UN Meeting on food loss and waste reduction in support of the ‘zero loss or waste of food’ element of the Zero Hunger Challenge

20 September 2013
FAO Headquarters
Rome, Italy

Participants at the UN meeting on food loss and waste reduction

1. Background

It is estimated that nearly one billion people in the world are chronically hungry and as many as two billion are malnourished. At the same time, roughly one third of the food produced in the world for human consumption is lost or wasted.

The UN agencies are uniquely placed to both highlight and address these issues. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is coordinating global policy efforts on nutrition and food security. The CFS has requested its High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) to undertake a study on the role of food loss and waste in the context of sustainable food systems.

The specialized agencies of the UN together have local presence throughout the world and their expertise encompasses a range of domains that are related to food losses and waste. These include food and nutrition security, technology, energy, environment, rural and urban development, and regional and international trade, to name but a few.

The issue of food loss and waste reduction is high on the political and development agenda and numerous initiatives are being conceived and implemented in all parts of the world to address it. Collaboration and partnership are crucial elements for achieving meaningful results, as they facilitate harmonization of methodologies, strategies and approaches, while at the same time avoiding duplication, facilitating mutual learning and fostering more efficient use of resources. This will make interventions more effective and improve impact, particularly when integrated with global initiatives, notably the Zero Hunger Challenge (ZHC) and the post-2015 agenda.

2. Purpose and expected outputs

The meeting convened UN organizations and international agencies that are involved in food loss and waste reduction activities. Its objective was to discuss the creation of a network of UN organizations within the frame work of the ‘zero loss or waste of food’ element of the ZHC.
The expected outputs of the meeting were:

1. A list of UN organizations willing to form a network to facilitate information exchange and collaboration on food loss and waste reduction
2. Overview of the strategies and approaches adopted in the organizations’ food loss and waste reduction programmes
3. A joint statement of their commitment to a longer-term effort around the ‘zero loss or waste of food’ element of the ZHC
4. An agreed set of steps to strengthen the partnership within the framework of the ZHC
5. A decision on whether the network should form the sub-group for the ‘zero loss or waste of food’ element of the ZHC

3. Organizers

The meeting was organized by FAO in collaboration with IFAD, WFP and UNEP.

4. Organizations present at the meeting

The following 13 organizations participated in the meeting: AfDB, FAO, ILO, IFAD, ITC, OECD, UNDP - HLTF Coordination Team, UNEP, UNIDO, UNSCN, WFP, World Bank, WTO. Also present was Messe Düsseldorf GmbH, a private sector partner in the Save Food Initiative. A list of participants is shown in Annex II.

5. Meeting Proceedings

The meeting was organized around the draft programme shown in Annex III.

5.1. Opening session

Ms Eugenia Serova, Director, Rural Infrastructure and Agro-Industries Division, FAO welcomed the participants to the meeting before giving the floor to Mr Ren Wang, Assistant Director-General, Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department, FAO to make the official opening statement.

Mr Wang described FAO’s special relationship with its sister UN agencies, international financial institutions and the WTO, with whom it shares the vision of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. He stressed the importance of collaboration in addressing food loss and waste, and noted that the ZHC vision of promoting universal access to food was central to the deliberations of the meeting. Mr Wang highlighted the prominent role FAO places on the issue of food loss and waste reduction in its strategic objectives.

5.2. Context, vision and roll-out of the ZHC

Ms Marlen Schuepbach, Liaison Officer, Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Food Security and Nutrition outlined how the ZHC was launched at Rio+20 as a vision for addressing global food shortages. She indicated that the ZHC’s five elements serve as a reminder of the key areas that need to be addressed in development interventions that seek to improve food and nutrition security.
The elements of the ZHC are:

1. 100% access to adequate food all year round.
2. Zero stunted children less than 2 years.
3. All food systems are sustainable.
4. 100% increase in smallholder productivity and income.
5. Zero loss or waste of food.

Ms Schuepbach noted that the five elements are interdependent. Reducing food loss and waste will: improve access to adequate food, reduce childhood stunting, contribute to the sustainability of food systems, and increase smallholder productivity and income.

