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**Coordination questions: United Nations support
for Agenda 2063**

United Nations system support for Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the main activities undertaken by the United Nations in support of the Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union. In preparation for the United Nations Food Systems Summit stocktaking moment, to be held in July 2023 in Rome, the report is focused on the role of food systems in sustainable development in Africa.

The report provides an overview of the projects and activities implemented by the United Nations system to support African countries in unleashing food systems' potential for economic growth through agro-industrialization, innovation and job creation. It contains a review of efforts to strengthen human capital through enhanced nutrition and the leveraging of agricultural projects for the inclusion of women, youth and vulnerable populations. It provides an overview of initiatives implemented to promote social cohesion, peace and stability, as well as to increase resilience and respond to emergencies. It presents innovative financing opportunities to enable the transformation of food systems and includes a summary of major advocacy efforts.

The report contains highlights of progress made in promoting stronger coordination among United Nations entities and with the African Union.

* [E/AC.51/2023/1](#).

** The present report was submitted after the deadline owing to delays in the clearance process.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [77/254](#), in which the Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on United Nations system support for Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union. The report refers to programmatic action of the United Nations system on food, nutrition and agriculture, with a particular focus on activities undertaken in 2022.

2. In its report on its sixty-second session ([A/77/16](#)), the Committee for Programme and Coordination welcomed the efforts of the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa to support African countries in planning and defining their energy mix; developing new alternative energy sources; promoting economic growth and strengthening their human capital through investments in energy; and mobilizing financing through the use of catalytic projects. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the recommendation of the Secretary-General to approach sustainable and renewable energy as an entry point for promoting a sustainable and inclusive recovery and accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 in Africa (see [E/AC.51/2022/14](#), para. 64).¹ The Committee also recommended that the Assembly request the Office of the Special Adviser to continue its efforts to enhance global cooperation and advocacy in support of Agenda 2063 and the capacity of Africa to achieve renewable energy and sustainable development.

3. In line with its mandate, throughout 2022, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa continued to promote closer collaboration among United Nations entities and with African Union institutions and African Member States on energy access on the continent, as explained in section III of the present report. These efforts resulted in an acknowledgement by United Nations system entities that the global call for a just energy transition needed to take into account the different starting points and needs of African Member States and to consider access to energy in Africa and other developing countries as an essential priority. This call culminated in the adoption of a new work programme on just transition by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-seventh session (see decision 1/CP.27, on the Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan).

4. In its 2022 report, the Committee for Programme and Coordination already highlighted the role of energy in increasing the productivity of the agrifood sector in Africa. The discussions of the interdepartmental task force on African affairs throughout 2022 served to clarify the role that energy and food systems play in triggering a ripple effect that accelerates progress towards sustainable development. In particular, while energy is a driver of development and is indispensable for making progress in any area of action, food systems have an impact on the resilience of development structures. As a result, merging efforts to enhance energy access with efforts to improve the food systems value chain, along with the use of technological innovations of the digital revolution, can pave the way for achieving resilience and sustainability in Africa.

5. In that regard, the present report provides a review of United Nations support for Agenda 2063 through an assessment of the programmes, projects and other activities implemented by the United Nations system to promote resilient, efficient and sustainable food systems in Africa. In particular, from the perspective of economic growth and development, and considering that 70 per cent of the continent's population depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, sustainable, innovative,

¹ The General Assembly endorsed the recommendation of the Committee in resolution [76/236](#).

inclusive and resilient food systems have a direct impact on advancing industrialization in agribusiness, ending poverty, promoting inclusion and achieving a high standard of living for all (Sustainable Development Goals 1, 8, 9 and 10 and Agenda 2063 goals 1, 4, 5, 6 and 18). From a human capital perspective, effective food systems are essential to eradicating hunger in Africa and ensuring healthy and well-nourished citizens (Sustainable Development Goals 2 and 3 and Agenda 2063 goals 1 and 3). In turn, good health and nutrition are essential for the educational attainment of children (Sustainable Development Goal 4 and Agenda 2063 goal 2). Furthermore, taking into account the fact that half of the agriculture workforce are women, sustainable food systems can also contribute to gender equality (Sustainable Development Goal 5 and Agenda 2063 goal 17). From the perspective of social cohesion and governance, food systems have the potential to enable the building of strong partnerships that leverage the links between development, peace and stability (Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17 and Agenda 2063 goals 11, 12, 13, 14 and 19). From the perspective of environmental sustainability, climate-smart and resilient food systems are essential to promoting energy efficiencies, ensuring the sustainability of natural resource management and combating climate change (Sustainable Development Goals 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 and Agenda 2063 goal 7). Finally, from a financial perspective, sustainable food systems are crucial for enabling African countries to own their development processes (Sustainable Development Goal 17 and Agenda 2063 goal 20).

6. The present report highlights strategic areas of action by United Nations system entities that can help to revert the ongoing deterioration of food security and nutrition in Africa resulting from, inter alia, the current global crises.² Furthermore, it includes proposals for ways to leverage the multiplying effect that sustainable food systems can have on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 to accelerate progress towards achieving the goals set out therein. It also provides an update on action taken by the coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system in Africa at the regional and global levels.

