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Продовольственная и  
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Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

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# FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE

## Thirty-second Session

Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 5-7 May 2020

## Provisional Annotated Agenda

### Ministerial Session

#### I. Introductory Items

1. **Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of Rapporteurs**
2. **Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable**
3. **Statement by the Director-General**
4. **Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council**
5. **Statement by the Chairperson of the 31st Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)**

The statement of the Chairperson of the 31st Session of ERC will provide a brief overview on the outcome of the deliberations of the 31st Session of ERC (Voronezh, Russian Federation, 16-18 May 2018) on matters related to the Europe and Central Asia region.

6. **Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)**
7. **Statement by the Spokesperson for the Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Consultation**

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## II. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Issues

### *Food Systems transformation and the road toward the Food System summit*

#### 8. Sustainable Food Systems and Healthy Diets in Europe and Central Asia

Increasing obesity and associated non-communicable diseases present challenges for the Europe and Central Asia region, and in addition, undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies are still present in some countries. The need to shift to healthier diets and sustainable food systems is increasingly evident, considering different challenges. It is necessary to include not only economic, social and environmental issues, but also nutrition and sociocultural dimensions. Particularly, the preservation of biodiversity is a key factor in developing sustainable food systems and agriculture; diversification of agricultural production positively influences food security, dietary diversity and livelihood sustainability.

The sustainability of food systems is a growing concern in the region. Food systems are evolving in response to demographic and socio-economic changes and there is a pressing need to provide healthy diets in a sustainable manner. In general, a sustainable food system requires that each of its elements, food production, processing, storage and distribution, marketing, trade and consumption, is sustainable. Safeguarding and protecting the system requires investments and action to protect animal and plant health and assure food safety.

The different actors of the food system usually focus on their own interests without specifically addressing issues such as healthy diets and sustainability and, therefore, appropriate public policies, investments and public–private dialogue are needed. In this context, policy-makers need to address the role and needs of food producers, suppliers and consumers, and include them in dialogue and decision-making. The respective policies should provide financial and non-financial incentives for the actors to promote food systems that provide healthy diets to consumers in a sustainable manner. Moreover, consumer behaviour plays an essential role in influencing the level of sustainable food systems, and thus targeting them with education related to healthy diets will be a key contribution to sustainability.

The background paper to be prepared by the FAO Secretariat will outline the status of nutrition and sustainable food systems and the related challenges in the region, taking into consideration the universality of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 1, 2, 6, 12, and 15. It will also include an assessment of existing public policies and institutions related to nutrition and the sustainability of food systems in order to make recommendations for the changes required for increased sustainability. Different dimensions of food systems will be considered in this context, such as the supply and affordability of nutritious food, with respect to inequalities in access to healthy diets, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, the role of food producers and small and medium enterprises, trade and market patterns, evolving retail and distribution patterns, policy development, nutrition-sensitive social protection and biodiversity. As elements of sustainable and inclusive food systems, also included under this topic would be issues of sustainable agriculture and value chains, strengthening of rural–urban linkages, urban agriculture, stakeholder and community engagement, and public–private collaboration. The background document would outline policy recommendations in addressing these issues.

The document will also consider the outcomes of the Regional Consultation on Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition organized by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), held in September 2019 in Budapest.

Member countries will be invited to review the recommendations for reshaping food systems, share experiences and provide their views on ensuring sustainable food systems that deliver healthier diets, and discuss possible ways to finance investments in sustainable food systems.

***Information Note: Status of Biodiversity in Europe and Central Asia – Challenges and Opportunities for Dynamic Conservation of Biodiversity***

Based on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) report, biodiversity is in a continuous, strong decline with 42 percent of terrestrial animal and plant species (with known trends) having declined in population size in the last decade. The extent of natural ecosystems and species diversity has also declined. This continued biodiversity loss is threatening nature and, in turn, the economic and cultural values provided by nature, “nature’s contributions to people”, including ecosystem goods and services and the notion of nature’s gifts from indigenous and local knowledge systems. High levels of biodiversity are required to sustain nature’s contributions to people. Between 1960 and 2016, nature’s regulating and some non-material contributions to people declined by more than 50 percent. Ecosystems services such as habitat maintenance, pollination, regulation of freshwater quantity and quality, soil formation and regulation of floods are negatively affected by the decline in biodiversity levels.

