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Update on collaboration among the Rome-based agencies

Draft decision*

The Board takes note of the update on collaboration among the Rome-based agencies (RBAs) (WFP/EB.2/2019/4-E/Rev.2).

The Board welcomes the pilot joint country strategies and looks forward to the reporting on these pilots and the preparation of more such strategies and notes the information provided by management that there are 34 new United Nations common country analyses in preparation for 2020.

The Board requests that in future reports RBA management focus on strategic issues and lessons learned, challenges faced, impacts, concrete achievements and financial benefits arising from RBA collaboration which lead to synergies and complementarities, particularly at the country level.

Following up on the discussions at the Third Annual Joint Informal Meeting of the three RBA Governing Bodies on 13 September 2019, in particular on the agenda item concerning "common services", the Board requests WFP management, together with FAO and IFAD, to provide a first assessment regarding the feasibility of integrating administrative functions and greater collaboration in some oversight functions. This assessment should also encompass an analysis of the potential added value of a common specialized expertise for all three RBAs on investigative functions related to allegations of sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Board requests WFP management to report back at the Executive Board Annual Session in 2020.

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the decisions and recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

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Background

1. In the 2016 joint paper,¹ the RBAs committed to providing the FAO Council and the IFAD and WFP Executive Boards with an annual update on how the agencies are working together at the country, regional and global levels. This progress report is the update provided to the RBA Governing Bodies and has been jointly prepared by FAO, IFAD, and WFP. As in the 2018 edition, this joint update highlights how the three agencies are working together in particular contexts, and showcases examples of strengthened coordination efforts under three of the four pillars of RBA collaboration: (i) country and regional levels; (ii) global collaboration; (iii) collaboration in thematic areas. This joint update also provides a brief update on the fourth pillar of RBA collaboration; (iv) joint provision of corporate services and further details are provided in the *Annex*.

Introduction

2. Four years have passed since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, yet the evidence so far indicates that we are behind in reaching our goal of a Zero Hunger world by 2030. According to the 2019 SOFI, hunger rates are on the rise again in Africa, South Asia and other parts of Asia, with as many as 820 million people suffering from hunger worldwide. The global community, and the RBAs, recognize the need to accelerate action to reverse the trend of rising hunger and malnutrition that threatens to divert us from the path for a decade of delivery to 2030. This will require holistic approaches, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and innovative investment in transformative initiatives that focus on addressing the root causes of hunger and malnutrition which span across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

3. The RBAs are fully engaged in the implementation of the UNDS reforms as a means to enhance system wide coherence and promote multilateralism. The UN reform has provided a unique opportunity to strengthen RBA collaboration for better results on the ground, ultimately achieving the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda, and in particular improving food security, nutrition and the well-being of poor communities in all regions. In doing so, the RBAs have recognized that for the UN reform to be successful, partnerships have to be broad-based and purposeful. Therefore, while RBA collaboration is central to improving the three Organization's effectiveness and efficiency, the RBAs must also leverage partnerships with other development actors – including governments – other UN entities, the private sector, civil society, IFIs and others to meet the SDGs.

I. Tri-partite MoU

4. In 2018 the RBAs signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding where the RBAs committed to working towards collective outcomes, based on comparative advantages and over multiyear time frames. The aim of the MoU is to strengthen collaboration and coordination at global, regional and country levels in order to provide enhanced support to member countries. It sets out areas for comprehensive and integrated support including working together on national planning processes with governments, as well as developing joint outcomes, programmes and assessments. It also covers shared data analysis, joint accountability for collective outcomes, and continued sharing of corporate services.

¹ <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000037188/download/>

II. MoU Action Plan

5. The RBAs have developed an Action Plan which operationalises the main provisions of the MoU.² The plan will cover a two-year period (2019-2020). At the May 2019 Senior Consultative Group (SCG) meeting, the Group collectively endorsed the joint RBA Action Plan. The Group agreed that the Action plan is a management working document that the SCG will utilize to guide and further strengthen the collaboration among the agencies. Performance in delivering on the activities will be monitored by RBA Focal Points and updates on implementation will be provided to the RBA Senior Consultative Group (SCG).

6. Based on the action plan, a comprehensive assessment of progress, achievements and lessons learned will be the basis of the 2019 joint progress report on RBA collaboration, as described below. Member States will continue to be updated on progress through existing platforms of engagement between the RBAs and their respective Governing Bodies.

III. Collaboration at Country Level

7. The RBAs are focusing on enhancing existing country level collaboration and scaling up initiatives in the areas of joint outcome formulation, joint programme formulation, joint food security assessments and interaction in thematic groups, capacity development, resilience initiatives, and emergency preparedness and response operations.

8. Over 70 RBA country and regional offices reported on their collaborative efforts. The depth of information provided is quite extensive and therefore in this section we seek to summarize some of the main highlights of RBA country level collaboration.

9. FAO, IFAD, and WFP are working together closely to ensure high levels of ambition and effectiveness in the new generation of *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework* (UNSDCF, or Cooperation Framework) that is being introduced in all UN programming countries. In the context of the new Cooperation frameworks, the RBAs are working together to ensure that matters related to food security, nutrition, agriculture, rural and food systems transformation are addressed in ways that reflect their ample potential contribution to many SDGs.

10. The RBAs are actively cooperating with each other in the framework of the overlapping objectives in achieving SDG2, during the development of FAO's Country Programming Frameworks, IFADs Country Strategic Opportunities Programme, and WFP's National Strategic Review and Country Strategic Plans. Within this context, the RBAs continue to also explore opportunities to develop joint programmes. Joint consultations have been held that resulted in the identification of areas of collaboration and partnership. The RBAs are exploring pooled funding opportunities that may present the possibility of financing joint activities

11. At the operational level, FAO, IFAD, and WFP conduct joint field visits to enhance synergies in ongoing activities. Following joint field visits joint actions have been initiated to enhance each agency's programmes and projects. Furthermore, the RBAs and governments continue to implement the vast array of existing projects and programmes that are central to each country achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In the Annexes, several countries have been showcased to give one the sense of the array and depth of RBA collaboration.

Joint Country Strategies

12. In line with commitments made to their respective Governing Bodies, the RBAs are exploring modalities for more systematic collaboration. Specifically, the agencies have committed to developing joint strategic planning and programming, at country level, in three pilot countries. Following internal consultations and based on a number of agreed-upon criteria, the following three pilot countries were selected and endorsed at the May 2019 Senior Consultative Group (SCG) meeting: for Latin America/Caribbean – Colombia; for Asia/Pacific – Indonesia; for Africa - Niger. The joint country plans seek more coherent and effective collaboration from the outset by building on the strengths, comparative advantages, outcomes and outputs identified in FAO Country Programming Frameworks

² The Action Plan is considered a rolling plan and will be updated on an annual basis.

(CPFs), IFAD country strategic opportunities programme (COSOPs), WFP country strategic plans (CSPs), and existing frameworks in a given country. Notwithstanding, the agencies will continue to be guided by and accountable for their individual country strategic plans/results frameworks, and thus the joint plan aims to support a strategic collective vision and does not replace each entity/s respective strategy.

13. In developing joint planning and programming in the three pilot countries, the RBAs aim to achieve the following objectives:
- a) Design, implement and measure the impact of joint country plans and possibly complementary activities/joint programs in support of agreed collective outcomes that contribute to national policy priorities, based on each agency's analytical capacities, tools and initiatives;
 - b) Harmonize the RBA contribution to system-wide strategic and programmatic thinking in the context of the ongoing UN Reform and, in particular, within the new UNSDCF's;
 - c) Enhance joint advocacy to adequately reflect the importance of food security, nutrition, sustainable (food and) agriculture and rural development, particularly in achieving SDG2 and related targets across the SDGs in national development planning and policy priorities and in the UNSDCF;
 - d) Support the selection of SDG targets appropriate to the national context on the basis of Government priorities, available data and gap analysis; and
 - e) Develop a model for collaboration that can be replicated, adapted and built upon in other countries

IV. Collaboration at the Regional Level

14. Collaboration at the regional level continues to ensure that strategies, programmes, and activities are in line with and complimentary to the global level RBA strategies and frameworks as well as the commitments that Governments have undertaken, to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Launch of the report - Collection and analysis of bilateral or tripartite work collaboration in Latin America and the Caribbean 2012-2017

15. In February 2019, the RBAs launched the report entitled *Collection and analysis of bilateral or tripartite work collaboration in Latin America and the Caribbean 2012-2017*. The report presents a collection and analysis of both bilateral and trilateral joint actions carried out by the three agencies in the LAC region during the 6 year period. It focuses on the following areas: i) factors that have either streamlined, or constrained inter-agency collaboration; ii) assessing the coordinated and complementary execution of actions in particular to support countries as they address the goals set in SDG 2; iii) potential courses of action and intervention strategies based on both the country and sub-region.

