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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND
THE COUNCIL**

**Implementing EU food and nutrition security policy commitments:
Fourth biennial report**

{SWD(2020) 85 final}

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth report highlighting progress made by the EU and its Member States towards implementing their common policy commitments on food and nutrition security.¹ It is accompanied by a Commission staff working document (SWD) with further information on the analysis and case studies.

The report focuses on the main policy developments, analyses the financial trends in disbursements² and the evaluation of policy priorities. It also highlights the results and progress achieved by the EU and its Member States on the two thematic focus areas identified by the Council in 2018: (i) women's empowerment for food security and nutrition, and (ii) rural employment creation. It concludes by highlighting the importance of eight policy orientations.

Examples are included throughout the report on how the EU and its Member States have stepped up their action on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture.

2. GLOBAL AND EUROPEAN POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

After decades of decline, hunger and malnutrition have been on the rise again since 2015. In 2018, it was estimated that 821 million people were undernourished.³ Moreover, when the prevalence of moderate and severe food insecurity is aggregated, it is estimated that 26.4% of the world population (about 2 billion people) suffer from food insecurity and more than 135 million people across 55 countries have experienced acute hunger requiring urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance.⁴ This increase is largely due to conflicts, natural disasters and climate change. If current trends continue, this would jeopardise the achievement of not only Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 (Zero Hunger), but all SDGs by 2030.

In 2018, the Council of the EU expressed concerns about global food and nutrition security, in response to the already alarming figures and following the most recent reports on implementing EU food and nutrition security policy commitments and on the Commission's action plan on nutrition.⁵ The Council invited the Commission to maintain and intensify its efforts to achieve SDG 2 and thus reverse current trends.

In the reporting period, the EU and its Member States made a significant contribution to improving global food security through the scale of its funding, advocacy and championing of key governance issues.

In 2018, the EU and its Member States focused on implementing the European Consensus on Development of June 2017⁶. The Consensus sets out a common approach to international cooperation and development policy and how EU external action can contribute to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Recognising that

¹ An EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges, COM(2010)127.

² The financial part of this report and accompanying SWD cover up to and including 2018 (for methodological/comparability reasons); experiences captured also include 2019.

³ State of Food and Agriculture in the World (2019).

⁴ Sources: Global Report on Food Crises (2020) released on 21/04/2020.

⁵ Council conclusions (14283/18) of 26 November 2018.

⁶ https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/24004/european-consensus-on-development-2-june-2017-clean_final.pdf

food and nutrition security are major global challenges, it identifies sustainable agriculture and fisheries as key drivers in the fight against poverty and growing inequality. It also calls on the EU and its Member States to pursue efforts to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition.

At the global level, EU and its Member States' efforts continued to: (i) strengthen food and nutrition security governance, including through the Committee on World Food Security and the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement; and (ii) advocate for a new global coordination mechanism to end food crises. Through its support for the 'Global Network against Food Crises', the EU continued to play a leading role and fulfil its commitment to work multilaterally to strengthen the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (priority 6). This integrated approach to crises brings together all key actors and actively promotes coordination and collaboration on the ground. The annual Global Report on Food Crises brings together 16 leading global and regional institutions under the Food Security Information Network and is now widely recognised as the reference for consensus-based analysis of food crises. In 2018, the Global Network prepared the 'Food and agriculture in times of crisis' conference, which took place early 2019 in Brussels.

As part of the global effort to tackle malnutrition, the EU has been actively working on undernutrition, especially on preventing stunted growth in children. The Commission pledged to mobilise EUR 3.5 billion by 2020 to reduce the number of stunted children in partner countries by at least 7 million by 2025. In its conclusion of 26 November 2018, the Council recognised the Commission's efforts to honour EU commitments and to mobilise all relevant sectors to support the nutrition agenda at global and partner-country levels. The 4th progress report on the *EU action plan on nutrition* released in 2019⁷ confirmed that the Commission's nutrition-related investments were on course to meet the EU's political commitment. In 42 partner countries, the prevalence of stunted growth decreased from 39.2% in 2012 to 34.9% in 2019. Based on current trends, an estimated 4.7 million children in these countries will avoid having their growth stunted. The commitment to allocate EUR 3.5 billion by 2020 was met ahead of schedule in 2019.