II. United Nations support for food systems transformation

7. In September 2021, the first United Nations Food Systems Summit was held, reflecting the culmination of an 18-month-long process that included 640 national dialogues, in addition to thematic, regional and global dialogues, and the engagement of food systems actors worldwide that resulted in over 2,200 propositions for accelerated action. By the time the Summit was held, 117 countries had developed national pathways in which they had set out their vision for a national transformation towards sustainable food systems. The Summit concluded with nearly 300 commitments from civil society actors, Member States and stakeholders to align their efforts, knowledge, resources, networks and tools in support of government-driven food systems priorities. The Summit was the starting point for a systemic approach around the following five action areas, with a view to ensuring sectoral engagement behind a coherent, sustainable food systems narrative: nourish all people; boost nature-based solutions; advance equitable livelihoods, decent work and empowered communities; build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stresses; and accelerate the means of implementation.

² The examples provided in the present report were drawn primarily from UN-Info and are included in the data portal of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (<https://uninfo.org>), managed by the Development Coordination Office. UN-Info is a digital platform used to gather information on the support provided by United Nations country teams to 162 countries and territories in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

8. African Member States were the only regional group to submit a common position at the Summit, in which they identified priority entry points to transform the continent's food systems, on the basis of the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. The common position was aimed at raising awareness, building consensus on a shared vision and galvanizing action towards resilient, viable and inclusive food systems. In that regard, it highlighted the paradox of a continent that contains 60 per cent of the global uncultivated arable land but that imports about 40 per cent of its food under unequal terms of trade. A continent that, by 2030, is projected to generate \$1 trillion in agribusiness but will also spend \$90 billion on food imports. Achieving the transformation of food systems with the support of the United Nations system will enable African countries to address this paradox and lay the foundations for economic growth and sustainable development on the continent.

Unleashing the potential of agriculture in Africa to boost economic growth and sustainable development

9. Agriculture contributes approximately 35 per cent of the continent's gross domestic product and employs over 50 per cent of the African workforce. Consequently, it is one of the economic sectors that is better placed to drive economic growth and improve the livelihoods of a substantial share of the population. In order to maximize this contribution, the United Nations system promotes three types of interventions: first, the development of a value chain approach to measure, assess and enhance the performance of the different value chains that make up food systems; second, the establishment of infrastructure to support agricultural development; and third, the strengthening of the agricultural job market.

10. The value chain approach is aimed at leveraging industrial techniques to boost production through specialization, value addition and technological innovations. To this end, United Nations entities support African countries in creating and strengthening the value chains of selected agricultural products. For example, in Guinea-Bissau, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is implementing a project focused on improving the competitiveness of the mango value chain through the provision of support to local farmers in all three stages of the chain: production, local processing and export.

11. To maximize the impact of value chain development on the promotion of investments that contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UNIDO have developed the Agrifood Systems Transformation Accelerator programme. The International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Trade Centre and the International Food Policy Research Institute also provide technical expertise for projects implemented under the programme. The programme is based on an integrated approach to value chain development and supports Governments and the private sector by providing capacity-building, facilitating efforts to institutionalize knowledge on value chains and market development, providing recommendations to create an enabling policy environment and de-risking investments. One of the pilot projects under the programme is focused on developing the palm oil sector in the United Republic of Tanzania.

12. The value chain approach also helps to facilitate the promotion of agricultural products with unique qualities and special characteristics associated with geographical location, specific farming practices and cultural heritage. This is the objective of the "One country one priority product" initiative launched by FAO in Africa in March 2022. The initiative currently includes 27 countries and 17 special agricultural products. The project also involves the promotion of economic

diversification and the adoption of economies of scale to increase intra-African trade, in particular through the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.³ In support of this goal, FAO and the African Union Commission launched a framework for boosting intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services. In addition, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in collaboration with the African Union Commission, organized a workshop and a webinar to identify best practices and disseminate recommendations on how special economic zones can contribute to the regional integration of value chains. Also in collaboration with the African Union Commission, UNIDO is conducting a mapping of regional value chains to support the development of a pan-African strategy to leverage the opportunities emerging from the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

13. In addition to product-focused interventions that seek to foster specialization, the United Nations system is also supporting the adoption of the agricultural value chain as a means to enhance production. For example, in Guinea, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported the development of four projects to develop sectoral programmes and value chains in agriculture, farming, fisheries and environmental issues.

14. The value chain approach has also been useful in better understanding the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on food production and adopting response measures.⁴ For example, in Rwanda, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) conducted a study on the performance of the agriculture sector during the pandemic. In Tunisia, FAO implemented a project to support efforts to respond to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on agricultural value chains and food security.

15. Enhancing the production and productivity of a value chain is, in many cases, linked to the quality of the agricultural input. According to FAO, in Africa, only about 35 per cent of crops are sown with seeds of improved varieties. In this regard, United Nations entities also support Member States by providing access to improved fertilizers and seeds, as FAO is doing in Gabon, or by supporting the shift to organic fertilizers and the greening of agricultural industries, as UNIDO is doing in Côte d'Ivoire.

16. Technology access and innovation can also offer solutions to increase agricultural productivity in Africa. How to leverage science, technology and innovation to leapfrog towards the transformation of food systems is one of the areas of focus of the United Nations system. For example, in 2022, UNCTAD and UNDP developed a study, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of Angola, focusing on promoting a competitive business environment that is favourable to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises through science, technology and innovation.

