

Opening remarks by Ms. Cristina Duarte, UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa

- The theme of this year's edition of the Africa Dialogue Series (ADS) 2022 ***“Build resilience in nutrition: Accelerate Africa's human capital and socio-economic development”*** is strongly aligned with the AU theme for 2022 as well as with the outcomes of the Secretary-General's September 2021 UN Food Systems Summit and the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025.
- The importance of the ADS as a multi-stakeholder platform at the global level for policy dialogue on Africa's peace, security and development issues, which since its inception has succeeded in bringing diverse perspectives that are united in a shared vision for a peaceful and prosperous Africa.
- Importance of the fruitful cooperation with the African Union Observer Mission to the United Nations in co-organizing the ADS 2022 and with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) which takes the lead in organizing the activities of the first week of the ADS on sub-theme1 ***“Building Resilient Socio-Agricultural Food Systems: The Key to Nutrition”***.
- The topic of the webinar on sub-theme 1, focusing on strengthening the resilience of socio-agricultural food systems cannot be more timely, particularly in light of the profound challenges facing the majority of African households in promoting food security and securing adequate and affordable nutrition.
- On resilience, USG Duarte shared the following key insights:

First, resilience is more than a function of macroeconomic stability. It is a function of income re-distribution policies where national budgets and resource allocation are at the centre of the challenge.

Second, resilience requires empowering communities through social and human capital building

Third, building resilience goes beyond crop diversification, irrigation spread out and increasing productivity, but it involves food systems that are above all socio-ecological systems

Fourth, food systems are more than value chains. Social and human capital assets are critical in addressing the non-monetary dimensions of poverty and building capacity for recovery, adaptation and transformation which are key dimensions of resilience.

Fifth, resilience is the bridge from fragility and vulnerability to preparedness and capacity to whether shocks to affordability and universal access to nutrition.

- There is a need to seize the opportunity that the current food crisis offers with respect to accord due attention to the agriculture sector, provide adequate support to smallholder farmers, including women and youth, and facilitate their access to technology, markets and finance.
- The 3rd CAADP Biennial Review Report (for the period from 2015 to 2021)¹ indicated that only four Member States out of the 51 that reported on the thematic area of enhancing investment finance in agriculture, were on-track.
- While acknowledging that this represents as improvement since no country was on track in the last review period. Similarly, the Review report states that the continental target of reducing the proportion of the population that is undernourished to 5 per cent or less by the year 2025 has not yet been fully met. Of the 22 African countries that reported progress on this indicator, only 13 Member States are on-track.
- Strengthening resilience is not possible without tackling climate change, referring the profound negative consequences of climate change on African countries, including drought, desertification, land degradation, loss of biodiversity and changing rain patterns.
- It's imperative to scale up international support and bridge the persistent gaps that are looming over the fulfilment of climate finance commitments. It's all crucial to spur transformative actions ***“to move from climate change victims to climate adaptation winners, we need to embrace long-term thinking to tackle transformative solutions and resilience is the way to go”***.

¹ https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/41573-doc-ENGLISH_3rd_CAADP_Biennial_Review_Report_final.pdf