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Продовольственная и
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Naciones Unidas para la
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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Thirty-seventh Session

Colombo, Sri Lanka
31 January – 2 February 2024 and 19–22 February 2024

Provisional Annotated Agenda

Senior Officers Meeting

31 January – 2 February 2024 (Virtual)

I. Introductory Items

1. Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons, appointment of the Rapporteur
2. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

II. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Matters

19. State of food and agriculture in the Asia and the Pacific region: global and regional food security outlook and foresight

This document presents an overview of the current food security situation in Asia and the Pacific, as well as the short- and medium-term outlooks for food security. It focuses on the food security dimensions of availability, access and stability and the impact of drivers such as climate variability and extremes, economic slowdowns and downturns, and conflict. Following the introduction, Section II presents the global and regional trends in chronic food insecurity, followed by an assessment of the acute food insecurity situation in food-crisis countries. Global and regional indicators of the cost and affordability of a healthy diet are also presented. Section III discusses the agricultural outlook for the major food commodities in both the short and medium terms and highlights emerging issues in the region.

20. Building resilience through agrifood systems transformation

Building resilience to climate change and multiple other shocks and stresses is the biggest challenge for countries in the region. Across subregions, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators related to disaster and climate resilience are regressing. Agrifood systems are both highly vulnerable and contributing to increased risks through unsustainable practices, and unhealthy diet and consumption patterns. Transforming agrifood systems is essential to tackle the resilience challenge in the region and to achieve the vision of more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, leaving no one behind. Agrifood systems transformation is central in attaining the SDGs. The Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC) has acknowledged this challenge and has

Documents can be consulted at www.fao.org

considered action to promote climate-resilient agrifood systems. Investment and progress of action are increasing. However, they are not compatible with the rate of growing risks and exacerbating vulnerabilities. Members in Asia and the Pacific have prioritized resilience in their National Pathways for Food System Transformation and related policies.

This paper highlights FAO actions to assist Members in accelerating agrifood systems transformation. Examples of actions presented in the paper are guided by the FAO Strategic Framework and Regional Priorities. They reflect FAO's adopted systems approach to achieve multiple objectives. The actions also emphasize emerging issues, including accounting for loss and damage, anticipatory action, harnessing climate change mitigation potentials, and blended finance, while reinforcing building resilience through ecosystem restoration and biodiversity conservation, sustainable water and soil management and a just transition, addressing land tenure and engaging with Indigenous Peoples.

21. Financing to end hunger for today and tomorrow (SDG 2)

Ending global hunger by 2030 requires both short-term relief for existing crises and long-term investments to address the root causes of poverty and the weak performance of agrifood systems. Achieving the necessary shifts demands careful planning of objectives, interventions, costs, incentives, policies, and financing options. The World Investment Report 2023¹ estimates that USD 4 trillion per year in additional financing is needed to meet the 2030 Agenda, including SDG 2 (Zero Hunger). To mobilize the necessary additional financing, a comprehensive approach is needed. This includes increasing domestic resource mobilization and leveraging international investments, attracting foreign direct investment, and accessing international financial flows, including official development assistance and climate finance. Innovative financing mechanisms, such as blended finance, impact investments, and sustainable finance instruments, can also play a crucial role in closing the financing gap.

22. How to fight food loss and waste in Asia and the Pacific region

Approximately 14 percent of the world's food is lost annually between harvest and retail phases, while an estimated 17 percent of food is wasted at the retail and consumer levels. This situation is unacceptable when food insecurity is affecting millions worldwide and in the region, and greenhouse gas emissions are accelerating climate change. SDG target 12.3 is to "By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses". Halving food waste and reducing food losses could reduce the environmental impacts of food systems by up to one-sixth and reduce the massive amounts of nutrient losses from food loss and waste (FLW).

