or regional universities, research institutions and 'think tanks'.

153. The world's farmers, foresters and fishers will ultimately determine whether the sustainable development goals are realized in the areas of food and agriculture. A participation of farmer organizations in coordination spaces at all levels should be promoted to a greater extent, as a way to better root the debates into reality. Consumer organizations could also represent useful partners in addressing the links between food systems and nutrition.
154. FAO could work more closely with national technical training institutes and universities to strengthen curricula and build capacity in nutrition-sensitive agriculture and other fields, as already done by the Nutrition and Food Systems Division (ESN). The practice of relying on one-off, ad hoc training events may have made sense in a previous era when national universities and training institutes in developing countries were weaker than they are today. This is no longer the case, and FAO's capacity building efforts need to reflect this evolution and seize the opportunity to leverage and support national training institutes.
155. Local governments and municipalities emerged as key stakeholders in policy implementation through territorial approaches, for instance in the recent "*100 territorios sin Hambre*" initiative by the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC) and the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger. Working with municipalities holds promises in nutrition education, school meals and procurement, in building strong and diversified rural-urban food chains, and more generally in the promotion of various local development initiatives.
156. Similarly, there are opportunities to collaborate to a greater extent with the private sector at national and regional level, e.g. on investment in agriculture, food safety or food labelling with the aim to protect consumer health in terms of food safety and to promote nutritional wellbeing.
157. In this regard, while the current FAO guidelines to work with the private sector address the need for regulating global partnerships with large multinationals quite well, they do not appear to provide adequate guidance to country offices trying to engage with food retailers, cooperatives or street food vendors at national or subnational level. They could be usefully amended to provide practical guidance applicable to multiple forms of engagement at country level, including with small- and medium-scale enterprises and the informal sector.
158. The Partnerships and South-South Cooperation Division (DPS) guidelines are to take money from the private sector to do projects, not on how to work with them on improving the content of their products.
159. The kind of policy work supported by SO1 is not an easy domain to mobilize resources for. FAO has been fortunate to receive significant support from the European Union on FNS governance, and the evaluation noted that the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program emerged as a new strategic donor. FAO should also explore regional and national funding opportunities, as done successfully in Latin America, as well as the resource mobilization mechanisms proposed to the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa (July 2015). The Addis Ababa Action Agenda adopted at the Financing for Development conference devotes much attention to food and nutrition security, recalls the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and its Framework for Action (2014), and quotes the CFS and its products. Among the avenues for resource mobilization identified in the Conference there

are some that hold promises for SO1-related work, such as finance from national and local governments, or the sort of public-private partnership initiated under "SDG Investing". FAO and specifically SP1 should keep abreast of these developments and could participate more actively on some of the platforms resulting from the Financing for Development conference.

160. Links with development banks could be further leveraged, and not only to raise funds but also to shape investment at national level. At country level the work of the Investment Centre Division (TCI) for IFAD and the World Bank would deserve to be more systematically coordinated with FAO Representatives and policy officers (e.g. FIRST policy officers) in country, in order to explore opportunities for mutual exchange and collaboration at policy level.

**Recommendation 2. While FAO is well positioned globally, it needs to strengthen its capacities to offer support to policy implementation and analysis at country level, through *inter alia*: the continuation and geographic expansion of the FIRST programme; better staff training and the publication of national SOFI reports in a few selected countries. The SP1 team also needs to strengthen its capacities to support and learn from FAO country offices.**

