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Subject: Strengthening global food and nutrition security
- Council conclusions (26 November 2018)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on strengthening global food and nutrition security, as adopted by the Council at its 3654th meeting held on 26 November 2018.

Strengthening global food and nutrition security

Council conclusions

1. Recognising that food and nutrition insecurity constitute major global challenges in the fight against poverty and growing inequality, the Council recalls the EU's and its Member States' firm commitment to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition, in line with the new European Consensus on Development, the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, the 2030 Agenda and the realisation of the right to food.
2. In this context, the Council recalls its previous relevant conclusions¹ and welcomes the Third biennial report on implementing EU food and nutrition security policy commitments as well as the Third progress report on the Commission's Action Plan on Nutrition.
3. The Council welcomes the Commission's work to attain the EU's commitments on nutrition, as well as its efforts in mobilising all relevant sectors in support of the nutrition agenda at global and at partner country levels. In particular, the Council welcomes the progress made in meeting the EU's financial commitment to invest EUR 3.5 billion in nutrition between 2014 and 2020, with over EUR 2.49 billion already allocated to nutrition programmes between 2014 and 2017.
4. The Council welcomes the joint work of the EU and its Member States, demonstrating their impact in shaping and moving forward the global agenda on food and nutrition security. Together, the EU and its Member States have supported partner countries and local, national as well as regional stakeholders to build resilient livelihoods, strengthen local food systems in food insecure areas, and enhance nutritional outcomes. These actions are essential not only for the achievement of SDG2, but also for the realisation of the 2030 Agenda in its entirety. In this regard, the Council recognises the importance of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025).

¹ Council conclusions on food and nutrition security (10392/16); Council conclusions on the Second Progress Report on the Action Plan on Nutrition (10679/17).

5. While recognising that some countries continue to make good progress to address food and nutrition insecurity and chronic child malnutrition, the Council is extremely concerned that after decades of decline, global hunger has been on the rise for the past three years, with 821 million people suffering from hunger and malnutrition. Meanwhile, an estimated 151 million (or 22%) children under the age of five are still suffering from stunting. In 2017, 124 million people across 51 countries faced crisis-levels of acute food insecurity, requiring urgent action – an 11% increase compared to 2016.
6. Recognising that one in three persons suffers from malnutrition worldwide, the Council acknowledges the need to accompany the transition towards sustainable agri-food systems that safeguard people's health. With the increasing impact of climate change and armed conflicts as well as mounting pressures on land and natural resources, the ability of agri-food systems to sustainably contribute to safe, healthy and nutritious diets to rapidly increasing populations will be significantly challenged. Urban agglomerations become increasingly vulnerable, with growth rates of African urban agglomerations being the highest worldwide, which is partly driven by rural poverty. Renewing the momentum and mobilising the international community will be imperative to the achievement of “zero hunger” and an end of malnutrition in all its forms by 2030 (SDG2).
7. The Council notes worrying global dietary trends and in this context the worsening problem of overweight and obesity, with 672 million obese and 1.3 billion overweight people. In many food insecure countries, overweight and obesity coexist with undernutrition and other forms of malnutrition. In this context, the Council encourages the Commission and the Member States to support food systems that ensure sustainable food and nutrition security for all, including through engagement in the preparation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

8. In acknowledging the results in food and nutrition security achieved by the EU and its Member States, the Council supports the recommendations and conclusions of both reports, in particular:
- a. **To increase the EU's and Member States' joint action on countering the severe impact of climate change on agriculture and global food supply.** The EU and its Member States shall work more proactively on the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the promotion of climate-sensitive agriculture, acknowledging the important role of agricultural practices in adapting to and mitigating climate change, as foreseen in the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture and exemplified by other relevant commitments to support developing countries to deliver on their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Furthermore, the Council underlines the need to protect biodiversity and ecosystems as well as to combat land degradation and desertification.
 - b. **To acknowledge the critical role that women play throughout agri-food value chains, in the management of natural resources and in ensuring food and nutrition security.** The Council urges the Commission and Member States to ensure that the development of gender-responsive value chains receives the necessary attention, in line with the EU *acquis*, including the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP II). The use of sex-disaggregated reporting should be increased in order to better capture women's contributions and to better measure efforts to reach, benefit and empower women. The Council underlines the importance of the work undertaken at all stages of the life-cycle to realise the EU's commitments on nutrition. In addition, the Council acknowledges that sustainable and inclusive development necessitates that all forms of malnutrition and gender inequalities, including the specific vulnerabilities of women and girls in times of crises and emergencies, must be addressed together in order to ensure the effectiveness of investments as a whole. In this context, it is important to keep up efforts aimed at strengthening social protection mechanisms for food and nutrition security.

