

## **Concept Note:**

### **“Renewing Commitment to the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF)”**

**Wednesday, 21 February 2018**

#### **Executive summary**

The Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF) received the support of by the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Regional Conference for Africa (ARC), held in April 2012, in Brazzaville, the Republic of the Congo, and was officially launched during the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Conference, held in June 2013, in Rome.

ASTF is an innovative Africa-led fund to support Africa-for-Africa development initiatives. Its main goal is to strengthen food security across the continent by assisting countries and their regional organizations to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, eliminate rural poverty and manage natural resources in a sustainable manner.

Angola and Equatorial Guinea have been the major financial contributors to the ASTF, with funding of approximately USD 40 million. To date, the fund has allocated USD 37 million to 18 regional programmes and national projects, which are being implemented in 40 countries.

The objective of this side event is to bring to the attention of the African Member Countries the results achieved so far by ASTF, lessons learned but also to discuss/revise the scope of the ASTF, its potential expansion and recapitalization through extended partnerships.

#### **I. Introduction**

One of the key priorities of the Steering Committee (SC) of ASTF, under the chairmanship of Angola, is the recapitalization of the fund in order to allow the continuation of this commendable initiative.

To date, the fund has received contributions totaling USD 40 million, of which USD 37 million has financed projects that have had an impact on the lives of millions of people in rural areas. Approximately USD 3 million remain which is not sufficient to ensure continuity of the fund and its objectives.

Given the current global, and particularly African, economic climate, and the call made by the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) with regard to the need for fostering multistakeholder partnerships, there is a need to broaden the approach of the ASTF. The fund will, therefore, open to contributions from stakeholders such as the private sector and non-African countries in addition to those contributions made by African countries.

Contributions can be made through donations, contributions and/or co-financing agreements; these can be in-kind, financial or in the form of technical assistance.

Commitment and contribution from all stakeholders, government and non-government, are essential for Africa to achieve the commitments of the Malabo Declaration for ending hunger by 2025, as well as the SDGs, particularly SDG2 on ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture by 2030.

Building on the declaration and in line with SDG2 and FAO's own commitment (SO1) to eradicate hunger, reduce malnutrition and poverty and build resilience of vulnerable populations, ASTF is a stepping stone to strengthen food security across the continent by assisting countries and their regional organizations to eradicate hunger and malnutrition.

It is a unique financing mechanism that pools resources from Africa's strongest economies to support national and regional initiatives. ASTF is instrumental in building Africa's Zero Hunger Generation, the first generation with the tools and the capacity to end hunger.

The side event will allow participants to become fully aware of the results achieved, lessons learned, challenges and new opportunities and commit to the resource mobilization event that will take place during the second quarter of 2018. Member Countries are also invited to indicate their availability to host the event and contribute to its organization.

## **II. Management of the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund**

The decision-making body of the ASTF is the Steering Committee. It provides strategic guidance and sets priorities for activities to be financed by the fund, and approves the work plan and project proposals submitted by the Programme Management Unit (PMU). The SC members include representatives of the ASTF donors (Angola and Equatorial Guinea), Chair of the Africa Regional Group, Chair of ARC, Representative of the African Union, and the FAO Deputy Director-General Climate and Natural Resources.

The implementation of activities is coordinated and directed by the PMU, established in the FAO Regional Office for Africa, under the oversight of the Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative. The PMU initiates the funding process by launching a call for proposals, which is circulated via the county and subregional offices as well as other FAO units indicating the guidelines for application; it then receives and assesses the proposals submitted and based on the assessment makes recommendations for the SC approval. So far, two calls for proposals have been launched by the PMU which resulted in the funding of most of the ASTF interventions (14 out of 18 projects). Also, occasionally, proposals can be made directly by the countries or relevant FAO headquarters units for the PMU review and consideration.

### III. Key achievements, resource mobilization and lessons learned

In many respects, the ASTF is South-South Cooperation (SSC) by nature as many of the supported programmes and projects are upscaling good practices, knowledge and technology from one African country to another.

ASTF is governed by a joint SC and a Fund Assembly (FA), with the support of a PMU. The fund supports activities aligned to SDGs, FAO's renewed strategic framework and priority programmes as well as development priorities determined by the ARC.

The fund has allowed covering critical gaps in the development agenda of African countries. Examples include providing rapid intervention projects during the outbreak of Ebola or developing and implementing projects to roll out effective prevention and control mechanisms to improve monitoring and response to pests and diseases (Fall Armyworm, fruit flies, etc.).