Middle East

16. Several efforts to advance joint resilience programming in the Middle East are underway. Regional technical focal points from FAO, IFAD and WFP have been working together to design a joint resilience programme focusing on supporting SDG2 and SDG1 by improving food security and livelihoods in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Yemen. Donors are now being engaged to secure funding to implement integrated and sequenced activities across four complementary outputs focusing on: (i) sustainable natural resource management; (ii) climate-smart and nutrition-sensitive value chain development; (iii) local employment creation and livelihood diversification; and (iv) knowledge management, learning systems and policy development. This joint programme offers an important opportunity to undertake more coordinated, deliberate and at scale programming across the three RBAs and seeks to leverage the respective strengths of FAO, IFAD, AND WFP. Contextual demands, donor encouragement and professional teamwork at regional level were critical factors which have enabled the success of these efforts.

17. The Enhancing resilient livelihoods and food security of host communities and refugees in Jordan and Lebanon through the promotion of sustainable agricultural development has been approved by the MADAD operational board, and the Multi Partner Contribution Agreement between FAO, IFAD and WFP was signed in August 2019, paving the way for implementation over a two year period.

RBA Sahel Action Plan

18. Following the successful Principals visit to Niger in August 2018, the RBAs reaffirmed their commitment to scale up joint efforts throughout the Sahel region. It was also agreed that the Agencies would develop an RBA Plan of Action for the Sahel. The Plan of Action was presented during the 2019 informal Joint Meeting of the RBA Governing Bodies. It is based on the strategic objectives and programmes of the RBAs in the Sahel and aims to scale up collaboration by systematically addressing food security and livelihood issues of vulnerable populations. In an effort to ensure UN system-wide coherence, the Plan is framed within the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) – the principal UN vehicle for contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Sahel. The Plan outlines the RBAs main joint objectives in the region, pillars of collaboration, along with principles of engagement. The RBA teams are currently working on supplementing the high-level plan with a set of concrete complimentary actions in the region.

V. Collaboration at the Global and Thematic Levels

19. The RBAs continue to seek synergies on key global and thematic initiatives including through strategic dialogue and selective joint communications and awareness raising.

2018 RBA Award of Excellence

20. As part of the closing segment of the Informal Joint Meeting of the RBA Governing Bodies the RBA Award of Excellence for collaboration at country level was presented. The biennial Award, established in 2012, celebrates the RBA country teams who spearhead innovative approaches to working together. The 2018 Award recognized the Guatemala country team for their concerted efforts in maximizing results and impact on the ground to achieve the 2030 Agenda. By leveraging each agency's comparative advantage, the country team has strengthened coordination, thereby delivering in a more efficient and effective manner. RBA activities in Guatemala from 2016 to 2017 directly benefitted more than 350,000 rural people, including some of the most marginalized populations - rural women, youth, children, and indigenous peoples. The activities have strengthened local capacities, and improved access to and control of natural resources and productive assets for women.

The 4th International seminar on global poverty reduction partnerships

21. In May 2019, FAO, IFAD, and WFP co-organized an international seminar on global poverty reduction partnerships together with the International Poverty Reduction Center in China (IPRCC) and the China Internet Information Centre (CIIC). The seminar, entitled “The Role of Technological Innovations to Help Accelerate Poverty Reduction and Achieve Zero Hunger”, took place on the margins of the International Development Cooperation Expo (EXCO 2019), and provided an opportunity to discuss how new digital technologies and innovative uses of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in development can contribute to increasing productivity and wealth, generating new activities, products, and services, addressing information gaps and improving livelihoods. The seminar was attended by more than 150 participants, including high-level representatives from governments, development partners, the private sector, academia, think tanks, and civil society.

Climate change

22. At the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), FAO, IFAD and WFP organized two High-Level side events addressing SDG2 and SDG12. The event entitled “SDG2 – we can still end hunger by 2030 if we take ambitious climate action” brought together high level actors to discuss the nexus of climate action, food systems and human nutrition; and share examples of the solutions to ending hunger and building ambitious climate action. The event “Fighting Climate Change Requires Zero Tolerance on Food Loss

and Waste – SDG12”, discussed reducing food loss and waste as a global shared obligation in a changing climate, and as an opportunity to both drive the transformation of food systems and mitigate climate change. FAO and IFAD, together with UN Women, have participated in a third event on gender mainstreaming in adaptation and mitigation, exploring a nexus approach between gender and climate change.

23. In June 2019, during the 50th session of the UNFCCC subsidiary bodies, the three RBAs also organized a side event on a long-term vision for addressing climate change in agricultural sectors and the future of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture.

24. During CFS 46, IFAD, FAO and WFP have organized a side event entitled ‘putting food security and nutrition at the heart of climate action’ focusing on country examples involving civil society and private sector.

25. On the operational side, FAO, IFAD, and WFP have collaborated under the umbrella of the Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Program phase 2. Two joint FAO-IFAD projects on the livestock sector and fisheries and two joint IFAD-WFP projects on climate forecasting and climate insurance have been adopted. In parallel, IFAD and WFP have launched a second phase of their common program on climate data. The three RBAs are also participating in the Technical Working Group on agriculture, food security and land use, a technical group of the NDC Partnership, aiming at highlighting the place of agriculture in the UNFCCC processes and NDCs implementation. Lastly, FAO, IFAD and WFP have been working closely to contribute to the development of a Green Climate Fund (GCF) strategy on agriculture and food security.

Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

26. In 2019, the RBAs continued to provide financial and staffing support to the Secretariat of the CFS, and the promotion of CFS policy products as instruments for accelerating progress on the implementation of the SDGs. The RBAs continue to actively engage in the strategic direction of the CFS and have agreed to become *ex-officio* and *extra-quota* members of the Advisory Group to the CFS Bureau, indicating that the RBAs are now permanent members of the Advisory Group. During the inter-sessional period, the RBAs provided technical expertise to a number of CFS workstreams and in the drafting of the strategic Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) 2020-2023 which defines the CFS programme of work, including its objectives, expected outcomes, ways to achieve them, and their relevance to the SDGs. As members of the Technical Task Team of the CFS nutrition workstream, the RBAs played a crucial role in the development of the Zero Draft of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, including by participating in six regional multi-stakeholder consultations on the topic. RBA senior management and staff actively participated in the CFS 46 Plenary week in October and the agencies co-organized a number of side events covering a range of topical issues.

Gender

27. In March 2019, the RBAs together with UN Women organized a joint side event for the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The side-event entitled "Rural women's empowerment for food security and nutrition for all: evidence from joint UN work" presented new evidence on the joint work of the RBAs and UN Women to eliminate hunger and malnutrition through the provision of an integrated approach to women's economic empowerment as part of the RBA Joint Programme “Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women” (JP-RWEE).

28. In May 2019, the RBAs and the European Union launched a new joint programme "Taking gender-transformative approaches (GTA) to scale for impact on SDG2 to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture". Supported by the EU, the four-year Programme aims to address the root causes of gender inequalities by embedding GTA in policy dialogue, programmes, institutional cultures and the working modalities of the three Agencies.

29. As part of the joint commitments to stop violence against women and gender-based violence, the RBAs Gender Teams support the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. As part of the Campaign, awareness raising events are jointly organized and hosted by the three agencies. On Friday 20 September, UN Women-UNITE Secretariat confirmed that the UNSG has requested the 16 Days campaign for both 2019 and 2020 to focus on rape as a specific form of violence against women and girls, under the broader Generation Equality campaign for Beijing+25.

