

**Statement on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States**

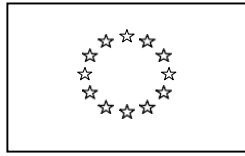
**174<sup>th</sup> session of the Council of the FAO**

**(4-8 December 2023)**

**Item 7: Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative**

Mr Chair,

1. I am honored to write to you on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.
2. The EU and its Member States take note of the latest progress report on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. The Hand-in-Hand initiative complements the core activities of the Organization and we would like to recall the continued importance of ensuring the coherence of the Initiative with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the joint programming of the UN development system and the 2030 Agenda. To achieve this, we encourage FAO to continue to closely coordinate its work on the Initiative with other relevant UN agencies and development partners, in line with its mandate.
3. We acknowledge with satisfaction the information on the growth in membership and new partnerships and initiatives focused on developing and transforming food systems in adherent countries. We also welcome the development of the tools associated to Hand in Hand, particularly its geospatial platform, looking forward to further developments that can improve the availability of detailed data for each region, country, and initiative.



4. We would like to recall the importance of the alignment of the initiative's private funding with the CFS Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment and FAO's Strategy for Private Sector Engagement 2021-2025. In addition, continued attention should be given to ensuring that the Initiative has no further impact on the regular FAO budget as approved and outlined in the 2024-25 Work Programme and Budget.
  
5. Finally, we thank FAO for providing information on the Initiative, as a further means of contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals within FAO's mandate, and we ask that FAO continue to provide regular updates to the FAO Council on the progress made in implementing the Initiative and the results achieved. Particularly, we look forward to getting more information on the outcomes of the 2023 Hand-in-Hand Investment Forum (17 - 20 October 2023, Rome).

Thank you, Mr Chair.

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