FAO's normative work at the global level includes developing the Voluntary Code of Conduct for FLW, establishing databases and technical platforms for FLW, and developing tools for measuring food losses, along with emphasizing education and awareness-raising campaigns. The regional-level strategy for FLW is based on five pillars: raise awareness; identify and address critical loss and waste points; enable investments; facilitate SDG target 12.3 measurement and reporting; and support governance mechanisms. Ongoing initiatives in the region include support for developing national strategies, awareness campaigns, pilots on measuring food losses for specific commodities, initiatives for reducing losses and improving waste management that can serve as best practices to upscale the work on FLW.

23. Transforming capture fisheries and aquaculture towards sustainability in Asia and the Pacific region

The capture fisheries and aquaculture sectors are particularly important for food security, livelihoods and the economies of the region. The region accounts for the majority of global aquaculture production and approximately 50 percent of all capture fisheries production, and is home to the majority of the world's small-scale fisheries. Trade of aquatic products is considerable both within the region and globally. When managed and developed sustainably, aquatic food systems in both marine

¹ UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). *World Investment Report 2023*. <https://unctad.org/publication/world-investment-report-2023>

and fresh waters, including aquaculture and fisheries of the region, have the capacity to produce a sustainable and resilient source of food and livelihoods. To assist Members in achieving sustainable, resilient and inclusive aquatic food systems within their own national economic, social and resource contexts, FAO developed a vision for Blue Transformation based on three core pillars: sustainable aquaculture; sustainable fisheries; and sustainable trade and value chains.

This document summarizes FAO's Blue Transformation vision and provides an overview of how this applies to the context of Asia and the Pacific region. The document identifies some capacity-building and technical assistance areas that may be of priority to the region. They include: aquaculture innovation and investment; support to improved fishery assessment for sustainable, adaptive management; strengthened support to small-scale fisheries policy; and review of fishery support mechanisms and their linkage to trade. The document outlines key opportunities for Members to invest in and promote Blue Transformation in their capture fishery and aquaculture subsectors and associated seafood value chain sectors, in order to increase the contribution of aquatic food systems to provide a significantly larger proportion of the nutritious food and resilient livelihoods in the region, and to help achieve the 2030 Agenda.

24. Applying a “One Health” approach to accelerate agrifood systems transformation in the Pacific region

One Health is a holistic concept that recognizes the fundamental interconnections between the health of people, animals (terrestrial and aquatic), plants and the environment. While the formal application of One Health to programmes and policies may be relatively new, the concept itself is not. In the Pacific Islands region, where traditional practices and culture are deeply intertwined with the natural world, One Health is a way of life. The One Health approach to designing and implementing programmes, policies, legislation and research where multiple sectors plan, communicate and work together to achieve better health outcomes for people, animals, plants and the environment is a key component of the agrifood systems transformation agenda in the Pacific region. The Pacific Islands region faces unique challenges affecting human, animal, plant and environmental health due to its vulnerability to natural disasters, the adverse impacts of climate change (such as rising sea levels and salinity, increased frequency of extreme weather events, and vector-borne diseases), geographical remoteness, limited arable land, and small economies. By adopting a One Health approach, stakeholders in the Pacific Islands region can develop strategies that promote sustainable agricultural, fisheries and forestry practices, enhance food security and safety, improve nutrition, and mitigate the risks of both zoonotic and non-communicable diseases.

III. Programme and Budget Matters

25. The Strategic Framework, priorities and results in the Region

Results for FAO in Asia and the Pacific Region – 2022–23

This Agenda Item will discuss how FAO activities have addressed previously agreed Regional Priorities during 2022–23 and contributed to the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31 and the SDGs. The item will highlight key achievements in the four Regional Priorities agreed for the biennium and examine how new ways of working, modalities and programmes, particularly One FAO, have impacted the region in 2022–23, moving towards more inclusive, efficient and effective agrifood systems transformation. The item will underscore the important roles of strengthened partnerships with the private sector, country-led innovations and technologies, statistics, and gender-responsive programmes in realizing inclusive, measurable and transformative change. It will also discuss FAO initiatives such as the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative, 1,000 Digital Villages (DVI), One Country One Priority Product (OCOP), as well as achievements in the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Solution Forum and Platform.

