



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa

Key messages

Food Systems Stocktaking Moment 2023 Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Arab Region

14 March 2023

Transforming Food systems to achieve SDGs





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FAO Regional Priorities accelerating transformation of agrifood systems in NENA



REGIONAL PRIORITIES



FOUR PRIORITIES TO TRANSFORM THE REGION'S AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS:

- **Rural transformation and inclusive value chains:** enhancing productivity and income, focusing on youth employment and women empowerment to close rural/urban divide
- **Food security and healthy diets for all:** focusing on trade, food safety and quality, and nutrition education
- **Greening agriculture:** addressing water scarcity and ensuring environmental sustainability and climate action
- **Building resilience** to multiple shocks, protracted crises and emergency situations along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus – Special focus on transboundary pests and diseases

Regional priorities are aligned with the FAO strategic framework 2022-2031

*Strategic framework: 4 Betters (BP- Better Production, BN- Better Nutrition, BE- Better Environment, BL- Better Life)

RP1: Rural transformation



- BP1 Innovation for sustainable agriculture production
- BP4 Small-scale producers' equitable access to resources
- BP5 Digital agriculture
- BL1 Gender equality & rural women's empowerment
- BL2 Inclusive rural transformation

RP2: Healthy diets for all



- BN1 Healthy diets for all
- BN2 Nutrition for the most vulnerable
- BN3 Safe food for everyone
- BN4 Reducing food loss and waste
- BN5 Transparent markets and trade
- BE4 Achieving sustainable urban food systems

RP3: Greening agriculture



- BP1 Innovation for sustainable agriculture production
- BP2 Blue transformation
- BE1 Climate change mitigation & adapted agrifood systems
- BE2 Bio-economy for sustainable food and agriculture
- BE3 Biodiversity & ecosystem services for food and agriculture

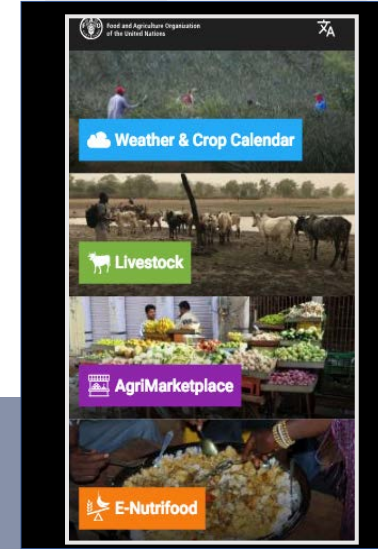
RP4: Resilience to multiple shocks



- BP3 One health
- BE2 Bio-economy for sustainable food and agriculture
- BL3 Agriculture and food emergencies
- BL4 Resilient agrifood systems



ACCELERATORS TO TRANSFORMING THE REGION'S AgrifOOD SYSTEMS



Governance, human capital INSTITUTIONS

Policies and institutions enabling change at scale

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENTS

Financial resources driving change

Data

Science for data and evidence based decision making

INNOVATION

Technology and innovation that serves smallholders

PARTNERSHIP

Harnessing the power of partnerships



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SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa

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Introduction session

- **Agrifood systems in the region are not on track in achieving SDGs.**
- **Rehabilitating FS in the region** should take into account the context of Arab states including solution for relying less on food imports, mitigating impact of climate change on FS, all aligned with the food security agenda.
- **Monitoring progress towards transformation of FS require sustainable steps** - Setting up a shared vision for the region by all stakeholders, collective action VS working in silo and working in synergy to achieve the vision.
- **Focusing on country needs, challenges and success** stories without reinventing the wheel is essential to identify the expectations and accurate measures of success at national level.



Food systems transformation as SDGs accelerator

- **Together and urgently** we should transform Arab food systems to become more resilient, inclusive and sustainable to achieve SDGs.
- **Raising ambition** for better use of technology, innovation, partnerships and collaboration, aligning with context and priorities of each country in the region.
- **Collaboration and coordination is key in achieving results and to turn challenges into opportunities** - Implementing solutions and people centered approaches will have the highest impact in light of the challenges facing the region.
- **Improving enabling environments towards better policy**, linking each pillar of food security to FS transformation and institutionalizing the concept of food systems transformation through **better laws and regulations**.
- **Effective and inclusive partnerships** between governments and private sectors, parliamentarians, civil society, research is a corner stone of FS transformation.
- **Integrated approaches to financial mechanisms and de-risking private sector investment for agrifood systems transformation** is a life line in war torn and conflict countries.
- **COP28 is a major opportunity to link climate and food systems** - Presidency will have a clear mandate and vision to elevate FS transformation as part of energy transition and the approach to FS transformation will recognize country led policies, rely on innovation pathways and mobilize climate finance in support of sustainable agrifood systems.