Biodiversity levels are declining partially due to intensive agriculture and forestry practices used to increase the provision of food and biomass-based fuels. More renewable natural resources are consumed in the region than are produced. The per capita ecological footprint in Western Europe is 5.1 ha; this exceeds the subregional biocapacity of 2.2 ha, meaning Western Europeans depend on net imports of renewable natural resources and material contributions of nature to people.

The document will provide an update on the status of biodiversity in Europe and Central Asia, based on the latest available analysis. It will provide information on the actions of FAO to maintain biodiversity in the region – as biodiversity essential for food and agriculture and for sustainable food systems – and will outline further challenges and opportunities.

***Information Note: United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition and Follow-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition***

As recommended in 2014 by Members at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), the United Nations (UN) General Assembly proclaimed in 2016 the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025<sup>1</sup>, a time-bound framework to implement the ICN2 commitments. The Nutrition Decade is a vehicle to advocate for more policy and programme implementation, increase nutrition investments and align existing efforts towards achieving a healthier and more sustainable future. In April 2018, a first report giving an overview of progress made in implementing the Nutrition Decade was submitted to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Paragraph 91 of this report<sup>2</sup> elicited that the Decade’s Work Programme provides for the convening of dialogues among all stakeholders to review progress in implementing the Nutrition Decade. The mid-term review of the Nutrition Decade is envisaged for 2020, in order to assess and evaluate the achievements in individual policy areas of the ICN2 Framework for Action, as reflected in the action areas of the Work Programme of the Nutrition Decade, over the time period from 2016 to 2020. The process leading to the mid-term review will include a series of consultations and dialogues with various stakeholders, including with member countries participating in the FAO Regional Conference for Europe, with the aim of evaluating progress made towards implementing the ICN2 global commitments and seek guidance on future priority areas and the way forward for the second half of the Nutrition Decade.

***Information Note: Update of the Vision and Strategy for FAO’s work in Nutrition***

This Information Item will update delegates on the drafting of a new Vision and Strategy for FAO’s work in Nutrition. The FAO Nutrition and Food Systems Division is leading a collaborative process in

<sup>1</sup> [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/259](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/259)

<sup>2</sup> <https://undocs.org/A/72/829>

drafting a new Vision and Strategy based on evaluation recommendations and increased knowledge and evidence for food-systems approaches to raise levels of nutrition. The new Vision and Strategy will consider: i) all forms of malnutrition; ii) food systems over and beyond nutrition-sensitive agriculture; iii) the current global context building on the outcomes of ICN2, the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition; iv) a robust implementation plan and accountability framework; and v) region-specific considerations.

***Information Note: Food Loss and Waste Measurement linked to the Food Loss Analysis Methodology***

As part of the SDG monitoring process, FAO recently published a new estimate of Food Losses, i.e. the Global Food Loss Index. This Information Item will refer to the report of the State of Food and Agriculture 2019, in which FAO's Food Loss Index was released and will update on FAO's initiatives to support countries in collecting data toward monitoring progress, informing policy and actions to reduce food losses and waste, toward achieving SDG target 12.3.

***Information Note: International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) 2020***

In December 2018, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH). The year is a once in a lifetime opportunity to raise global awareness on how protecting plant health can help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect the environment, and boost economic development. As part of this, the FAO, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and their partners are leading the global effort to promote plant health in 2020 and beyond. The IPPC is a global treaty, signed by over 183 countries, that provides a framework for protecting plant resources from pests and diseases. It leads to the development of international plant health standards and promotes safe trade among all countries.

***Information Note: UN Food Systems Summit 2021***

In 2021, the UN Secretary-General will convene a Food Systems Summit as part of the UN Decade of Action. The Summit reflects the prominence that the 2030 Agenda has given to improved health and nutrition, reduced poverty, improved ecosystem services, and social inclusion and to the key role that future food systems will play in the achievement of these goals. Although food systems stakeholders are beginning to take actions and to change behaviour, the many independent initiatives of governments, private sector and civil society that have emerged in support of more sustainable food systems lack a common framing of the complex interactions, dependencies and trade-offs intrinsic to food systems. This is constraining the ability of societies with different priorities, and with different agro ecological and institutional potentials to identify and implement appropriate pathways towards more sustainable food systems.

