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Implementation of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019–2028)

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report on the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019–2028), prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, pursuant to Assembly resolution [72/239](#).

* [A/76/150](#).



Report on the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019–2028)

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [72/239](#), in which the Assembly proclaimed the period 2019–2028 as the United Nations Decade of Family Farming, called upon the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to lead the implementation of the Decade and invited the Secretary-General to inform the Assembly about the implementation on the basis of biennial reports compiled jointly by FAO and IFAD.

During the biennium 2019–2020, national action plans for family farming were approved in 8 countries, the drafting phase was reached in 4 and considerable progress was made in mobilizing actors to draft such plans in 33. More than 1,570 relevant actors have been involved in dialogue processes or platforms, including 925 family farmers' organizations and federations. More than 65 intersectoral coordination mechanisms, such as national committees for family farming and other multi-stakeholder platforms for policy dialogue, have been established or reinforced to achieve coherent objectives and targets. Eighty-five laws, policies and regulations were developed and approved, most of which are focused on mitigating the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on family farmers and on promoting approaches centred on family farming to address food system issues.

Over the next biennium, implementation should be scaled up, effective support and investment increased, policy dialogue and coherence enhanced and the number of national commitments raised.

I. Introduction

1. In the light of the achievements of the International Year of Family Farming¹ and as a result of the ensuing campaign to build upon those achievements during a decade of family farming, the General Assembly proclaimed 2019–2028 the United Nations Decade of Family Farming.
2. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), family farming is a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production that is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family capital and labour, including that of women and men. The family and the farm are linked; they co-evolve and combine economic, environmental, social and cultural functions.²
3. Family farming is the predominant form of agriculture in developed and developing countries. More than 90 per cent of the 600 million farms in the world are managed by individuals or families, relying mainly on family labour. According to estimates, family farmers occupy approximately 70 per cent to 80 per cent of global farmland and produce more than 80 per cent of food in terms of value. Small family farms of less than two hectares represent 84 per cent of all family farms and produce 36 per cent of food globally.³
4. Family farmers play an extremely important role in supplying the vitamins and minerals needed for a healthy diet. Farms of less than 20 hectares account for 71 per cent of global vitamin A production, which is supplied mainly by fruits and vegetables, some livestock products and orange-fleshed roots and tubers.⁴
5. Despite their huge contribution, family farmers often face the highest levels of poverty, food insecurity and vulnerability. Almost 80 per cent of the world's poor and food-insecure people live in rural areas. Most of them are small-scale family food producers who face many difficulties in gaining access to productive resources, opportunities and markets.
6. Enabling family farmers to achieve diversified, innovative and dynamic farming systems can increase the availability of nutritious, sustainably produced and culturally appropriate food, incentivize healthy diets and promote the transition to context-specific, diversified, resilient and sustainable food systems, while also contributing to local and territorial development.
7. The Decade's aim is to provide a clearly defined cohesive framework for Member States to develop, improve and implement public policies and investments in support of family farming, with a view to accelerating efforts and fostering additional commitments in line with the transformative ambitions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the decade of action to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals.
8. The present report is prepared by FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which jointly perform the Decade's secretariat functions. It was informed by an inclusive voluntary consultative process involving global, regional and national actors to collect information on the activities and results of the 2019–2020 biennium. The process was complemented by a desk review of the biennium's relevant policies, laws, regulations and programmes.

¹ General Assembly resolution 66/222.

² See www.fao.org/world-agriculture-watch/tools-and-methodologies/definitions-and-operational-perspectives/family-farms/en/.

³ See www.fao.org/3/ca7036en/CA7036EN.pdf.

⁴ See [www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanplh/PIIS2542-5196\(17\)30007-4.pdf](http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanplh/PIIS2542-5196(17)30007-4.pdf).

9. In total, 190 inputs from 69 countries representing all regions were collected through questionnaires, online interviews and the desk review. Participants included United Nations entities, Member States, family farmers' organizations, national committees for family farming, civil society organizations, academia and other relevant stakeholders.

II. Overall contribution of the Decade to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and possible synergies with ongoing processes

10. The Decade has served to promote integrated actions supported by cross-sectoral policies to address the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development. People and their livelihoods are at the centre of the Decade, the aim of which is to leave no one behind and tackle inequality and vulnerability in rural areas. A nexus approach has been promoted in the implementation of the Decade, helping to reduce the risk of sector-specific interventions undermining one another and working towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in a more efficient and holistic way.

11. The Decade has been focused on securing family farmers' access to natural resources, productive inputs and tailored services to unleash their potential to implement resilient and highly productive agricultural practices that ensure better incomes and contribute to ending hunger and malnutrition and securing universal access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food (Sustainable Development Goal 2).

12. The Decade has supported processes that help family farmers to shift away from subsistence farming to create income generation opportunities (Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 10) and to demonstrate their own potential to create decent jobs and positively affect rural-urban mobility, in particular for youth (Goals 8 and 9). In addition, it has served to promote sustainable integration between urban and rural areas (Goal 11) and climate-resilient food systems that are more sustainable and preserve biodiversity and culture (Goals 2 and 12–15); provide a voice, recognition and an enabling environment for family farmers through extensive dialogue, awareness-raising and capacity development (Goals 5, 10, 16 and 17); and reinforce family farmers' organizations to deliver inclusive rural services contributing to territorial development (Goals 3, 4 and 6).