In line with the 2nd EU gender action plan (GAPII), efforts have continued to have a transformative approach to improving gender equality. Women's critical role across agri-food value chains in managing natural resources and ensuring food and nutrition security is fully acknowledged. The number of gender-sensitive contracts increased from 37% in 2014 to 57% in 2018.⁸

At the One Planet Summit in 2017, the EU pledged EUR 270 million to support climate resilience and agricultural innovation for sustainable rural transformation. With financial support from France, the Commission initiated the DeSIRA⁹ initiative to strengthen the link between research and innovation in climate-resilient food systems and build evidence to underpin policies in low and middle-income countries. DeSIRA supports research and innovation projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America and strengthens research capacities and governance for key national, regional and global actors. It has three main pillars: 1) Research and innovation in agricultural and food systems; 2) Research infrastructure conducive to innovation and 3) Knowledge and evidence to feed policy design. Since 2018, more than 40

⁷ 11850/19.

⁸ Study on EU Achievements in Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture 2014-2018, p.27.

⁹ Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture.

projects have been adopted in over 31 countries, and six Member States¹⁰ committed additional funds to DeSIRA to strengthen synergies with their bilateral and multilateral research and innovation portfolios in agriculture and rural development.

The EU-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture is implementing a jointly agreed EU-African Union roadmap (2016-2020). By the end of 2020 funding in the order of EUR 190 million will have been mobilised from Horizon 2020, through the African Union Research Grant Scheme and through a joint funding scheme (LEAP-AGRI ERANet) from 10 EU and 9 African Union Member States. In total close to 100 projects are funded¹¹.

Two events strengthened cooperation between the African Union and the EU. The 2019 African Union - EU Ministerial Conference agreed on 10 action points, including the establishment of the Pan-African Network for the Economic Analysis of Policies (PANAP), which is intended to share knowledge on policy impact analysis in sub-Saharan countries. The 2019 African Union - EU High Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Science Technology and Innovation aims to make better use of research results and translate these into products and processes that increase the production of high quality food with appropriate inputs, enhance income growth and promote rural development in both regions.

The EU and its Member States made progress in strengthening the link between small-scale farmers and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and in targeting their investments to the creation of job opportunities in rural areas, especially for youth and women. In 2018, a Communication on the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs¹² was adopted, aiming to create jobs and promote sustainable and inclusive development. A taskforce on rural Africa was also set up to boost job creation in agriculture and the agri-food sector. The main EU tools to encourage investment in Africa (including by mobilising other sources of funding to develop agriculture) are the External Investment Plan and the Trust Fund for Africa.

On multilateral coordination, the Commission and five Member States¹³ continue as Board members of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD). In the GDPRD, the EU has strongly engaged in the Global Donor Working Group on Land. The EU and 28 partners have committed to increase coordination and knowledge exchange on land governance programmes, and they jointly support solutions to land issues in policy processes. In 2018, the EU adopted a programme on land governance¹⁴ that aims to boost investment in land to increase agricultural productivity and sustainable development.

3. FINANCE AND PROGRESS

This section provides a snapshot of the food and nutrition security (FNS) disbursements by the EU and its Member States and the latest progress towards the policy priorities.

¹⁰ France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands have provided some cash co-funding to DeSIRA through their foreign affairs departments or development agencies; Spain and Belgium have provided in-kind but quantified co-funding via their development agencies

¹¹ https://library.wur.nl/WebQuery/leap4fnssa-projects?q=*

¹² COM(2018) 643 final of 12.09.2018.

¹³ Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands.

¹⁴ Annex 1 of 2018 annual action programme, Commission Decision C(2018) 8063 final.

Disbursements¹⁵

Since 2012, total official development assistance (ODA) of the EU and its Member States for FNS has increased steadily, rising to EUR 5,027 million in 2018 – a 19.7% increase from 2016. This represented 8.1% of the total ODA flows in 2018, the highest level since 2012.

From a policy design perspective, country-level disbursements continued to make up the highest proportion of ODA since 2012, accounting for 66% in 2018. The proportion of regional-level disbursement has been stable in 2018 compared to 2016, but the volume has nearly tripled since 2012. Peaking at more than EUR 1 billion, spending on global initiatives and on the delivery of global public goods have risen in 2018, following a small dip in 2014 and 2016.