17. A critical step in the development of agricultural value chains is the establishment of agro-industrial parks. They are strategic tools that can contribute to improving agricultural production and productivity by supporting the transformation of agricultural and livestock products. UNIDO supports Member States through all the stages of development of an agro-park: from prefeasibility studies to investment

³ Additional information on agricultural export diversification in Africa can be found in the report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development entitled *Rethinking the Foundations of Export Diversification in Africa: The Catalytic Role of Business and Financial Services – Economic Development in Africa Report 2022*.

⁴ A global assessment from a human rights perspective can be found in the report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food on the right to food and the coronavirus disease pandemic ([A/77/177](#)).

promotion, construction and operation. UNIDO is also contributing to the efforts of the African Union Commission to develop common African agro-parks to bolster regional value chains. The Zambia-Zimbabwe common agro-industrial park is expected to be the first to be developed as part of these efforts.

18. Besides interventions linked to the development of value chains, the United Nations also supports the establishment and operationalization of smaller infrastructure projects, usually linked to programmes and initiatives targeting vulnerable populations. For example, in Mali, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is building four fishponds and two gardening structures as part of a project to increase the resilience of local communities. In Guinea, FAO built 10 poultry farms as part of a project to generate job opportunities for youth. The project also included the provision of training to 100 young men and women and 10 veterinary officials to manage and oversee, respectively, the farms.

19. Improving the working conditions of farmers, promoting job opportunities and enhancing livelihoods through agriculture and farming are also important areas of focus for the United Nations. In this regard, ILO continues to provide support to strengthen the capacity of labour administration and inspection systems to enable them to uphold labour standards. For example, the “Trade for decent work” project, implemented in 11 countries, 5 of which are in Africa, is aimed at improving the application of the ILO fundamental conventions through improved labour relations and working conditions. ILO also provides programmatic and technical support to improve working conditions in specific value chains. For example, one of the aims of the “Sustainable supply chains to build forward better” initiative is to advance decent work in the fisheries industry in Namibia, one of the most significant contributors to the country’s gross domestic product and its second largest source of foreign currency earnings.

20. Other United Nations entities are also implementing projects aimed at strengthening skills related to agribusiness. For example, FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have established farmer field schools as a comprehensive, localized and community-based solution in which participants “learn by doing”. Each school has a curriculum tailored to a particular area, and students identify and analyse solutions to their specific challenges. United Nations entities have promoted such schools in several African countries, including Burundi, Guinea, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, the Niger, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

21. United Nations entities also support the establishment of professional structures in the agribusiness sector and the development of the capacities of government officials linked to the agro-industry. For example, in Somalia, FAO is supporting the formation and operation of 30 farmer cooperatives and three farmer-trader business forums. In Botswana, UNDP is providing capacity development to staff of the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry to better facilitate and regulate international trade in order to prevent distortions in the agricultural market.

Strengthening human capital through food and agriculture

22. Food security and nutrition play a fundamental role as enablers of human capital development. They are essential for achieving good health and well-being, promoting educational attainment and ensuring that the population’s most basic needs are met. Furthermore, given that most agricultural activities in Africa are small in scale, enhancing agriculture, farming and fisheries provides significant opportunities for increasing the income of small-scale farmers, thereby promoting their socioeconomic integration and favouring the emergence of a middle class. In this regard, the United

Nations system provides a range of support to Member States in strengthening their human capital through food security, nutrition and agriculture.

23. Wasting, stunting and general malnutrition have a negative impact on educational attainment. While African countries have succeeded in achieving universal primary education, the literacy and numeracy levels of African children remain below the average. Nutrition deficiencies are one of the causes of this problem. Furthermore, school enrolment and completion decrease substantially during secondary school, in particular for girls. This decrease in schooling is related to, inter alia, the lack of support for adolescent girls to be able to maintain menstrual hygiene management in schools and the need for older children and youth in low-income households to contribute to their families' sources of income.

24. To provide a comprehensive solution to this problem, the World Food Programme (WFP) is working closely with the African Union Commission and African Member States in the design and implementation of school-feeding programmes using homegrown food. The programmes ensure that children receive at least one nutritious meal a day that addresses their nutritional needs and helps them to perform better in school. Such programmes reduce the burden of care for family members, in particular women. Furthermore, in some cases, the programmes also provide direct cash or in-kind support to the children's families, to compensate for the contribution that the children would make to the household income if they were not attending school. Through the implementation of joint projects, WFP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are complementing school-feeding interventions with child and adolescent health services aimed at, inter alia, providing support to adolescent girls and keeping them engaged in school. In addition, the WFP homegrown school-feeding initiative contributes to the development of local agriculture and economies by involving local smallholder farmers as regular suppliers of food for the programmes. WFP is currently supporting such initiatives in 46 countries, 29 of which are in Africa.