13. The Decade has been very successful with regard to engagement with a wide range of stakeholders to identify specific policies and measures in support of family farming. Its success makes it a suitable mechanism to support the effective contextualization of international tools and guidelines in support of family farmers, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, and many global policy instruments, including those of the Committee on World Food Security.⁵

⁵ An example of the Decade's effectiveness as a mechanism for the contextualization of international tools and guidelines can be seen in the mutually reinforcing activities related to the implementation of the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* (FAO, Rome, 2015), which serve to strengthen the capacity development of small-scale fisheries organizations and their participation in national policy dialogue spaces, and the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* (FAO, Rome, 2012). These promising linkages could be reinforced in 2022 as part of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture.

14. The implementation of the Decade also helps to channel key emerging priorities, needs, messages and specific solutions from the local and national levels into the global discussion and the international agenda. Thus, the implementation involves a two-way dialogue that is paramount in supporting Member States in their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and paving the way for the establishment of synergies and collaboration with other relevant processes and forums at the global and regional levels.

15. The 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit and its expected outcomes will support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goals 1 and 2. Owing to the extensive two-way dialogue conducted in the context of its implementation, the Decade offers a unique mechanism for putting into practice the Summit's final recommendations.

III. General overview of the first biennium of implementation

A. Establishment of governance mechanisms and development of the Global Action Plan of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming

16. In 2019, an international steering committee, composed of representatives of Member States and family farmers' organizations,⁶ was established as the body responsible for overseeing and ensuring the coherent implementation of the Global Action Plan of the Decade of Family Farming,⁷ supported by FAO and IFAD in their joint performance of the Decade's secretariat functions.

17. The Global Action Plan is aimed at accelerating collective, coherent and comprehensive actions to support family farmers. It contains a series of recommendations on indicative and interconnected actions to be taken at every level, from global to local, guided by seven mutually reinforcing pillars of work:

- (a) Pillar 1: develop an enabling policy environment to strengthen family farming;
- (b) Pillar 2 (transversal): support youth and ensure the generational sustainability of family farming;
- (c) Pillar 3 (transversal): promote gender equity in family farming and the leadership role of rural women;
- (d) Pillar 4: strengthen family farmers' organizations and capacities to generate knowledge, represent farmers and provide inclusive services in the urban-rural continuum;
- (e) Pillar 5: improve socioeconomic inclusion, resilience and well-being of family farmers, rural households and communities;

⁶ For the period 2019–2020, the international steering committee was composed of Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile (alternate member), Costa Rica (Chair), Dominican Republic, France (alternate member), Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Kuwait (Vice-Chair), New Zealand, Philippines, Switzerland (alternate member), Uruguay (alternate member), United States of America (alternate member), Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development, Confederación de Organizaciones de Productores Familiares del Mercosur Ampliado (COPROFAM), FAO, IFAD, La Via Campesina, Pacific Island Farmers Organization Network, Réseau des organisations paysannes et de producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA), World Farmers' Organization, World Food Programme and World Rural Forum (Vice-Chair).

⁷ See www.fao.org/3/ca4672en/ca4672en.pdf.

(f) Pillar 6: promote sustainability of family farming for climate-resilient food systems;

(g) Pillar 7: strengthen the multidimensionality of family farming to promote social innovations contributing to territorial development and food systems that safeguard biodiversity, the environment and culture.

18. The Global Action Plan was initially presented at the Sixth Global Conference of the World Rural Forum, held on the topic of family farming, held in Derio-Bilbao, Spain, in March 2019, as part of a process to build a solid, multi-stakeholder and participatory Decade agenda at the national, regional and global levels, with more than 250 participants from 66 countries.

B. Main global and regional launch events for the Decade

19. In Rome, on 27–29 May 2019, the global launch of the Decade was attended by approximately 500 participants, including more than 230 representatives from 113 Member States. The main outcome of the event was the official adoption of the Global Action Plan to guide the implementation of the Decade.

20. The launch of the Decade was also marked in New York (15 July 2019) at a side event of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, and at United Nations headquarters in Geneva (3 October 2019), providing opportunities to share information with Member States on efforts made to pave the way for the implementation of the Decade.

21. At the regional launch of the Decade in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in the Dominican Republic on 25–27 August 2019, participants agreed upon the Bávaro declaration,⁸ which serves to promote the formulation and review of national action plans for family farming on the basis of inclusive dialogues.

22. The regional launch of the Decade in Asia and the Pacific was held online on 3 September 2020 in the context of the thirty-fifth session of the FAO Regional Conference.

23. The regional launch of the Decade in the Near East and North Africa, held online on 24 November 2020 by FAO in close consultation with IFAD, brought together relevant stakeholders to gather perspectives on a draft regional action plan for the implementation of the Decade.

24. The Decade was also officially launched in various countries, reaffirming the commitment to raise awareness about the role of family farmers and to implement relevant policies, strategies and investments.

C. Development of global products for the Decade

25. In their joint performance of the Decade's secretariat functions, FAO and IFAD are developing global products to offer technical support to more effectively design and implement tailored actions and strategies at the national level, including the development and implementation of the national action plans for family farming. The products include:

(a) Analysis and checklist of legislative and regulatory frameworks for family farming to equip policymakers to better understand their national regulatory frameworks and identify legislation that affects and enables family farming;

⁸ See www.fao.org/3/ca5896en/ca5896en.pdf.