In 2018, Africa-South of the Sahara region remained the biggest beneficiary of FNS support, receiving about half of all disbursements. The joint share of FNS funding allocated to North and Central America and South America has been fairly stable since 2012, fluctuating around 6%. Although FNS support in Neighbourhood countries has risen since 2012, it still accounts for a small proportion of total FNS disbursements (an average of 6.7% per year).

Many activities were supported in 2018, mainly on sustainable agricultural development, food assistance, rural development, basic nutrition and agricultural research, which accounted for about half of the total funding¹⁶.

Table 1: Geographical distribution of aid disbursements from the EU and its Member States to FNS in 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018. In EUR million and percentage share¹⁷

Geographical area	2012	2012, in %	2014	2014, in %	2016	2016, in %	2018	2018, in %	Total	Total, in %
Africa-South of Sahara	1,440	42.8	1,650	45.1	2,242	53.4	2,463	49.0	7,795	48.0
Asia Pacific and Oceania	622	18.5	559	15.3	521	12.4	659	13.1	2,361	14.5
Middle East	12	0.3	54	1.5	40	0.9	64	1.3	169	1.0
Neighbourhood	98	2.9	273	7.4	312	7.4	405	8.0	1,088	6.7
North, Central and South	232	6.9	225	6.2	285	6.8	289	5.8	1,031	6.3

¹⁵ Different reporting methodologies exist across the EU and its Member States. The figures reported here solely reflect the specific methodology for this exercise and exclude humanitarian aid flows. Data include EU institutions and only ten Member States, which represent 91.2% of the total ODA flows of the EU institutions and 28 Member States in 2018. The detailed methodology is provided in the SWD annexed to this report. As with previous reports, this 4th report (issued in 2020) presents the latest official figures available, in this case for 2018. This report also includes smaller projects (below EUR 100,000), leading to an increase in the number of projects captured. But even without this methodological change, 2018 shows a marked increase in the number of projects and the amounts disbursed compared to 2016, from 3,462 to 3,928. However, these smaller projects accounted only 2.4% of the total FNS disbursements in 2018.

¹⁶ Sectors defined in terms of OECD DAC sector classification.

¹⁷ Regions refer to the OECD DAC regional classification. Neighbourhood refers to European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) partner countries and a few other candidate and potential candidate countries. The numbers of tables 1 and 2 are rounded.

America										
Regional and unspecified	962	28.6	898	24.5	800	19.1	1,148	22.8	380	23.4
All regions	3,366	100	3,659	100	4,200	100	5,027	100.0	16,251	100

Table 2 provides an overall picture of FNS assistance for EU policy priorities. Disbursements for '*smallholders' resilience and livelihoods*' (priority 1) made up the bulk of total FNS flows. Support for '*social protection mechanisms for food and nutrition security*' (priority 4) fell slightly compared to 2016. By contrast, the EU and its Member States considerably increased their support for building resilience at individual and country level (priorities 1 and 6), allocating 62% of the net increase from 2016. Overall, the significant net increase in total FNS disbursements in 2018 was because more programmes were implemented and the average support was higher.

Empowering women and girls and promoting gender equality has been increasingly incorporated into FNS programmes. Table 2 shows that this objective accounted for a significant proportion (64%) of total FNS support in 2018 (up from 53% in 2016). A similar trend was observed for environmental objectives, 51% of FNS-related disbursements addressed climate adaptation and/or climate mitigation. Research investments in FNS-related sectors remained relatively stable: 10% in 2018 vs 12% in 2016. Furthermore, FNS development initiatives in 2018 benefited more partners (130 beneficiary countries).

