

Global action required for sustainable agriculture

“ No country alone will be able to overcome all the challenges we face fully, so we must act globally. Nobody must be left behind. ”

Concluding the week-long deliberations of the FAO Council, the governance body that manages administrative and financial affairs for the organisation, José Graziano da Silva, FAO director-general, praised participants for taking decisions by consensus with a focus "on substantive issues rather than micromanagement" and urged them to continue that approach after his tenure ends in 2019.



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The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the fundamental tool for joint action to achieve global goals such as eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, and assuring a viable environment, he noted.

"Countries cannot achieve the sustainable development goals on the basis of traditional agricultural approaches," added Graziano da Silva. "We need innovation."

Deliberations at this year's Council included budgetary blueprints and discussion on proposed initiatives, including proposals put forth by member states or technical committees governing the FAO's main areas of work, including agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

Appropriate funding

He also urged member states to honour the requirements they place on the FAO with appropriate funding. This year's Council included 32 specific items that will require budgetary resources, sparking the director-general's "concern that countries continue to ask the FAO to do more and more with less and less."

Council members endorsed the FAO's leading role in sustainable agriculture and food systems, indicating they support the organisation as "the right forum to tackle these matters."

African Solidarity Trust Fund

The FAO also hosted a high-level panel on the African Solidarity Trust Fund, an innovative Africa-led fund to support African development initiatives set up in 2013 with a generous endowment from Equatorial Guinea and Angola.

The fund has since supported 18 projects in 40 countries, benefitting thousands of rural people across the continent. Graziano da Silva highlighted some of these successes, including one called Nigeriens Nourish Nigerien and another supporting the recovery of Sierra Leone's agribusiness sector after the Ebola crisis in that country.

He welcomed the intentions of African countries to replenish the fund, which in its next phase will build on the successful implementation and lessons learnt so far, as well as expand by including innovative financial modalities in order to receive contributions from development partners outside of Africa, particularly from the private sector.

"All African governments need financial support to build the resilience of family farmers to the impacts of conflicts and climate, as well as to meet the challenges of youth unemployment, women empowerment, forced migration and the lack of infrastructure," said Graziano da Silva. "There is no doubt that the African Solidarity Trust Fund can play an important role."

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