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## PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

### Hundred and Tenth Session

Rome, 7 - 11 May 2012

### STRATEGY AND VISION FOR FAO'S WORK IN NUTRITION (OUTLINE)

#### Executive Summary

At its 108<sup>th</sup> Session in October 2011, the Programme Committee commended the approach taken by the Secretariat in developing a strategy and vision for FAO in nutrition, and requested to review the strategy and vision at its session in May 2012. Since then, the Organization has embarked on a review of its Strategic Framework and preparation of the Medium Term Plan 2014-17 through a Strategic Thinking Process launched by the Director-General.

In this context, and based on wide internal consultation, the present document:

- describes progress to date, including highlights of tentative elements of the strategy on nutrition; and
- describes the roadmap to complete the strategy for presentation at the October 2012 session of the Committee.

#### Guidance requested from the Programme Committee

The Committee is requested to review and provide comments, as appropriate on the proposed process for preparing the strategy on nutrition.

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## I. Context

1. At its 108<sup>th</sup> Session in October 2011, the Programme Committee commended the approach taken by the Secretariat in developing a strategy and vision for FAO in nutrition, and requested to review the strategy and vision at its session in May 2012.<sup>1</sup>
2. Raising levels of nutrition is an intrinsic component of FAO's mandate as outlined in its Constitution.<sup>2</sup> The Evaluation on FAO's role and work in nutrition, completed in 2011, noted that, over time the Organization's ability to lead globally and at country level in linking food and agriculture with nutrition has been limited. It recommended a series of actions to strengthen FAO's capacities in nutrition,<sup>3</sup> including the need to improve internal alignment of resources and structure and to engage more effectively with important international initiatives on nutrition, such as REACH, SUN, and the UNSCN.<sup>4</sup>
3. Management largely endorsed the recommendations of the Evaluation,<sup>5</sup> and since then, it has instituted an inclusive, participatory process to mainstream nutrition within all FAO activities and to reposition FAO within the nutrition architecture at country, regional and global levels.
4. In addition, in January 2012, the Director-General launched the Strategic Thinking Process in order to determine the future strategic direction for the Organization. This Process will inform revision of the FAO Strategic Framework, and preparation of the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2014-17. Accordingly, development of the nutrition strategy must necessarily be aligned with this process.
5. The Strategic Thinking Process is a broad and iterative process, which has as its basis the established Vision and Global Goals of FAO, and which includes consultation with staff, inputs by an External Experts Panel, discussion with partner organizations and ample dialogue with Members. Its first major output was the identification of major global trends as drivers of change, and seven main challenges that are derived from those trends and represent the possible priority areas of future work of the Organization.<sup>6</sup> Two of these main challenges are directly linked to nutrition.
6. These challenges, complemented by identification of comparative advantages and core functions of FAO, as well as further consultation, will be considered in defining the future strategic objectives for the Organization. The selection and characterization of these strategic objectives will also be informed by regional specificities and priorities identified by the 2012 Regional Conferences. The draft strategic objectives, as well as an outline of the reviewed FAO Strategic Framework will be presented to 144<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council in June 2012 via the Programme and Finance Committees at their Joint Meeting on 31 May-1 June.
7. The reviewed FAO Strategic Framework, as well as outline of future action plans and programmes for the Organization will then be formulated on the basis *inter alia* of feedback from FAO's technical committees, and further consultation with staff, external experts and global collaborators, for endorsement by the Council at its 145<sup>th</sup> Session in November 2012, following review by the Programme and Finance Committees in October 2012. Accordingly, the Programme Committee will also receive at its 112<sup>th</sup> Session in October 2012 a detailed strategy on nutrition for FAO as part of the overall "strategic package" for the Organization that results from review of the FAO Strategic Framework through the Strategic Thinking Process.

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<sup>1</sup> CL143/7, para. 16

<sup>2</sup> Basic Texts of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2011 Edition.

<sup>3</sup> PC 108/6

<sup>4</sup> REACH stands for Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger. It is the joint United Nations initiative for combating child hunger and undernutrition. SUN stands for Scaling Up Nutrition. It is a movement of more than 100 governments and organizations to push for action and investment to improve maternal and child nutrition. UNSCN is the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition. It is the interagency mechanism to harmonize UN agencies' actions on nutrition.