Table 2: Progress against policy priorities¹⁸

Performance criteria	Number of programmes				Support received, EUR million				Number of countries				
	2012	2014	2016	2018	2012	2014	2016	2018	2012	2014	2016	2018	
1. Improve smallholders' resilience and livelihoods	1,560	1,822	1,863	4,471	2,022	2,137	2,120	2,377	108	103	108	126	
2. Support effective governance	410	588	632	1,160	395	535	698	802	84	92	87	97	
3. Support regional agriculture and food and nutrition security	98	188	228	333	151	191	226	409					
4. Strengthen social protection mechanisms for food and nutrition security	94	102	123	124	209	133	254	238	40	40	44	48	
5. Enhance nutrition	278	341	455	935	467	504	638	683	63	64	71	92	
6. Enhance coordination of humanitarian and development actors to increase resilience	63	148	161	423	122	159	265	517	18	37	37	70	
Total	2,503	3,189	3,462	7,446	3,366	3,659	4,200	5,027			114	130	
Of which...													
Research programmes	149	154	463	1189	(16%)	379	300	493	491	(10%)	69	92	(71%)
Gender-sensitive programmes			1,879	4,251	(57%)			2,404	3,382	(67%)	97	114	(88%)
Principal objective			155	575	(8%)			171	168	(3%)	51	77	(59%)
Significant objective			1,724	3,676	(49%)			2,233	3,214	(64%)	97	113	(87%)
Climate change adaptation programmes			1344	2,976	(40%)			1,826	2,407	(48%)	95	116	(89%)
Principal objective			308	691	(9%)			342	381	(8%)	67	93	(72%)
Significant objective			1,036	2,285	(31%)			1,484	2,026	(40%)	91	100	(77%)
Climate change mitigation programmes			598	1,315	(18%)			693	946	(19%)	89	108	(83%)
Principal objective			82	192	(3%)			75	85	(2%)	40	56	(43%)
Significant objective			516	1123	(15%)			618	861	(17%)	86	105	(81%)

¹⁸ Data include the EU and only ten Member States. For the detailed methodology, see the SWD annexed to this report.

Progress on policy priorities

This section provides an overview of activities undertaken to support the six FNS policy priorities. More detailed information and specific examples are provided in the accompanying SWD.

Policy priorities 1 and 6 ‘*Improve smallholders’ resilience and livelihoods*’ and ‘*improving the coordination of humanitarian and development actors to increase resilience*’ remain the most significant part of the EU and its Member States development cooperation portfolio. This support increasingly addresses the underlying socio-economic, environmental, and security dynamics at play in sustainable, resilient and healthy food systems. Developing such food systems should strengthen sustainable rural development as well as prevent food crises. The EU intensified its support for the Global Network against Food Crises, which plays a critical role in transforming agri-food systems with a focus on consensus-based information, leveraged strategic investments, and coordinated and integrated action across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus.

Policy priorities 2 and 3: the EU and its Member States invested in *land governance* in about 40 countries and greatly increased *responsible investments in agri-businesses*, notably through blending initiatives for sustainable agri-food value chains. The EU also developed sustainable fisheries and aquaculture with a special attention to small-scale fisheries because of their potential to deliver economic and social benefits, particularly for women. Moreover, the EU and its Member States have stepped up their support to the overall governance and architecture for agricultural research and innovation and significantly enhanced country research capacities for innovation within national agriculture knowledge and innovation systems.

Policy priority 4: EU support to *social protection mechanisms* remained at the same level – EUR 237 million in 2018. The EU produced a guidance package including guiding principles, lessons learned and promising practices to support social protection programmes in situations of shocks and protracted crises.¹⁹

Under **policy priority 5**, the EU has already met in 2019 (one year ahead of schedule) its commitment to invest EUR 3.5 billion in *nutrition* by 2020 and has stepped up efforts to analyse how its assistance helps avoid stunted growth. The EU and its Member States continue to strengthen global governance and accountability mechanisms and to address multiple forms of malnutrition in their support programmes to achieve the global stunting reduction target by 2025.