(b) Capacity development tool, or “learning framework”, to assist policymakers and other relevant stakeholders in the design, development, implementation and review of inclusive, integrated, innovative and context-specific public policies and investments to support family farming, with a holistic perspective;

(c) Research methodology for public policy cycle analysis, aimed at guiding the selection and systematic analysis of successful experiences and lessons learned from existing relevant policies throughout the distinct stages of the policy cycle, which has been applied to successfully document 13 case studies with distinct geographical scopes, constituencies and policy areas;

(d) Learning guide for trainers on empowering farmers and their organizations through the creation of social capital,⁹ in which the fundamental role of social capital in healthy and sustainable organizations is recognized;

(e) Survey on the challenges facing family farmers and small-scale producers in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which provides a quantitative tool to support data collection, analysis and credible statistical samples of the characteristics and needs of family farmers and to inform policymaking that is focused on family farming;

(f) Family Farming Knowledge Platform,¹⁰ bringing together entities to share knowledge, solutions and action-oriented initiatives in support of family farming, which increased its visibility during the biennium to reach an average of 70,000 visitors per month and more than 27,000 documents in its database, including by sharing its content on social media and establishing a community of practice on family farming and agroecology to connect and facilitate knowledge exchange among practitioners from different regions.

26. Further to the contributions made at the global level, FAO and IFAD directly supported 15 countries located in multiple regions to assist in mobilizing stakeholders and in developing and reviewing relevant legislation and policies.

D. Main policy processes at the regional and subregional levels

27. The Global Action Plan includes the development of five regional action plans and seven subregional action plans for family farming by 2024, with context-specific key priorities, strategies and actions for the effective promotion of the Decade’s implementation. Significant results were achieved during the biennium, including the drafting of one regional action plan (Near East and North Africa) and three subregional action plans (Central Africa, Central America and South Asia), as well as subregional mobilization efforts by three intergovernmental organizations (Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR)).

28. A coordination committee composed of the Economic Community of Central African States, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, FAO, IFAD and the Plateforme régionale des organisations paysannes d’Afrique Centrale (PROPAC) is leading the process to draft a subregional action plan for Central Africa.

29. The drafting of the subregional action plan for South Asia is being led by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, in collaboration with the Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development and the International Cooperative Alliance in Asia and Pacific, with technical support from FAO.

⁹ See www.fao.org/3/cb1423en/CB1423EN.pdf.

¹⁰ See www.fao.org/family-farming.

30. Ministers of the Central American Agricultural Council approved the development of a subregional action plan for family farming under the leadership of the Council's executive secretariat, in cooperation with the rural regional dialogue programme and with FAO support.

31. The regional action plan for the Near East and North Africa was developed through a consultative process involving 26 countries and was presented by FAO on the occasion of the Decade's regional launch.

32. Twenty-three national parliaments, almost 60 parliamentary advisers and more than 500 parliamentarians, organized into 25 parliamentary fronts against hunger and malnutrition, were mobilized and took actions in the context of the Decade's implementation. A subregional framework law for Andean countries was approved by the Andean Parliament. Strategic partnerships with FAO, parliamentary fronts and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were created to strengthen regulatory frameworks for family farming in three Caribbean and Mesoamerican countries and to provide technical support to the more than 500 parliamentarians of the parliamentary fronts.

E. Communication initiatives to raise awareness about the Decade and promote engagement by family farmers

33. Communication efforts played an important role in positioning the Decade in relation to national and international agendas and in raising awareness among the general public. A dedicated website¹¹ and global outreach plan for the Decade were developed by FAO and IFAD, with emphasis on giving visibility to the national action plan processes and the perspectives of family farmers' organizations.

34. In response to requests by such organizations, a participatory communication approach was adopted, focused on three main dimensions: awareness-raising, channelling relevant information to rural areas and ensuring that the voices of family farmers are heard; capacity-building on communication for the organizations; and promoting inclusive rural communication services as part of family farming policies and programmes.

35. Participatory communication plans, including regional information campaigns on priority issues such as the impact of COVID-19, were developed for Asia (ComDev Asia),¹² Latin America (Onda Rural)¹³ and Africa (Yenkasa),¹⁴ in partnership with family farmers' organizations, community media organizations and rural institutions.

36. Awareness-raising campaigns, information-exchange webinars, training sessions and local communication strategies for family farming were designed and implemented in more than 20 countries as part of the participatory communication plans. The aim of the regional information campaigns was to promote the valuable role of family farming in achieving sustainable and resilient food systems during the COVID-19 pandemic and to inform family farmers about relevant measures and key aspects related to safety and production.

37. Overall, the three regional information campaigns reached more than 50 countries. More than 200 radio stations and 150 radio programmes/podcasts were

¹¹ See www.fao.org/family-farming-decade/home/en/.

¹² See <http://comdevasia.org/>.

¹³ See <https://ondarural.org/>.

¹⁴ See <https://yenkasa.org/>.

involved, with a potential reach of 40 million listeners. In addition, more than 20,000 users per month were reached via websites and social media.