161. Informing and strengthening policy support at country level through the active dissemination of good practices and approaches requires better communication across the Organization. In particular, the SP1 team must systematize and curate a certain body of knowledge learned from experience in the field and must help share that body of knowledge from one country and one region to the next, not as one-size-fits-all prescriptions but as options to consider and that have worked well in well-documented circumstances. To do this effectively, it cannot rely entirely on the essentially technical backstopping functions of regional offices and must maintain a functional link in real time with the country level. So far FIRST has played this role in 33 countries, and the facility should be extended and ideally expanded geographically as well.
162. The SP1 team should strengthen its link with decentralized offices by building upon the FIRST facility, its country profiles and its network of policy officers at country level informing the SP1 team in real time and receiving dedicated technical support. The number of staff and consultants working on SO1 in regional and Subregional offices is also very low and ought to be strengthened, resources permitting, in keeping with the principle of subsidiarity and to allow for the most suitable adaptation of good practices to each particular regional or national context.
163. The development of a series of Strategic Framework/Strategic Objective training and e-learning courses should be considered, directed at FAO staff in regional, subregional and country offices, and the series of sectoral policy guidelines produced in 2017 thanks to FIRST could now be disseminated via a set of webinars. FAO could also develop a general policy training course aimed at its technical staff at all levels of the Organization, to sensitize them to the importance of policy matters, familiarize them with the terminology, link them to the resources available in FAO, etc.
164. Based on documented experiences, SP1 should develop and provide guidance at regional and country level in engaging simultaneously with multiple ministries. This becomes particularly significant in areas such as agriculture diversification, land tenure, nutrition, food systems, food safety and climate change where multi-stakeholder partnerships within Governments and outside are necessary for success.

165. Within FAO, simpler ways of facilitating cross-disciplinarity should be introduced than the "Service Level Agreements", whose transaction cost appear higher than their potential benefit.
166. The SP1 team could also be more present at country level, for instance through supporting and participating in key policy and strategy reviews or other strategic policy events and processes led by regional and country offices, in a demand-oriented manner.
167. The production of national SOFI reports in a few selected countries would represent an opportunity for FAO to engage with national academia and contribute to national policy discourse through science-based analytics, while feeding into the SDGs voluntary national reviews and numerous other relevant policy processes at country level. Such an undertaking would initially require the drafting of a set of guidelines for national SOFI reports, and implies the progressive development of a capacity to backstop country offices from headquarters and regional offices on the production of high-quality documents.

**Recommendation 3. Nutrition and gender have received increased attention from FAO in recent years, but there is still much room for progress. In particular, FAO needs to pay more attention to diversifying diets as a way to address overweight and obesity. FAO should raise awareness on pathways from agriculture to nutrition and try and promote agriculture and policy concerns in nutrition coordination space where the issue is still often seen only as a health problem. In gender equality, there are opportunities for FAO and SP1 to help reform national support systems for agriculture such as extension systems, veterinary networks or rural credit schemes to make them more supportive of female farmers, particularly in contexts characterized by male migration out of agriculture and resulting increased feminization of agriculture.**

168. In the context of the nutrition transition, demand from Member Countries for technical support on the emerging issues of obesity and overweight tends to increase, calling for FAO to step-up its efforts in this area. Human resources permitting, country offices should try and expand their support to diet diversification – especially in countries where the focus is perhaps too narrowly placed on a few staple crops – as a way to address nutrient deficiency, overweight and obesity and be more present in national coordination forums devoted to nutrition (e.g. under SUN/REACH) to promote the agriculture and food system determinants of good nutrition.
169. At the nexus between gender and nutrition, and given its domain of activity, FAO's concerns extend beyond the traditional health-inspired focus on maternal and child nutrition within the first 1 thousand days. Of course FAO can legitimately work with women as caregivers and child bearers (for instance in joint projects with UNICEF), but FAO's domain of activity demands that it addresses women as farmers, as laborers, as business owners and as decision makers, and that it contributes to the school meals and nutrition education of school-aged children beyond the first 1 thousand days.
170. Beyond supporting vulnerable groups and communities through rural development projects, FAO and singularly SP1 can contribute at the level of the enabling environment, for instance by helping extension systems and rural credit schemes reach out to female farmers to a greater degree than at present. A fortiori, in contexts characterized by male migration out of agriculture and a resulting increased feminization of agriculture, a parallel feminization of public and private support systems to agriculture appears in order. This could mean

attracting more female students in studies linked to agriculture, such as agriculture extension or veterinary science – the sort of systemic change in the enabling environment for agriculture which an Organization like FAO and a programme like SP1 would be well-placed to contribute to.

