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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Council Conclusions on the First biennial report on Implementing EU food and nutrition security policy commitments

At its meeting on 26 May 2015, the Council adopted the Council conclusions as set out in the annex to this note.

Council Conclusions on the First biennial report on Implementing EU food and nutrition security policy commitments

1. The Council recalls its Conclusions of 28 May 2013 on “Food and Nutrition Security in external assistance”¹ which endorsed the Commission Staff Working Document on “Boosting Food and Nutrition Security through EU Action: Implementing our Commitments” (Implementation Plan)² and invited “the Commission to coordinate, in close collaboration with Member States, a consolidated EU biennial progress report and to publish the first such report in 2014”.
2. The Council also recalls its Conclusions of 10 May 2010 on “An EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges”³ and on “Humanitarian Food Assistance”⁴, its Conclusions of 28 May 2013 on “The EU Approach to Resilience”⁵, as well as its Conclusions of 12 December 2014 on “The Action Plan on Nutrition”⁶.
3. The Council welcomes the findings of the implementation report⁷, which also provides the baseline for subsequent reports. The Council welcomes the joint effort that the EU donors have made to produce a consolidated report on assessing performance in implementing EU Food and Nutrition Security policy commitments. The Council recognises the importance of this accountability tool for strengthening aid effectiveness, transparency and mutual accountability as well as for enhancing policy coherence, coordination and synergies, thereby contributing to EU visibility and leadership.

1 Doc. 9328/13
2 Doc. 8107/13
3 Doc. 9653/10
4 Doc. 9654/10
5 Doc. 9325/13
6 Doc. 16857/14
7 Doc. 16855/14

4. The Council recognises that global food and nutrition security challenges are inherently complex issues that require increased EU attention and need to be addressed in a sustainable way. The Council further stresses the importance of ensuring proper linkages between further work on food and nutrition security and key intergovernmental negotiations, notably on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the 2015 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process, as well as with other relevant fora such as the Committee on World Food Security, and with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. The Milan Expo 2015 will also provide a good opportunity to sustain engagement on key food and nutrition security policy issues.
5. The Council welcomes the collective EU response to food insecurity and crises since 2010 as discussed in the implementation report. It encourages the EU and its Member States to continue improving effectiveness, through greater alignment, transparency, complementarity, coordination, and division of labour at country level and as far as possible under partner countries' leadership.
6. The Council stresses that the EU and its Member States, as appropriate, should strengthen Joint Programming in the area of food and nutrition security, building upon lessons learned from past experiences. In-country coordination, harmonisation, joint analysis, and division of labour should be strengthened and monitored, including in the field, in particular in relation to their impact on food and nutrition security. Progress with regard to these efforts should be reported in the next biennial report.
7. The Council reiterates the need to reinforce all levels of food and nutrition security governance and urges the EU and its Member States to further strengthen multi-stakeholder dialogue and the involvement of civil society, the private sector and farmer organisations, with a focus on small holders, in partner countries, in particular regarding national programme formulation and implementation.

8. The Council welcomes the findings of the report on the increasing leadership that the EU and its Member States are showing on critical topics such as the fight against malnutrition, research, resilience building, and land governance, including equitable access to land. The Council encourages the EU and its Member States to continue working on these issues and to build upon these successes in addressing emerging challenges such as sustainable and climate sensitive agriculture and resilient food systems, efficient management of water, nutrition sensitive agriculture and rural transformation, including youth employment. Particular focus should be put on gender-sensitive interventions and policies.
9. The Council also emphasises the need to focus collectively on improving food and nutrition security through a long-term perspective and a holistic approach, and to promote the multiplier role of the agricultural sector. In particular, the Council emphasises the need to
 - i) develop and link local, regional and international value chains for agricultural products,
 - ii) increase responsible public and private investments in sustainable agriculture and food systems,
 - iii) create an enabling environment for socio-economic development of rural areas by ensuring coherence between urban and rural development policies,
 - iv) improve nutrition integration in relevant programmes and strategies,
 - v) strengthen education for food and nutrition security, as well as to
 - vi) strengthen social safety nets and enhance coordination between humanitarian and development action.
10. The Council urges the EU and its Member States to step up their support for pro-poor, demand-led and high-quality agricultural research and effective and evidence-based extension and innovation, both in terms of increased investments and focus on emerging priorities, and to ensure the translation of results into action on the ground to maximise impact.

11. The Council recalls the importance of developing and harmonising measures to track progress on food and nutrition security commitments and of supporting national monitoring systems. The Council recognises the need to refine and simplify the reporting format and methodology in view of the next EU joint biennial report on implementing EU food and nutrition security policy commitments. In particular, the Council suggests focusing on selected policy priorities, and putting more emphasis on results and impact assessment, ensuring consistency with the overall approach of the EU Development and Cooperation Results Framework which is being developed, as noted in the Council Conclusions of 19 May 2014. The Council notes the need to improve the quality of data reported and stresses the importance of alignment with national plans of partner countries.

12. The Council urges the EU and its Member States to step up efforts to communicate the joint achievements, both at European level and in partner countries, and invites the Commission to coordinate, in close collaboration with all Member States, the next consolidated report with a view to its publication in the first semester of 2016.