Mr Michael Clark, Special Adviser on International Governance, FAO described the open and inclusive approach of the ZHC and the ongoing effort to bring organizations on board for the Challenge.

He said UN agencies are uniquely placed to both highlight and promote these issues. The FAO-hosted intergovernmental CFS is coordinating global policy efforts on nutrition and food security. The CFS has requested its HLPE to prepare a report on the role of food loss and waste in the context of sustainable food systems.

Mr Clark noted that the specialized agencies of the UN have local presence throughout the world and expertise in: food and nutrition needs and requirements; rural and urban development; labour standards; food and agricultural systems; environmental sustainability; and, regional and international trade and cooperation.

Mr Clark indicated that FAO, acting on behalf of the Vice Chair of the HLTF (that is, the Director-General of FAO), has proposed that five sub-groups be formed corresponding to the five elements of the ZHC. As a first order of business, each sub-group would confirm its co-chairs and governance arrangements, and then proceed as quickly as possible to provide initial answers to four questions:

1. What are the most important challenges presented by the respective elements?
2. What new ideas do we bring for addressing these challenges?
3. How does the element, which the sub-group corresponds to, link to or join up with the other elements?
4. What is the expected value addition of HLTF members joining forces to work on this and all five elements?

Elucidating further, Mr Clark stated that there are a variety of potential steering committees and working structures already in place within the UN system for the first two elements (of adequate food and childhood stunting), and it may well be that work within the HLTF in support of these two elements is based on or in other ways closely tied to these existing UN forums.

This UN meeting on food loss and waste reduction, he further explained, could agree on an appropriate organizational structure for the “zero food loss and waste reduction” element of the ZHC, since it already includes most of the members of the HLTF who have agreed to work together on this topic. There has been no formal discussion among HLTF members about whether non-HLTF members can be invited to participate in the working sub-groups of HLTF, but the general spirit of the effort is to pitch a large tent and support a broad and inclusive global movement. The steering group of the HLTF will need to take the decision from the meeting and recommend an appropriate course of action.
5.3. Activities of organizations in food loss and waste reduction

Each organization presented its food loss and waste reduction activities in a session that was moderated by Ms Wafaa El-Khoury, Senior Technical Adviser at IFAD. The focus was put on the strategy and approach adopted in these activities. Following is a brief outline of the presentations:

AfDB conveyed how food loss and waste reduction resonates with regional initiatives such as NEPAD. Agro industry is considered as the basis for post-harvest loss reduction, and supply chain efficiencies need to be enhanced to contribute to reduction of losses. AfDB’s activities in this regard include: construction of access and feeder roads and rural markets; setting up cottage agro-industries; extension of power grids; and creating financial instruments for the establishment of agro-industries.

FAO described how food loss and waste reduction has been integrated into its Strategic Objective 4 which deals with inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems. Activities are being carried out within the Global Initiative on Food Loss and Waste Reduction – SAVE FOOD which has four pillars: raising awareness; collaboration and coordination of initiatives; policy, strategy and programme development; and support to private and public sector investment programmes and projects.

IFAD informed on the increased emphasis on food loss reduction, nutrition and resilience to climate change. These are all being mainstreamed in all new IFAD programmes, especially value chain projects, with relevant indicators being built into monitoring and evaluation systems. Food loss and waste reduction elements are included in IFAD’s support to value chains and government-led investment programmes.

ILO made its presentation via phone link. It indicated that its activities on lifting rural populations out of poverty by promoting decent work and sustainable rural enterprises also contribute to the goal of reducing food losses. Environmental sustainability and decent work are intimately linked and must be addressed together.

ITC informed the meeting that food loss and waste reduction is integrated with work on optimization of the food supply chain. Knowledge, skills and capacity-building in packaging, quality and supply chain management are considered as key tools to reduce food loss and waste along the food value chain from farming and harvesting to consumption. ITC has a number of sector-specific training packages on optimizing the food supply chain.

OECD presented its work on the trade and market effects of reducing food losses and waste. An analytic study is being conducted which will be complemented by country case studies in Japan and the United Kingdom with the view to validating model-based predictions.