Roundtable - Country progress and expectations from the STM

- Some of the questions addressed by member include expectations from the STM; measures of success from the STM, and support needs.
- Presenting countries include Morocco, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Oman, Palestine, Yemen, and Tunisia.
- Following the preparation of the National Pathways, countries developed and launched projects and programmes to advance food system transformation including social protection programmes, but the effort is sometimes slowed down by COVID-19 and the current Ukraine crisis.
- South-South Cooperation strengthens coordination between countries and may play important role for food security (as in the case of Morocco).
- Reducing food loss and waste using local knowledge, research and awareness and unifying indicators emphasized by member countries.
- Challenges include the problem of migrant and displaced people which burdens food system in some countries, water scarcity and low agricultural investment. Lack of statistics and data and political instability threatens food system transformation.
- Call for reviving intra-regional cooperation and establishment of common (joint) fund for implementing SDGS.

Discussion - Fast-tracking and monitoring food systems transformation

- **Despite the challenges of water scarcity, threats of climate change and fragile land in the Arab Region, it is a region of wealth, untapped potential and strong interest and engagement of private sector.**
- **Significant opportunities for private sector investment on blue food and incorporating blue food in public food procurement such as school feeding programs.**
- **Call for comprehensive food systems approach in food security policy. There is need for indicators of food systems in the region to support monitoring progress towards transformation goals.**
- **Realistic reading suggests the difficulty of transforming food system in the Arab region due to fragmentation of efforts and lack of coordination and lack of a line ministry responsible for FS. Cooperation between Arab parliamentarians is crucial in streamlining policies.**
- **Final report should follow Global Food Security Index for ranking countries performance in achieving food security.**
- **Applying nexus humanitarian-development-peace approach to food systems programs and plans**

Financing food systems transformations

- Low level of financing in food systems in compare to other sectors – Untapped value of food industry and private sector investment coupled with cost of inefficiency of food systems (e.g. food waste, cost of malnutrition, biodiversity loss, inequity).
- Need for stepping up investment for FS transformation but also finance food systems differently to achieve sustainability goals.
- Don't finance unsustainable food systems, harmful food business decisions - DO promote fit purpose and smallholders oriented financial instrument and investment on stability and resilience.
- **Government** should re-prioritize allocation geared towards effective subsidies and incentives, **development partners** should not support distorting market and price measures, **food businesses** should mainstream sustainable and inclusive business models
- Mutual accountability lies in measure ODA flows to food systems, identify gaps in public investment on food systems Mapping FS finance windows and food systems financing solutions for countries
- Solutions to finance should be context specific, evidence base, following water-food energy nexus

In conclusion,

- ❑ **Sustainable Agrifood systems** are resilient, productive and prosperous, equitable and inclusive, empowering, regenerative and deliver healthy and nutritious diets.
- ❑ **“Business as usual” is no longer an option:** In an increasingly globalized agrifood systems, **the challenges to achieve food security and nutrition could go beyond production and even food value chain.** Focusing on one part of the value chain, we risk overlooking some root causes of the food system underperformance.
- ❑ **We have all the solutions,** but we don't know how they fit together (trade-offs) – We need data, science and information to guide policy making.
- ❑ **Adopting an integrated approach in developing tools for data generation is required** to assess the impact of decisions and interventions on communities, environment and economy, in order to manage trade-offs and leverage synergies.
- ❑ **Unleashing the power of partnership and policy for lasting change** - We have learned that the complexity of challenges of food and agriculture require **establishing collaboration between multiple stakeholders and development agencies** at local, national, regional, and global levels.



4 As, 4 Cs, 4 Ts **ACT on Food Security**

FOOD SECURITY

4 As

- Availability
- Access
- Affordability
- Adaptability/Adequacy

CHALLENGES

4 Cs

- Climate change
- Conflicts
- Calamities
- Consumers

Transformative Solutions

4 Ts

- Technology
- Trade
- Tapping into local resources
- Transforming Diets



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SUSTAINABLE
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Thank you