Most of the funding has been used: (i) as a catalytic fund for youth employment and value-chain projects (38 percent); (ii) resilience and livelihood projects (31 percent); (iii) food safety, security and nutrition projects (24 percent); and (iv) empowerment of rural women in the agriculture sector.

With the guidance of its governing structure, the fund allocated USD 37 million to 18 innovative regional programmes and national projects which are being implemented in 40 countries to boost efforts to eradicate hunger and reduce malnutrition and poverty and build resilience of vulnerable populations.

Theme	Number of Projects	Budget (USD million)
Resilience and livelihood supports	8	11.5
Employment	4	14
Food safety, security and nutrition	4	10.5
Gender and women empowerment	1	1
	<b>18</b>	<b>37</b>

*Breakdown of the funding by theme*

The ASTF projects also provide an opportunity to strengthen partnerships and to mobilize resources.

The renewed partnership between FAO and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has led to new modalities of collaboration. In the regards, the ASTF funded project on youth has been implemented by NEPAD in compliance with rules and regulations of both FAO and NEPAD. The project (USD 4 million) aims to support African countries to share and exchange development solutions for youth.

In Malawi, the ASTF project helped to mobilize bilateral funding with the European Union for EUR 5.5 million, with an additional EUR 35 million in the pipeline.

In Mali, Luxembourg funded EUR 1.5 million to replicate the ASTF approach of building resilience for conflict-affected rural communities, reducing rural poverty through youth employment opportunities and building best practices to increase crop and livestock production whilst the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) funded a USD 318 085 project.

In Liberia, the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) funded a USD 1.2 million project for scaling up interventions. In the Niger, the results of an ASTF project helped mobilize USD 810 300 from Norway to strengthen the resilience of rural communities.

ASTF funds were used to rapidly respond to emerging issues, such as the Fall Army Worm in Africa.

In terms of lessons learned, the ownership of projects by counterparts has been key for improved partnership with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and donors; knowledge sharing among and within countries. The need is to continue improving communication on results.

#### **IV. Renewal and sustainability**

Based on the successes and lessons learned to date, the ASTF is presented at the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of ARC with a renewed and focused vision and call for expanded partnership to:

- sharpen its focus on national and regional programmes and projects in line with Africa's priorities;
- foster intra-Africa/South-South collaboration , document good practices and promote African institutions of excellence in food and agriculture, with a view to establishing an "African Centre of Best Practices: building the concept of an Africa Solidarity Centre";
- encourage countries to share their expertise and financial contributions in order for knowledge to be shared/exchanged across Africa.

The sustainability of the ASTF can only be ensured if pledges of African countries lead to an effective replenishment.

The SC has engaged in resource mobilization by developing a Resource Mobilization Strategy and an action plan. A resource mobilization forum is foreseen for the second semester of 2018.

The growing importance of the private sector calls for a close partnership in order to fund critical gaps in the agricultural development of Africa. It is for this reason that the Resource Mobilization Strategy foresees the implication of the private sector as well as non-African countries to a fund already operating similarly to the South-South Cooperation modalities.

## V. Details of the event

21 February 2018, (11:00 to 12:00 hours).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitator: Mr David Phiri, FAO Subregional Coordinator for Southern Africa</li></ul>
11:00-11:15 hours	<p><b>Opening statement</b> Director General FAO and Chairperson ASTF</p> <p><b>Chairperson:</b> His Excellency Mr Florêncio Mariano da Conceição e Almeida Ambassador, Permanent Representation of the Republic of Angola to FAO/Chair of the ASTF Steering Committee</p>
11:15-11:20 hours	<p><b>PowerPoint Presentation</b> Regional Office for Africa (RAF) ARC Secretary, Mr Kwami Dzifanu Nyarko-Badohu, Programme Officer</p>
11:20-11:55 hours	<p><b>Discussions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speakers:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Congo Brazzaville to open the debate;</li><li>• Equatorial Guinea, Donor of ASTF for remarks;</li><li>• African Union Representative for remarks;</li><li>• Minister of Agriculture for Cameroon, Malawi and Uganda to share experience;</li></ul></li></ul>
11:55-12:00 hours	<p><b>Closure</b> by the Chairperson</p>

## Organizing institutions

This event is convened by FAO in partnership with the African Union.

## VI. Guidance sought by the Regional Conference

- acknowledge success of the African Solidarity Trust Fund in building capacity and financial resources for an African lead response;
- in light of the Changing development architect and considering dwindling resources within the fund, suggest innovative models for revamping the ASTF.