

'Year of Pulses' closes with call to build on strong momentum among farmers, private sector – UN

10 February 2017 – Although the International Year of Pulses has helped raise awareness globally of the many benefits of pulses, such as beans, lentils and chickpeas, gains must be further strengthened to achieve the international community's new development goals, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said today.

"It is essential to maintain the momentum," FAO's Deputy Director-General Maria-Helena Semedo told the Year's official closing ceremony today, which was hosted by Burkina Faso, according to a news release.

Realizing that pulses – defined as edible dried seeds of plants in the legume family – are "small but powerful allies" in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN General Assembly designated 2016 as the International Year and nominated FAO to lead implementation.

Since the Year's launch, connections have been fostered among key actors from farmers' organizations to the private sector to facilitate information exchange and policy dialogue on the production, trade and consumption of pulses.

Leaders in policy and research have tackled the top pulse issues at several international forums, and national committees have been established. A technical pulses database was created, a cookbook featuring recipes from international chefs was published, and the official multilingual website, with over half a million visits, promoted a rich array of information on pulses.

Though the Year has now officially closed, there has been a sound call to keep the momentum alive and continue activities beyond 2016.

"Training programmes on the value of pulses should be supported, particularly for schoolchildren, farmers and extension workers. Policies and programmes should focus more on pulse producers, particularly small-holder farmers and young people," Ms. Semedo said, noting that FAO will carry on working with stakeholders from governments to family farmers to promote pulses.

Pulses are packed with minerals such as iron, zinc and folate and have been an important part of diets around the world for centuries.

Pulses are a valuable ingredient in achieving UN Sustainable Development Goal 2 which aims to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

The plants contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation. They add

large amounts of beneficial nitrogen to the soil and require little fertilizer. Growing pulses with other crops enhances soil fertility, improves both crops' yields, and contributes to a more sustainable food system.

In addition, pulses have a very low water footprint compared to other protein sources, can be grown in very poor soils, and help reduce the risk of soil erosion and depletion. For poor farmers, growing pulses contributes to stable livelihoods, additional income and improved nutrition.

Burkina Faso's President, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, said: "To better cope with the triple problem of soil fertility management, reducing the adverse effects of climate change and the issue of food security, producing and consuming pulses is a great opportunity, especially for the most vulnerable people."

Overall, global pulse production has been slowly but steadily increasing. In 2014, global production reached 77 million tonnes, up 21 million metric tonnes since 2001.

[Senior UN officials call for close cooperation to address migrant, refugee flows in Libya](#)

10 February 2017 – The heads of the United Nations agencies for human rights, migrants, and refugees, and the UN envoy for Libya, today met in Geneva calling for international solidarity to address the flows of migrants and refugees in the North African country.

The senior UN officials stressed the need "for a comprehensive approach to address the situation of migrants and refugees in Libya as well as to assist the hundreds of thousands of Libyans displaced and impacted by the crisis," according to a press release.

The meeting was between the Director-General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), William Lacy Swing; the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi; the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein; and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Libya, Martin Kobler.

They called for close cooperation at the regional and international levels, and highlighted the need to protect and rights of migrants and refugees.

"Along with many Libyans, migrants and refugees are heavily impacted by ongoing conflicts and the breakdown in law and order in Libya," the four senior UN officials said.

They noted that untold numbers of people – particularly those smuggled or trafficked, and those in detention outside of any legal process – face grave human rights abuses and violations.

Migrants and refugees are also exposed to malnutrition, extortion, torture, sexual violence and other abuses, according to the joint press release.

[Haiti: Peacekeeping chief points to changes in mandate of UN mission](#)

10 February 2017 – While the security situation in Haiti is not perfect, solid progress has been made over the past few years, the head of United Nations peacekeeping operations has said, stressing that the Organization is considering a change in the mandate of the UN Stabilization Mission in the island nation, known as MINUSTAH.

Wrapping up a week-long visit during which he attended the swearing in of the new Haitian President, Jovenel Moïse, and carried out an out an evaluation of Mission, Hervé Ladsous, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, told reporters yesterday in Port-au-Prince: “The military component of MINUSTAH is likely to disappear in the relatively near future. We are looking at the modalities.”

At the heart of the Mission’s work is ensuring stability, he continued, noting that the recent elections had gone off with few incidents, thanks to MINUSTAH and particularly the Haitian National Police, and the Provision Electoral Council. “I think this is something to be noted,” he said.

He recalled that in October 2016, when the UN Security Council renewed MINUSTAH’s mandate, it had expressed its wish to examine the mandate of the Mission in mid-April. The Secretary-General is to make recommendations to the Security Council on 15 March.

