

16th Session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa 28 and 29 March 2015, Addis Ababa

I. The Cluster System of the RCM-Africa

1. Accountability/Structural/Systemic

1.1 Meetings held, dates, objectives, outcomes and follow-up actions

Meetings of the Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development Cluster did not take place in 2014 because of high staff turnover at the UN level. The management of Clusters is usually relegated to one staff member in each institution, but unfortunately the institutional memory and continuity was lost. However, FAO and WFP are in the process of reactivating meetings in collaboration with the AUC-DREA.

The cluster members were however very active and contributed to the AU events within the context of the *Year of Agriculture and Food Security in Africa (YAFNS)*. Cluster members supported the DREA-DSA/UNLT team in the preparatory meetings for the 5th African Day of Food and Nutrition Security (ADFNS), which was commemorated in Kinshasa, DR Congo on 2nd and 3rd November 2014, under the theme '*Accelerated Action for a Hunger Free Africa*'. The event was officially opened by the H.E. Joseph Kabila, the President of DR Congo. The Cluster also supported DREA and DSA in co-organizing a symposium on "***Sustainable Indigenous African Diets for Food and Nutrition Security***", which was part of the AFDNS.

1.2 Preparation and adoption of Three-Year Business Plans

Given the constraints outlined above, the cluster has not prepared and adopted a Three-Year Business Plan in 2014, but efforts by FAO and WFP are under way to structure the streams of work for 2015 and beyond. Some of the directions are built on past activities and would allow for a certain continuity in programming. Examples include i) support and technical inputs into the organization of the 2015 Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security, including a strong component and activities on women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship (in line with the year's thematic), ii) the organization of the World Food Day 2015 in connection with the RCM cluster and iii) one activity joined with the AUC on nutrition in agriculture and food security, either to focus on one specific issue in nutrition and/or focus on policy recommendations to increase the investments in nutrition programming through appropriate policies and programmes. The cluster will also continue exploring how to better create the alignment both between the African Union and the national governments and between the UN

system regional/sub-regional offices and its country offices. One possibility to stimulate the alignment would be in the context of the World Food Day, with some of the key issues addressed at regional level also included in national agendas.

1.3 Joint activities implemented in the context of the cluster system (including overlapping programmes merged and implemented jointly)

Gender Mainstreaming

In previous activities, the cluster members had been prepared for gender issues, through a short term training course (supported by FAO) on how to mainstream gender in the execution of their respective mandates. This training enabled members to conduct a rapid assessment on the extent of gender mainstreaming in selected UN agencies. Given that 2015 is the AU 2015 Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063, the cluster plans to work out how to carry this past work forward, in collaboration with the AUC Gender Department, to incorporate women economic empowerment to achieve food and nutrition security in the 2015 events.

The Cost of Hunger in Africa Study

The Cost of Hunger in Africa study is a joint African Union, UN Economic Commission for Africa and World Food Programme initiative that analyzed the cost of not addressing nutrition for a nation's economy and finances.

The first Regional report of the Cost of Hunger in Africa (COHA) Study that unveils the impact of child under nutrition on the economies of four African countries (including Ethiopia, Egypt, Swaziland and Uganda) was launched in Abuja, Nigeria in March on the sidelines of the Seventh Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. According to the regional report, economies suffered an estimated annual loss associated with under nutrition equivalent to between 1.9 percent and 16.5 percent of the Gross Domestic Product.

The studies are ongoing in four more countries Burkina Faso, Ghana, Malawi and Chad. A third phase group of countries consisting of Botswana, Cameroon, Kenya, Mauritania, Mozambique, DRC, Madagascar, Niger, Tanzania, Sudan, Somalia and Zambia will undertake this ground-breaking initiative by the end of 2016.

The cost of hunger reports have played a major role in creating awareness about the long term costs of malnutrition, and it is felt within the AUC that it is important to expand and deepen the studies and also undertake complementary studies that uncover hard facts about the state of malnutrition and gives a baseline for concerted actions. FAO is interested to collaborate in COHA studies linking them to work on review and promotion of indigenous foods and diets, also with UNICEF.