Table 3: Examples of projects with notable results

Policy priority 1	The Netherlands supports the ‘ <i>Projet d’Appui à la Production Agricole au Burundi (PAPAB)</i> ’ applying the PIP (<i>Plan Intégré Paysan</i>) approach. Based on a farm business plan, small-scale food producers can better invest in soil fertility management, farming system resilience and thus increased food security. Through this approach, 37,400 households have demonstrably increased their productivity and income, while 18,700 hectares of farmland are managed more sustainably. Another Dutch programme ‘ <i>Geodata for Agriculture and Water (G4AW)</i> ’ uses satellite data to improve food security. Involving 23 projects in 14
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¹⁹ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/sp-nexus/documents>

	<p>countries, the goal is to reach 4.5 million small-scale farmers by 2022.</p> <p>In 2018, Ireland released 13 new and improved varieties of legumes, cereals, roots, and tubers in Malawi, including bio-fortified beans with iron and zinc, and a vitamin A rich orange-fleshed sweet potato.</p>
Policy priority 2	Finland carries out the <i>‘Responsible and Innovative Land Administration’</i> project in Ethiopia to develop the National Rural Land Information System, which handles all land registration data and land-related transactions (inheritance, divorce, gift etc.). By 2019, 14.5 million parcels had been registered.
Policy priority 3	Germany funded the <i>‘Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training for Women’</i> regional project championing women’s skills development in the agricultural sector. It implemented the project together with the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) in six countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi and Togo.
Policy priority 4	UK ²⁰ support to social protection systems in 23 developing countries helped poor and vulnerable people build more productive and resilient livelihoods. It also helped governments build shock-responsive systems, including through programmes providing cash transfers in countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia. In the aftermath of extreme weather events such as droughts and floods, these programmes helped people secure enough food, reducing hunger and the risk of famine.
Policy priority 5	Italy’s <i>‘SA.NI – Food Security, Nutrition and Hygiene for Equatorial band’s communities in South Sudan’</i> project provided water access to 1,550 people, as well as ‘Safe Water Champion’ training for 450 women and pre-natal services to 5,000 pregnant and/or breastfeeding women.
Policy priority 6	The EU funded the <i>‘Rapid City Profiling Towards Early Recovery in Yemen’</i> project to better target and coordinate humanitarian, recovery and development investments, and strengthen the resilience of stakeholders and affected populations in selected cities in the face of the conflict.

Joint programming

Significant progress was made in joint programming by the EU and its Member States. The approach has been adopted in 23 countries, and implementation started. To support the process, the EU has developed new joint programming guidelines and guidance documents for conflict-affected and fragile states and more advanced developing and middle-income countries²¹. Two global peer-learning events were also organised in Cambodia and Uganda, in December 2018 and November 2019 respectively. Both events brought together a broad range of representatives from partner countries, the EU and representatives from 16 Member States, who identified practical steps and tools to formalise joined-up approaches and increase the EU’s impact, voice and visibility at country level.

²⁰ During the period under review of this report, the UK was a member of the European Union.

²¹ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/joint-programming/highlights?page=1>

Textbox 1: EU joint programming in Bolivia

Bolivia was among the first countries to embark on joint programming with the EU, eight Member States and Switzerland. The 2017-2020 joint European strategy is aligned with Bolivia's 2025 Patriotic Agenda and the 2016-2020 economic and social development plan. Joint programming has fostered collaboration and coordination in a range of sectors among the EU+ group. In FNS, it proved that regular dialogue and joint activities are key incentives to bring EU partners together from joint programming to joint implementation.

Textbox 2: EU joint programming in Madagascar

In 2018, the EU, Germany, and France embarked on joint programming and developed a joint analysis. Following the presidential elections of January 2019, which marked the first political alternation of power in the country, the Malagasy government prepared the 2019-2023 *Plan Emergence Madagascar*, which should set out the strategy for the joint programming planned in 2020. The EU partners have increasingly implemented joint programmes and projects across sectors. This wide collaboration has improved the synchronization and complementarity of the interventions – including in terms of support to civil society. In FNS, the *working better together* culture has clearly accelerated progress in joint implementation and enabled a structured policy dialogue with the government in the various coordination platforms.

4. REPORTING THE RESULTS

The multidimensional nature of FNS issues, the diversity of projects, the different implementation systems and channels, the specific aims of development policies and the individual statistical practices of Member States, all make it challenging to report standard aggregated indicators that show impact on the ground. Nevertheless, the EU and its Member States are stepping up their harmonisation efforts for Eurostat and SDG reporting²².

Table 4 sets out quantified results on a few selected themes, namely assistance to food insecure people, nutrition, sustainable management in agricultural and pastoral ecosystems and support to smallholders to increase sustainable production, and improve access to markets, land and finance. However, caution should be taken in making any comparisons, as calculation methods may differ between countries, and the table does not provide a full picture of efforts in each area, but only what has been captured through available tools.