The overarching goal of the Food Systems Summit is therefore to help stakeholders understand and manage these complex choices. It will be informed by an inclusive, decentralized preparatory process supported by robust and independent evidence and will provide a platform to build partnerships and ambitious initiatives. This agenda item, supported by an information note that will elaborate the rationale, proposed outcomes for and process towards the Summit, will provide an early opportunity for Member Countries to request clarification and to provide their inputs.

***Hand In Hand Initiative: Reaching the most Vulnerable***

**9. FAO's Hand-in-Hand Initiative: a New Approach**

Hand-in-Hand is an evidence-based, country-led and country-owned initiative of the FAO to accelerate agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development to eradicate poverty (SDG 1) and end hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG 2). In so doing, it contributes to the attainment of all the

other SDGs. The initiative adopts a robust match-making approach that proactively brings together target countries with donors, the private sector, international financial institutions, academia and civil society to mobilize means of implementation that support accelerated action. It prioritizes countries and territories within countries where poverty and hunger are most concentrated or where national capacities are most limited. And it introduces a framework for monitoring and impact analysis.

The initiative deploys sophisticated tools, including advanced geospatial modelling and analytics, to identify the biggest opportunities to raise the incomes and reduce the inequities and vulnerabilities of the rural poor, who constitute the vast majority of the world's poor. It uses these tools to present an evidence-based view of economic opportunities and to improve targeting and tailoring of policy interventions, innovation, finance and investment, and institutional reform. Hand-in-Hand adopts a market-oriented food systems approach to increasing the quantity, quality, diversity and accessibility of nutritious foods available in local, regional and national food markets. The Initiative prioritizes countries where national capacities and international support are most limited or where operational challenges, including natural or human-induced crises, are greatest. This is in keeping with the UN's commitment to "leave no one behind."

#### **10. Solutions for Youth, Employment and Developing Rural Areas in relation to the United Nations Decade of Family Farming**

Rural areas in Europe and Central Asia face multiple challenges, taking into consideration the predominance of small farms in many countries of the region. Rural poverty has been declining over the years, but this trend has slowed, resulting in a current stagnation. This poverty has a strong gender dimension; for example, women have less access to land, fewer economic resources and less technological knowledge, and they are overrepresented in manual labour as informal unpaid family workers, while rarely managing agricultural holdings/farms. Moreover, youth often do not find adequate living and employment conditions in rural areas, resulting in outmigration as they seek those opportunities in urban areas or abroad.

As in many rural areas, there are several concurrent and interconnected development constraints, including rural poverty, food insecurity, inequality, unemployment and lack of access to social protection, all of which often have disproportionate impacts on women, especially the young. It is necessary to develop policies to address these issues in a holistic and integrated manner. One key goal is to maintain rural areas as spaces for providing sustainable livelihoods attractive to both young women and men, helping them to see their future in rural areas and improve their quality of life by ensuring basic infrastructure and basic services.

The FAO Secretariat will present a background document for this topic that gives an overview of the challenges and trends for the region. Recommendations included in the document will outline key measures to support rural development and address the root causes of economic or distress migration. Among them will be investment in food security and agriculture, resulting in the creation of decent employment and alternative income opportunities; formulation of social protection policies; creation of adequate social infrastructure; support for the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT); Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI); and integrated community development approaches.

The Civil Society Consultation, prior to the 32nd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC), aims to increase the consideration of youth issues in the discussion at the ERC and to ensure that youth representatives are given adequate space to share their input with respect to sustainable food and agriculture and their role in it.

Members will be invited to share their views and exchange experiences to support investment in rural youth.

## *Innovation and Digitalization*

### *Special Event: Innovation and Digitalization*

Innovation in agriculture cuts across all dimensions of the production cycle and along the entire value chain - from crop, forestry, fishery or livestock production to the management of inputs to market access. FAO assists member countries in unlocking the potential of innovation to drive socio-economic growth, ensure food and nutrition security, alleviate poverty and improve resilience to climate change, thereby helping to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The global food system continues to face considerable challenges in being able to provide enough food of adequate quality to feed an ever-growing population. The world is also changing at a fast pace with the emergence of an array of technologies. Digital technologies offer unique opportunities for improving food production and trade, especially to smallholder farmers, and in helping to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

This special event will provide a platform for countries and other stakeholders to exchange and showcase their innovations in agriculture. It will also invite the Members to share their views on digitalization in food and agriculture systems and the measures that can be taken to maximize its potential in food and agriculture, considering also the ways for FAO to support the global knowledge sharing and analysis in order to inform policy-makers and other food and agriculture stakeholders.

