



## PRESS RELEASE

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### SIGNATURE OF A FUNDING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PRINCE'S GOVERNMENT OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO AND THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO) TO REDUCE FOOD LOSS AND WASTE IN THE OASIS SYSTEMS OF MOROCCO

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**Rome, 27 June 2019** – In the margins of the forty-first session of the FAO Conference, and on the eve of Monaco's accession to the FAO Council for a four-year term, Ms Isabelle Rosabrunetto, Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Government of the Principality of Monaco, and Mr Daniel Gustafson, Deputy Director-General for Programmes at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in the presence of Ms Imane Louati, Head of Multilateral Affairs at the Moroccan Ministry of Agriculture, signed a funding agreement worth EUR 500,000 to implement the project: *"Helping to reduce food loss and food waste in date, apple and fig production in the oasis systems of Morocco"*. The project agreement was signed in Rabat some weeks earlier by the Secretary-General of Morocco's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forests (MAPMDREF) and the FAO Representative in Morocco.

Although figures vary from one publication to the next, everyone is in agreement that at least a third of the food produced globally every year is either lost or wasted. Faced with threats to food security and impending shortages of resources, the issue of food loss and waste has become a critical one on the international agenda, due to the economic, social and environmental consequences it entails.

It was this alarming fact that gave rise to this project, particularly since it became clear that the issue posed a major challenge for food security in Morocco, contributed to economic losses for food producers and stakeholders along the value chain, and represented a waste of all the resources used to produce and handle food which was, in the end, not consumed.

Developed with this in mind, the project offers a response to the inherent difficulties involved in managing and failing to control the value chain that are encountered by groups who live primarily off what they can produce in the oasis areas, which are geographically distant from the Kingdom's major towns. Thanks to the efforts made by Morocco and the contribution from Monaco, the project will be rolled out over a period of 36 months. Its primary objective will be to improve food security and increase the incomes of date, apple and fig producers in four regions of Morocco: **Tata, Tinghir, Figuig and Imilchil-Amellago**.

Consequently, the project outcomes will help to:

- Improve knowledge management and innovation relating to the technical, economic, social and environmental aspects of food loss and waste (for example by developing guides and training materials)
- Build technical and management capacity among the various stakeholders in the target industries in order to reduce food loss and waste
- Increase the revenue of industry stakeholders and the socio-economic resilience of communities by investing in efficient food systems, adapted to the specific environments of each oasis, and minimising losses across the entire value chain
- Capitalise on and disseminate best practices in production, harvesting, packaging and marketing

The project is in line with the FAO's strategic objectives and with the top priority in the country programming framework (2017–2020) agreed by the Government of Morocco and the specialist United Nations agency for implementing the commitments undertaken to meet the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2 (food security) and SDG 12 (sustainable production). It will also contribute to addressing new priorities on climate change, aligning with national and regional priorities for agricultural development.

In this respect, it supports the national strategy on reducing food loss and waste in the production of six crops (grains, apples, dates, citrus fruits, beldi figs and prickly pears), developed as part of a collaboration between MAPMDREF and the FAO in 2017. It is also a continuation of the project “*Support for the development of a national strategy and action plan to reduce food loss and waste*” and complements the project “*Revitalising oasis agroecosystems through a sustainable, integrated and rural approach in the Draâ-Tafilalet Region (OASIL)*”.

The project will be led by MAPMDREF, represented by the Production Chains Development Directorate, which chairs the project's national steering committee. It will be carried out in close collaboration with the National Agency for the Development of Oasis Zones and the Argan Tree (ANDZOA), and will involve all relevant local stakeholders and organisations.

The relationship between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Principality of Monaco has long been characterised by exemplary cooperation, which has unquestionably increased recently, particularly on the issues of access to education, access to employment and agricultural development. This new partnership, which seeks to improve food security for small family farmers and the sustainable management of natural resources in Morocco, fits perfectly within the context of this strategy.

The Principality of Monaco joined the FAO in 2001. The country has financed several food security programmes, including the Special Programme for Food Security, and supports the FAO's mandate by participating in major events and conferences. The signature of this agreement, on the eve of the Principality of Monaco's accession to the FAO Council for a four-year term, is a concrete example of the Monegasque Government's commitment to tackling the challenges of food security alongside the FAO.

**Media contacts:**

**Florence Marie Rolle**, FAO Representative in Morocco, +212 0537654776

**Lina Touri**, FAO Communications Manager in Morocco, +212 0662244903