IV. Main policy processes triggered by the Decade, and national results

A. Development of national action plans for family farming

38. National action plans are contextualized frameworks that serve to promote cooperation among institutions to integrate family farmers' issues into policies and strategies related to the wider food and agricultural, social, economic and environmental sectors. They are an effective instrument in increasing the level of commitment and ensuring coherence and integration between relevant policies and legislation at the national level. They also represent an opportunity for all relevant national stakeholders to mobilize resources and to align and reinforce their actions. The ambitious goal of having 100 national action plans approved by 2024 is central to the Decade.

39. During the biennium, Governments, national committees for family farming, family farmers' organizations, FAO, IFAD and other stakeholders at the national and international levels worked together to promote the development and implementation of national action plans, in an inclusive effort which led to the approval of such plans in eight countries: Dominican Republic, Gambia, Indonesia, Peru, Brazil, Costa Rica, Nepal and Panama.

40. The national action plan of the Dominican Republic, launched in August 2019, resulted from a broad dialogue process involving the Government, family farmers' organizations and civil society actors. The 10-year plan reflects a recognition of the strategic role of family farmers in achieving the country's development goals. It is aimed at empowering family farmers by creating an enabling environment to improve living conditions, promote territorial governance and reduce environmental vulnerability.

41. The national action plan of the Gambia was approved in October 2019, after an extensive dialogue process among national and local governmental entities, family farmers' organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector, consumers, academic institutions and international cooperation agencies. The aim of the 10-year plan is to develop an enabling environment to improve livelihoods, promote territorial governance and reduce environmental vulnerability. Family farmers' organizations and the national committee for family farming have been strongly involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of the plan through institutional mechanisms established for that purpose.

42. In Indonesia, the national action plan approved in November 2019 is a reference for the local governments, which are planning to develop action plans tailored to the characteristics of the country's regions as an integral part of the strategy to implement the national action plan. The main goals of the national action plan are to support food security and nutritionally balanced diets and to increase the income and improve the livelihoods of family farmers. The plan includes clear implementation steps, measurable development targets, funding provisions and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

43. The national action plan of Peru was adopted in November 2019 by presidential decree. It resulted from a multisectoral process involving 12 ministries, which are committed to working together along nine strategic lines of action. The plan, aimed at achieving effective operationalization, identifies typologies of family farmers and

establishes targets, indicators and governance and coordination mechanisms to guide implementation and monitoring, together with a well-defined timetable and budgetary allocation for the first biennium.

44. In Panama, the national action plan legislation was approved in March 2020. The plan is aimed at improving family farmers' livelihoods and reducing rural poverty through a multisectoral and intergovernmental approach led by the Ministry of Agricultural Development. It includes the development of policies and measures to improve access to productive, technical and financial resources. A family farming registry was also created to facilitate the identification of family farmers.

45. In Brazil in June 2020, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply published the 2020/2021 Safra Plan, which presents a set of coherent policies to support family farming. The objective of the plan is to encourage sustainable production and strengthen small-scale family farmers, with a focus on expanding access to rural credit.

46. In Costa Rica, the national action plan was officially launched in October 2020. It provides an agreed definition of family farming to facilitate tailored and effective support, with clear objectives, expected results and strategic pillars of actions. The plan is based on a solid contextual analysis and an extensive review of relevant legal and policy frameworks in the country. A governance structure was established to identify the entities responsible for implementation, coordination mechanisms, key partners and their functions, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

47. In Nepal, a national steering committee for the Decade was established, comprising relevant ministries, research institutions, national farmers' networks and cooperative federations. A participatory dialogue was held to identify needs, objectives and priority activities. The 2020–2028 national action plan includes context-specific outcomes and budget provisions.

48. An additional four countries, namely Burkina Faso, Madagascar, the Philippines and Sierra Leone, progressed towards the development of national action plans. As of December 2020, they were in the advanced stages of drafting. Another 33 countries progressed in mobilizing actors to draft such plans.¹⁵

B. Work of the national committees for family farming and other multi-stakeholder platforms for policy dialogue

49. The development of national action plans should be conducted by Governments in dialogue with relevant national stakeholders. To that end, the Decade serves as a global partnership initiative at multiple levels. It supports and enhances participation by all actors and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, in particular family farmers, to ensure their empowerment and agency and lead to efficient processes, effective results and sustainable impact.

50. Various stakeholders were systematically engaged in the Decade's policy dialogue processes through the national committees for family farming. Overall, 1,570 family farmers' organizations, NGOs, public institutions and academic institutions are part of the national committees. Among them, 925 family farmers'

¹⁵ Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eswatini, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, India, Japan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Mexico, Niger, Nigeria, Paraguay, Portugal, Senegal, Spain, Togo, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania.

organizations and federations have been directly engaged in the committees, forming a very solid basis for the implementation of the Decade at the country level.

51. The 45 national committees, the other multi-stakeholder platforms and the family farmers' organizations have been very active. Stakeholders have been mobilized through a wide range of activities forming an intensive agenda, including the following: meetings, workshops and communication campaigns on the Decade to inform and engage civil society, family farmers' organizations, public institutions and cooperation agencies; creation of a common road map and methodology to elaborate the national action plans; and organization of policy dialogue forums and multi-stakeholder consultations to draft the plans.

C. Challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and the Decade's potential to advance the pandemic response

52. The spread of COVID-19 and related measures to contain transmission exacerbated existing structural weaknesses and inequalities in food systems and brought unexpected challenges to family farmers. Reduced access to markets due to movement restrictions, the issue of conserving perishable products, changes in consumer behaviour, the closure of farmers' markets and other commercialization channels, such as schools, canteens and small businesses in neighbouring areas, led to a reduction in family income, challenging farmers' capacity and presenting them with the difficult decision of whether they could continue producing.¹⁶

53. In the first half of 2020, the implementation of the Decade slowed down at all levels, owing to the need to reorient work and channels for delivery and communication. Family farmers' organizations faced difficulties in maintaining contact with their members to organize them, advance policy dialogues and provide the necessary information and technical support. Moreover, the shift in priorities to address the immediate effects of the pandemic, and the measures taken in that regard, resulted in a decreased commitment to the Decade's activities, in terms of actions and resources.

54. Family farmers' organizations played a paramount role in supporting family farmers. They created solidarity networks in contexts with inadequate social protection schemes; provided family farmers with relevant information to prevent their exposure to, or transmission of, COVID-19; developed alternative logistics and food distribution initiatives directly linking producers to consumers; applied new technologies, in particular e-commerce tools, to maximize access to reliable and remunerative markets; and advocated government emergency response efforts, resource allocation and long-term policy changes.¹⁷

55. At the country level, the committees played an important role gathering local information, reporting and sharing it with local and national authorities and proposing strategies to design and implement emergency measures.

56. The Decade's implementation received new impetus in the second half of 2020, with new opportunities to scale up activities. The Global Action Plan proved to be a valid framework for tackling the effects of the pandemic on family farmers, as it provided key indicative actions to mitigate the immediate impacts (with pillars 2–6 focused on strengthening the economic, environmental and social resilience of family farmers facing the crisis) and revamp rural economies and societies in the medium

¹⁶ See www.fao.org/3/cb0417en/CB0417EN.pdf.

¹⁷ See www.fao.org/3/ca9846en/CA9846EN.pdf.

term (with pillars 1 and 7 focused on local food systems and the promotion of innovative economic opportunities and market solutions).

57. The development of national action plans resumed as part of the COVID-19 response and the ongoing discussion on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and sustainable food systems and the challenge of climate change. In various countries, processes related to the Decade leveraged and built on the paramount role of family farming in feeding communities and cities during the worst period of the pandemic. There was a renewed commitment to the incorporation of emergency COVID-19 measures into strategies, policies and national action plans, but also to the inclusion of family farmers as key actors in medium-term recovery strategies. That commitment is well reflected in the 85 laws, policies and regulations developed and approved during the biennium, most of which were focused on mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on family farmers and on promoting approaches centred on family farming to address food system issues.

V. Assessment of the main national results with regard to the targets and indicators of the Global Action Plan of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming and their contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

58. The Global Action Plan includes relevant outcomes, outputs and indicative actions for each of its seven pillars of work, and indicators under each outcome to monitor the overall progress towards the Decade's ultimate targets. Biennium targets (milestones to be reached by 2021) are also provided for each indicator.

59. Overall, the assessment of results at the national level against the biennium targets shows very positive results, with 29 out of 37 having already been met. In addition, implementation is fully on track for 20 out of the Plan's 28 outcomes.

60. The Plan's indicators have also been compared to the Sustainable Development Goal indicators to identify correlations and measurable contributions to progress on specific Sustainable Development Goal targets.

A. Pillar 1: develop an enabling policy environment to strengthen family farming

61. An enabling social, economic and political environment is a necessary prerequisite for strengthening family farming, as it provides a framework for specific strategies and interventions tailored to family farming groups facing distinctive social, economic and environmental realities. Beyond the development of the national action plans and the subregional mobilization efforts by ASEAN, ECOWAS and MERCOSUR (Global Action Plan outcome 1.4), much has been done at the national level, including the achievement of five out of the six biennium targets set for the year 2021 under pillar 1.

62. In 22 countries, there was an increase in the of availability, accessibility, quality and usage of family farming data (outcome 1.1), and in 29 countries, legal frameworks were developed or existing frameworks reviewed through the inclusion of context-specific criteria to recognize/target family farmers (outcome 1.4). The achievements constitute important steps towards a policy shift to support the tailoring of interventions to address the specificities of family farming.

63. Given the specific correlations among Global Action Plan indicators and Sustainable Development Goal targets, the processes and results directly contributed to increasing the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable disaggregated data (target 17.18), and developing measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support for statistical capacity-building (target 17.19).

64. Effective interventions to stimulate family farming require integrated multisectoral policies and programmes. In eight countries, effective strategies were developed to increase coherence in policy implementation (outcome 1.4). In particular, coordination mechanisms among sectors and government institutions were developed or improved in 18 countries (outcome 1.3). Meanwhile, in 38 countries, there was an increase in the level of commitment and capacity with regard to adopting comprehensive policies, mostly translated into adequate resourcing, increased recognition and a greater focus on family farming in policy agendas.

65. The results significantly contributed to enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development (Sustainable Development Goal target 17.14); developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions (target 16.6); ensuring significant mobilization of resources to provide adequate and predictable means of implementation (target 1.a); and creating sound policy frameworks to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions (target 1.b).