**Recommendation 4. Building upon the strong level of trust established with national institutions, FAO should continue to advocate for more sustainable and equitable development policies, relying on a variety of advisory and advocacy channels such as national academia, farmer organizations, south-south cooperation and mainstream national media, and grounding its advice on a strong analytical base and socio-economic argument, in complement to a right-based argument.**

171. Because of its nature as a multilateral Organization, FAO maintains a strong relationship with national governments and generally supports national policies and priorities. As a result, classic advocacy groups such as the most vocal NGOs have not always been the most natural partners at country level. National universities, farmer organizations, south-south cooperation and national mainstream media can help bring policy issues to the attention of decision makers without appearing as confrontational or politically motivated. These advocacy channels have been used by FAO and could be used more in policy incidence.
172. FAO could cast its arguments for gender equity and food and nutrition security in economic terms to a greater extent than done currently, e.g. around the need for women and men to produce food for themselves and the rest of society ('Cost of Hunger' approach). The nutritional wellbeing of women engaged in agriculture constitutes a right by itself, but also a necessity for them to contribute to food production, trade and utilization. Similarly, reducing the drudgery of women's farm and off-farm work could also be presented as an economic efficiency argument in contexts characterized by a 'feminization of agriculture', rather than cast only as an equity issue.
173. The idea of national SOFI reports has been mentioned in Recommendation 2. If developed under the appropriate editorial board and given some visibility in country, such reports would also help ground FAO's policy messages in objective national data, demonstrate how FNS is a worthwhile socio-economic goal for the country and indicate where progress could be made.

## 5 Appendices

### Appendix 1. List of people met

	Name	Role
	<b>FAO headquarters</b>	
1	Amaral, Cristina	Director (OSD)
2	Anderson, Robynne	PSM coordinator (CFS)
3	Andrew, Nadeau	Senior capacity Development Officer (DPS)
4	Arvelo, Mario	Chair of the Committee on World Food Security
5	Awabdeh, Omar	Evaluation Officer (OED)
6	Balie, Jean	Project Manager (ESA)
7	Belli, Luisa	Evaluation Officer (OED)
8	Bester, Angela	Led the recent evaluation of the CFS reform
9	Bonomi, Genny	OED Evaluation Officer (OED)
10	Cafiero, Carlo	Project Manager (ESS)
11	Callens, Karel	Deputy SP1 Leader
12	Carter, Diana	Nutrition and Food Systems Officer (ESN)
13	Castaneda, Rodrigo	Senior Partnership Officer (DPS)
14	Ceren, Gurkan	Food Security Officer (SP1)
15	Clark, Michael	Senior Coordinator, Policy and Governance Unit (ESD)
16	Crawford, Beth	Deputy Director, Office of Strategic Planning (OSP)
17	Croce, Stefania	M&E Consultant for FIRST Programme
18	Davies, Benjamin	SP3 Leader
19	Feng, Dongxin	Deputy Director, South-South Cooperation (DPS)
20	Fulton, Deborah	Secretary to the Committee on World Food Security
21	Garcia-Cebolla, Juan Carlos	Right to Food Team Leader (ESP), SP1
22	Giasi, Francesco	Programme Officer SP1
23	Gilmozzi, Dario	Senior Programme Officer (OSD)
24	Ginsburg, Michael	Programme Officer (OSD)
25	Gustafson, Daniel	Deputy Director-General (DDP)
26	Hachem, Fatima	Senior Nutrition Officer (ESN)
27	Ho, Yuen	Evaluation Officer (OED)
28	Jelensperger, Johanna	Nutrition Officer (SP1)
29	Kitaoka, Kazuki	Team Leader for Marketing, Outreach and Reporting, South-South and Resource Mobilization Division (TCR)
30	Kuemplangan, Blaise	Chief Legal Department (LEGN)
31	Lartey, Anna	Director (ESN)
32	Lincke, Friedrich	Senior Programme Officer (DDP)
33	Mansouri, Mohamed	Director (TCID)
34	McGuire, Mark	Food Security and Nutrition Officer
35	Mol, Victor	Programme Officer (OSD)
36	Molina, Javier	Senior Land Tenure Officer (DPS)
37	Mukhitdinova, Malika	Internal Auditor (OIG)