30. For Beijing+25 - the RBAs have been designated as the co-lead agencies of the IANGWE whose other members include: ITCILO, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNOPS, UN Women, OHCHR, and the Indigenous Peoples and Development Branch/DISD/DESA. Activities of the working group include developing an advocacy paper making the case for investing in rural women and girls; preparing and participating in an IANGWE side event focused on rural women and girls are CSW64; and coordinate the activities of the group.

31. The RBAs also collaborate on the CFS workstream on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition, and the annual celebration of International Women's Day.

Informal Joint Meeting of the FAO Council, and IFAD and WFP Executive Boards

32. The third Informal Joint Meeting of the RBA Governing Bodies was held in September 2019 at WFP HQ. The Joint meeting provided both Member States and Observers the opportunity to discuss RBA collaboration in an informal setting with the FAO Director-General, President of IFAD, and Executive Director of WFP. Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General, opened the morning segment of the meeting as representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Deputy Secretary-General provided a statement focused on the United Nations development system reform, including its implications for the RBAs – inciting a fruitful morning discussion with Members. The overall meeting focused on the following four main areas of common interest to both the RBAs and Member States: i) implementation on the UN Reform; ii) RBA Sahel Action Plan; iii) Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and; iv) Approaches to Engaging the Private Sector. In advance of the meeting, the RBAs disseminated and posted to their respective agency websites: (i) Rome-based Agencies Plan of Action for the Sahel; (ii) ERP Implementation and Review of Potential Compatibilities within Rome-based Agencies; and (iii) an update on RBA Corporate services.

33. On the margins of the Informal Joint Meeting, the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) Secretariat formally launched the synthesis report of the MOPAN case study on country-level collaboration between FAO, IFAD, and WFP. The report findings triggered an interactive discussion between the three agencies and Member States on how collaboration among the RBAs can further evolve on the ground and in support of SDG2. The agencies provided their feedback and perspectives on collaboration moving forward, recognizing the need for initiatives to be in line with and fully responsive to national priorities and commitments.

International Digital Council for Food and Agriculture

34. In January 2019, the agriculture ministers of 74 nations adopted a number of resolutions stated in a political communique about digitalization in agriculture issued during the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA). The GFFA Communique 2019 noted that smart solutions are needed to reconcile conflicting goals and meet the current and future demand for safe and nutritious food and feed. The communique (line 167) states that FAO to draw up, in consultation with stakeholders including the World Bank, African Development Bank, IFAD, OECD, WTO, ITU, OIE and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA), a concept for considering the establishment of an international Digital Council for Food and Agriculture that will advise governments and other relevant actors, drive the exchange of ideas and experiences and consequently help everyone harness the opportunities presented by the digitalization” Against this backdrop the first consultation meeting with multi-stakeholders for the establishment of the Council was held in June 2019. Subsequent to that workshop, there has been interviews with individuals participating in that workshop to provide feedback on documents and inputs to the principles, organization, funding mechanisms and strategic objectives of the Digital Council. A concept note has been prepared and

discussed in September 2019 and presented at a side event at the 46th Session of the Committee on World Food Security.

Minimum Dietary Diversity-Women (MDD-W) indicator

35. The global level project is a multi-country research project on optimizing the operationalization of collecting the Minimum Dietary Diversity-Women (MDD-W) indicator in the field, with three participating countries, namely, Cambodia, Ethiopia and Zambia. Collaborations with RBAs include the following: A RBA meeting was organized in November 2018 to discuss the way forward in getting more countries to collect and use MDDW data. A capacity development workshop of country representatives from sub-Saharan Africa is planned for first quarter of 2020. A MDD-W Coordination Team, composed of global experts and representatives of IFAD, WFP, Bioversity, GIZ and EU.

Nutrition

36. Under the umbrella of the Agenda 2030 and of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, RBAs have continued to collaborate on nutrition through several platforms, including the UN Network for SUN (UNN) and the UN Steering Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) and the Nutrition Sensitive Value Chain Technical Working Group.

37. The RBAs have submitted an update on the progress achieved over the past two years in support of the Decade of Action. This update will be incorporated in the consolidated UN Secretary General's biennial report to the General Assembly. The 2nd biennial report is due in December 2019.

38. The United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) hosted by FAO has sought to maximize global policy coherence and advocacy on nutrition since 1977; the UN Network is one of the Networks of the SUN Movement, created by the Principals of the RBAs, plus UNICEF and WHO in 2013 to provide an entry point through which agencies can engage in a coordinated manner with SUN Movement processes and efforts. The two entities share a common Steering Committee membership, which include the RBAs, UNICEF and WHO.

39. In line with goals set out by the UN Reform, the above mentioned five UN Agencies have harnessed the positive experiences of the UNN and of UNSCN and started discussing the possibility of converging the two coordinating mechanisms into the establishment of the UN Nutrition Group (UNNG). Discussions started in 2018 under the guidance of UNSCN Chair, with the support and guidance of the Deputies of all the five agencies. The RBAs under UNSCN have collaborated in the development of technical discussion papers to ensure common messages.

RBA Seminar on UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2417

40. In February 2019, the Netherlands organized a seminar on the topic of hunger and conflict – focusing on how the RBAs can support the implementation of Resolution 2417. The seminar brought together various stakeholders to discuss what concrete actions the RBAs can take to accelerate implementation of the resolution. The session highlighted the need to further examine the root causes of conflict and hunger, taking into consideration the climate dimension – as both conflict and climate are fuelling one another.

RBA visit to Burundi

41. In November 2018, RBA focal points from HQ and the Burundi country offices undertook a joint mission to visit a milk value chain where all three RBAs are working together with the private sector. The collaboration in Burundi is a unique example of public-private partnership along the milk value chain. The value chain begins by the production of enriched animal fodder produced by a feed processing unit provided by FAO. The fodder is utilized to boost the production of cow milk. IFAD provides one cow per household and often a pregnant cow is provided. In this way, another member of the community receives the calf – a powerful form of asset building since the pass on calf system will continue in what is called the "Community solidarity chain." The milk produced from the cow is then brought to a local milk collection centre, which is organized by IFAD. The collection centre pools milk from various farmer cooperatives organized by IFAD throughout Gitega. IFAD contributes to building the milk collection centres, along with providing equipment to collect the milk. From the

local collection centre, a representative transports the milk to the main collection centre at Bugendana. Here, the milk quality is tested and stored. The Modern Dairy Burundi (MDB) comes to retrieve the milk and transports it to its factory. To facilitate the commercialization of milk, WFP partnered with MDB, the only Ultra High Temperature (UHT) sterilized milk factory in Burundi. WFP provided capacity building on milk quality standards, processing and control. The milk produced by MDB is utilized by WFP school meals programmes in Gitega.

School Food and Nutrition Programme

42. The Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) Working Group comprises the RBAs and was created to prepare the HGSF Resource Framework that was published in October 2018. The Framework supports governments through the process of policy formulation, implementation and evaluation of school meals programmes. It also brings together the technical expertise of different stakeholders in a programmatic, coherent, and accessible way for countries requesting technical assistance. Currently the group is developing a joint e-learning course based on this HGSF Resource Framework. In Africa, the RBAs have been working in close collaboration with NEPAD CAADP, and the AU on HGSF. Other countries in which RBAs are collaborating on School Food and Nutrition programmes include Burundi, Zambia, Senegal, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Armenia, and Tajikistan. Additionally, FAO and WFP are collaborating on the development of School Meals Guidelines.

Senior Consultative Group (SCG) Meetings, followed by Informal meetings of the RBA SCG with Member States

43. The RBA Senior Consultative Group (SCG), composed of the senior management of FAO, IFAD and WFP, met three times in 2019. The Group has committed to meeting on a triannual basis to discuss the latest developments in RBA collaboration. A number of matters were reviewed and endorsed by the SCG, *inter alia*, including: latest developments in the UN reform; joint RBA visits; RBA Action plan; Sahel Action Plan; joint country strategies; and the RBA Award of Excellence.

