

Session 4: 2014 Progress Report for the 20th RCM

Thematic Working Group on Food Security

Chair: FAO

I. 2013 – 2014 Achievements: Highlights of Key Activities since 19th RCM

- **Side Event on *Building Resilience to Crises in the Arab world*** was organized in Rome during the 41st Session of the Committee of World Food Security (CFS) Conference October 13-17, 2014.

In response to the increasing food security challenges in the region and in order to enhance efforts to share data and information on food security, contribute to building resilience and, enhance policy dialogue, members of the RCM Thematic working Group on Food Security and Nutrition together with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) organized a Side Event “Building Resilience to Crises in the Arab world” during the 41st session of the Committee of World Food Security. The overall objective of the event which was organized in Rome was to raise awareness about the deepening food security crises (mainly driven by conflict) in many parts of the region. In particular, the event was intended to enhance collaboration efforts for sharing data, information and analysis on food security; contribute to the debate on building resilience in the region and, enhances policy dialogue among Member States, and other stakeholders. As part of the activities related to the side event, IFPRI launched Arab Spatial which is a food security information tool; a collaborative BLOG on Food Security in the Arab World was also launched on which the FAO, ESCWA, IFPRI and IFAD among others contributed BLOGs on food security in the region. The side event was attended by more than 50 people from the following countries: Egypt, Yemen, Sudan, Qatar, the Netherlands, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Libya, Kuwait, Oman, Jordan, Lebanon, Argentina, Iraq, Sweden, Belgium, USA and Cyprus. Participants from the LAS, UN-ECA as well as WFP and other UN agencies and regional organizations have also attended. One of the key messages from the audience was consensus on the request for joint work/knowledge products leading to evidence-based, convergent and actionable policy recommendations on food security in the region. FAO as the convener of the RCM Thematic working Group on Food Security and Nutrition coordinated the event together with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

- **Joint Knowledge Products to inform appropriate food security policies:**

As part of the RCM Thematic Working Group on Food Security and Nutrition’s joint activities, several technical papers have been prepared and are in the process of publications. The technical papers which will be published in one of the leading Arab scientific journals are aimed at building on the current knowledge and momentum created by the TWG in the region to provide policy makers with the necessary knowledge to tackle food security problems in Arab Countries.

II. Summary of Key Challenges Faced: Substantive and Procedural

Limited resource to implement common programs like the publications of the joint knowledge products, regional multi stake holder forums for policy dialogue, regional Side events etc has been and will remain to be the main challenges of the TWG.

III. Main Activities and Outputs Planned for 2015

Building on the experience of the past Regional Multi-stakeholder Workshops on Food Security and Nutrition - Cairo (2011), Khartoum (2012), and Tunis (2013), Members of the Thematic Working Group on Food Security and Nutrition are planning to organize this year's workshop will focus on three main objectives: i) Strengthening regional and global linkages around key food security and nutrition policy issues of relevance to the region: these include addressing food insecurity and malnutrition in protracted crisis situations; Promoting responsible investment in agriculture and food systems in the context of national food security and; Addressing food losses and waste. The expected outcomes of the workshop include report capturing the main findings and action points emerging from the contributions of all stakeholders, including lessons learned for the way forward.

IV. Decisions Requested from the Members of the RCM

None