38	Ndisale, Brave	SP1 Leader
39	Petracchi, Cristina	Capacity Development Officer, E-learning Team Leader (DPS)
40	Petricis, Hajnalka	Gender and Development Officer, SO1 Gender Focal Point (ESP)
41	Pierrri, Francesco	Policy Officer & Advocacy Unit Head (DPS)
42	Solal-Celigny, Amelie	Evaluation Officer (OED)
43	Stamoulis, Kostas	Assistant Director General (ESD)
44	Stinke, Oenema	The coordinator for the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (ESN)
45	Takagi, Maya	Senior Social Protection Officer (SP3)
46	Tomoko, Kato	Nutrition Officer (ESN)
47	Troubat, Natalie	Food Security and Nutrition Officer (ESS)
48	Tucker, Rachel	Communications Officer (OSD)
49	Valls-Beadeau, Jose	FIRST Policy Officer (SP1)
50	Veillerette, Benoist	Senior Economist, SP1 Team
51	Vidar, Margret	Legal Officer (LEGN)
52	Villarreal, Marcela	Director (DPS)
53	Wang, Jie	Programme Officer (OSD)
54	Whan-Kan, Marilyn	Programme Officer (OSD)
55	Wiegers, Esther	Food Security Policy and Monitoring Consultant (SP1)
56	Wolpold, Martin	CSM coordination (CFS)
57	Yasaman, Matinroshan	FIRST Programme Officer (SP1)
<b>Partners and UN agencies</b>		
58	Bidault, Nicolas	Acting Global Coordinator, REACH, WFP
59	Brooks, Karen	Director, CGIAR Research Programme on Policies, Institutions, and Markets (PIM), CGIAR
60	Conti, Mauro	Advocacy and Policy Officer, International Committee for Food Sovereignty
61	De Cao, Gianpietro	Head of programmes, Agriculture & Food Security and Nutrition, European Commission
62	Dyer, Nichola	GAFSP Programme Manager, Global Agriculture & Food Security Programme, World Bank
63	Garrett, James	Senior Research Fellow, CGIAR Research Programme on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH), CGIAR
64	Gilliard, Martin	Business Support Assistant to the Executive Board Secretariat, WFP
65	Gillman, Helen Maree	Senior Knowledge Management Specialist, Global Engagement, Knowledge and Strategy Division, IFAD
66	Gornass, Amira	Ambassador, Embassy of Sudan
67	Guerra, Alberta	Senior Policy Analyst, ActionAid International
68	Haque Rahman, Farhana	Director General, IPS
69	Heinemann, Edward	Lead Technical Specialist - Policy, Policy and Technical Advisory Division, IFAD
70	Hochstetter, Stephanie	Director, Rome-based Agencies and Committee, WFP
71	Nilsson, Torben	Senior Global Engagement Specialist, Strategy and Knowledge Department, IFAD

72	Samkange, Stanlake	Director, Policy and Programme Division, WFP
73	Spanos, Harriet	Secretary to the Executive Board and Director, Executive Board Secretariat, WFP
74	Torrigiani, Francesco	Policy Officer, Oxfam
75	Were Omamo, Steven	– Food Systems Coordinator and Deputy Director, Policy and Programme Division, WFP
<b>Brazil</b>		
76	Baioni, Maristela	Representative, UNDP
77	Balaban, Daniel	Director, WFP - Centre of Excellence against Hunger
78	Bojanic, Alan	FAOR
79	Chianca, Gustavo	Assistant FAOR, Policy Officer and SO1 Focal Point, FAO
80	Correa da Silva, Hur Ben	General Coordinator for Family Farming Affairs and International Cooperation, Special Secretariat for Family Farming and Agrarian Development - Presidency
81	Coutinho, Janine	Adviser to the Representative, PAHO/WHO
82	Faria, Eliane	Project Manager, FAO
83	João, Padre	Member of the Parliament/ President of the PFH, Parliament
84	Leão, Marília	Executive Secretary, CONSEA - Presidency
85	Lessa, Michele	General Coordinator for Food and Nutrition, Ministry of Health
86	Martins, Juarez	Parliamentary Assistant, Parliament
87	Nilson, Eduardo	Coordinator for Food and Nutrition, Ministry of Health
88	Rahal, Lilian	Deputy Secretary for FNS, Ministry of Social Development
89	Reis, Ricardo D.	General Coordinator for Technical Assistance and Rural Extension, Special Secretariat for Family Farming and Agrarian Development - Presidency
90	Rossetto, Juliana	South-south Cooperation Specialist, FAO
91	Santos, Karine	General Coordinator "School Feeding Programme", National Fund for Education Development - Ministry of Education
92	Souza, Palova	Communication Consultant, FAO
93	Takei, Sue	Programme Associate, FAO
94	Vieira, Hardi	Country Programme Officer, IFAD
95	Vives, Esperanza	Deputy Representative, UNICEF
96	Zacarias, Ursula	Gender Focal Point, FAO
<b>Cambodia</b>		
97	Borath, Mam	Director of Department of Nutrition Improvement, Ministry of Planning
98	Bredehöft, Claudius	Senior Advisor, Improvement of Livelihoods and Food Security, GIZ
99	Buckley, Simon	First Secretary, Development Cooperation, Australian Embassy
100	Bunsor, Khou	Nutrition Officer, WHO
101	Careme, Etienne	Operation Coordinator and Gender Focal Point, FAO
102	Chanthan, Chea	National Project Coordinator, Live and Nature, FAO