44. In an effort to advance dialogue and engagement with Member States on RBA collaboration, the agencies collectively agreed to hold informal briefing sessions with Members following meetings of the SCG. The briefing sessions are hosted on a rotational basis among the agencies and by the host agency of the SCG meeting. Three informal briefing sessions were held in 2019 (February, May, October). The briefing sessions stimulated an interactive dialogue between the RBAs and Member States and offered an opportunity to discuss progress in collaboration, potential next steps and the RBAs engagement with regard to the UN reform.

South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC)

45. In March 2019, the RBAs coordinated their joint participation in the Second United Nations High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The Conference is also known as "BAPA+40" commemorated the 40th anniversary of the adoption in 1978 of the "Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC). On this occasion, the RBAs organized three side-events: (i) "Assessing the contribution of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) to development results in agriculture, rural development, food security and nutrition,"; (ii) "Investing in South-South Cooperation for better food security, nutrition and rural transformation: the role and contributions of China and the United Nations Rome-based agencies," organized together with China; and (iii) "Creating benefits for smallholder farmers through farmer-to-farmer exchanges".

46. In September 2019, the RBAs organized a joint celebration for UN SSTC day at WFP HQ. The event focused on the contribution of the three agencies to SDG2 through SSTC and how they plan to implement the BAPA+40 outcome document. It featured voices from some member state representatives, project specialists, and the RBAs, shedding light on concrete country examples and opportunities to reach the most vulnerable people through SSTC, in areas such as family farming, market access for rural women, and engagement opportunities for the rural youth.

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)

47. The 2019 edition of *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* was jointly prepared for the third consecutive year by FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. The previous two editions of the report offered evidence indicating that hunger was slowly on the rise, while this edition confirms the upward trend with over 820 million people suffering from hunger worldwide. The report traditionally traced world hunger using the prevalence of undernourishment (PoU), however the 2019 report introduced another indicator from the global SDG monitoring framework: the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES). The FIES indicator measures whether individuals had regular access to nutritious and sufficient food – even if they were not necessarily suffering from hunger. The findings indicate that hunger is on the rise in many countries who have experienced economic shocks, with economic downturns having a disproportionate effect on food security and nutrition where inequalities are more prevalent. In response to the alarming trend, the report calls for action in two main areas: safeguarding food security and nutrition through economic and social policies that help counteract the effects of economic shocks and second, tackling existing inequalities at all levels through multisectoral policies.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on Tour

48. The RBAs participated in the Goals on Tour, a global campaign to create public awareness and increase support for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sixteen shipping containers filled with content pertaining to the SDGs embarked on a journey across the globe. The RBAs sponsored a container representing their collective work on SDG2, highlighting the agencies shared vision of the sustainable development agenda. The exhibition's first stop was the 5th edition of the Seeds & Chips Global Food Innovation Summit, held in May 2019 in Milan. The objective of Seeds & Chips is to foster debate on food security and innovation, involve relevant stakeholders and deliver solutions that can actively contribute to achieving the targets set by the SDGs.

Sustainable Value Chains for Nutrition

49. The Nutrition-sensitive Value Chains (NSVC) RBA Working Group was created two years ago to undertake joint actions. Since 2018, the group has been developing a joint e-learning module on NSVCs tapping into the rich experiences of each of the agencies and their knowledge products. The Working Group, in collaboration with Bioversity International, has developed a food value chains for nutrition framework and a Nutrition sensitive value chains guide to guide their work. Development of an e-learning course on sustainable nutrition sensitive food value chains is on-going. The Working group has expanded its terms of reference to include cross agency collaboration in areas of assessments, shared technical expertise, learning and program/project implementation at country level. The working group is chaired on a rotational basis.

UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028

50. In December 2017, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 72/239, proclaiming a United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028). As mandated by the resolution, FAO and IFAD co-organized the Global Launch of the UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2029, held in May 2019 in Rome. The launch was attended by close to 500 participants, including 236 family farmers and representatives of civil society, private sector, and more than 230 delegates from 113 countries. Along with the RBA Principals, The President of the UN General Assembly, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to FAO, IFAD and WFP, and Ministers from all regions delivered remarks during the Global Launch. On the occasion of the launch, stakeholders adopted the Global Action Plan (GAP), a comprehensive framework intended to guide actions to be taken by various actors and stakeholders over the ten year period.

UN General Assembly 74th Session High-Level Side Event

51. In September 2019, the RBAs together with Ireland, Malawi, the Kingdom of Norway and the World Economic Forum (WEF), convened a side event on the margins of the High-level Week of the 74th UN General Assembly. The high-level side-event entitled "*Countdown to 2030: Transforming our Food Systems to achieve the SDGs*" provided an opportunity for leaders from governments, civil society, private sector and the UN system to exchange knowledge on initiatives and efforts underway

to transition our food systems as sustainable transformative pathways to accelerate, and potentially multiply progress toward the 2030 Agenda. The inclusive discussion highlighted the need to take urgent action across sectors and with a variety of stakeholders, to ensure that policy actions are identified that not only build more sustainable food systems, but also support inclusive economic growth, the safeguarding of biodiversity, and the increased understanding of what constitutes healthy eating.

VI. Collaboration on Corporate Services

52. The RBAs, subject to availability of resources and consistent with each Party's legal and technical requirements and the decisions of their Governing Bodies, continue to collaborate extensively in the area of corporate services on a wide range of activities, including on security and business continuity, corporate procurement, human resources, health services, information technology, privileges and immunities, travel and Visa, and corporate environmental responsibility. These areas continue to yield results of the RBA collaboration. This section of the document provides an update on oversight and hosting agreements in the field and highlights an area not previously mentioned as an area of collaboration: risk management.

Hosting agreements in the field

53. Currently FAO hosts IFAD in eight country offices, in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Burundi, Madagascar, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Egypt (Agreements concluded between 2011 and 2015). In addition, FAO provides IFAD with office space for storage in Yemen. Since 2015, FAO and IFAD have been sharing joint premises in Ghana provided by the Government. Subsequently all administrative and security expenses for the joint premises are co-shared by the two agencies. It is expected that in the next two or three years IFAD will enter into additional service-level agreements with FAO and/or WFP, thus increasing collaboration among the RBAs in areas such as field security, field security training, general administration, human resources and IT support. In some countries, IFAD uses FAO host country agreements to extend privileges and immunities to its staff and operations. WFP liaises with IFAD and FAO facility managers on common services agreements including maintenance and printing services and LTAs regarding the management of premises. Currently WFP hosts FAO in nine countries: Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Kenya, the Niger, Philippines, South Africa, Turkey and Zimbabwe. WFP hosts IFAD in four countries: Nepal, South Africa, the Niger and Zambia. Moreover, WFP has very often, where feasible, shared premises with IFAD and FAO at the national and subnational levels. IFAD country offices enjoy extremely collaborative IT and technical support from their FAO and WFP partners in hosted country offices.

Oversight

54. In May 2019, the three RBAs co-organized the 17th meeting of Heads of Internal Audit in International Organizations in Europe, which was hosted by FAO. Over 50 participants from 35 organizations attended the meeting. The agenda focused on the key areas of interest to the members of the internal audit profession. Training was organized on fraud risk assessment and social media cybersecurity controls for participants the three Offices of the Inspector General in Rome. In parallel to the meeting, WFP initiated an interagency network on IT auditing, the second meeting of which is taking place in Geneva on the 25 October.

55. The tenth annual meeting between FAO's Office of the Inspector General, IFAD's Office of Audit and Oversight and WFP's Inspector General and Oversight Office, Office of Internal Audit, was held in June 2019, hosted by IFAD. The three agencies shared their workplans and discussed areas of potential joint work and audit and investigation experiences, including methodologies, challenges and lessons learned. Internal and external experts, including the heads of IT for the three agencies, spoke to the group and provided insights on emerging technologies.