66. Overall, 66 Member States have developed or reinforced already existing inclusive coordination and accountability mechanisms, including the national committees for family farming and the other multi-stakeholder platforms for policy dialogue (outcome 1.3). This effort also contributes to ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels (Sustainable Development Goal target 16.7) and enhancing multi-stakeholder partnerships to share knowledge and resources (target 17.16).

B. Pillar 2 (transversal): support youth and ensure the generational sustainability of family farming

67. The entry of young people into farming is a key driver of vitality in rural areas and competitiveness in agriculture. Many actions conducted in the implementation of the Decade were focused on innovative strategies to ensure the generational sustainability of family farming while empowering youth as key development actors in rural areas. The accelerated search in response to the pandemic for innovative digital solutions to connect producers and consumers paved the way for a greater role for youth-led innovations and opened new market opportunities for family farmers, resulting in the achievement of three out of the five biennium targets under pillar 2.

68. Much has been done to improve the active engagement of youth in the rural economy and their access to productive resources and services: 60 Member States developed strategies and actions aimed at generating decent rural employment opportunities for youth (outcomes 2.1 and 2.4), and 20 developed or reviewed legal frameworks to improve youth rights and access to natural resources, productive assets and markets (outcome 2.2).

69. The efforts contributed significantly to progress on Sustainable Development Goal 8, specifically decent job creation and employment (targets 8.3, 8.5 and 8.6) and financial services for all (target 8.10), as well as equal rights to access economic resources, basic services, land and other forms of property, inheritance and natural resources (target 1.4).

70. Progress was made in designing strategies to improve generational turnover in family farming (outcome 2.3), with 15 Member States developing or reviewing their legal frameworks to include specific legal provisions in that regard.

71. Additional attention could be paid to improving the innovation capacity of young family farmers to connect local knowledge with new solutions (outcome 2.4). Capacity development programmes to support rural youth in developing their potential for innovation have been implemented in 34 countries, mostly by family farmers' organizations, thus directly contributing to equal access for all to technical, vocational and tertiary education (Sustainable Development Goal target 4.3) and skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship (target 4.4).

C. Pillar 3 (transversal): promote gender equity in family farming and the leadership role of rural women

72. On average, women account for almost half of the global agricultural labour force. They engage in activities on and off the farm and play a central role in natural resource management and food production, processing, conservation and marketing. Despite their huge contribution, women farmers remain more affected by poverty, social exclusion and violations of their basic human rights than men are.

73. These challenges call for comprehensive and dedicated policies that afford due consideration to the multiple roles women perform within family farming to strengthen their status in rural communities. As part of the Decade's implementation, numerous processes and actions have favoured the active engagement of rural women in family farming and rural economies, leading to the achievement of four out of the six biennium targets under pillar 3.

74. Actions to accelerate gender equality and the economic empowerment of rural women (outcome 3.3) were taken in 39 countries. In addition, institutions and strategies aimed at generating decent rural employment for women were improved in 31 countries (outcome 3.1). Furthermore, legal frameworks were developed or reviewed in 20 countries to improve women's rights to land and their access to other natural resources and productive assets, information, infrastructure, services and markets (outcome 3.2).

75. The results contributed to progress on multiple Sustainable Development Goal targets, including policies and legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (target 5.c), as well as targets 1.4, 8.3, 8.5 and 8.10.

76. Additional efforts should be dedicated to improving the technical, advocacy and leadership skills of women farmers and their organizations, thus enhancing participation in the organizations and in policymaking processes. Capacity development programmes specifically focused on supporting women farmers (outcome 3.3) were developed and implemented in 32 countries, while in 23 countries, programmes and initiatives were implemented to accelerate knowledge-sharing for the empowerment of rural women (outcome 3.5).

77. Overall, the efforts contributed to enhancing the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology (ICT), to promote the empowerment of women (Sustainable Development Goal target 5.b), as well as targets 4.3 and 4.4.

78. In 10 countries, specific actions were taken to improve protection against gender-based violence in rural areas (outcome 3.4), directly contributing to progress towards the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in the

public and private spheres (Sustainable Development Goal target 5.2) and of all harmful practices affecting women and girls (target 5.3).

D. Pillar 4: strengthen family farmers' organizations and capacities to generate knowledge, represent farmers and provide inclusive services in the urban-rural continuum

79. When farmers organize, they achieve better results while reducing inequalities through longer-lasting solutions. The recognition of the important role played by family farmers' organizations is shown by the Decade's great spirit of commitment and numerous actions that were carried out to strengthen the governance and organizational capacities of such organizations. The organizations were better able to serve their members and their communities, which resulted in the achievement of five out of the six biennium targets under pillar 4.

80. Actions and strategies have been developed in 36 countries to strengthen these organizations, including their role and the recognition they receive (outcome 4.1). Facilitating collective action (outcome 4.3) was the focus of interventions in 17 countries, and increasing the presence of youth and women in leadership roles within their structure (outcome 4.1) was the focus in 22 countries. These actions led to positive contributions to ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership (Sustainable Development Goal 5.5) and to target 16.7.

81. Family farmers' organizations play an important role in strengthening the capacities of their members in resilient and sustainable production and processing practices, entrepreneurial and business management skills, engagement in policymaking processes and access to markets. In 26 countries, specific attention was paid to increasing the organizations' technical and service provision capacities. Meanwhile, farmer-led schools promoting sustainable practices were developed or strengthened in 11 countries (outcome 4.2).

82. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the role that ICT plays in facilitating access to knowledge and in linking producers to markets; in improving resilience and climate change adaptation through community-based early warning systems; and in supporting farmer-led advisory services for inclusive innovation.

83. The participatory communication plans and the three regional information campaigns (see para. 35) fostered partnerships with community media networks and rural radio stations and streamlined communication as a key dimension of the national action plans. They constituted an outstanding contribution to improving the capacity and services of family farmers and their organizations on communication and ICT (outcome 4.4) and ensuring that their voices were heard. Moreover, specific actions to develop strategies and platforms to improve the ICT capacities of family farmers were carried out in 20 countries.

E. Pillar 5: improve socioeconomic inclusion, resilience and well-being of family farmers, rural households and communities

84. Family farmers are among those most affected by poverty and vulnerability and face high levels of economic, financial, social and environmental risks. The pandemic amplified their vulnerability. Many Member States took urgent measures to preserve the health of family farmers and the safety and quality of their production, and adopted mitigation measures to guarantee farmers' access to essential goods and livelihoods.

85. This effort is well reflected in the positive results achieved in enhancing standards of living and reducing farmers' vulnerability through access to social protection, services and public goods, as well as capacity development for family farmers. All four biennium targets under pillar 5 were met by the end of 2020.

86. Twenty-seven Member States improved social protection provisions and advisory and financial services for family farmers (outcome 5.1); 45 developed or revised their strategies, policies or regulations to improve farmers' access to and control over services, technologies, infrastructure, markets and natural resources (outcome 5.2); 34 developed and implemented specific provisions to facilitate and enhance farmers' access to markets (outcome 5.4); and 29 developed strategies, investments and capacity development efforts aimed at reducing vulnerability and making agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable (outcome 5.3).

87. The results contributed to progress on multiple Sustainable Development Goal targets, including the following: reducing the vulnerability of the most disadvantaged (target 1.5); increasing productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers by securing their access to land, productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services and markets (target 2.3); implementing resilient agricultural practices to increase production while strengthening adaptation (target 2.4); promoting sustainable public procurement practices (target 12.7); and providing access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets (target 14.b); as well as targets 1.4 and 1.b.

F. Pillar 6: promote sustainability of family farming for climate-resilient food systems

88. Family farmers have the potential to drive the transition towards climate-resilient food systems if they are supported through an integrated approach that simultaneously addresses production, processing, distribution and consumption issues. As a result of the comprehensive actions taken during the Decade, all of the biennium targets under pillar 6 have been met.

89. Thirty-six Member States developed or improved their strategies and policies aimed at securing access to and sustainable use of natural resources for family farmers (outcome 6.1). Meanwhile, 29 Member States took specific actions to implement comprehensive strategies and activities to manage risks (outcome 6.2), especially through the provision of tailored capacity-building efforts targeting family farmers and their organizations.

90. The achievement of resilient and sustainable food systems relies on the establishment of an inclusive market environment for family farmers to provide diversified and nutritious food. Twenty Member States took actions to improve farmers' access to markets (outcome 6.3), including with regard to policies, investments and infrastructure. The actions enhanced local markets, which played a role in ensuring food security during the pandemic, paving the way for the Decade to be better positioned in relation to national agendas. Institutional arrangements, programmes and regulations supportive of the inclusiveness and efficiency of family farming in existing value chains were designed in 15 countries (outcome 6.4).

91. The results contributed to progress on multiple Sustainable Development Goal targets, including the following: access to financial services and integration into value chains and markets (target 9.3); sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources (target 12.2); integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning (target 13.2); raising capacity for effective climate change

planning and management (target 13.b); ensuring the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems and their services (target 15.1); and mobilizing resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems (target 15.a); as well as targets 2.3 and 2.4.

G. Pillar 7: strengthen the multidimensionality of family farming to promote social innovations contributing to territorial development and food systems that safeguard biodiversity, the environment and culture

92. Supporting the complexity and multidimensionality of family farming promotes the endogenous growth and preservation of the diversity of ecosystems, genetic resources, culture and life, with a focus on territorial development centred on the innovative nature of family farming. As a result of the numerous processes and actions carried out to strengthen the multidimensionality of family farming, two out of the three biennium targets under pillar 7 have been achieved.

93. Seventeen Member States developed or reviewed their strategies aimed at increasing sustainable agricultural practices (including agroecology) and synergies between agriculture, forestry and fisheries, as well as strengthening the provision of ecosystem services by family farmers (outcome 7.1). Such strategies leverage family farming to enable the dynamic management of genetic resources and production systems, which leads to greater efficiency and resilience in the use of resources.

94. The role of family farmers in guaranteeing food security within their communities and in the urban-rural continuum has been highlighted to outstanding effect during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Decade's implementation triggered processes in 27 countries to develop or review institutional arrangements and legal frameworks to improve farmers' access to services, resources and markets with a view to reinforcing urban-rural linkages (outcome 7.2). Furthermore, 20 Member States developed and implemented strategies centred on the promotion of innovative economic opportunities and market solutions based on the multifunctionality of family farming (outcome 7.3).