103	Cheang, Siv	Senior Programme Officer, Agriculture and Rural Development, JIKA
104	Chhun, Min	Director, Department of Planning, Dept of Planning, Kandal province
105	Davuth, Lor	Director General, General Department of CADASTRAL and Geography, Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction
106	de Lorenzo, Ayesha	Technical Officer, Health Systems Strengthening, WHO
107	Erdelmann, Francesca	Deputy Country Director, WFP
108	Groetschel, Andreas	Project Preparation and Coordination Specialist and Agriculture Economist, FAO
109	Gruber, Evi-Kornelia	Team Leader Food and Nutrition Security, GIZ
110	Knibbs, Sarah	Deputy country representative, UNWOMEN
111	Kosal, Oum	Assistant FAOR Programmes, FAO
112	Kroeun, Hou	Deputy Country Director, Helen Keller International
113	Lailou, Arnaud	Nutrition Officer, UNICEF
114	Lee, Sang	Deputy Programme Coordinator, Gender and Equality and social development, Ministry of Women Affairs
115	Lee, Trinette	Consultant, Noncommunicable diseases and health promotion, WHO
116	Osbjer, Kristina	International ECTAD Team Leader, FAO-ECTAD-CMB, FAO
117	Piseth, Long	Senior Project Officer, ADB
118	Poliveth, Lao	Economist, Ministry of Economy and Finance
119	Pothy, Pich	Director of Sub-National Statistics Department, National Institute of Statistics
120	Proyuth, Ly	National Planning and Monitoring Adviser, FAO
121	Russell, lean	FIRST Policy Officer, FAOKH
122	Sacci, Inna	NOURISH Team Leader, Save the Children
123	Sakphouseth, Meng	Country Programme Officer, IFAD
124	Sarom, Men	Vice Rector, Royal University of Agriculture, RUA
125	Sileng, Sang	Deputy Director of agricultural extension Gender and children focus point, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Fisheries Administration
126	Silo, Sok	Deputy Secretary General, Council for Agricultural and Rural Development
127	Simona, Buntuon	Director, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Department of Agriculture, Kandal province
128	Socheath, Heng	Programme Manager, UNWOMEN
129	Soeun, Mak	Deputy Director General, Deputy Director General, General Directorate of Agriculture Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
130	Sokhun, Ty	Secretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
131	Sokunthea, By	Programme Officer, EU
132	Sopheap, Ros	Executive Director, Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC)

133	Sopheap, Sao	Adviser and Director of MoE, Minister's Cabinet Ministry of Environment
134	Sotheavy, Meas	Deputy Director, Department of Planning and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
135	Sothu, Tu	DIC Department, Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction
136	Sovann, Sar	Secretary of State, Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction
137	Sovoleak, Khin	Deputy Director General, National Institute of Statistics
138	Theara, Horn	Deputy Secretary General, Cambodia Rice Federation Office
139	Try, Ing	Deputy Director General, FiA, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
140	Van de Warren, Claire	UN Regional Coordinator, UNDP
141	Wessel, Guenter	Team Leader, GIZ
142	Yunguo, Liu	WHO Representative, WHO
<b>Dominican Republic</b>		
143	Acosta, Ivett	Director for UN Cooperation, General Direction for Multilateral Cooperation - Ministry of Economy and Planning
144	Adelma, Luz	Gender Focal Point, FAO.
145	Alberto Diaz, José	Coordinator, DPA Monte Plata
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## **6 List of Annexes**

Annexes available at <http://www.fao.org/evaluation/en/>

Annex 1. Terms of Reference

Annex 2. Gender



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