Priorities for FAO in the region under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31

This Agenda item will discuss FAO's regional approach towards achieving the Organization's vision, the Global Goals of Members and the 2030 Agenda. Reflecting on challenges and opportunities in the

region, the item will show how the four Regional Priorities, endorsed by APRC in its 36th Session, will continue to guide FAO's work in the region for 2024–25 and beyond in the context of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31, including the *four betters* and the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs). The Regional Priorities will focus on those PPAs most relevant in Asia and the Pacific with a view to “localizing” the Strategic Framework, contributing to SDG targets, and guiding future technical work of FAO in the region. The discussion will be informed by: the results of FAO's work in the region; the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31, the Medium-Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022–25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2024–25; priorities and recommendations of the Regional Technical Commissions; and the plans and priorities of partners such as the Regional Economic Organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector. The item will elaborate on regional approaches towards implementing corporate priority initiatives and strategies, including the HIH Initiative, OCOF and DVI. The item will describe how accelerators and cross-cutting themes will be integrated in priority programmes and activities in the region. This item will seek Members' endorsement of the Regional Priorities of FAO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

26. Decentralization

The effectiveness of FAO's assistance to countries in reaching their 2030 Agenda targets is linked to the Organization's ability to make the best use of available resources and deliver at scale at country level through a modern and efficient FAO Decentralized Offices Network, allowing the Organization to respond to the aspirations of countries in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to observe international standards of accountability, internal control and good management.

Over the past years, FAO Governing Bodies, starting with Regional Conferences, have provided guidance on the Decentralized Offices Network transformation, to ensure greater flexibility and efficiency in the use of the Organization's financial and human resources to better respond to Members' expectations, on a cost neutral basis and without negatively impacting the technical capacity at headquarters.

This document responds to guidance from the Governing Bodies to strengthen the Organization's work at country level and proposes measures to address current challenges, prioritizing and tailoring support to the specific needs of countries.

IV. Other Matters

27. Any other matters

28. Date and place of the Thirty-Eighth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific

V. Concluding Items

29. Review and adoption of the Report of the Senior Officers Meeting

The Rapporteur will introduce the Report of the Senior Officers Meeting prepared by the Drafting Committee for consideration and adoption. The meeting will adopt the Report, with appropriate amendments, by consensus.

Information Series²

a) Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific (APHCA)

The 44th Business Session and 82nd Executive Committee of the Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific (APHCA) was held in New Delhi, India from 14 to 17 November 2023, hosted in collaboration with the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying and the Ministry of Fisheries of India. The Commission affirmed its support for

² If they so wish, delegates may comment on the information items under “Any other matters”.

FAO and emphasized the importance of maintaining and expanding the Commission in the region due to the importance of the work focused on promoting sustainable, climate-smart livestock development through technical and policy guidance, capacity development, and networking. The Commission endorsed using Trust Fund Resources to hire an APHCA coordinator to support the review of the mandate, by-laws and modalities of operation to align and harmonize with the current challenges of livestock production in the region at this point in time. The Commission members also thanked FAO for the effort to expand the Commission by presenting to the Chief Veterinary Officers in the region, enabling participation of APHCA members in the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock meeting in 2023, developing important technical guidelines on livestock production, and for the increased engagement and support provided by the APHCA Secretariat to the Members.

b) Report of the Thirty-seventh Session of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC)

The thirty-seventh session of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC) took place in Qingdao, People's Republic of China, from 13 to 15 June 2023. The Commission commended FAO's support and emphasized the importance of maintaining regional cooperation in fisheries and aquaculture. Due to financial challenges, the Commission decided to suspend its activities for five years but stressed that this should not undermine efforts for regional cooperation. As part of the key recommendations, the Commission requested FAO's support for: capacity development to improve stock assessment and guidance for innovation and investment in the aquaculture sector in order to address environmental aspects and adaptation to climate change; technical advice to address issues related to small-scale fisheries; and guidance to ensure sustainable use of marine resources as part of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

c) Report of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC)