Table 4: Outputs and impact on the ground

Austria	In 2017-2018, 1,327,983 smallholder farmers were reached by measures funded by the Austrian Development Agency designed to increase sustainable agricultural production, and/or improve access to land and other natural resources, to financial services and/or markets. Of these, 399,217 were food insecure.
European Commission	17,787,000 women of reproductive age and children under five benefited from nutrition-related programmes, of which 1,381,000 were food insecure

²² Formed by the United Nations Global Compact and Global Reporting Initiative.

(2013-2018)	<p>(2018);</p> <p>26,197,000 food insecure people received EU assistance;</p> <p>sustainable land management practices were introduced on 4,152,000 ha;</p> <p>6,985,000 smallholders benefited from EU-supported measures designed to increase their sustainable production, access to markets and/or security of land, of which 828,000 were food insecure (2018).</p>
Finland	<p>In 2015-2017, bilateral and civil society projects provided support for about 3,106,000 farmers, of which 41% were women, to increase their sustainable production, access to markets and/or security of land. Private sector cooperation has supported more than 2,200,000 farmers. 120,000 families have secured tenure of land – 64% of land tenure certificates were obtained by married couples and 19% by women only. In addition, 3,245,400 ha of forest was brought under sustainable use through bilateral, civil society and private sector operations.</p>
France	<p>In 2016-2018, 9,086,289 family farms were supported by AFD-financed projects designed to increase their competitiveness, adapt their agricultural practices to climate change, and facilitate their access to land and financial services.</p> <p>57,621 thousand ha have benefited from biodiversity conservation, restoration or sustainable management programmes (2016-2018). In 2017-2019, 5.4 million food insecure people benefited from the food assistance programme of the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs.</p>
Germany	<p>178,600 women of reproductive age and 67,400 children under two targeted by BMZ's global 'food and nutrition security and enhanced nutrition' programme (part of Germany's 'ONE WORLD – no hunger' initiative), demonstrably improved their nutrition in 2018. At least 16,000,000 food insecure people benefited from the German government's FNS improvement measures²³.</p>
The Netherlands (2019)	<p>20,100,000 undernourished people received assistance, of which about 15,300,000 demonstrably benefited from improved food intake;</p> <p>19,200,000 smallholder family farms received support, of which 6,600,000 increased their productivity and/or income and 5,600,000 (also) gained better access to markets;</p> <p>673,000 ha of farmland were improved, 612,000 ha of which adopted more eco-efficient practices and 118,000 ha became more resilient to stresses and shocks; 113,000 farmers obtained secure tenure of land.</p>
UK	<p>60,300,000 children under 5, women (of childbearing age) and adolescent girls were reached through nutrition-related measures (April 2015-March 2019). In 2018/19, DFID had 49 ongoing commercial agriculture programmes that had benefited over 22 million farmers and sustained or</p>

²³ This number only refers to technical cooperation projects (implemented by GIZ). Due to overlaps of the target groups, impact data of other projects (financial cooperation, multilateral projects) have not been considered here.

	created over 140,000 jobs.
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5. THEMATIC FOCUS

As requested by the Council in 2018, this report provides a deeper focus on two specific themes: women empowerment and rural employment.

Women empowerment for food security and nutrition

Reflecting the EU's commitment to a transformative gender approach, the share of FNS measures that include a gender-equality aspect rose from 37% in 2014 to 57% in 2018. EU and Member States' measures have increasingly improved women's access to productive resources and employment opportunities, stimulated behaviour changes – such as joint decision-making in rural households, and provided women with platforms to voice their rights.

In Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi and Senegal, the LANDac programme funded by **the Netherlands** supports women's access to agricultural land by involving them in data collection and in land governance discussions. In Malawi, the EU strengthens land governance systems for smallholder farmers by training local officials on women's land rights and through a Women's Land Rights Forum to strengthen women's leadership skills. **Italy** increased women's involvement in value chains in Mozambique and scaled up community-based maternal and child nutrition services in Afghanistan. In Mali, the **EU and Germany** facilitated women's access to irrigated land, thereby improving their access to diversified and healthy diets.