UNEP presented its ongoing work being conducted under the Think.Eat.Save global campaign. Activities cover: raising awareness; measuring food waste and developing a food waste protocol in collaboration with WRI, FAO and others; participation in a partnership to develop a practical guide for food waste reduction; stimulating governments and businesses to make commitments to change food-wasting behaviour, while at the same time setting targets to be achieved.

UNIDO related how its support to agribusinesses and supply chains both contribute to food security and to sustainable food systems. UNIDO provides support to public policies, institutions and infrastructure at all levels of the value chain, as well as business development services along the supply chains.

UNSCN explained its mandate of promoting cooperation among UN agencies and partner organizations in support of community, national, regional, and international efforts to end malnutrition in all of its forms. Reducing food loss and waste forms a natural part of this effort, particularly when working in partnership.
WFP revealed how it addresses food loss and waste as part of the root causes of food insecurity in its Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative. The P4P aims to bridge acquisition of food with improving smallholder farmer’s food security, by improving quality and output. It has found that the largest challenges for smallholders are food preservation and quality.

WTO relayed via phone link that it approaches the issue as part of food markets and trade, trade policy, and multilateral trade rules, which have a bearing on food loss and waste reduction. Better functioning food markets, improved infrastructure and food quality monitoring can limit food loss and waste, and are all fields where WTO is making an impact.

The full presentations and background papers can be found here.

5.4. Potential synergies and collaboration, methodologies, approaches and tools

During this session, which was moderated by Ms Fanny Demassieux, Coordinator of the Resource Efficiency Sub-programme of UNEP, the meeting considered the following three key questions:
- How can the concerned organizations work together to make a difference?
- Are the organizations equipped to address the ZHC?
- What needs to be done to address the challenge articulated in the fifth element of ZHC?

5.4.1. Immediate next steps:

The deliberations in plenary led to identification of the following immediate steps:
- Mapping of activities of the organizations using the following dimensions:
  a. Food subsectors.
  b. Stages of the supply chain.
  c. Key issues within supply chain stages, as relevant.
  d. Countries/geographic focus.
  e. International frameworks, like the ZHC and post-2015 SDGs.
- With regard to measuring the magnitude and impact of food waste and food loss, the steps identified were:
  a. Making a collection of existing methodologies to measure impact.
  b. Mapping existing tools, methodologies and approaches.
  c. Developing a common methodology.
- With regard to working together, the steps identified were:
  a. Identify each organization’s strengths in relation to the addressing the ‘zero loss or waste of food’ element of the ZHC.
  b. Define a strategy for areas of working together, possibly in clusters.
  c. Share information and communicate on the organizations’ food waste and loss activities.
  d. Map the stakeholders/partners that each organization is already mobilising on the issue of food loss and waste reduction.
  e. Share experiences and lessons on the impact of activities.

5.4.2. Other issues:

Other issues that were raised during the session included the following:
- Need to operationalize the ‘zero loss or waste of food’ element of the ZHC.
- An ambitious joint programme is required in order to take up the challenge, however it should reflect current activities.
- The range of food loss and waste issues covered by the agencies is very wide, making it difficult for them to work together.
• Advocacy and maintaining the issue on the policy agenda at various levels are important aspects.
• Importance of identifying overlaps, opportunities for synergies, gaps and a time frame.

5.5. “Delivering as one” and modalities for collaboration within the ZHC

The sessions on creating a network and collaboration within the framework of the ‘zero loss or waste of food’ element of the ZHC were moderated by Mr Adrian van der Knaap, Chief of Transport and Logistics Services, WFP.

5.5.1. Creating a network

Following discussions in plenary, the following points were agreed regarding the network:
• Relevant UN agencies and international organizations will be mobilized to form a formal network which will also function as a community of practice.
• The network would constitute the sub-group of the fifth element of the ZHC in the HLTF.
• The network would exist amidst other networks working on food losses and waste.
• A clear objective and time frames for activities of the network need to be set.