31st Session of NEPAD Heads of state and Government Orientation Committee (June 26th 2014, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea)

The FAO Director General, Dr Graziano da Silva presented a paper during the 31st Session of NEPAD Heads of state and Government Orientation Committee on June 26th 2014 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, in which he argued that it is possible to end hunger by 2025. Among the reasons he advanced were those that:

- CAADP is already being effective as a driver of the End Hunger campaign
- There exists great potential for enhancing productivity and production
- There is potential for reviving and promoting local genetic, bio diversity for crops, animals and fish that can lead to better and diversified diets and providing markets for small scale producers
- Agriculture can promote inclusive growth
- The Agriculture sector and agri-food systems have potential for diverse opportunities to absorb young people in farming, food processing and marketing as well as food service industries
- Innovative programmes like school feeding can produce a win-win situation by using produce from family farms

The cluster aims to continue collaboration with AUC in policy strategy to support the goal of hunger eradication

The 6th Meeting of the African Task Force on Food and Nutrition Development (ATFFND)

The Sixth African Task Force on Food and Nutrition Development (ATFFND) meeting was held on 14 to 15 May 2014, in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting reviewed the first draft of the African Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS) 2015-2025 as well as considered the action plan and TORs of the African Nutrition Champion, the King of Lesotho, and of nutrition Ambassadors. As part of the review process of the various nutrition interventions in the continent, the implementation progress of the Cost of Hunger in Africa study was presented where the evidence generated and its immediate impacts in bringing nutrition at the center of both political and development agenda was appreciated. The meeting was co-sponsored by WFP and FAO.

Linked to this is the Second International Conference on Nutrition ICN2, held in Rome from 19 to 21–November 2014 which was co-organized by FAO and WHO and attended by the Ministers of Health and Agriculture from member countries. The African Nutrition Champion participated at this conference, and during a meeting of with the FAO DG, the African Nutrition Champion, King Letsie III, the Director General of FAO, pledged his commitment to ensure that FAO continues to provide full support to the African continent to advance the regional endorsement of the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and implementation of its Framework for Action through the reinforcement of political commitment and technical guidance. Consequently FAO is preparing a Technical Cooperation Project with AUC to support the work of the king to:

- rally high level political resolve, leadership, commitment and accountability among African leaders on decisive policies and programmes to invest more in nutrition
- engage the African Union, Regional Economic Commissions as well as countries in Africa to advance the recommendations of the ICN2
- advocate for eradication of hunger and prevention of all forms of malnutrition on the African continent

Consultative Meeting on Ending Hunger by 2025 (4-6 September 2014, Midrand, South Africa)

The AUC, NPCA, FAO and Lula Institute met to discuss how best to take forward the Road Map under the Malabo Declaration on Ending Hunger in Africa by 2025. During the discussions, it was decided that there might be need to revise the CAADP Results Framework, taking into consideration the Malabo Declaration and its implementation strategy especially to integrate elements of accountability and social inclusion. It was decided that going forward the in country process should follow 6 steps:

- Meeting with operational officials
- Country stock taking to establish baselines
- Setting of goals and targets
- Developing networks among countries
- Develop, launch and sustain the implementation of intensive communication and advocacy activities
- Conduct joint learning/study tours

5th Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security (ADFNS)

The fifth Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security was commemorated in Kinshasa, DRC on November 3, 2014 under the theme “Accelerated Action for a Hunger Free Africa”. The event was organized by the African Union Commission, NEPAD, and the government of Democratic Republic of Congo. The event was supported (technically and financially) by UNICEF, FAO, WFP, WHO, and Save the Children. The One Year Review of the Cost of Hunger in Swaziland was presented to participants. The review indicated a clear picture of national-level actions taken as a result of the recommendations of the study in Swaziland. As a prelude to the ADFNS, a symposium on Sustainable Indigenous African Diets for Food and Nutrition Security jointly was also organized by the AUC, FAO and the EU. The cluster is planning to engage in developing activities to enhance nutrition interventions conducting studies and disseminating findings, on integrating nutrition in Agriculture

Publication of the “Status of Food and Nutrition Security in Africa”

This is the first joint publication led by African Union Commission and supported by ECA, WFP, UNICEF and the FAO. The publication was launched during the ADFNS in DRC Kinshasa. This will be an annual publication.