25. To restore school meal programmes that were stopped during the pandemic and to help low-income countries to reach the most vulnerable people and promote safe, nutritious and sustainably produced food, a group of Member States launched the School Meals Coalition in the context of the United Nations Food Systems Summit. The Coalition, which is co-chaired by Finland and France, includes 77 Member States, including 35 African countries, and 81 partners. The African Union, the African Union Development Agency and seven United Nations entities⁵ are also part of the Coalition. In 2022, the Coalition launched three initiatives to support Member States, namely: (a) a research consortium, led by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, to develop data and evidence on the impact of school feeding, including research on the value for money of school health interventions and their impact on education outcomes; (b) a sustainable financing initiative for school health and nutrition, led by the Education Commission and chaired by the Special Adviser on Africa, which seeks to increase domestic financing and make funding from donors more efficient and effective; and (c) a data and monitoring initiative, led by WFP, to develop a global database of school meal programmes as a global public good to ensure that quality data on national school meal programmes are made available worldwide. During 2022, 28 countries used the services of the Coalition and participated in its initiatives. For example, in Rwanda, through the sustainable financing initiative, support was provided to identify funding gaps and options for the mobilization of domestic and external resources.

⁵ WFP, which provides support as the secretariat of the Coalition, FAO, IFAD, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Health Organization.

26. The inclusion of women and youth constitutes one of the main pillars of Agenda 2063 and, consequently, of United Nations action on the continent. To pursue this goal, United Nations entities work with national administrations and local communities and undertake advocacy and analysis efforts. Activities in support of national administrations are focused on two areas: the development of national policies and the provision of capacity-building. For example, in Cameroon, FAO is contributing to the development of a strategy to promote agricultural entrepreneurship among women and youth. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) is helping authorities to incorporate international standards into selected national policies to advance women's empowerment in the green and blue economies.

27. Community support activities are aimed at providing vulnerable women and youth with the means to lift themselves out of poverty and at creating community-based structures that will help to enhance production and productivity. For example, in Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire, FAO and UN-Women are supporting the establishment of cooperatives of women and youth in the agrifood sector. Activities include capacity-building for financial institutions to enhance the gender responsiveness of services provided to cooperatives.

28. Advocacy efforts involve awareness-raising among the affected communities and the promotion of standards, such as the Women's Empowerment Principles that UN-Women has developed with the United Nations Global Compact to guide businesses on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, the marketplace and the community. For example, in Senegal, UNICEF, UN-Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are implementing a project to raise awareness among youth and mobilize them to stand up for their health and nutrition rights.

29. Advocacy activities to promote the role of women and youth are a major focus for entities based at United Nations Headquarters. For example, in February 2022, the Deputy Secretary-General convened a retreat for senior African women leaders in the United Nations to discuss challenges to the joint implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 from a gender perspective. Participants discussed, inter alia, the role that food systems can play in advancing women-led solutions, based on the example of Food for Education, a women-led non-governmental organization that provides subsidized meals to primary schools in Kenya. In April, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa organized an Africa regional breakout session for the Economic and Social Council youth forum, under the theme "Nutrition and the Sustainable Development Goals: how can young people help to feed Africa?". It was organized in collaboration with ECA, UNESCO, UNDP, United Nations Volunteers and the African Union Special Envoy on Youth.

30. Analytical activities are also undertaken by entities at Headquarters and in the field and include the development of assessments to better understand the gender component of food security and nutrition. For example, in 2022, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa issued a paper on food security in Africa in which it discussed the gender aspects of malnutrition. In the field, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNFPA and UNDP are supporting a study on the impact of climate change on food security, gender and migration in Lesotho.

31. Migrants, refugees and other persons of concern are also recipients of United Nations support in the areas of food security and agriculture. In some instances, the support is provided through in-kind assistance. For example, in Botswana and Mauritania, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) distributes rations to prevent hunger among persons of concern. In

Mauritania, IOM has distributed 2,000 ruminant animals and established a food bank for livestock in a camp to strengthen self-subsistence among displaced people.

32. In other cases, United Nations entities provide agricultural capacity development to migrants and refugees and to their host communities, to increase the probability of successful integration. For example, in Angola, WFP and UNHCR are conducting activities to enhance self-reliance among refugees. In Zimbabwe, UNHCR is supporting efforts to improve the access of vulnerable farming households to climate-smart agricultural inputs and outreach systems enabling farmers to reach external sources of information.

33. Besides targeted support to selected vulnerable populations, United Nations entities also support Member States in strengthening the food security and nutrition aspects of their social protection systems. For example, FAO is promoting linkages between social protection, agriculture and food security to increase intersectoral coherence in Mozambique. In Zimbabwe, WFP is providing policy and technical support to increase the interoperability and coordination of cash transfer programmes.

34. Food insecurity and malnutrition have a severe impact on people's health, worsening their vulnerabilities and increasing the burden on national health systems. To leverage nutrition as a preventive health tool, the United Nations system follows the One Health approach, which seeks to support Member States in establishing integrated multisectoral and transdisciplinary health and nutrition services at the local and national levels. For example, in Senegal, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO are implementing a series of projects aimed at enhancing this integrated approach by leveraging technologies, strengthening public services and working with religious leaders and traditional leadership, *inter alia*.

35. United Nations entities also provide targeted support to specific sectors or communities. In some cases, the support is focused on the development or improvement of strategies. For example, in Namibia, IOM, UNAIDS, WHO and WFP are collaborating with national authorities to strengthen the integration of a comprehensive food and nutrition component into programmes to combat HIV and tuberculosis. In other instances, United Nations action involves a combination of technical support and financial or in-kind contributions to address the impact of malnutrition. For example, UNICEF is helping to incorporate micronutrients into the diets of newborns and toddlers in Mauritania.

