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Food and Agriculture
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Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
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 THE NEAR EAST

Thirty-fifth Session

21-22 September 2020¹

Information Note

Executive Summary

1. In light of the decision to hold the 35th Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East in virtual mode, Members are invited to participate in the meeting sessions and to access online documentation asynchronously at their convenience. In order to enhance the efficiency of the virtual meeting, advance written correspondence will be used for certain documents through the Regional Dialogue Area (please see Section F):
<http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/nerc35/login/>
2. Comments, questions and discussion on the documentation should be sent by email to NERC-Dialogue@fao.org by 15 September 2020.
3. Documentation may be accessed at <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/nerc35/documents/en/>.
4. The Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable and Inaugural Ceremony will take place on 21 September from 10:00 to 11:00 hours (GMT + 2).
5. The Ministerial Round Table discussion, focusing on the theme of 'Transforming food systems to achieve the SDGs and respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic', will be held on 21 September from 11:00 to 12:30 hours (GMT + 2).
6. The Ministerial Meeting discussion on Programmatic Matters will take place on 22 September from 10:00 to 11:30 hours (GMT + 2).
7. The Review and Adoption of the Report of the Regional Conference and Closure of the Regional Conference will take place on 22 September from 11:30 to 13:00 hours (GMT + 2).
8. Delegations are reminded that the meeting will be webcast.

¹ Rescheduled from 2-4 March 2020, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.

A. Conference arrangements

1. The 35th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC) will be held in virtual modality from 21 to 22 September 2020.
2. This decision follows consultations by the Director-General with the Chairperson of the NERC and the FAO Near East Group, including on special procedures to be applied for the virtual modality of the Regional Conference.
3. Special procedures for virtual modality outlined in this Information Note will be confirmed by the Regional Conference during Item I *Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable*, and said confirmation will be recorded in the Report of the 35th Session of the NERC.
4. All meetings of the Regional Conference will be conducted through the Zoom videoconferencing platform. The link to register for the Zoom meeting will be distributed in a separate message.
5. The inaugural ceremony will take place online at 10:00 hours (GMT+2) on Monday, 21 September 2020.
6. All session times indicated are those of the FAO Regional Office (GMT +2).
7. An “Order of the Day” will be issued daily by the Conference Secretary, giving detailed information of the Regional Conference business, timetable of meetings, items to be discussed and other general information.
8. The Provisional Annotated Agenda (NERC/20/1 Rev.3), Provisional Timetable (NERC/20/INF/2 Rev.2) and Provisional List of Documents (NERC/20/INF/3 Rev.2) will be circulated to delegates with the invitation letter and made available on the NERC website at: <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/nerc35/documents/en/>
9. The Secretary of the Regional Conference is Mr Serge Nakouzi, Deputy Regional Representative (DRR), FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (RNE). As the Regional Conference is hosted by the Sultanate of Oman, Ms Nora Ourabah Haddad, FAO Representative in Oman, is the Conference Affairs Officer². They will be assisted by a number of FAO staff, whose names and functions will be included in a list to be issued on the first day of the conference.

B. Working languages

10. The working languages of the Regional Conference are Arabic, English and French. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided and the conference documents will also be issued in these three languages.

C. Documentation

11. The Regional Conference webpage is available at: <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/nerc35/en/>
12. Working documents will be made available to all participating governments and organizations before the Regional Conference commences, at the following address:

² Please see contact details under Section G. below.

<http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/nerc35/documents/en/>. Documents drafted during the Regional Conference will be available on the NERC webpage at the same link.

D. Draft recommendations and amendments

13. Delegates who wish to submit draft recommendations, or other documents requiring decision by the Regional Conference, are requested to provide an electronic version of their text in English to the Regional Conference Secretary at FAO-RNE-NEERC@fao.org.