The EU and its Member States increasingly advocate for a gender transformative approach during policy dialogues with partner countries. The EU and its Member States contributed for example to a joint gender analysis as a step to forge partnerships across sectors in Madagascar, and stepped up the coordination between EU partners in delivering gender-sensitive messages on violence against women in Colombia.

The EU's thematic briefs setting out a gender-responsive approach to land governance, nutrition, and value chain development included *Closing the gender gap through agri-food value chain development*, complementing its value chain analysis for development (VCA4D) methodology to assess a value chain's impact on social development, including gender equality. In Cambodia the VCA4D tool highlighted women's participation in aquaculture activities in the semi-intensive and small-cage production systems and their under-representation in decision-making on fisheries policy.

Creating rural jobs

Under the 2018 Communication on the Africa–Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs²⁴, the EU and its African partners are developing jobs and growth compacts (JGC), concentrating their joint efforts on value chains with the highest potential for job creation. Where relevant, the JGC links up with other international initiatives like the G20 Initiative on Rural Youth Employment²⁵.

²⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-africa-europe-jobs-alliance-communication-643_en.pdf

²⁵ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23551/2017-g20-rural-youth-employment-en.pdf>

In July 2019 for example, the EU shared its JGC²⁶ with the Ugandan government to encourage convergence with key EU priorities identified with the Member States, partner financial institutions and other actors, as well as through dialogues with the government and the private sector. The JGC aims to support forestry, farming and agriculture value chains that enable job creation, innovation, the participation of women and youth in the production process, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and complementarity with other programmes.

EU-funded actions to boost investment and jobs include the AgriFI initiative that promotes investments in smallholder agriculture and micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) through blended finance. To help develop agricultural value chains, the EU takes advantage of the opportunities offered by local, regional and global markets, and applies the VCA4D methodology to assess the impact of value chains on job creation, such as in Zambia (egg and aquaculture), Honduras (coffee), Sierra Leone (palm oil), Tanzania (coffee), Guinea Bissau (mango and lime), Burundi (banana), and Benin (pineapple)²⁷.

Textbox 3: Boosting job creation in value chains in Sierra Leone

Germany supports the ‘Employment Promotion Programme III’ to increase jobs in cocoa, coffee, rice and vegetables value chains. The programme entails working with MSMEs and youth to improve skills, with strong mentorship and coaching elements to increase self- and wage employment. In 2016-2019, the programme supported 1,200 businesses and trained 36,000 young people, creating more than 9,000 new jobs and self-employment opportunities. By 2019, it had benefited more than 250,000 people.

Textbox 4: Working with partner countries to boost job creation and achieve peace, security and development in the Sahel

In the Sahel and Lake Chad region, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) created more than 27,500 jobs, helped 129,000 people develop income-generating activities, and enabled 50,000 people to receive professional training and or/skills development in 2018-2019. The EU’s support is critical for increasing economic participation among young people, and thus contributes to the EUTF’s stabilisation efforts in the region. Approximately 700,000 youngsters benefited from job creation and work placement initiatives, professional training and/or support to develop their skills.

²⁶ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/68138/eu-jobs-and-growth-compact-uganda-supporting-job-creation-and-economic-growth_tk

²⁷ VCAs studies, 2016-2020: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/value-chain-analysis-for-development-vca4d->

Textbox 5: Increasing sustainable agricultural growth, employment, and food security in Malawi

The **EU and Germany** support the KULIMA More Income and Employment in Rural Areas of Malawi (MIERA) programme to increase income and employment opportunities for smallholder farmers and MSMEs in a number of value chains (cassava, groundnut, soybean, and sunflower). Since 2017, more than 23,000 smallholder farmers have been trained on farm economics, agribusiness and marketing and 300 marketing and contract farming agreements have been signed between leading companies and farmers' organisations. Farmers have increased their incomes by 20% and 900 jobs were created.