“I think that when we look at the situation in this country compared to what it was a few years ago, we have made a lot of progress,” Ladsous said. “Security is not perfect, but I think it is much better.”

Mr. Ladsous went on to note that the regular strength of the Haitian National Police is set to reach 15,000 and that efforts will continue to strengthen the capacities of this police.

Somalia: UN Security Council urges sustained momentum towards democratic governance

10 February 2017 – Welcoming political and security progress in Somalia since 2012, including the recently concluded elections in the country, the United Nations Security Council today highlighted the need to maintain the momentum towards democratic governance in the African nation.

In a Presidential Statement adopted today, the 15-member Council also hailed the increased representation of women in the Upper House and the House of the People and underscored the important contribution of women to Somalia's peacebuilding and State-building processes.

The UN body responsible for matters concerning international peace and security also congratulated President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed 'Farmajo' and paid tribute to former President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud for his service and commended the swift and gracious transfer of power in Somalia.

The new President, known as 'Farmajo,' was declared the winner on Wednesday after two rounds of voting by the Somali Parliament in the capital, Mogadishu. The runner-up, incumbent President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, chose to withdraw from a third and final round.

It also underscored the importance of timely and transparent appointment of ministers and the cabinet, in consultation with the Somali Parliament, and called on the Parliament and all federal and provincial leaders to cooperate fully with the Federal Government in driving forward reform and addressing immediate priorities without delay.

The Security Council further emphasized the need to accelerate agreement between the federal and regional authorities on a federal security sector architecture as well as the importance of good faith cooperation between the authorities to speed up the country's peacebuilding and State-building process.

It also called on the international community and Somalia's partners to step up their support to efforts to build and strengthen the country's national institutions, governance structures and socio-economic infrastructure.

The Council further urged the Federal Government to promote a comprehensive reconciliation process that brings about local, regional, and national cohesion and integration in a climate of respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to establish an effective federal political system.

Also in the statement, the Council recognized that the coming months would be an important

period for Somalia, and said that it would follow progress closely, and reaffirmed its support for peace, stability and development in Somalia.

In Turkey, UN chief Guterres spotlights collective responsibility for refugee protection

10 February 2017 – Underscoring the enormity of the plight of refugees, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today appealed for effective burden-sharing in supporting those who have been forced to flee their homes, as well as to those providing them refuge.

“This is a moment to launch an appeal when we see so many borders being closed and when we see so many escaping their responsibilities [...] for effective burden-sharing and to make sure that the integrity of the international refugee protection regime is maintained,” Mr. Guterres said at a press encounter in Istanbul alongside Binali Yildirim, the Turkish Prime Minister.

“One area is [supporting] the countries of first asylum, support to the host communities, support to projects that can help [...] both refugee populations and the host communities,” he explained.

“The second area of burden-sharing is the resettlement of refugees [...] because the protection of refugees is not only the responsibility of neighbouring States of a crisis; it is a collective responsibility of the international community,” added Mr. Guterres.

The UN chief, on his first official visit to the region, also thanked the Turkish Government and people for their large humanitarian support to Syrian people as well as to those from other parts of the world.

In particular, he expressed his appreciation for the role of Turkey in convening and orienting the Astana conference on Syria and that it would lead to the Geneva talks in which the political solution dimension will be at the centre of the discussions.

“The role that Turkey has played has been, in our opinion, extremely positive and we are very grateful and very appreciative for that fact,” he said.

Mr. Guterres also thanked Turkey for its role in convening of the Astana Conference and said: “It is now very important to have in Geneva discussions that go to the substance of the issues and allow for a political solution to start [being] built.”

Recalling the country's contributions to the international multilateral system, he noted that Turkey is one of the guarantor powers in the UN-supported Conference for Cyprus for the unity of Cyprus, and expressed hope that the efforts of the two communities that go on meeting at the highest level and the efforts of the guarantor powers will allow for a breakthrough in the near future.

A breakthrough able to fully respect the concerns of the Turkish Cypriot community about its security but, at the same time, compatible with the concerns of the Greek Cypriot community, added the Secretary-General, pledging the support of the UN to the two communities and the guarantor powers to support the search for a solution that is acceptable for all.

The UN chief also noted the importance of political solutions in which people feel duly represented at the political level for successfully fighting terrorism.

Secretary-General Guterres also said there is no plan B but for the two-state solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and underscored: It is absolutely essential to avoid unilateral actions that undermine the possibility of that two-state solution.

He also noted that his discussions in Istanbul included the situation in Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan as well as the on importance of rule of law and protection of human rights.