- c. To strengthen the cooperation between the EU and its Member States on climate-resilience, sustainability and development-smart innovation in agriculture for sustainable rural transformation, building on the One Planet Summit's commitments.** Specific attention should be given to strengthening national and regional agricultural research and innovation capacities and promote multi-stakeholder partnerships for enhanced and long-term impact, such as Development-Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA).
- d. To continue following a strategic approach to food crises and malnutrition across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus, in a conflict-preventive and conflict-sensitive manner,** as failure to reduce world hunger is closely associated with the increase in conflict and violence in several parts of the world. The EU and its Member States are encouraged to enhance support to the Global Network against Food Crises, with a view to enhance joint-up analysis and coordinated responses, and to renew their commitment towards relevant UN agencies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP). Furthermore, to better prevent famines and address the structural causes of food and nutrition insecurity, the EU and its Member States need to strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable countries in line with the EU Global Strategy. Moreover, the Council underlines the need to acknowledge the links between armed conflict, food insecurity and the threat of famine, and for the EU and its Member States to commit to enhance the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2417. In addition, the Council notes the need to promote coherent and well-coordinated humanitarian and development policies and programmes to address food insecurity and malnutrition, to save lives and build resilience.

e. **To strengthen the link between small-scale farmers and small and medium-sized enterprises and invest specifically in the creation of job opportunities in rural areas,** especially for youth and women, in order to promote inclusive and sustainable growth in agricultural value chains, given the importance of promoting regional agricultural trade to reduce extreme poverty. In this regard, the Council highlights the relevance of the Commission's initiative for a new Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs and of scaling-up partnerships through the External Investment Plan and the Trust Fund for Africa, including for developing the agricultural sector, taking into account the EU's and its Member States' commitment to address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement. Such partnerships should be adapted to the specific needs of small-scale farmers and SMEs, adhere to the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems as well as continue to implement the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, both endorsed by the CFS. Furthermore, the Council is looking forward to the recommendations of the Commission "Task Force on Rural Africa – strengthening our partnership in food and farming".

9. The Council notes that 4.7 million children will have been averted from stunting by 2025 in the Commission's prioritised countries for nutrition. This is over double last year's number of 2 million, and represents commendable progress in supporting partner countries in achieving the objective to reduce stunting by at least 7 million by 2025. However, the Council is extremely concerned that the current pace of stunting reduction will still be insufficient to meet global stunting reduction objectives by 2025², thus compromising the achievement of the SDGs. In this context, the Council urges the Commission to substantially step up efforts to address malnutrition in all its forms (stunting, wasting, micro-nutrient deficiency and overweight), jointly with Member States.

² The first of the World Health Assembly targets is a '40% reduction of the global number of children under five who are stunted'. It implies a global reduction of about 70 million stunted children (from 171 million in 2010 to approximately 103 million in 2025).

10. The Council encourages the Commission to further pursue its active role at the global level in keeping food and nutrition security at the forefront of the EU's development cooperation agenda. The Council stresses that the EU and its Member States can collectively contribute to boosting food and nutrition security, through a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach, which integrates nutrition in different sectors, such as agriculture, social protection, health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, amongst others. The EU and its Member States therefore need to continue working together, including through the further promotion of joint programming and joint results frameworks at country level, and also with partners, to improve the coherence and effectiveness of development cooperation. To that end, the Council also encourages partner countries to develop and implement national food and nutrition security strategies in close consultation with all key stakeholders.
11. In light of persistent and emerging global challenges, the Council invites the Commission to propose a revision of the 2010 policy framework on food security and the 2013 policy framework on nutrition, honouring its nutrition commitments and implementing a holistic EU approach.
12. Without prejudice to the ongoing MFF negotiations, the Council stresses the importance of ensuring the allocation of sufficient resources by the Commission, Member States and the international community to effectively address food and nutrition security in order to achieve SDG2 and hence reverse the current negative trend.
13. The Council invites the Commission and Member States to specifically report on the follow-up to the present Council conclusions in the next biennial report on implementing EU food and nutrition security policy commitments.