Risk Management

56. All three RBAs are currently participating in a system-wide HLCCM risk management working group, which is co-chaired by the WFP Chief Risk Officer. The working group has agreed (and the HLCCM has endorsed) a risk maturity model for use by all participating United Nations agencies (about 25 in all). Several United Nations agencies, including WFP, are piloting the maturity model, and feedback on its use as a management tool is due to be presented to the HLCCM at its October 2019 meeting.

57. Under the guidance of the HLCCM, the risk working group has been asked to consider three key areas for fostering common approaches among United Nations agencies: risk appetite; embedding risk into planning; and risk information sharing. IFAD is leading the workstream on risk appetite and WFP is leading (with FAO contributing to) the workstream on risk information sharing. Progress will be presented to the HLCCM in October.

VII. CONCLUSION

58. The continued strengthening of RBA collaboration is consistent with the implementation of the United Nations Development System reforms which seek increase ambition, efficiency, effectiveness, collaboration and accountability amongst all entities of the UN development system. The RBAs utilize every opportunity to engage in coordinated actions as the lead group of agencies within the UNDS to deliver SDG2 and the broader 2030 Agenda. In this context, the RBAs will also continue to advance new strategies, programmes and activities that are in line with their mandates, comparative advantages and distinctive strengths, building on the expertise and technical skills of each agency, as a means for greater effectiveness and impact. Additionally, FAO, IFAD, and WFP will continue to analyse their partnerships for good practices, lessons learnt, innovative solutions and potential efficiency gains, all of which aid in enhancing collaboration at all levels.

59. Through this progress report, the Informal Joint Meeting of the FAO Council, and IFAD and WFP Executive Boards, and the now established informal seminars following the RBA Senior Consultative Group meetings, RBA management and Member States are engaged in a continuous dialogue with regards to the collaborative efforts of FAO, IFAD, and WFP. The RBAs will continue to update Member States on interests of common concern in the context of the four pillars of RBA Collaboration: : (i) country and regional levels; (ii) global collaboration; (iii) collaboration in thematic areas; and (iv) joint provision of corporate services.

Brief Update on the RBAs Engagement in the Reform of the United Nations Development System

Background

1. The aim of the repositioning of the UN Development System, (UNGA [Resolution 72/279](#)) is to enhance the delivery and effectiveness of the UN as a primary support to Member States' achievement of the SDGs. For the RBAs, this means more ambitious and integrated collective efforts to end hunger, achieve improved food security and nutrition, promote sustainable food production, and advance the well-being of the rural poor.
2. Stronger RBA collaboration and coordination are integral to the repositioning of the UNDS as the reform provides a concrete opportunity for taking forward many proposals to improve purposeful partnerships. The joint RBA action plan for 2019-2020, including the joint RBA action plan for the Sahel and the joint country plans, are important examples of the synergies that can be developed across the RBAs for increased effectiveness and efficiency. While RBA collaboration is central to enhanced system-wide coherence, it is also recognized that partnership goes well beyond the three agencies, and the RBAs must also continue to leverage partnerships with other development actors such as with other UN entities, the Private Sector, Civil Society, IFIs and others to meet the SDGs.
3. At the recent Joint RBA Governing Body meeting on 13th September with the UN DSG in attendance, the RBAs engaged with members states extensively on complementary business models. They highlighted the increasing RBA collaborative endeavours on country-level delivery as a key entry-point to ensuring the agencies successfully and collectively influence the ambitious efforts of the UN reform on the ground. This entails identifying means to further enhance the synergies of joint interventions in country. By building on the comparative advantages and complementary technical expertise of the agencies, the RBAs should reduce duplication of efforts, thereby delivering in a more coordinated and synergetic manner.
4. In the past two years, the RBAs have reaffirmed their strong commitment to engage in the implementation of the UNDS Reform to ensure the system is fit for purpose to contribute to supporting national development plans at the request of member states, but also to support regional and global efforts across the development system to achieve the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. The agencies have actively contributed to key reform elements and processes, while developing common positions on issues of concern.
5. The RBAs recognize the significant progress achieved in finalisation and delivery of several reform products. Following the UNSDG and CEB Meetings (Geneva, 8-10 May 2019) and the ECOSOC (Operational Activities-for-development Segment) Meetings in New York (in May and more recently during the UNGA in September) there is broad consensus that the implementation mandate given under the UN Resolution (31 May 2018) is progressing with several aspects of the reform still in a design phase.

Some key developments in the UNDS reforms with active RBA participation

6. UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF): The UNSDCF has been redesigned to serve as the most important planning framework for the provision of the entire UN system's development assistance as the country level. The RBAs participated in the development of the revised UNSDCF guidelines - which indicate that entity specific planning instruments must be mutually coherent and consistent with the UNSDCF. In this regard, the RBAs are taking measures to align their country planning instruments to the UNSDCF. For instance, FAO has revised the Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) guidelines to integrate the UNSDCF guidelines and integrate the processes, FAO CPFs will be derived from the UNSDCF and will integrate RBAs country level joint programming. IFAD and WFP have developed guidance for their Country Offices' engagement in the development of the UNSDCF and Common Country Analysis and the alignment of their respective country programme documents. In the spirit of RBA collaboration and in light of IFAD's limited country representation – as and when needed, IFAD will seek the support of FAO and WFP

representatives to highlight IFAD priorities in UNCTs, for instance, in those cases when IFAD may not be able to participate in some of the discussions on the development of the UNSDCF.

7. UN Common Country Analysis (CCA): The CCA is being significantly enhanced to underpin the new UNSDCF. WFP was part of the “CCA design team” for this revamped tool. The new generation of CCAs will be developed collaboratively by the UN Country Team. Non-resident agencies can contribute to the CCA when relevant., The RBAs have agreed, wherever possible, to engage collectively in the preparation of CCAs, working closely with the Resident Coordinators (RCs), particularly to build a strong case for action on SDG2 and related goals and targets, ensuring full and explicit attention to the contribution of food and agriculture to sustainable development in the UNSDCF.

8. UN System-Wide Strategic Document (SWSD). The SWSD, requested by Member States, is a UNDS currently with Member States for final approval, which seeks to set the strategic intent of the UN reform at the global, regional and country level to best support member states in achieving their nationally defined priorities, with the 2030 Agenda at the center. The SWSD provides a concise overview of all elements of the reform and articulates how these reform elements are being designed and implemented in a coherent manner to enhance the UN’s comparative advantages and strengthen its development offer. The RBAs participated extensively in the development of this document. Moving forward, the RBAs will ensure that the broad principles of the SWSD are embedded in their respective strategic visions and corresponding individual and collective activities.

9. Reinvigorated Resident Coordinator (RC) system: The strengthened and impartial RC is now in a better position to lead and coordinate the UN Country Team and their collective contribution to the 2030 Agenda. The RBAs are committed to working closely with the RCs in this new collaborative spirit and to seize tangible benefits from the improved communication and coordination and thus to ensure issues related to agriculture, rural development, food security and nutrition gain the required attention at the country level for meeting the SDGs.

10. Business Innovations Strategic Results Group (BIG): A key request from member states is a more efficient and effective UNDS. Through the work of the Business Innovations Strategic Results Group (BIG) of the UNSDG, comprised some 40 UN entities and is currently co-chaired by the Principals of WFP and UNHCR, new tools and approaches to country level coherence are being rolled out. For example, Mutual Recognition, signed by FAO and WFP along with 14 other UNDS entities, is intended to readily enable UN entities to use or rely on other entities’ policies, procedures, system contracts, and related operational mechanisms. This is a departure from the barrier to collaborating through shared services, greatly increasing operational agility by removing the need to review other providers’ different policies and procedures before entering into a service agreement. The Business Operations Strategy (BOS) is a results-based framework which encourages UN entities to work together at the country level, reduces duplication, leverages collective purchasing power and maximizes economies of scales. The RBAs are currently interacting with UNCTs in respective duty stations with a view to joining BOS efforts, where appropriate, through formally signing the strategy paper developed at the country office level. One of the key drivers for the RBAs participation in the new BOS is a clear cost efficiency gain, along with increased effectiveness. IFAD is developing a corporate approach to signing the BOS in counties where it has a field presence.

