

### Context

The Arab Region Working Group on Food Security and Nutrition is established in the context of the Sustainable Development Agenda to contribute to advancing the SDG2 “End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition and promote sustainable Agriculture”. The working group will take advantage of the opportunities for open consultation between Member Countries, the League of Arab States (particularly coordination with the LAS Arab Sustainable Development High Level Committee and the proposed SDG2 subcommittee group) and UN Agencies to monitor developments in food security and nutrition in the region, identify countries for joint UN support, host a regional dialogue on food security and nutrition and to present an annual or biannual review of food security and nutrition issues representing a UN consensus view for the benefit of Member States.

The expected outputs of the Working Group include but are not limited to:

1. In partnership with WFP & ESCWA, Annual or biennial report tracking the progress towards the achievement of SDG2.
2. An annual regional dialogue on food security and nutrition fostering exchange of experiences and lessons learned in key thematic areas for the region.
3. Specific effort to address implementation options and modalities of SDG2 in fragile and protracted crisis contexts.
4. 2-3 joint country support missions to advance the SDG2 agenda using the MAPS approach.

It is particularly relevant to recall that the LAS has now established a committee to address food security and nutrition in the context of the SDGs. This respond to the joint FAO/WFP continuous advocacy over the last couple of years and provide the working group with a counterpart to advance SDG2. Based on its mandate and objectives, the Subcommittee for Ending Hunger in the Arab Region represents an opportunity to advance FAO’s Zero Hunger Initiative in the region.

### I. 2018 Achievements: Highlights of Key Activities since 23<sup>rd</sup> RCM:

- Members of the Working Group organized a meeting on 30 April 2018 to brainstorm on how the UN agencies in this region can collaborate in supporting the SDG 2 agenda in the region. The meeting focused on the following agenda:
  1. Current and future regional cooperation with the League of Arab States and its affiliated organizations.
  2. Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2018: Current and suggested future collaboration
  3. Proposal for Multi-stakeholder meeting.

The achievements of the WG are reported here against expected outputs:

- **Annual or biennial report tracking the progress towards the achievement of SDG2:**
  - FAO and ESCWA released and launched “Arab Horizon 2030: Prospects for Enhancing Food Security in the Arab Region” in December 2017.
- **Regional dialogue on food security and nutrition**
  - The FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, in collaboration with the regional offices of UNICEF, WFP and WHO, organized a Regional Symposium on “Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition” in Muscat, Oman from 11-13 December 2017.
  - Launch of the 2017 edition of the Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in the Near East and North Africa (NENA) in December 2017 in Cairo.
- **Implementation options and modalities of SDG2 in fragile and protracted crisis contexts**
  - The three Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) developed a joint Conceptual Framework - “Strengthening Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition” - to work more and better together, and with key partners, to strengthen resilience of the most food-insecure. Under this framework, FAO and WFP are implementing the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis-funded project “Strengthening livelihood and food security of host communities and Syrian refugees through the development of sustainable agricultural practices (2018-2020)” in **Jordan and Lebanon**. This project aims at improving security, increase youth employment and improve agricultural productivity.
  - **SYRIA:** WFP and FAO worked together in the 2017 and 2018 Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission and ongoing joint assessment missions
  - **Yemen:** WFP and FAO partnered in the 2017 and 2018 Yemen IPC and other assessments
  - Multi-Stakeholder Meeting on Addressing the Implications of Protracted Crises on Food Security and Nutrition in the Arab Region, March 2018.
- **MAPS missions**
  - FAO and WFP provided support for the MAPS missions to Egypt and Tunisia.
- **Other activities**
  - Members of the WG on Food Security and Nutrition participated in the first meeting of the Sub-committee for Ending Hunger in the Arab Region of the League of Arab States (LAS) in September 2018. The meeting of the Sub-committee established seven high-level groups each is led by a member organization. The leading organizations reports to the Department for Sustainable Development and International Cooperation of LAS. The Working Groups are:
    - Agricultural productivity improvement, sustainable land management and biodiversity.
    - Hunger issues and rural community development
    - Social protection networks

- Adaptation to climate change and reduction of land degradation
- Ending hunger in countries in protracted crisis
- Sustainable production and consumption
- Improved nutrition

## II. Main Activities and Outputs Planned for 2019:

- **Joint Publication:**
  - “First Arab Report on the state of Food insecurity and Nutrition: Status of SDG2 in the Arab region: Challenges and pathways to hunger eradication and improved nutrition” expected to be completed by the third quarter of 2019.
  - FAO and UNICEF collaboration on 2019 Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in NENA Region, which will have a greater focus on nutrition
- **Capacity strengthening** in data collection, analysis and reporting impacts, GIS, nutrition analysis and agriculture. Efforts at all levels (i.e. managers, analysts, monitors, field supervisors) are critical for a successful cooperation, and WFP and FAO can enhance national capacities in several ways like delivering training and facilitating the exchange of experiences with other relevant partners.
- **Joint program design and implementation** through WFP and FAO digital platforms, cash-based transfers, food voucher systems, school meal programs, climate-related early warning systems and safety net programs, system-based social protection programs to support and build capacity of local producers, displaced persons or other groups;
- **Policy development and capacity strengthening** of governments and other partners in terms of strengthening national school meal and social protection policies, capacities of small-scale farmers and climate action plans and strategies within the context of SDG2;
- Yearly exercise to help refocus priorities and adjust work plans.
- Bi-annual **review assessment** (the first in December 2018) to help refocus priorities and adjust work plans.
- **Technical support** to the Sub-committee for Ending Hunger in the Arab Region established by the High Level Sustainable Development Committee of the League of Arab States (LAS).
- **Capacity strengthening** of the Sustainable Development and International Cooperation (SDIC) Division of LAS to enable it to contribute effectively to achievement of SDG 2 in the Arab Region.
- **Tracking the progress towards the achievement of SDG2** through collaboration of FAO and UNICEF on 2019 Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition for NENA Region, which will have a greater focus on nutrition

### **III. Decisions Requested from the Members of the RCM (if any):**

Develop the “First Arab Report on the state of Food insecurity and Nutrition: Status of SDG2 in the Arab region: Challenges and pathways to hunger eradication and improved nutrition”.