36. United Nations health-related support is also aimed at creating and strengthening African countries' capacity to control and ensure the quality of agricultural and livestock products. For example, in Cameroon, FAO is supporting the establishment of a health control programme for meat processing facilities. In Guinea, WHO is working with stakeholders to support food quality control processes and mainstream best practices in food hygiene.

Unlocking the potential of food systems for social cohesion, peace and stability

37. Conflict is a source of food insecurity and the main driver of hunger. Seven countries in which there is a high risk of famine in 2023⁶ have high levels of armed violence. However, the link between food and conflict is not unidirectional. Food insecurity is not merely a consequence of conflict but can also act as a trigger of tensions among communities and competition for the control and use of natural resources, such as water or pastures. At the same time, food- and agriculture-related interventions can be effective conflict prevention mechanisms, by fostering social

⁶ Burkina Faso, Haiti, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen; data taken from the WFP global operational response plan 2023, update No. 7.

cohesion, strengthening the resilience of communities and thereby upholding the rights of marginalized groups.

38. Promoting civil, economic and cultural rights linked to food and agriculture is an essential component of efforts to entrench human rights, in line with goal 11 of Agenda 2063. It is also an effective mechanism to contribute to social cohesion and prevent food- and agriculture-related issues from triggering tensions and social conflict.⁷ In this context, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) supports Member States in the mainstreaming of human rights into policy development. For example, in Tunisia, OHCHR is implementing a project to support the embedding of the rights of migrant populations, including the right to food, into national policies.

39. Upholding the right to land in an equitable manner is also critical to achieving inclusive sustainable development and durable peace. In this regard, OHCHR and FAO advocate the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security and provide technical support to Member States for their implementation. For example, in 2022, Sierra Leone passed two new laws on land tenure security that boost the rights of rural landowners, empowering them to negotiate the value of their land with investors and prevent it being leased out without their express consent. Considering the existing gender divide in land ownership, United Nations entities are also implementing initiatives aimed at promoting land ownership of women. For example, IFAD has launched the global gender-transformative approaches initiative, which seeks to enhance the recognition and protection of women's land rights in selected projects. The initiative is being implemented in seven countries, four of which are in Africa.

40. The use of land can be a source of tension in Africa, in particular between herders, farmers and transboundary communities. United Nations country teams and peacekeeping operations work with national authorities and local communities to apply multidimensional approaches grounded in sustainable development for all that reduce the risk of escalation and promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, FAO is implementing a project funded by the Peacebuilding Fund to support the establishment of 10 transboundary agriculture microprojects and the reinvigoration of two transboundary markets as a way to reduce conflicts among pastoral communities. In Mauritania, ILO and IOM are supporting transboundary populations to better manage natural resources and improve transhumant corridors as a prevention measure to reduce the risk of conflict.

41. United Nations peacekeeping operations also contribute to enhancing the food and agriculture sector in the host country through quick impact projects and through regular support to national authorities and local communities. For example, in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic built a stockyard and supported the farmer and breeder committee responsible for managing the premises. Since 2022, the Mission has been supporting farmers and herders associations in targeted conflict hotspots with small farming equipment and seedlings (for farmers) and medication and vaccines (for cattle) as an incentive to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts between farmers and breeders in the Mambéré-Kadéï, Ouham-Pendé and Lim-Pendé Prefectures.

⁷ The report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food on conflict and the right to food ([A/HRC/52/40](#)) provides an overview of violence in food systems and recommendations to address it.

42. United Nations entities at Headquarters are also fostering food and agriculture interventions to promote peace and stability. For example, in 2022, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa launched the initiative “A pen for a gun” as part of a project funded by the United Nations peace and development trust fund. The initiative, which is the Office’s contribution to the School Meals Coalition, seeks to unlock and maximize the potential of school-feeding programmes as a conflict prevention tool. In particular, it seeks to amplify their impact in three areas: first, enhancing social cohesion and inclusion, by maximizing the social protection components of school-feeding programmes to promote wealth distribution and balance inequalities and by bolstering the programmes’ contribution to gender equality; second, supporting an expanded presence of State institutions, by using the community-based structures established to manage school-feeding programmes, which involve teachers and families, as an entry point for public service delivery in remote and marginalized areas (see [A/77/644-S/2022/959](#), para. 42); and third, preventing the recruitment of children and supporting the reintegration of former child soldiers.

Promoting resilience and sustainability through food and agriculture

43. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has noted, climate change has an impact on food production, processing, storage, distribution and consumption. This has contributed to worsening the food crisis and also represents a risk for economic growth and sustainable development. Agricultural productivity growth in Africa has decreased by 34 per cent since 1961 owing to climate change, and, without adaptation measures, further global warming is expected to reduce yields and livestock production.⁸ For example, with a 2°C rise in global temperatures, maize yields in West Africa are expected to decline between 20 and 40 per cent compared with the yields recorded for 2005. Estimates show that a reduction in fish production in coastal West Africa due to ocean acidification might lead to a loss of 50 per cent of fisheries-related jobs in the area.⁹ The frequency and severity of floods, droughts and other weather phenomena have increased on the continent,¹⁰ affecting food systems and increasing the cost of emergency support. In 2022, African countries received over \$6.8 billion in humanitarian assistance in agriculture, food security and nutrition.¹¹ Building resilience and addressing the underlying causes of humanitarian crises, instead of reacting to the crises, is the only long-term solution. It is also more cost-effective. To support African countries in addressing this challenge, the United Nations system is working with Governments and communities to increase resilience, enhance the conservation of natural resources and ensure sustainability.