Resilience Activities

1. In 2015, the Rome Based Agencies (RBA) affirmed its joint commitment to support the resilience of food-insecure people in relation to shocks that affect their livelihoods and food systems. The common focus of the three UN agencies is to strengthen the resilience of rural poor, vulnerable and food insecure people's livelihoods and agriculture production systems.
2. The common focus of the RBAs' efforts is to strengthen resilience of the agriculture livelihoods and food systems. Building the resilience at system level, is part of the key building blocking of the UN Common Guidance on Resilience, as well as supporting essential capacities of organizations and people, namely: absorptive capacity; adaptive capacity; and transformative capacity.
3. The RBA resilience joint work has 3 main characteristics:
 - a) Adopting a common approach adapted to the specific challenges faced by each country/community (system approach, multiple risk and sectors and context specific) and reflecting the specific strengths of each agency at the country level.
 - b) Blending all RBAs best tools which are brought together, bringing more coherence and convergence to what the three agencies are doing at the field level, especially on programming, monitoring and learning.
 - c) Concretely testing and refining joined up actions to address the root causes of food insecurity and undernutrition in protracted crises (including multiple risk from shocks and stressors and related vulnerabilities)
4. Since the endorsement of the RBA inter-agency framework, the three agencies have developed joint programmes to translate the joint aspiration in to actions on the ground.
5. As evidenced by feedback received from the RBA country teams, strengthening the resilience of rural communities and farmers to food and nutrition insecurity has emerged recently as one of the major focus areas for the RBAs joint work on the ground. Over 30 RBA country offices across all the regions were engaged in various forms of partnerships on resilience activities, adapted to the specific country context and external drivers, such as environmental challenges and climatic shocks, natural disasters, humanitarian crises and conflicts.
6. Specific examples include: The RBA Canada funded (USD 38 million) resilience programme (2017-2020) aims to address immediate food needs while building and protecting medium- and long-term livelihoods in three protracted crisis contexts (Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger and Somalia) affected by multiple risk and with acute and chronic food insecurity and malnutrition.
7. In the Sahel, within the framework of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), the RBAs have teamed up on resilience of livelihoods, based on their complementary approaches, tools and services, to 1) respond to the most immediate humanitarian needs of vulnerable communities, 2) contribute to addressing the root causes of vulnerabilities to natural disasters and man-made crises, and 3) contribute to social cohesion and sustaining peace.
8. Other examples include: the RBA Agriculture Production Programme in Zambia, and in Guatemala with the Rural Dry-Corridor Agriculture Programme.
9. The RBA partnership on resilience building is a good example of coherent and convergent efforts for addressing both the immediate needs of those most affected by hunger and food insecurity, but also for tackling root causes of the vulnerability of their agriculture livelihoods system on which they depend. Quintessential to the implementation strategy of the RBA is that the RBA joint programmes focus on:
 - a) Multi-Year funding and planning with multi-sectoral and system approach
 - b) Addressing Humanitarian-Development –Peace gaps increasing inter-agency collaboration with complementary approaches and activities

- c) Focusing on protracted/recurrent crises affected by multiple hazards and stressors and fragile contexts
- d) Increasing inclusiveness with participation of and accountability to affected most vulnerable populations, with a particular focus on women and girls, and marginal groups

10. The RBA conceptual framework informs the understanding, scope and modalities of how the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) support the resilience of food-insecure people in relation to multiple shocks and stressors that affect their livelihoods and food systems; and provides a way for the agencies to seek and build complementary alignment across agencies ensuring that RBA collaboration is result oriented and cost-effective.

11. These RBA gains are achieved using common tools and good practices through joint analysis and planning through the “Three Pronged Approach” (3PA³), joint targeting, joint impact measurement through the FAO Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis tool (RIMA⁴), and joint activities implementation and this further reinforce the need for joined-up multi-actor resilience programming and learning as stressed by the UN common guidance on resilience.

12. Building on such examples, in 2018, the UN Community contributed to the development of the interagency broader UN Common Guidance on Resilience which seeks to identify different entry points for UN agencies to build complementary alignment across existing agency-specific approaches to supporting the resilience building of specific systems in countries. The RBA collaboration is a concrete example of partnership for building resilience, currently implemented and field-tested in several countries and that is efficient and results oriented, further informing the ongoing country/region validation phase of the UN common guidance on resilience.

13. Although less than 5 years old, the RBA partnership on resilience building is a good example of coherent and convergent efforts for addressing both the immediate needs of those most affected by hunger and food insecurity, but also for tackling root causes of the vulnerability and the multiple threats of their agriculture livelihoods system on which they depend. These principles and common characteristics have provided and will continue to play a key foundation role for the broader UN and partner’s engagement in the UN Common Guidance on Resilience.

³ The 3PA is comprised of three processes at three levels: Integrated Context Analysis (ICA) at the national level, the Seasonal Livelihood Programming (SLP) at the sub-national level, and the Community-Based Participatory Planning (CBPP) at the local level

⁴ RIMA is the FAO Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis tool

Country Level Collaboration

Colombia

1. Within the framework of the global MOU signed in 2018 and the RBA joint Planning and Programming Pilot, RBA efforts to improve the implementation of country strategies and coordinating activities have been initiated, with an emphasis in the regions where there are complementary operations, mainly the PDET areas (Development Plans with territorial approach). Strategic meetings have been held between FAO, IFAD, and WFP aimed at identifying opportunities for programmatic convergence and joint action; and, efforts to ensure a coordinated approach to the design of the new UNSDCF through dialogues with UNCT and Government.
2. The triple Nexus approach (humanitarian-development-peace) is the articulating axis of the RBA collaboration. The crisis response of migrants and victims of the armed conflict is the first stage in this process, pointing directly to access to food and recovery of nutritional status. Subsequently, the recovery of livelihoods, resilience and adaptation to climate change, rural development and access to local markets are the joint activities implemented at different scales. Finally, peace building, as a United Nations priority in Colombia, has been an opportunity for RBAs to generate innovative response models.
3. Partners involved in the partnership include: Ministry of Agriculture (MADR), Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS), Victims Unit (UARIV), Risk Management Unit (UNGRD), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Chancellery), the National Planning Department (DNP) and the institutions responsible for implementation of the peace agreement led by the High Council for stabilization and consolidation; Territorial renewal agency (ART), Reintegration Agency (ARN). In addition to the joint RBA initiative, civil society, private sector and international cooperation play a key role to support the implementation of the Peace Agreements, provide opportunities for rural communities and transform the rural agenda.
4. In 2019, the RBAs committed to working closer together and agreed to work on 5 strategic components; Crisis response, resilience and adaptation to climate change, food security and nutrition (Including supplementary feeding programme), access to markets and peace building. As a result of this work, RBAs have been working on a joint work matrix with specific objectives, products and results of this collaboration. During CFS 46 the three agencies presented the main results, opportunities and challenges for their joint work aimed at complying their institutional mandates and aligned with the Colombian government priorities.
5. Several factors have already contributed to the early success of the partnership, most importantly, leadership and adjustments within the framework of United Nations cooperation. Also, the process of formulating a new UNSDCF supported the revision and adjustments to the country plans of all UN agencies in Colombia. Additionally, national and local government created opportunities to position the work of the RBA in spaces of policy formulation and implementation of government programs. In this regard, for 2019 World Food Day celebration in Colombia, the RBAs will host a full-day event with the GoC and other key stakeholders to strengthen their policy engagement and partnership with policy-makers and the private sector to ensure nutrition-sensitive policies and projects.
6. Several challenges have occurred including the current country context with increasing crises around migration flows, armed conflict with new illegal actors, implementation of the peace agreement and communities affected by natural disasters and climate change. Therefore, the RBAs are aware that their complementarity and cooperation are fundamental to overcome institutional barriers and recent challenges for rural development and the achievement of the SDG 2 "Zero Hunger".
7. A key lesson learned so far has been the preparation of the joint work plan among the RBAs has been a lesson learned, and has allowed the rapid assessment of each agencies capacities.