<sup>5</sup> PC 108/6 Sup.1

<sup>6</sup> Ref. APMC/12/INF/10, and Web Annex .

8. In this context, the present document, in responding to the Committee's previous request:
- describes progress to date, including highlights of tentative elements of the strategy on nutrition; and
  - describes the roadmap to complete the strategy for presentation at the October 2012 meeting of the Committee.
9. This document is based on inputs received through a wide internal consultative process, including various meetings with individuals and groups and comments.

## **II. Repositioning nutrition in FAO: progress and strategy development**

10. Progress to date and recent activities are outlined below and follow the structure of the Management Response to the Evaluation. The strategy itself will also address decisions about organizational structure, staffing, and resource requirements.
11. The nutrition strategy is being elaborated with emphasis on full participation and effective communication. For this purpose, three separate groups have been set up:
- a) *Internal Task Team on Nutrition (ITT)*. This is an existing cross-FAO group of about 50 people. The group consists of group leaders in AGN (Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division) and technical staff in the Knowledge Arm and TC (Technical Cooperation Department) who serve as nutrition focal points. The ITT gives feedback on content, process, and progress and gathers comments from and communicate back to their departmental colleagues.
  - b) *Guiding Team for Vision and Strategy*. This team is composed of seven senior staff from departments across FAO. Members include directors from AGN, Economic and Social Department, Fisheries Department, OSD (Office of Support to Decentralization) and TC, as well as leaders in gender work and from the Africa region. This group provides higher-level guidance on the strategy development process.
  - c) *Steering Committee*. DDK (Deputy Director-General, Knowledge) and ADGs (Assistant Directors-General (ADG) from the Knowledge Arm and TC already meet regularly for management purposes. This group serves as the Steering Committee to the ITT.
12. Significant involvement of the regions is planned. Regional nutritional officers from the Africa and Near East regions currently participate as members of the Guiding Team and the ITT. Involvement of the regions will increase as the strategy development process unfolds.
13. These mechanisms ensure awareness of the repositioning process across the Organization. During the strategy development, consultations will continue across FAO (both departments and interdisciplinary groups) and with other organizations, including Member States, UN agencies, SUN, REACH, the World Bank, members of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), NGOs, and other groups, such as GAIN (Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition), WEF (World Economic Forum), and AAHM (Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition). FAO will work closely with UNICEF, WFP, and WHO<sup>7</sup> to clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities expected from the agricultural sector in ensuring nutrition security at global, regional and country levels.

### *Strategic Framework*

14. Development of the nutrition strategy is being closely coordinated with the Office of Strategy, Planning, and Resources Management (OSP) and with OSD. This ensures development of the nutrition strategy is not isolated from broader processes of transformational change, but aligns with and informs them.

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<sup>7</sup> UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund; WFP, World Food Programme; WHO, World Health Organization.

### *Corporate position on nutrition*

15. FAO has underlined nutrition as a corporate priority at the highest level and has instituted an inclusive, participatory process to mainstream nutrition within all FAO activities and to reposition FAO within the nutrition architecture at country, regional and global levels.

16. In his public statements and speeches to Regional Conferences, the Director-General has reaffirmed the commitment of the Organization to addressing all forms of malnutrition, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and obesity.

### *Collaboration, partnership, networking*

17. With increased interest in nutrition, and FAO's renewed commitment to nutrition, the Organization is expanding and strengthening relations with partners in nutrition.

