SUMMARY NOTE
SIDE EVENT at the 52nd SESSION OF THE UN STATISTICAL COMMISSION
The 50x2030 Initiative to Close the Agricultural Data Gap:
Learning from partner country implementation to date

Thursday, 25 February 2021, 3:00-4:15 PM (New York Time)

This online side event presented some of the early lessons emerging from the implementation of the 50x2030 Initiative at country level. The Initiative aims to support 50 low- and lower-middle income countries to address gaps in agricultural and rural data through the use of novel integrated agricultural and rural surveys. Nearly 150 people attended from around the world.

The 75-minute event comprised an exploration of two major areas of learning: **coordination** and **data generation**. The side event concept note, program, PowerPoint presentation and video can be found on the 50x2030 website, while the major takeaways from each session are outlined below.

50x2030 Learning Area 1: Coordination

Coordination is integral to the overall approach of the 50x2030 Initiative. It is required within partner countries, between different government agencies, with the three implementing agencies (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development, and World Bank), and with partners that have related agendas.

Data Value Chain: The three implementing agencies ensure harmonized support and collaboration throughout the data value chain, guided by the data gaps identified through each country's data ecosystem mapping exercise. The incorporation of a data-use strategy in each is one of the unique ways in which the program adds value to agricultural statistics in the country. If countries know their data needs, they can design survey programs that produce data that informs the development of relevant policies.

Country experience, Central Statistics Agency (CSA) of Ethiopia: Ethiopia established a country coordination group at the start of the planning phase of the 50x2030 Initiative. This coordinating body is useful because it creates bridges between the three 50x2030 implementing agencies, the CSA, the Ministry of Agriculture, research centers, and even the ministries of planning and finance. This ensures long-term coordination in the generation and use of agricultural and rural data at the country level. The country is currently preparing its program implementation plan, which will capture all activities under its 50x2030 country program, as well as complementary work to build agricultural statistical capacity with other partners. Both the coordination group and the program implementation plan help facilitate interactions and build trust among different stakeholders in the National Statistical System, which are likely to have benefits beyond the generation of agricultural statistics.

Improved data quality: Activities under the 50x2030 Methods and Tools component aim at innovative ways of generating survey data and improving data quality through institutional, technical and operational collaborations and partnerships. Areas of work include integrated survey satellite applications, collaboration with Earth Observation partners, and the integration of objective measurements into survey operations. Innovation in data production is informed by learning from methods research, developing R&D priorities and stakeholder dialogue.

50x2030 Learning Area 2: Data Generation

Integrated Survey Program: The 50x2030 Initiative promotes the Integrated Agriculture and Rural Survey Program, which is a farm-based survey that includes a household socioeconomic survey in rural areas. The program builds on two existing survey tools, the Agricultural Integrated Survey Programme (AGRISurvey) and the Living Standards Measurement Study - Integrated Surveys on Agriculture (LSMS-ISA). The program is customized at country level in a sustainable and realistic way in order to facilitate country takeover. It also brings flexible and cost-effective solutions for producing indicators relating to SDG2 and other national and regional program indicators (e.g., Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme) and for improving sex-disaggregated and gender-relevant data supported by applied research on 50x2030 methodologies and tools. 50x2030 partner countries Uganda, Senegal, Georgia are already computing SDG2 indicators based on this support.

Country experience, Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS): Uganda is the first country to adopt the integrated agriculture and rural survey approach of the 50x2030 Initiative. The country stressed that the approach could save up to two-thirds of the cost of non-integrated approaches, as a result of consolidating multiple surveys into one, the reduction in field visits, and adoption of the new methodology and tools based on research supported by 50x2030. This makes the integrated survey more sustainable through the introduction of coordinated sampling, streamlined field visits, a reduction in respondent burden, and production of comprehensive official estimates that enable deeper analysis. However, the Integrated Survey Program comes with challenges, such as the complexity involved in combining the samples of farm and non-farm households, and the trade-off between reduced field visits and the possibility of missing seasonal data.

COVID-19: The 50x2030 Initiative endeavored to continue with operations despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic by adapting its implementation approach to include remote training, the merging of survey rounds, and phone interviews. It also conducted the country onboarding process remotely.

Q&A Session

Panelists fielded questions on issues including:

- the integration of satellite imagery and household survey data and how 50x2030 provides protocols on better ways to produce and disseminate survey data to effectively contribute to Earth Observation products.
- the type of support and regions covered in the 50x2030 Initiative.
- future opportunities for information sharing between countries via regional and global meetings and the [50x2030 website](#).
- joining the 50x2030 Initiative through the [Country Expression of Interest process.](#)

- the research objectives of the 50x2030 Initiative.
- new areas of interest for the Initiative for future consideration, such as linking security and peace agendas to agriculture, which affect farmers' access to markets.

Nepal also shared its experience of working with the 50x2030 Initiative.