5.5.2. Roles, responsibilities and limitations

Regarding the roles and responsibilities of the sub-group of the fifth element of the ZHC, the following points were agreed upon:
• The sub-group’s task is to shape the ZHC vision into an action plan.
• Specific tasks of the sub-group include mapping current activities of each organization, identifying gaps, developing future joint activities, working on common methodologies and impact measurement, raising awareness and policy development.
• The sub-group would engage with stakeholders at different levels, and would foster knowledge sharing among involved agencies.
• FAO will develop a concept note and terms of reference (ToR) for the network. The ToR would outline the network’s objective(s), structure within ZHC, membership, size, and relationship to other networks.

5.5.3. Institutionalization within the agencies

Regarding institutionalization within the agencies, the following points were raised:
• The network would need coordination and a focal point from each participating organization.
• Coordination/ moderation role would need to tap into existing resources.
• Ongoing activities within the agencies should be built upon to develop future joint activities.

5.6. Meeting statement, conclusions and next steps

The sessions aimed at discussing and adopting the meeting statement were moderated by Ms Wafaa El-Khoury, Senior Technical Adviser, IFAD.

5.6.1. Statement

In formulating the statement, the meeting considered it important that the statement reflect:
• The work of UN organizations that did not participate in the meeting, but undertake activities dealing with the issue of food loss and waste reduction.
• The role of the private sector in food loss and waste reduction.
The following statement was adopted:

**Statement for UN meeting on food loss and waste reduction in support of the ‘zero loss or waste of food’ element of the Zero Hunger Challenge**

An estimated one third of food is lost or wasted.

The problem of food loss and waste is huge, widespread and complex, and affects all parts of the food system. It is essential that all stakeholders, including consumers, join efforts to successfully tackle the problem.

Food loss and waste reduction is one of the most effective ways of improving global food supply, thus contributing to enhanced food and nutrition security.

We embrace “zero loss or waste of food” and commit to work together to support the realization of this vision. We encourage other UN agencies, governments, the private sector and civil society organizations to join in this effort.”

**5.6.2. Conclusions and next steps agreed**

- The participating international organizations agreed to constitute the basis of the sub-group of the HLTF, supporting the fifth element of the ZHC - ‘zero loss or waste of food’. The role of the sub-group will be to outline the roadmap towards achievement of ‘zero loss or waste of food’, through information sharing, inclusive coordination and facilitation of food loss and waste reduction initiatives. Specifically, this will include the formulation of targets, objectives and indicators for the sub-group.
- FAO was requested to convene the next meeting of the sub-group, where the modalities and ToR of the sub-group will be decided, as soon as possible after the meeting of the HTLF.
- The sub-group will mobilize a global network of stakeholders active in food loss and waste reduction. FAO was requested to act as the network facilitator.

**5.7. Closing session**

Ms Wafaa El-Khoury thanked FAO for hosting the meeting and on behalf of the co-organizers thanked FAO for inviting all the participants to the meeting and said that the meeting had been very productive.

Ms Eugenia Serova underscored the inter-departmental nature of FAO’s work on food loss and waste reduction. On this note she invited Mr Arni Mathiesen, Assistant Director-General, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO to give the closing speech.

Mr Mathiesen said he has witnessed first-hand the amount of loss and waste that occurs at all stages of primary food production, from agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries. He related the tons of fish dumped overboard as unwanted by-catch on shrimp trawlers, and the practice of discarding entire sections of meat because of superficial vaccination scars. He drew attention to the difficulty in ascertaining where the problem of food loss and food waste begins and where it ends, and noted that the problem seems to reach every corner of the food sector.