- Institutionally, FAO is actively involved in the global initiatives on nutrition, SUN and REACH, and engages with both at global, regional and country level.<sup>8</sup> It also is a leading partner in the UNSCN. FAO strongly supports the internal reform of the UNSCN and formally sits on the UNSCN Executive Committee.
- FAO is working with other UN agencies in nutrition, especially WFP and WHO, to clearly define roles and responsibilities in nutrition. At field level, FAO and WFP are coordinating activities in response to the current food and nutrition crises in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.
- FAO is collaborating with the World Bank and other global leaders in nutrition to create SecureNutrition, a knowledge platform on nutrition, agriculture, food and poverty.
- "Linking Agriculture, Food Systems, and Nutrition" was the topic of FAO's electronic Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) in February 2012. This FSN Forum discussion, which reaches more than 3 800 development practitioners, was co-hosted by FAO staff.
- Preparatory work for ICN+21 (International Congress on Nutrition) is continuing. FAO is working with co-sponsor WHO to sharpen the focus of the Conference and of the Steering Committee.
- FAO collaborates with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and WHO in the Social Protection Floor Initiative. Interventions to ensure food security and nutrition for all are important elements of such minimum social protection floors.

### **III. Suggested elements of a strategy for nutrition**

18. The strategy on nutrition and accompanying implementation plan will answer the following three principal questions:

- What are FAO's vision and goals for its work in nutrition?
- What specific activities will FAO undertake to achieve its vision and goals?
- How will FAO achieve its vision and goals (including where and when activities will be carried out, and by whom, and some indication of resource allocations and needs)?

19. The strategy will allow the Organization to respond to existing and emerging challenges in global nutrition. It will define the criteria used to determine FAO's priority areas for action in nutrition; its scope and content will inform FAO's actions in nutrition, and help define the magnitude and location of requisite, related capacity.

20. Tentative elements of a strategy, subject to change during the strategy development process, are set out below, with brief suggestions on content or key questions to be answered during the strategy development.

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<sup>8</sup> Twenty-seven countries have now joined the SUN movement. REACH expects to be active in 15 countries by the end of 2012.

## **A. Goals**

21. Recognizing the right to food, FAO's goal is to strengthen the potential of the food and agricultural system to improve nutritional outcomes for people of all ages, in rural and urban areas and the spaces in between, and in both emergency and development contexts.
22. A focus on strengthening the food and agricultural system for nutrition will encompass all elements of the system, from production to marketing, processing, preservation and consumption. This aims to ensure access to a diverse, healthy and sustainable diet, with attention to raising consumer awareness, information and education, and to improving the livelihoods of those connected with the food and agricultural system, including through promotion of gainful and decent jobs.
23. With the focus on country-level results and on areas of greatest need, FAO can concentrate on responding to the needs of the most vulnerable. This may lead to the greatest focus on low- and middle-income countries, where problems arising from resource and knowledge constraints and weak institutional capacity are greatest. In addition, FAO possesses comparative advantages for producing some key global public goods useful for developed and developing countries alike, for example in tools for dietary assessment.

## **B. Scope**

24. The strategy itself will have a lifespan through 2017, in line with the timespan of the next MTP. The strategy will focus on activities for this time period, but must also be dynamic enough to respond to new issues and challenges as they emerge over time.
25. The strategy will focus on the role and work of nutrition throughout FAO, and not only within a given division or department. The strategy will also consider food safety, but as one of many factors that affect nutrition, not as a primary focus of the strategy. However, FAO's role in food safety at global and country levels is highly valued. The effect of any decisions regarding nutrition in the Organization must be carefully considered for its impact on food safety and the Codex Alimentarius more generally.

## **C. Actions: What FAO will do**

26. The Nutrition Evaluation recommended a number of focal areas around which FAO's nutrition strategy could be built. The strategy development process for nutrition, in alignment with the Strategic Thinking Process, will review these recommendations to determine which areas should be prioritized and how.
27. Going forward, FAO will need to include an appropriate range of stakeholders in consultations as the discussion on nutrition needs to extend beyond traditional constituencies in the agricultural sector to include those in finance, planning, health and education, among others. At the international level, the comparative advantages of other organizations, including UN agencies and other partners dealing with nutrition, may provide some parameters for FAO's actions. Internally, FAO will have to relate its actions in nutrition to other corporate strategies and policies mentioned above.
28. FAO might sharpen its focus by clearly defining what kinds of activities it will and will not undertake. For example, FAO could prioritize activities that lead to production of global public goods and have demonstrable global or national impact. This could include providing technical guidance based on global evidence and strengthening the quality of FAO's involvement with national coordination mechanisms for nutrition, such as REACH. In any case, each potential area of action should trace its impact pathway to demonstrate how it contributes to better nutritional outcomes.
29. The Strategic Thinking Process, the initiative for decentralization and the keen focus on results bring work at country level to the fore. Thus, country needs, as reflected in the Country Programming Framework (CPF) and regional strategies, will be given special attention. Because these needs will likely vary, depending on the situation found in the region or the country, the nutrition strategy must consider how to support core functions with global relevance and at the same time have

the flexibility needed to respond effectively to emerging issues and particular regional and country needs.