44. To increase resilience, United Nations entities are providing capacity development to Member States and supporting planning and mapping processes to improve decision-making. For example, the United Nations Environment Programme, FAO and WFP are helping to develop a map of areas at risk of drought, flooding and pest and disease outbreaks in the United Republic of Tanzania. The mapping is

⁸ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, “Africa”, in *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability – Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (Cambridge, United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press, 2022).

⁹ Vicky Lam and others, “Climate change impacts on fisheries in West Africa: implications for economic, food and nutritional security”, *African Journal of Marine Science*, vol. 34 (May 2012).

¹⁰ Intergovernmental Authority on Development, FAO, Famine Early Warning Systems Network, WFP and European Commission, “Unprecedented drought brings threat of starvation to millions in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia”, joint statement, 9 June 2022.

¹¹ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Humanitarian Data Exchange. Available at <https://data.humdata.org/> (accessed on 23 February 2023).

expected to establish a baseline and potential climate change scenarios to support risk management.

45. The United Nations system also contributes to enhancing the resilience of local communities through adaptation projects and enhanced infrastructure. For example, in Kenya, an IFAD-funded project is supporting efforts to identify solutions to drought through the use of climate-smart agriculture technology. In Somalia, FAO is remodelling embankments and improving irrigation drainage systems and canals to prevent flooding.

46. Emergency interventions, including the provision of in-kind assistance, are also undertaken when needed in order to help local communities to overcome adverse conditions. For example, FAO carried out livestock slaughter destocking activities in support of pastoral populations in Somalia. IFAD and the World Bank are supplying livestock feed, water and veterinary drugs to support breeders in Ethiopia.

47. To foster conservation and sustainability, the United Nations system is promoting the mainstreaming of best practices to prevent land and environmental degradation. For example, in Cabo Verde, UNDP is working on the identification of best practices to fight desertification. In Mozambique, FAO is developing a payment for ecosystem services scheme to support the conservation of forests. In the United Republic of Tanzania, UNHCR is supporting government efforts to promote the sustainable management of shared resources, protect water catchment and water sources and adopt erosion control measures in and around refugee camps and refugee hosting areas.

Sustainable financing to transform food systems

48. Leveraging the potential of the agriculture sector requires massive resource mobilization. According to the African Development Bank (AfDB),¹² the total cost for agricultural transformation in priority areas and for priority commodities¹³ is between \$32 billion and \$40 billion per year. To support African countries in overcoming this challenge, the United Nations system has adopted a broad range of initiatives, from traditional financing facilities to initiatives that leverage data and the digital revolution and community-based solutions.

49. For example, to help to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the agriculture sector and rural areas, IFAD launched the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility. The Facility mobilized \$93 million in order to provide cash grants, emergency supplies and agricultural inputs. In the Gambia, cash grants of about \$100 to \$500 were disbursed to the country's most vulnerable households. To respond to the ongoing global food crisis, ECA is working with the African Export-Import Bank, the African Union Commission and the secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area to repurpose the Africa Trade Exchange platform to assist countries in dealing with the food shortages. IFAD has launched a crisis response initiative in 22 vulnerable countries, 17 of which are in Africa. The initiative is a financial facility that will support access to finance for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, de-risk market participation, contribute to the financial sustainability of small-scale infrastructure investment plans and ensure affordable access to agricultural inputs.

50. The Hand-in-Hand Initiative, launched by FAO, is aimed at accelerating the market-based transformation of agrifood systems. As part of the Initiative, advanced

¹² AfDB, *Feed Africa: Strategy for Agricultural Transformation in Africa 2016–2025*, May 2016.

¹³ The priority commodities are tree crops (for example, cocoa, coffee, cashew and cotton), oil, palm horticulture and fish farming across all Africa; wheat in North Africa; sorghum, millet and livestock across the Sahel; rice in West Africa; maize, soybean, dairy and poultry across the Guinea Savannah; and cassava in humid and subhumid zones

data analytics are used to identify territories in which agricultural transformation has the greatest potential for alleviating poverty and hunger, to support national and local governments in developing an investment plan and to facilitate engagement with donors and development partners. The Initiative supports 60 countries, 33 of which are in Africa.

51. The Platform for Agricultural Risk Management, an IFAD initiative, also seeks to create favourable conditions for investments in the agriculture sector. The goal of the Platform is to embed risk management into policies, institutional capacities and investments through technical support and knowledge exchange. By enhancing the capacity of national and local governments and farmers to manage agricultural risks, the Platform increases the attractiveness of agricultural investments in developing countries. The Platform is currently working in Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, the Niger, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia.

52. United Nations entities also support small-scale financing solutions for farmers, including by promoting community-based approaches, leveraging new technologies and tapping into new financing sources. For example, in Mali, UNESCO is supporting a community-based financial solution in which group savings are used to provide basic financial services to women and youth, and IFAD has launched a project to attract investments from the Malian diaspora in rural farming projects. In Mozambique, FAO established an e-voucher system to facilitate the access of smallholder farmers to agricultural inputs through a network of retailers participating in the programme.