- 1.4** Alignment of cluster plans and activities with the UN Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the AU, the strategic plans of the AU Commission and the NEPAD Agency and relevant Decisions of the AU and RECs and outcomes of AU Sectoral Ministerial Bodies

The lack of a formalized work plan in 2014 did not prevent the cluster activities to be closely aligned with the AU strategic priorities. As highlighted above, the activities conducted by the cluster were done in partnership with the relevant AU institutions and bodies. The cluster work plan that is being prepared for 2015 will be aligned with the existing and upcoming key strategic directions.

- 1.5** Addressing cross-cutting issues: gender, human rights, health, culture, youth and employment, regional integration and climate related issues in the plans and activities of clusters. This time around because of the theme of the 16th Session a special emphasis on Gender is required.

As highlighted above, gender is one of the issues that have been targeted by the cluster activities in previous years. Besides the gender mainstreaming for cluster members, the activities have always considered the gender angle.

2. Coordination/Collaboration

- 2.1** Inter-cluster communication and collaboration (joint meetings, joint activities, information shared etc)

As detailed above, the inter-cluster communication and collaboration was on ad hoc basis in 2014, though close communication was ensured with all the cluster members.

- 2.2** Participation of the AU Commission, the NEPAD Agency, the RECs and the AfDB in cluster activities

As detailed above, the lack of formal meetings of the cluster in 2014 meant that the AU Commission, the NEPAD Agency, the RECs and the AfDB did not participate in a formalized way in the cluster meetings. Still, they were involved in the activities conducted.

3. Resources and Capacity Building Support (human, technical, financial and material)

to:

3.1 The AU Commission

3.2 The NEPAD Agency

3.3 The RECs

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

4.1 Monitoring and evaluation should be considered as part of the Cluster business plan. In this regard, business plans should include clear indicators which describe how expected accomplishments will be measured. Indicators can be quantitative measures or qualitative observation and should assist in measuring the extent to which objectives and/or results have been achieved. Good indicators should be set in such a way that they are measurable, precise (not ambiguous), consistent (can be measured over time) and sensitive (changing proportionately in response to actual changes).

4.2 Availability of monitoring data and information

4.3 Reporting to the RCM-Africa Secretariat

5. Communication/Outreach/Advocacy

5.1 Information provided by the AU Commission, the NEPAD Agency and RECs to Clusters (particularly the advocacy and communication cluster) and the RCM-Africa Secretariat to facilitate communication and advocacy activities

5.2 Advocacy and communication activities undertaken in support of the AU and its NEPAD Programme, as well as RECs

II. Achievements, results and impacts

The Cost of Hunger Study was endorsed at highest level possible by Heads of African states during the 23rd AU Summit in Equatorial Guinea. The Declaration also requests the African Union Commission, UNWFP and UNECA and other Development Partners to expedite the successful completion of the study in the remaining countries. The Malabo Declaration solidifies a previous declaration by the Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development calling to scale up the study to more countries.

The African Task Force on Food and Nutrition Development (ATFFND) meeting discussed the next generation of the African Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS), 2015-2025, and what should be included in the draft strategy document. Recommendations and emphasis were given that the document should be in line with the AUC mission and vision and that it should include clear priority areas of nutrition that the AUC should focus on in the next 10 years. Furthermore, the Task Force asserted that the strategy document should build on ongoing activities in the region, including the SUN movement, without creating another parallel system.

The first “State of Food and Nutrition Security in Africa” brief was launched at the Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security. This is a first publication of its kind for Africa.

III. Challenges and constraints

A joint work plan for the cluster has not been agreed upon at the beginning of the year, thus activities are usually agency-based as opposed to joint activities as a cluster. In addition, lack of financial resources to implement joint programmes has been a major challenge for the agencies involved in this cluster. Apart from producing a work plan, the cluster members need to come up with a budget based on the work plan. Each member institution should commit some resources to the budget. Implementing a coherent work plan is constrained without a budget. Cluster leads have been personalized and not institutionalized, making continuity a challenge when the lead is reassigned or resigns.

IV. Lessons learned and the way forward

The Cluster needs to be guided by the RCM secretariat on how to engage in joint programming. Practical steps should be taken to involve the AU in the development of cluster business plans. To progress with its activity, the cluster needs to come up with a tentative plan as basis for discussion. Also, the cluster should aim to prepare monthly reports of its activities to the RCM Secretariat. The cluster should propose a schedule of its meetings to be discussed and agreed by its members. Activities can trickle down by staging them at country level and linking with established events like the World Food Day.