Kenya

8. The RBA collaboration remains strategic to address Kenya's challenges related to food and nutrition security. Over the past year, inter-agency consultations informed country programme evaluation and design of the new FAO, IFAD, and WFP country programmes and frameworks. Aligned with the Government's national priorities enshrined in the Big Four Agenda, the Agricultural Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy and the Medium-Term Plan III, the RBA country programmes present an array of opportunities to jointly deliver the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2018-2022) and the Sustainable Development Goals.

9. Common priority areas of intervention include support to Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) on sustainable rural transformation, inclusive value chains, resilient livelihoods, improving efficiency of food systems, nutrition-sensitive agriculture and strengthening public institutional capacities at all levels. The RBA are also investing in inter-agency knowledge exchange and evidence generation as IFAD and FAO are part of the Reference Group to monitor and evaluate WFP resilience and food systems outcome in Kenya.

10. This window of collaboration has also generated new opportunities for partnerships, where FAO and WFP are promoting economic integration of refugees and host communities under the Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Programme (KISED). The collaboration includes other UN agencies such as UNHCR, UNICEF and UN Habitat. This is in line with the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).

11. The inter-agency work is also contributing to the implementation of UNDAF towards Sustainable Economic Growth, especially at the programmatic level, through the "Kenya Cereal Enhancement Programme-Climate Resilient Agricultural Livelihoods Window" (KCEP-CRAL). The KCEP-CRAL is designed to improve food security and incomes for 185,000 smallholder farmers in the high- to medium-potential areas and in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) areas of the country by increasing the productivity and profitability of cereals and pulses.

12. KCEP-CRAL capitalizes on the comparative advantages of the agencies in support to Kenya's devolved governments. It combines FAO's technical support to improve smallholder farmers' sustainable productivity and profitability through conservation agriculture, with IFAD's support to the transition of smallholders to resilient market based farming. The programme includes an innovative e-voucher system to facilitate access to inputs. The programme offers a window for smallholders who benefitted from WFP's food assistance programmes and are ready to engage in more market-oriented agriculture, thus proposing a gradual pathway towards self-reliance.

13. Overall, KCEP-CRAL has reached a total of 106,306 farmers (46,795 female adult, 37,055 male adult, 13,66 female youth and 8,790 male youth). Between 2016 and 2019, over 6,000 farmers (933 male adult, 4,246 female adult, 67 male youth and 822 female youth) who participated in previous WFP livelihoods programme applied for KCEP-CRAL through the e-voucher package. Out of these, 1,253 WFP beneficiaries (16.4% male adult, 71.7% female adult, 11.4% female youth and 0.5% male youth) were able to mobilize the necessary 10% contribution and access e-voucher inputs. The agencies continue to pursue efforts to strengthen coordination of its operations. An ongoing assessment will provide recommendations for increasing enrolment rates of previously WFP-supported graduated beneficiaries into the programme.

14. The RBAs are also currently piloting the establishment of a robust database for the various programmes and interventions to foster synergies and, to avoid duplications of efforts among the RBA supported activities. It is expected that the pilot would provide a model of consolidated database for the consideration of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. Access to consolidated, real-time data is aimed at increasing the government's capacity to monitor the developmental impact in the agriculture sector in line with the Big Four Agenda and Agriculture transformation agenda in the country including eliminating hunger by 2030.

15. Efforts made over the past year are contributing to an efficient use of time and resources as the RBAs seek to deliver a common message to government counterparts. Despite encouraging results of the RBA collaboration in Kenya, challenges remain at operational level, with limited RBA geographical presence as well as inadequate internal capacities to ensure consistent joint programme planning and implementation. In the long-term, a stronger platform for in-country collaboration would require investments in a joint RBA country strategic framework. In the meantime, greater synergies can be explored during the annual and mid-term reviews of the respective agency-specific country frameworks.

Kyrgyz Republic

16. RBA collaboration in the Kyrgyz Republic is continuing to strengthen through the implementation of joint programmes, building synergies and complementarities, joint fundraising, communications and partnerships.

17. Following a second joint retreat by FAO and WFP in 2018, an updated joint workplan was developed for 2019 in line with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the FAO Country Programming Framework and the WFP Country Strategic Plan. The workplan covers joint activities in the areas of food security and nutrition, rural development, climate change and disaster risk management and communications.

18. FAO and WFP co-chair the working group meetings under the Development Partners Coordination Council (DPCC) for Agriculture and Rural Development, Food Security and Nutrition. Moreover FAO, WFP and UNDP co-chair the DPCC working group on the Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management. WFP and FAO are co-leading the food security cluster within the Disaster Risk Coordination Unit, intersectoral coordination to ensure food security in case of emergencies.

19. FAO, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, in consultation with development partners, drafted a set of recommendations for the development of a "Food Security and Nutrition Policy" to coordinate the meaningful collaboration between state and international partners, taking into account the priorities of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and Agenda 2030 commitments, particularly SDG 2. FAO, UNICEF, WFP and the World Bank provided technical support to the Food Security and Nutrition Programme (2018-2023). In June 2019, the Food Security and Nutrition Programme was endorsed by the Government and the decree was signed by the Prime-Minister.

20. The joint collaboration under Sustainable Forest and Land Management led to the adoption, in May 2019, of the Concept of Forestry development of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2040. FAO, UNDP and WFP are jointly implementing Outcome 1 of PBF "Communities restore cross-border linkages and trust by jointly addressing interdependent needs/challenges associated with community infrastructure and natural resources, as well as by establishing platforms of confidence-building and cooperation between various societal groups." Together with the Government, FAO-WFP agree to joint work plan, FAO provides technical inputs to the establishment of demonstration sites on drip irrigation, water distribution and measurement, remote water measuring instruments. WFP provides practical training on FAO demonstration sites for their beneficiaries.

21. FAO, IFAD, UN Women, and WFP have been successfully responding to the multidimensional challenges faced by rural women, based on the comparative advantages and expertise of these agencies complementing each other's interventions under the Joint Programme "Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women" (JP RWEE). The Joint Programme provides a platform for the four Agencies to join resources to achieve a common objective through the sharing of experiences, good practices and lessons learned.

22. Under the JP RWEE, a total of 8,156 beneficiaries (of which 7,150 women and 1,006 men) and 27,738 family members are supported in 5 provinces (Osh, Jalalabad, Batken, Naryn & Chui) thanks to the generous contribution of the governments of Norway and Sweden. The project participants benefited from WFP's innovative food assistance interventions, such as the Food for Training (FFT) modality which included training activities such as business planning, financial literacy, value chain development, entrepreneurship and nutrition awareness. WFP also supports

selected groups with small scale equipment for income generation and processing of agricultural surpluses in order to reduce harvest losses. FAO provides beneficiaries with the knowledge and skills in advanced, modern agricultural technologies and agricultural inputs (seeds and equipment). Beneficiaries also benefited from UN Women's support to enhance women's leadership and political participation as well as IFAD's Household Methodologies (HHMs) like the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) and Business Action Learning for Innovation (BALI), which encourage change at the household level by challenging harmful social norms, attitudes and behaviours and improve intra-household gender relations. A recent evaluation highlighted the contribution of the JP to the Agenda 2030 and several Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goal).

23. FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP continue to implement the "Cross-border Cooperation for Sustainable Peace and Development" Project funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). This is the only project that consolidates the efforts of five different UN agencies on each side of the border, where each agency uses its comparative advantage in achieving results for peace and sustainable development in cross-border communities.

24. FAO and WFP work within the School Meals Programme to provide expert advice to the Government, including the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Melioration (MAFIM), in order to revise and facilitate the programme's rules and formalities. This includes utilizing locally-produced food to improve the schools' nutrition and making use of school lands for farming in order to benefit the schools.

25. In May 2019, FAO, UNICEF and WFP provided expert and technical support to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Melioration (MAFIM) and conducted the National Forum on Food Security and Nutrition, which included the last round of public consultations on the National Food Security and Nutrition Programme (2018-2023).

26. FAO, UNICEF and WFP are supporting the government in the formulation and establishment of a functional M&E system for the Food Security and Nutrition Programme, pending its approval by the Government. The M&E system will define the M&E plan, tools and methods, as well as ensure the linkages between how the activities with SDG targets and indicators are progressing.