53. To ensure the long-term sustainability of financing efforts, the United Nations system is working with Member States to strengthen domestic resource mobilization systems so that they can become the driving force of food systems transformation. In this regard, the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund supports African countries in building integrated national financing frameworks as a critical tool to link financing and planning processes and overcome impediments to financing efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The Fund also promotes innovative approaches to financing such efforts by improving the reliability of investments in sustainable development, fostering greater policy coherence and mechanisms for effective multisectoral, inclusive coordination, and supporting efforts to shape a new food finance architecture. For example, in Malawi, the Fund is supporting agribusinesses through a combination of loans, equity capital and technical assistance. In addition, to contribute to the dissemination of knowledge and best practices, the Fund issued two data briefs in 2022 on blended finance, food systems and the blue economy.¹⁴

Global advocacy

54. Drawing from the African Union theme for the year 2022 “Strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security on the African continent: strengthening agrifood systems, health and social protection systems for the acceleration of human, social and economic capital development”, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations organized the 2022 Africa Dialogue Series on the theme “Building resilience in nutrition: accelerate Africa’s human capital and socioeconomic development”. In order to amplify the impact of the Dialogue Series, leverage it as a tool for enhanced coordination and coherence and consolidate it as a system-wide advocacy platform, the Dialogue Series was structured around four subthemes, each of which were led by

¹⁴ Convergence and the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund, “Blended finance and the blue economy”, data brief, February 2022; and “Blended finance for food systems”, data brief, April 2022.

United Nations and African partners with key expertise in the area of focus: (a) building resilient socio-agricultural food systems as the key to nutrition, led by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa; (b) strengthening the resilience of farming systems through land, digital transformation and access to finance, led by FAO; (c) the role of social protection in enhancing food security and nutrition for greater resilience in Africa, led by ILO and WFP; and (d) human capital development, climate, energy and food systems, led by the African Union Development Agency and ECA.

55. In launching the Dialogue Series, the Deputy Secretary-General expressed concern about the rise of hunger and malnutrition on the continent and called upon United Nations entities and Member States to build on the outcomes of the United Nations Food Systems Summit, in particular the African Union common position and the national pathways developed by countries, as a means to not only achieve food security but also foster economic growth, biodiversity, gender equality and social protection. In his statement, the Secretary-General underscored the need to address nutrition, food security, conflict, climate change, ecosystems and health as an interconnected challenge. He commended the humanitarian support provided by United Nations entities and partners to mitigate the impact of the crises but raised concern about the systemic nature of the problem. Consequently, he highlighted the need to pursue structural changes through massive technical and financial support for climate adaptation, energy access and resilience throughout the continent.¹⁵

56. Throughout 2022, United Nations principals continued to advocate transformative change in Africa to curb hunger and ensure agricultural self-reliance, in line with the African Union theme of the year. For example, on 25 May, on the occasion of Africa Day, the Secretary-General recalled the promise of the United Nations to contribute to a prosperous and peaceful Africa for all and called upon global stakeholders to strengthen food security and put nutrition within reach of every person. In June, in response to the global food crisis triggered by the war in Ukraine, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary-General of UNCTAD launched a joint appeal to Member States to refrain from imposing export restrictions on essential foodstuffs purchased by least developed countries and net food-importing countries to ensure the fulfilment of the right to food. In July, during the launch of the 2022 report on the state of food security and nutrition in the world, the Deputy Secretary-General expressed concern about the persistent disparities between regions, with Africa bearing the heaviest burden in terms of hunger. In September, during the Global Landscapes Forum, the Special Adviser on Africa highlighted the need to promote innovation and to activate the linkages between energy and food systems to leapfrog towards food resilience. In October, FAO co-convened with the African Union Commission, AfDB and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies a high-level conference on food security and nutrition in Africa. In December, during the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Acting Executive Secretary of ECA highlighted that over 62 per cent of African people depended directly on natural ecosystems for food, water, energy, health and livelihoods and called for the incorporation of the sustainable use of natural assets into national strategies.

¹⁵ For more information, see the Africa Dialogue Series 2022 e-magazine. Available at <https://express.adobe.com/page/7fzzFcbZpDVMu/>.

III. Coordination of the United Nations system and with the African Union in support of the continent's development

57. During 2022, the Regional Collaborative Platform for Africa and its opportunity and issue-based coalitions continued to support the continent's development and transformation process in the context of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The Platform secretariat, composed of the Development Coordination Office, ECA and UNDP, adopted streamlined operating practices and consolidated back offices, resulting in efficiency gains and higher quality services. The United Nations Africa Knowledge Hub Expertise Repository was finalized. It will be used to maintain a dynamic list of experts working for the United Nations across Africa and provide a view of existing expertise in the United Nations development system. It is complemented by online communities of practice for each of the opportunity and issue-based coalitions in order to provide a platform for online collaboration. Furthermore, the work led by ECA and UNFPA within the framework of the Platform to develop the Africa United Nations Regional Knowledge Hub on COVID-19 was recognized at the 2022 World Summit on the Information Society as one of the champion projects in the category for international and regional cooperation.

58. Progress was also made in structuring the collaboration between the Platform and the African Union Commission. The African Union-United Nations Regional Collaborative Platform held its inaugural meeting on 23 June and agreed on six priority areas to constitute the basis of a joint workplan: (a) climate change; (b) trade, macroeconomic frameworks, debt and economic diversification, including through the African Continental Free Trade Area; (c) digital transformation, data and statistics; (d) food sustainability; (e) humanitarian issues; and (f) COVID-19 and transboundary issues (see [E/ECA/COE/41/19](#)).