6. CONCLUSION

The EU and its Member States have taken a comprehensive approach to supporting partner countries' policies and programmes. Joint efforts have focused on strengthening the resilience of the most vulnerable people to food crises, increasing responsible investments in sustainable food systems, improving nutritional outcomes, stimulating innovation, and addressing gender equality and the empowerment of women. The experiences presented in this report and in the accompanying SWD demonstrate the importance of:

- 1. Taking a comprehensive approach to sustainable and inclusive food systems that enable safe and nutritious food and healthy diets for all.** This means focusing on food systems as a whole, from sustainable production to consumption, processing, trade and marketing, and balancing climate, health, environmental, economic and social factors. It takes account of gender equality, in line with the second EU gender action plan (GAPII). It also recognises the important role of fisheries and aquaculture for FNS, which requires better marine governance that upholds laws on access to fish stocks, land and water resources, and a particular focus on the resulting benefits for small-scale fishers and smallholder fish farmers.
- 2. Supporting the Global Network against Food Crises as a critical contributor to developing sustainable food systems along the humanitarian, development and peace nexus.** This support by the EU and its Member States entails joint analysis, strategic investments, and coordinated responses at national, regional, and global level. The EU and its Member States should continue to address both immediate needs and underlying socio-economic, environmental, and peace factors to prevent recurrent food crises.
- 3. Prioritising a multi-stakeholder approach to food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture in order to speed up progress on Agenda 2030.** This approach notably includes global, regional, national and local governance mechanisms. The strategy should involve strengthening partnerships with the UN system (including with the Rome-based UN agencies and the Committee on World Food Security), research organisations, global multi-stakeholder platforms, private sector and civil society organisations to develop and apply global norms.
- 4. Reinforcing agricultural research and innovation systems at national, regional, and global level to promote climate resilience.** The EU and its Member States should continue to support institutional governance architecture and the capacities of regional and national agricultural research organisations, and should stimulate sustainable innovation through multi-stakeholder partnerships such as the DeSIRA initiative.

5. **Increasing responsible public and private investments in sustainable agriculture, fisheries and agri-businesses, including through blending assistance to support smallholder agriculture, fisheries and MSMEs.** The EU and its Member States should keep economic, environmental, and social development impact as the core priority in supporting private investments in agri-businesses, including by further investing in gender-responsive, sustainable and inclusive value chains.
6. **Supporting local and regional marketing and accelerating inter- and intraregional agricultural trade.** The EU and its Member States should continue to support agreements, such as on the African Continental Free Trade Area, that promote regional integration and that can help to create new markets and new decent jobs, increase competitiveness, and reduce dependency on food imports.
7. **Promoting climate-sensitive agriculture, including agro-ecology, acknowledging the importance of sustainable agriculture in adapting to and mitigating climate change** as set out in the Koronivia joint work on agriculture²⁸ and highlighted in other relevant commitments. In this context, the EU and its Member States should help developing countries deliver on their nationally determined contributions.
8. **Addressing malnutrition in all its forms, while continuing to focus on the most vulnerable population groups.** The EU should continue to assess and report on its impact on reducing stunted growth, while addressing all forms of malnutrition that affect vulnerable people. Nutrition programmes should also contribute to the sustainable transformation of food systems.

These observations are also relevant when preparing for the Nutrition for Growth Summit and the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021.

COVID-19 and food security

The COVID-19 pandemic was still unfolding when this report was being finalised. The full effects of COVID-19, and of the socio-economic crisis it triggered, on food and nutrition security are still largely unknown in terms of severity of lockdowns and spillover effects on rural livelihoods. Early indications suggest that impacts could be substantial with many millions of people losing their income, while simultaneously facing an increase in local and imported food prices due to logistics and in some cases export restrictions (for example rice).

Moreover, the risk that measures to tackle the health crisis could strongly aggravate current food crises was clear, as agricultural production in some regions could be affected by farmers' difficulties in accessing inputs while also facing other challenges (such as weather extremes, pests and diseases, e.g. desert locusts). Countries affected by multiple crises are at particular risk of food insecurity.

The EU and its Member States are adjusting their cooperation portfolios to respond to these challenges. More fundamentally, the COVID-19 pandemic underlined the need to strengthen the 'one health' approach and to address the underlying reasons for the rise in diseases stemming from animal-human interactions, including the loss of biodiversity, unsustainable farming practices and unsafe food marketing and trade.

²⁸ Decision 4/CP.23