Laos

27. In 2016, FAO and WFP signed a MoU to strengthen collaboration in areas such as nutrition and nutrition-sensitive agriculture, disaster risk reduction and developing community infrastructure. FAO and WFP also co-chair the Food Security and Nutrition Cluster and worked closely on the flood response in 2018/2019. As part of this work, FAO and WFP collaborate on the design and implementation of response strategies for the cluster, and on the development of tools such as the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), with high commitment and cooperation of various ministries, agencies and departments.

28. IFAD and WFP work together on the GAFSP funded Agriculture for Nutrition/Strategic Support for Food Security and Nutrition (AFN/SSFSN) under which WFP assists in the formulation of village development plans, and IFAD, with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, provides the funding for plans that have been endorsed by the district government. FAO has an ongoing project with WFP and IFAD – UTF /LAO/020/LAO Technical Assistance for Strategic Support for Food Security and Nutrition Project.

29. The Director-General of FAO, the Executive Director of WFP, and the Sub-regional Director of the Asia and Pacific region from IFAD, visited the Lao People's Democratic Republic in May 2019. During their visit, the agencies met with the Lao PDR Prime Minister as well as the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Agriculture. They also visited the country's northern area where the Agriculture for Nutrition (AFN) programme is benefiting around 21,000 households in the 400 villages in four northern provinces as well as a school programme that provides healthy meals to children and encourages local food production. AFN is a key programme as it supports both the government's

National Nutrition Strategy to 2025 and Plan of Action 2016-2020 aiming to contribute to the reduction of extreme poverty and malnutrition in the poorest communities.

30. The IFAD President paid a follow up visit in July 2019 to Lao PDR. He was accompanied by country directors of FAO and WFP and the UN resident coordinator to observe the progress of the AFN programme and discuss with the Prime Minister and Government Officials key challenges and policies related to the nexus of climate change adaptation and nutrition security. He held also consultations with the RBA agencies and other development partners on joint programming for nutrition and climate change.

31. Under the IFAD-funded Southern Laos Food Security & Nutrition and Market Linkages Programme (FNML), IFAD and WFP established a partnership to build community resilience through the creation of productive assets and sustainable livelihood development. FAO and IFAD agreed to support technical assistance to the recently approved IFAD funded project on Partnership in Irrigation and Commercialisation for Smallholder Agriculture (PICSA). The TA would foster innovations for climate adaptation in upland agriculture in Lao PDR.

32. Finally, as part of the ASEAN–UN Joint Strategic Plan for Disaster Management 2016–2020, FAO, ILO, UNICEF, UNISRD, and WFP, are strengthening the capacity of ASEAN member states (AMS) to develop risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection for resilience. The project aims to strengthen the capacity of AMS to design and implement risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection systems to reduce the vulnerabilities of at-risk populations, strengthen their capacity to respond to and recover from shocks, and thus enhance households' resilience to mitigate the effects of shocks and improve preparedness for further crises. A case study for Lao PDR was conducted and the report was published in May 2019.

33. The projects under which the three RBAs collaborate lend themselves to partnerships that leverage each agency's strength. For example, when working with the Lao Statistics Bureau on the Lao Expenditures and Consumption Survey (LECS), WFP supported the inclusion of modules for the Food Consumption Score (FCS), while FAO focused on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES). During the flood response in 2018/2019, WFP and FAO received funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), where WFP provided unconditional cash and FAO provided vouchers for agricultural inputs. In the Agriculture for Nutrition project, WFP focuses on nutrition-sensitive planning, while IFAD works with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on financing projects.

34. Differences in how the RBAs engage with the Government present challenges. IFAD and FAO are both project-based and therefore their MOUs are relatively rigid with one government counterpart and less flexibility in terms of operational changes. IFAD no longer has a country presence (there is one national consultant in-country). This presents a challenge in terms of having to rely on IFAD staff that are based abroad.

Lebanon

35. In Lebanon, the RBAs are currently working towards a more structural collaboration to ensure synergies, complement respective Agencies' expertise and initiate joint programming in the domains of resilience and agricultural livelihoods to support food security of refugees and vulnerable Lebanese households.

36. The recently approved EU Madad/Trust Fund joint programme for Lebanon and Jordan will be implemented by the RBAs over the next two years. The programme will support refugees and host communities in strengthening agricultural productivity, farmers' income, creation of job opportunities and promotion of social protection mechanisms. The three agencies will target the same geographical locations and work on a common list of beneficiaries as a basis for complementary interventions, building on commonly agreed vulnerability and targeting criteria. This first official joint collaboration between the three agencies can be the basis for future collaboration and resource mobilization to scale up successful activities together.

37. FAO, IFAD and WFP have been collaborating closely on an ad hoc basis in several technical domains as part of the livelihoods programme. For forestry, WFP has been coordinating with FAO to support the Ministry of Agriculture in achieving the 40 million trees target by 2025. In 2019-2020, FAO and WFP will be jointly working on the implementation of the GEF-funded “Smart Adaptation of Forest Landscapes in Mountain Areas” (SALMA) project through an agreement that is currently being developed. As part of the SALMA project, WFP will be providing seedlings and cash-based transfers to participants, while FAO will support site identification and provide technical support on planting and monitoring of cooperating partners. Regarding design and implementation of irrigation networks, WFP works in close coordination with a coordination unit within the Ministry of Agriculture, established by the IFAD-funded project AgriCal (Climate Smart Agriculture: Enhancing Adaptive Capacity of the Rural Communities in Lebanon).

38. FAO and WFP were also involved in several joint resource mobilization initiatives, such as the Productive Sectors Development Programme, a joint programme developed by WFP, ILO, FAO, UNDP, UNIDO, UNWOMEN and UNICEF. The overall aim of the Productive Sectors Development Programme (PSDP) is to support economic opportunities and job creation in the manufacturing (agro-food) and agriculture sectors with special focus on youth employment and women economic empowerment in disadvantaged areas. Agencies are jointly looking to attract donor’s interest to fund this multi-year programme. Building on this strategy, a joint FAO-WFP-UNIDO-ILO concept note was also submitted to the Human Security Trust Fund.

39. The RBA collaboration contributes to the 2015 – 2019 Strategy of the Ministry of Agriculture; the Resilience and Response Program (3RPs); WFP’s Country Strategic Plan, FAO’s Strategic Framework; IFAD’s Strategic Framework (2016-2025) and the Social Protection National Strategies and Policies. The partnership under the EU Madad/Trust Fund contributes primarily to SDG-2, “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” and SDG-5, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, as well as SDG-1, “End poverty in all its forms everywhere”.

40. Each of the agencies has a well-defined mandate and operational modalities through which it has established its own strengths, including building resilience for food security and nutrition at multiple levels. It is precisely these differences in mandates and modalities that, when brought together, offer great opportunities for strengthening the resilience of food-insecure individuals, households, communities and population groups, including acting upon the systems on which food security depends. It also reaps benefits, as agencies’ approaches strengthen resilience-building work through their diversity of mandates and instruments and build partnership.

41. Partnership between several organizations under one project necessitates to have the same dynamic or relationship with the other groups, such as the government or local institutions. Therefore, each agency has appointed one focal person to follow upon these initiatives and ensure that third parties are approached jointly.

42. Harmonizing the reporting approach between several organizations is relatively challenging as each organization has its own structure and reporting system as well as strict guidelines and requirements from its headquarters. Therefore, it was agreed to delegate one agency – FAO – to take the lead in reporting on the upcoming EU Madad/Trust Fund project.

43. The implementation capacity is not the same between the different organizations. Therefore, a well-established work plan needs to be developed and regular coordination meetings to be held. In Lebanon, the implementation arrangements concerning IFAD portion, it would be used towards co-financing HALEPP project, loan agreement of this project is signed in July 2019 with the government of Lebanon.

44. The nature of projects also presents some challenges. Whether the project targets agriculture infrastructure or reforestation, seasonality highly affects the implementation process and adds challenges to the project. A joint work plan and risk matrix address such challenges.