59. At the global level, the interdepartmental task force on African affairs, which is chaired by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, developed a comprehensive approach to discussing issues related to energy access and to the support that the United Nations system can provide to African Union institutions and African Member States at the strategic level. Following the prioritization of energy as an entry point for accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (see [E/AC.51/2022/14](#)), the task force structured its 2022 workplan around three working groups, focused on energy and people, energy and planning and energy and prosperity, respectively, and four plenary meetings. At the first meeting, held in March, the task force discussed domestic resource mobilization as a catalyst for financing the acceleration of energy access and transition in Africa. At the second meeting, held in July, the task force focused on the use of energy technology to achieve universal access and a just transition in Africa. At the third meeting, held in October, the task force discussed energy planning and African Union-United Nations cooperation around the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as an opportunity for Africa. At the fourth meeting, the task force reviewed progress made and decided to focus its discussions in 2023 on African food systems transitions and addressing the environmental sustainability, climate, energy and water nexus.¹⁶

60. The task force's new approach of delving into a specific thematic priority has proved successful. Each of the meetings was an opportunity for leading United Nations and partner entities to present their work, identify common priorities and agree on a joint approach. The regular participation of the African Union Commission

¹⁶ For more information on the discussions of the task force, see the 2022 compendium. Available at <https://www.un.org/osaa/reports-and-publications/compendium-un-interdepartmental-task-force-african-affairs-idtfaa>.

and representatives of Member States helped to ensure that the prioritization agreed upon by the task force was aligned with the interests and priorities of African countries. As a result, the task force has become an effective forum for exchange and coordination among United Nations entities and partners and has contributed to changing the global narrative about the continent's energy access and transition.

61. In December 2022, the sixth African Union-United Nations annual conference was held in Addis Ababa. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General reviewed progress made in the implementation of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Secretary-General called for a scaling up of joint efforts to advance the women and peace and security agenda and the youth and peace and security agenda, as well as joint efforts to end poverty and hunger, reduce inequality, promote food and energy security and improve the health and well-being of all Africans. Regarding food security and nutrition, the Chairperson and the Secretary-General expressed concern about the impact that drought and conflict had had on the humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, called for the strengthening of the capacity to address climate change, food security and energy issues and agreed to promote a results-based approach focused on energy access, food security, climate action, financing for development and governance.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

62. The United Nations Food Systems Summit constituted a turning point in the United Nations approach to food as a key component in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Over 120 countries have developed national pathways that offer a political vision and a road map to achieve the necessary shift towards more sustainable, resilient, inclusive and healthy food systems. A total of 28 coalitions, bringing together Member States, United Nations entities and other stakeholders, were launched to advance joint efforts through various entry points in support of these government-driven visions. The African common position, based on the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, provided a clear, comprehensive picture of challenges and opportunities, levers, drivers and game changers to transform food systems in Africa.

63. However, current progress remains too slow. The food, energy and finance crises are a harsh reminder that food systems transformation is critical to building resilience on the continent. Necessary immediate response measures should not distract from the longer-term need to shift food systems to a more sustainable trajectory that addresses the root causes of instability, avoids the crises of tomorrow and harnesses the enormous potential of the continent's food systems. In the next eight years, the continent's food needs are expected to more than double. This represents a risk of increased vulnerability to external shocks and reduced capacity to achieve food security. However, it can also be a unique opportunity to lay the foundations of a powerful industry that becomes the core of economic transformation in Africa.

64. The United Nations is committed to supporting the African Union and African countries in leveraging this opportunity. The Food Systems Coordination Hub emerged from the Food Systems Summit to sustain the collective efforts to deliver on the vision and commitments established at the Summit. It aims to facilitate the alignment of government-driven visions, thereby helping countries to achieve the

Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The first biennial Food Systems Summit stocktaking moment, which will be held from 24 to 26 July 2023, provides a framework to celebrate progress, assess and address hurdles encountered during the first biennium and commit to accelerating transformations to sustainable food systems. Governments have been encouraged to undertake inclusive multisectoral, multi-stakeholder stocktaking discussions to allow for an effective, interactive and fruitful exchange centred around countries' experiences, objectives and needs, on the basis of which plans can be established for the next biennium. Collective action and multi-stakeholder collaboration are essential for this shift. In this regard, the Secretary-General recommends that the Committee for Programme and Coordination:

- (a) Endorse food systems as an essential accelerator of transformative change across all Sustainable Development Goals in Africa;**
 - (b) Encourage countries to engage in the 2023 Food Systems Summit stocktaking moment through an inclusive approach that highlights their successes, challenges, priorities and ambitions and shapes the direction of efforts to enhance global food systems in the next biennium;**
 - (c) Support the development of a road map for food systems transformation in Africa according to the priorities identified in the African Union common position, and the convergence of relevant initiatives in support of national and continental visions;**
 - (d) Encourage Member States and partners to accelerate collective efforts, through such coalitions as the School Meals Coalition, to deliver on the commitments made at the Food Systems Summit, in support of the government-driven visions set out in the national pathways;**
 - (e) Call upon the international community to scale up efforts to transform food systems in Africa.**
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