E. Advance communication of speeches and statements

14. Delegations are encouraged to limit their written statements to a maximum of 800 words. Delegates are requested to submit digital copies of their statements in Arabic, English or French to the Secretariat of the Regional Conference at FAO-RNE-NEERC@fao.org by Friday, 18 September 2020 to ensure inclusion in the draft report.
15. Statements received will be annexed to the final report of meeting.
16. Participants are also welcome to submit pre-recorded statements which will be posted on the Regional Conference webpage: <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/nerc35/en/>
17. Video statements must reach the NERC Secretariat in MP4 format by Friday, 18 September 2020. Videos should be sent to FAO-RNE-NEERC@fao.org with a link to any commercial large file transfer service.
18. The technical specifications for pre-recording interventions are as follows:
 - a. The recording/filming should be produced in full HD 1080 x 1920.
 - b. The file, in MP4 format, should be compressed into a lighter version for playback via Zoom.
 - c. A 3-4 minute video should be compressed to 80 MB in size at a compression rate of 3.5 mbps (megabyte per seconds). Files exceeding this size may create technical problems to play and view. The compression should be done prior to sending to NERC Secretariat.
 - d. Videos in .MOV format should be avoided.

F. Advance written correspondence on agenda items

19. Given the decision to hold the 35th Session of the Regional Conference in virtual mode and constraints related to the span of time zones in the Near East region, the programme will be condensed. In order to streamline the proceedings of the Regional Conference, a written correspondence procedure will be the main mode to address the following documents:
 - a. NERC/20/3 Decentralized Offices Network
 - b. NERC/20/7 Multi-year Programme of Work for the Regional Conference for the Near East.
 - c. NERC/20/INF/5 Summary of the Recommendations of Regional Commissions and Major Meetings in the Near East on: i) Policy and Regulatory Matters and ii) Programme and Budget Matters.
 - d. NERC/20/INF/15 UN Decade of Action on Nutrition and Follow-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2).

- e. NERC/20/INF/16 Update of the Vision and Strategy for FAO's Work on Nutrition.
 - f. NERC/20/INF/21 Digital Innovation for promoting Agriculture 4.0 in the Near East and North Africa.
 - g. NERC/20/INF/17 Food Loss and Waste Measurement linked to the Food Loss Analysis Methodology.
 - h. NERC/20/2/Web Annex 5 Update on the development of the new Strategic Framework.
 - i. NERC/20/INF/22 Report of the First Regional Consultative Technical Meeting for the 35th Session of FAO Regional Conference for the Near East.
 - j. NERC/20/INF/23 Report of the Second Regional Consultative Technical Meeting for the 35th Session of FAO Regional Conference for the Near East.
20. The aforementioned documents can be accessed through the Regional Dialogue Area at this link: <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/nerc35/login/>. Registered participants will receive the username and password by separate email after registration.
21. Members are requested to submit any questions and comments on the documents posted on the Regional Dialogue Area by email to NERC-Dialogue@fao.org no later than Tuesday, 15 September 2020. Please indicate clearly in the email subject line and in its body to which agenda item the comments or inputs relate.
22. Where applicable, the Secretariat will provide written responses to inputs received. All comments received and FAO responses will be posted by the NERC Secretariat in the Regional Dialogue Area by Friday, 18 September 2020.
23. Items considered under the written correspondence procedure will form an integral part of the deliberations and report of the 35th Session of the NERC.

G. General enquires

24. All correspondence concerning the Regional Conference should be addressed to:

Conference Secretary

Mr Serge Nakouzi

35th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East

FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa

P. O Box 2223, Cairo, Egypt

Tel: +202 33316000

Fax: +202 37495981, or 33373419

E-mail: FAO-RNE-NEERC@fao.org

and copied to:

The Conference Affairs Officer in Oman

Ms Nora Ourabah Haddad

Telephone: (+968) 24955405

Fax: (+968) 24601642

E-mail: FAO-Oman@fao.org; nora.ourabahhaddad@fao.org

During the Regional Conference, the contact details of the Conference Secretariat are:

Title: RNE-DRR

E-mail: RNE-DRR@fao.org; RNE-ADG@fao.org; FAO-RNE-NERC@fao.org

Tel.: +20233316000

H. Webcasting

25. All plenary sessions will be webcasted live and/or uploaded to the Regional Conference website at: <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/nerc35/en/>

I. Press liaison and information

26. For the duration of the Regional Conference, the FAO Information Officer, assisted by a team from the Regional Conference, will ensure contacts with the press and be responsible for matters concerning information to the public.

J. Online registration

27. Participants are requested to register online at the following link:
<https://fao.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwpdOCpqT4qGdJEPu7RtUyLVZr54y0pMMZD>,
following which they will receive a Zoom meeting link.
28. Please note that all delegates and observers are requested to register for the virtual meeting even if a previous registration had been submitted for the originally scheduled in-person meeting.