

44th Session of the Conference

Subitem 10.5: Report of the 37th Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East (Amman, Jordan, Senior Officers Meeting 5-8 February 2024 and Ministerial Meeting 4-5 March 2024)

I am pleased to present the salient highlights of the Report of the 37th Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The Regional Conference was organized in two parts: the Senior Officers Meeting (SOM) from 5 to 8 February 2024 and the Ministerial Meeting from 4 to 5 March 2024. The Senior Officers Meeting was organized virtually and the Ministerial Meeting was conducted in person with virtual participation.

The Senior Officers Meeting focused on the main theme of the Conference “Accelerating Transformation of Agrifood Systems in the Near East and North Africa”, as the importance of transforming agrifood systems to embed MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable systems that promote *better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life*, leaving no one behind, has been acknowledged as being pivotal for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Ministerial Meeting was divided into five ministerial roundtables, which discussed the Regional Priorities and explored how they articulate with FAO’s vision of supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through accelerating the transformation to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for *better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life*, leaving no one behind. I would like to take this opportunity to summarize the key outcomes in relation to global policy and regulatory matters, for the attention of the Conference.

Under the main theme of accelerating transformation of agrifood systems in the Near East and North Africa, the Regional Conference emphasized the importance of equitable access of smallholder farmers to agricultural inputs, resources, goods and services, not only access to food and healthy diets. FAO and Members were called upon to focus on the mentioned accelerators for the transformation of their agrifood systems. In addition, FAO and Members were advised to harness the potential of inter- and intraregional cooperation in agriculture, food security and nutrition and related issues, by increasing trade and investment and revisit their fiscal and financial systems and allocations in the agriculture and food sectors, in order to reorient them towards transforming agrifood systems. The Regional Conference also highlighted the role of improved governance and regulatory systems, evidence-based policymaking and the use of data and analytics.

The Regional Conference took note of the mandatory documents and information notes covering different areas, *inter alia*, Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Agrifood Systems, Enabling Inclusive and Sustainable Rural Transformation, Anticipatory Action to address the impacts of compounded crises, Greening Agriculture: Towards Transformation to Efficient and Climate Resilient Agrifood Systems, and Accelerating Transformation Towards Sustainable Markets, Trade and Consumption.

Finally, the recommendations from the Regional Commissions were endorsed with requests to support countries in terms of resource mobilization and strongly supported the establishment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Aquaculture and Fisheries Organization.

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