In declaring the meeting officially closed, Mr Mathiesen congratulated the participants for their effort in bringing a new momentum to the quest of tackling food loss and waste.
### Annex I

#### List of acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AfDB</td>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAADP</td>
<td>Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (of NEPAD)</td>
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<td>CFS</td>
<td>Committee on World Food Security</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
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<td>HLPE</td>
<td>High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition</td>
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<td>HLTF</td>
<td>High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis</td>
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<td>IFAD</td>
<td>International Fund for Agricultural Development</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<td>ITC</td>
<td>International Trade Centre</td>
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<td>NEPAD</td>
<td>New Partnership for Africa's Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>P4P</td>
<td>Purchase the Progress (P4P) programme of WFP</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>ToR</td>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
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<td>UNIDO</td>
<td>United Nations Industrial Development Organization</td>
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<td>UNSCN</td>
<td>United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<td>WRI</td>
<td>World Resources Institute</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZHC</td>
<td>Zero Hunger Challenge</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Participant list for UN meeting on food loss and waste reduction in support of the ‘zero loss or waste of food’ element of the Zero Hunger Challenge

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## Programme for UN meeting on food loss and waste reduction in support of the ‘zero loss or waste of food’ element of the Zero Hunger Challenge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Presenters</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:30</td>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>Eugenia Serova and Ren Wang, FAO</td>
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<tr>
<td>08:45</td>
<td>Welcome by Eugenia Serova, Director, Rural Infrastructure and Agro-Industries Division, and Ren Wang, Assistant Director-General, Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department</td>
<td>Eugenia Serova and Ren Wang, FAO</td>
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<tr>
<td>08:55</td>
<td>Presentation of the meeting objective and background</td>
<td>Divine Njie, Senior Officer, Agro-Food Industries Group, FAO</td>
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<td>09:00</td>
<td>The Zero Hunger Challenge: Context and vision</td>
<td>Marlen Schuepbach, Policy Officer, HLTF</td>
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<td>09:15</td>
<td>Rolling out the Zero Hunger Challenge, and food loss and waste in the Post 2015 agenda / Sustainable Development Goals</td>
<td>Michael Clark, Special Adviser on International Governance, FAO</td>
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<td>09:30</td>
<td>Presentation of the role of and strategy on food loss and waste reduction in each organization (Pre-prepared write-ups shared with organizers. 5 minutes per Organization)</td>
<td>Moderator: Wafaa El-Khoury, Senior Technical Adviser, IFAD</td>
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<td>10:30</td>
<td><strong>Coffee Break</strong></td>
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<td>10:45</td>
<td>Plenary discussion on:</td>
<td>Moderator: Fanny Demassieux, Coordinator Resource efficiency Subprogramme, UNEP</td>
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<td>• Potential synergies and collaboration</td>
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<td>• Methodologies, approaches and tools</td>
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<td>• Sharing information</td>
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<td>11:45</td>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
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<td>12:30</td>
<td>Plenary discussion on “Delivering as one” on food loss and waste reduction:</td>
<td>Moderator: Adrian van der Knaap, Chief of Transport and Logistics Services, WFP</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Formalising a network on food loss and waste</td>
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<td>• Roles, responsibilities and limitations</td>
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<td>• Institutionalisation within the agencies (agency focal points or task teams)</td>
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<td>13:30</td>
<td>Plenary discussion on:</td>
<td>Moderator: Adrian van der Knaap, Chief of Transport and Logistics Services, WFP</td>
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<td>• Modalities of collaboration under the food loss/waste element of the ZHC and linkages to the other elements</td>
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<td>• Linkages to SAVE FOOD and Think.Eat.Save</td>
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<td>• Milano Expo 2015</td>
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<td>• A timeline to agree on common goals, activities and an implementation plan</td>
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<td>15:00</td>
<td><strong>Coffee Break / Group Photograph</strong></td>
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<td>15:30</td>
<td>Presentation and plenary discussion on draft statement:</td>
<td>Moderator: Wafaa El-Khoury, Senior Technical Adviser, IFAD</td>
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<td>• Adoption of the meeting statement</td>
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<td>• Agreement on next steps</td>
<td>Moderator: Wafaa El-Khoury, Senior Technical Adviser, IFAD</td>
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<td>17:30</td>
<td><strong>Closing of meeting</strong></td>
<td>Eugenia Serova and Arni Mathiesen, FAO</td>
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<td>Eugenia Serova, Director, Rural Infrastructure and Agro-Industries Division, FAO and Arni Mathiesen, Assistant Director-General, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO</td>
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