95. The processes and results are relevant to the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goal targets, including the following: maintaining the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants, farmed and domesticated animals and related wild species (target 2.5); integrating ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts (target 15.9); safeguarding the world's cultural and natural heritage (target 11.4); supporting positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning (target 11.a); and developing and implementing tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products (target 12.b).

VI. Conclusions and the way forward

A. Lessons learned and main results

96. The Decade fuelled a robust process of policy dialogue in support of family farming, with many related events and initiatives at the local, national, regional and international levels. Efforts to implement the Decade have been actively pursued by many relevant actors around the world, with a particular focus on strengthening legal frameworks and policymaking in support of family farming.

97. Family farmers' organizations, national committees for family farming and other multi-stakeholder platforms for policy dialogue played a critical role in the promotion, design and implementation of the national action plans and legal frameworks to support family farmers and strongly contributed to channelling proposals from the field to governments.

98. The main policy areas addressed were those connected with the development and implementation of coherent and integrated frameworks to target and comprehensively support family farming and, as well as mitigating the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 and involving family farmers in recovery strategies.

99. The urgent need to create employment opportunities for youth and ensure the generational sustainability of family farming, together with the need for strong actions to promote women's economic empowerment and gender equality in rural areas, was also extensively addressed through specific provisions within the national action plans and numerous processes aimed at reviewing and developing relevant policies and activities.

100. There was a growing interest in focusing policies and interventions on increasing the productivity of family farmers while addressing climate change impacts and environmental degradation, with a focus on the following areas: enhancing access to land, productive resources and financial instruments; diversifying value chains and promoting new market opportunities; strengthening capacities of family farmers' organizations and cooperatives in service provision and in collective action; and promoting innovation in rural areas, including through digitalization.

101. The processes triggered at the regional and subregional levels stress the important role played by intergovernmental organizations in the implementation of the Decade. Over the biennium, these entities supported national processes. Their contributions included the identification of common requirements and criteria with flexible, context-specific parameters to help to identify family farmers at the national level; the development of policy frameworks and guidelines to support the formulation of national policies; and the commitment to advance in priority policy areas, including by developing joint programmes, projects and focused exchanges on priority topics.

B. Recommendations and priority areas for future action

102. Member States and other relevant actors should renew their efforts to promote reinforced commitments and effectively translate them into a more effective policy dialogue as well as adequate resources for the design and implementation of policies and programmes.

103. At the institutional level, a clear strategy to support family farming, to be agreed among the different government entities, should be promoted, together

with multisectoral coordination to improve synergies between the various actors and policy areas. Such a strategy would facilitate the operationalization of coherent mechanisms and approaches to achieve the Decade's interconnected objectives throughout the food system.

104. It is of paramount importance that efforts to promote policy dialogue and multi-stakeholder, bottom-up and inclusive processes and platforms, including national committees for family farming, should continue, with a common effort to better include women, youth and other marginalized groups, as well as other constituencies with the potential to play a fundamental role in the implementation of the Decade.

105. Policies and frameworks already developed in the context of the Decade must be consolidated and scaled up. Innovative means must be identified to increase their outreach, ensure their widespread uptake and resolve bottlenecks in operational capacities. An established and continuous dialogue with family farmers' organizations is paramount in ensuring that solutions to effectively address the needs of family farmers are identified and put into practice.

106. Additional financial resources should be mobilized to adequately implement the Decade, including the provision of specific budget lines. Collaboration and cooperation among partners (including donor countries, international organizations and development agencies) should be encouraged, and innovative and equitable public-private partnerships should be promoted.

107. The development of a joint FAO-IFAD resource mobilization strategy is recommended in order to scale up priority areas of work under the pillars; reinforce synergies between ongoing FAO and IFAD initiatives related to the Decade; provide a framework to support the development of national action plans and relevant global products for technical support; and identify projects based on country demands and on the dialogue with family farmers' organizations.

108. The immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on family farming (including on liquidity and access to markets) need to be urgently addressed, including through policies and programmes to build back better, involving the national committees for family farming, multi-stakeholder platforms mobilized to draft the national action plans, and family farmers' organizations as active partners in the formulation and implementation of the plans.

109. Efforts to reinforce the Decade's outreach and communication strategy are needed at all levels to strengthen policymakers' and consumers' understanding and recognition of family farming. Increasing the information and awareness about the Decade is a precondition for a more participatory policy dialogue and a deeper involvement of family farmers and their organizations in the Decade's implementation. To that end, a communication for development approach should be adopted to enhance local communication capacities and put in place inclusive rural communication services to respond to the evolving needs of family farmers.

110. It is also of paramount importance that efforts to generate and share knowledge on family farming, improve the understanding of key concepts and promote the identification of criteria for better policy targeting should continue. At the national and local levels, a renewed effort to produce and access reliable, timely and locally relevant data and evidence on the multidimensional performance of family farming is a precondition for the effective design of policies based on robust needs assessments and for the effective implementation of existing policies and interventions.

111. Strengthening family farmers' organizations is key to advancing their capacities as agents of change, enhancing the generation and dissemination of knowledge and services and fostering farmers' meaningful participation in decision-making processes at all levels.

112. Promoting experience-sharing and networking among family farmers is an effective way to develop their capacities to contribute to the Decade's processes and activities. Capacity development for national and local authorities is likewise important to ensure that farmers are adequately supported and that the Decade's activities are effectively designed and implemented.