#### **D. Actions: How FAO will do it**

30. The distribution of nutrition capacity at FAO will be designed to support the activities that emerge from the strategy development process. The proposal must consider who will do what at which levels, so that the structure optimally supports specific areas of work and also enables working across divisions and departments (horizontally) and from headquarters to country level (vertically).

31. Operationally, FAO is expected to engage actively and in an integrated fashion with international and country-level coordination mechanisms, such as SUN and REACH, or UN Joint Programmes where REACH does not exist.

32. The respective roles of staff at headquarters and decentralized offices will be clarified. FAO must also assess whether essential resources and individual and institutional capacities needed to implement the strategy are available. In line with the Evaluation and the decentralization initiative, high-level experts, who provide services to other divisions within FAO and the regional offices and cultivate international partnerships and otherwise focus on dissemination of global public goods, would reside at headquarters.

33. Regional staff in nutrition would have a technical background in nutrition and would bridge between high-level technical expertise at headquarters and operations at country level, thus ensuring a critical mass and enhance FAO's presence at country level and the quality of services staff could provide.

#### **IV. Proposed process and timeline**

34. The focus of this paper is on the development of the vision and strategy for nutrition and the accompanying implementation plan. The draft strategy on nutrition will be presented to the Committee in October 2012.

35. The main actions to be taken in the development of a vision and strategy on nutrition are: 1) work with important actors and stakeholders; 2) collect information on the situation; 3) discuss the evidence (information, situation) with these players to develop a shared understanding and plan ways forward. The steps to be taken to prepare the strategy are:

- Step 1. April 2012. Prepare an initial draft strategy document, including a prospective vision statement, for internal sharing, comment and discussion with the ITT, Guiding Team, and AGN. This document and comments received will provide input and guidance to the workshops described in Step 3.
- Step 2. April/May 2012. Hold a series of workshops with a cross-section of staff, including from across divisions and regional and country offices, to provide inputs for the strategy. Tentative topics include:
  - Guiding Frameworks: Nutrition-Sensitive Food and Agricultural Systems
  - Global Challenges for Nutrition, International Architecture, and the Place of FAO
  - Strategy Development: FAO's Vision and Purpose
  - Actions: What FAO Will Do
  - Actions: How FAO Will Do It
  - Mapping Proposed Institutional Changes
- Step 3. May/June 2012. Synthesize outputs from workshops and revise vision and strategy document.
- Step 4. June 2012. Solicit final internal comments, revise again and prepare for sharing outside FAO.
- Step 5. July 2012. Consult on vision and strategy with external partners and stakeholders, including member countries, WFP, WHO, UNICEF, REACH, SUN, and other development

partners, such as the World Bank, research institutes of the CGIAR, private sector associations and NGOs.

- Step 6. July/August 2012. Revise vision and strategy document in light of external comments received. Prepare accompanying implementation plan.
- Step 7. August 2012. Hold validation workshop for FAO on revised vision and strategy document and implementation plan.
- Step 8. August 2012. Finalize the vision and strategy and implementation plan for consideration by the Programme Committee.
- Step 9. September 2012. Submit vision and strategy to the Programme Committee for review and endorsement at its 112<sup>th</sup> Session in October 2012.

36. Throughout the steps outlined above, the process for development of the vision and strategy on nutrition will be intrinsically linked with the evolution of the overall Strategic Thinking Process.

#### *Guidance Sought*

37. The Committee is requested to review and provide comments, as appropriate, on the proposed process for preparing the strategy on nutrition.