## **III. Programme and Budget Matters**

### *Means of Implementation*

#### **11. Decentralized Offices' Network**

The paper will outline the way forward, challenges and opportunities for FAO's decentralization policy, taking into consideration the conclusions of the 159th Session of the FAO Council (June 2018) and the 41st Session of the FAO Conference (June 2019) on the need to continue efforts to strengthen the technical capacity of the Organization, including through the review of FAO's decentralized network coverage and the review of the country office staffing model. The paper will present for consideration the outcomes of the corporate Internal Review of FAO Regional Structures carried out in 2018–2019, and the progress made in the implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution RES/A/72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system, launched in January 2019 across the region, with priority attention to the Rome-based Agencies collaboration format.

#### **12. Results and Priorities for FAO in the Region**

The Regional Conference will consider how FAO activities have addressed the agreed regional priorities during 2018-2019 and will provide guidance on the priority areas for 2020-2021 and beyond, in the context of FAO's Strategic Objectives and the 2030 Agenda.

The Secretariat will inform the Regional Conference on the results of FAO's work in the region, achieved within the Medium Term Plan 2018-21 (reviewed) and priorities and recommendations of the Regional Technical Commissions..

Key elements of the background document will be the main results achieved under the programmatic umbrella of the Regional Initiatives (RIs), in response to the agreed priorities for 2018-19, including lessons learned and FAO's contribution to the SDGs (Agenda 2030) in the region. Members are expected to review the results presented and provide feedback on the lessons learned and on the implementation modalities of the RIs.

In addition, FAO's work in the Europe and Central Asia region is based on Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs), as well as the Regional and Subregional challenges supporting the countries in the achievement of the SDGs and the UN reform. FAO's programme of work in the region in 2020-21 will continue leveraging its three RIs aimed at: empowering smallholders and family farms for improved livelihoods and poverty reduction (RI1); improving agri-food trade and market integration (RI2); and enhancing sustainable natural resource management in a changing climate (RI3); and providing a programmatic umbrella for an integrated and cross-sectorial assistance at the country and regional level. Members are expected to review the proposed programme of work and the areas of emphasis under the RIs in light of their contribution to the SDGs at national and regional levels.

### **13. Synthesis of FAO Evaluations 2014-2019 in Europe and Central Asia Region**

The document will present a synthesis of FAO evaluations carried out in the period of 2014-2019 in the Europe and Central Asia region. The synthesis will focus on four themes that are aligned with the priorities identified at the ERCs and relevant for achieving the Strategic Objectives (SOs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): rural poverty reduction; agri-food trade and market integration; natural resources and changing climate; and food security and nutrition.

## **IV. Other Matters**

### **Means of Implementation**

### **14. Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2020–2023 of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)**

The implementation of the Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) is a mechanism designed to enhance the role of the Regional Conferences in the governance and decision-making process of FAO. The paper will present the progress made towards the indicators and targets of ERC as a Governing Body.

### **Food Systems transformation and the road toward the Food System summit**

### **15. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 41st Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)**

A summary report from the deliberations of the 41st Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) (Budapest, Hungary, 1-2 October 2019) will be presented. Members are expected to review the recommendations the ECA made to the ERC under the overarching topic of plant health in Europe and Central Asia.

### **16. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the Joint Session of the 40th European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 77th UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI)**

A summary of the outcomes and recommendations of the Joint Session of the 40th European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 77th UNECE Committee on Forest and the Forest Industry (COFFI), which took place from 4 to 7 November 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland, will be presented.

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**17. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 30th Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC)**

A summary report from the deliberations of the 30th Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC) (Dresden, Germany, 11-13 September 2019) will be presented.

**18. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 6th Session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish)**

A summary report from the deliberations of the 6th Session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish) (Izmir, Turkey, 15-18 October 2018) will be presented.

***Information Note: Report from the Outcome of the Debates of the 42nd and 43rd Sessions of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)***

The outcomes and recommendations of the 42nd Session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) (Rome, Italy, 22-26 October 2018) and of the 43rd Session of the GFCM (Rhodes, Greece, 4-8 November 2019) will be presented.

**19. Date and Place of the 33rd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe**

**20. Any other Business**

**Review and Endorsement of the Report of the Regional Conference**

The draft report, introduced by the Rapporteurs, will be reviewed and discussed for endorsement.

**Closure of the Conference**