The Thirtieth Session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) took place in Sydney, Australia, from 3 to 6 October 2023 under the theme "Sustainable forests for a sustainable future". The Commission acknowledged the multiple demands on forests, emphasized the continued relevance of sustainable forest management to respond to these demands, and suggested actions, *inter alia*, on the following topics: sustainable wood and non-wood forest product value chains; forest and landscape restoration; forest and biodiversity, with a focus on the role of primary forests; forest resilience to climate change, with an emphasis on wildfires; and forest pests and diseases. Furthermore, the Commission recommended the topic of "decoupling agriculture from forest and biodiversity loss" for consideration by the APRC. The session saw a high level of participation, with 150 in-person participants from 25 Member States, and 14 regional and international, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, illustrating the continued relevance of the platform for regional exchange and coordination. The next session will take place in 2025.

d) Report of the Asia and the Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC)

The Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC) convened for the first time in 1956. It administers the Plant Protection Agreement for Asia and the Pacific Region and reviews the plant protection situation at the national level in its 25 Member Countries and at the regional level. Its key objectives are: coordinating and promoting the development of regional plant protection systems; assisting Member States in developing and implementing effective plant protection programmes; setting regional Standards for Phytosanitary Measures; facilitating inputs into the development of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures; and promoting information exchange. It also plays a leadership role in supporting the implementation of integrated pest management and pesticide management programmes at regional and national levels. Focus is given to the capacity development among the Member States. This report reviews APPPC's activities in the past biennium (2022–23) and provides updates on various plant protection and pesticide management programmes in the region.

e) Report of Asia and the Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS)

The Twenty-ninth Session of Asia and the Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS) was hosted by the Government of Mongolia, led by the National Statistics Office of Mongolia, and convened virtually in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia from 22 to 25 November 2021. The Commission acknowledged the significant improvements to agricultural statistics in the region and the contributions of FAO and APCAS. The Commission recommended that FAO continue its support to countries to: integrate agricultural statistics and SDG indicators into national statistical systems; improve fisheries and aquaculture statistics; implement farm-based surveys; compile and report SDG indicators; and strengthen collaboration with national and regional partners. The Commission noted the importance of specific indicators and approaches such as the Food Insecurity Experience Scale, the food loss index, food consumption away from home, use of Earth Observation data, and incorporating SDG indicators in Voluntary National Reviews. The Commission specifically noted the need to adapt approaches and provide support to Pacific SIDS.

f) Pacific Action Plan on mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors (2024–2030)

The 2022 Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific recommended that FAO develop a regional plan to promote cohesive action on mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors, including crops, livestock, forestry and fishery in the Pacific region. It also recommended that FAO ensure that the regional plan is demand-driven, involves a multistakeholder consultation process, and is aligned with relevant global and regional frameworks and initiatives. In response, FAO initiated a highly consultative, multistakeholder process in the region that led to the formulation of the Pacific Action Plan for Mainstreaming Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture (2024–2030) (Pacific Action Plan). This Information Note provides an overview of the process followed to develop the Pacific Action Plan and a description of its objective, strategic areas and key actions. Development of the Pacific Action Plan has helped to identify the biodiversity challenges across sectors as well as to create the coordination needed among various stakeholders and focal ministries.

g) Strategic Regional Foresight for Asia and the Pacific Region

Responding to calls by the 28th Committee on Agriculture to reinforce Strategic Foresight capacities and activities, FAO is currently engaged in foresight exercises for the transformation of agrifood systems at all levels. FAO is strengthening its quantitative analysis and modelling capacities to support Members to better anticipate future scenarios for strategic decision making. In this context, the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific is engaged in a Regional Foresight Exercise (RFE) on the future of agrifood systems, supported by the FAO Foresight Network, comprising several Offices and Divisions. The RFE aims at: a) Developing regional and sub-regional strategic visions and actions to move agrifood systems towards sustainability and resilience; b) Supporting Common Country Assessments and Country Programming Frameworks; and c) Enhancing institutional capacities on strategic foresight exercises at all levels. The RFE provides a granular assessment of regional dynamic relationships occurring among agrifood, socioeconomic and environmental systems. This Information Note outlines RFE's findings to date and elicits further engagement of Members and other regional stakeholders in strategic foresight.

Ministerial Meeting

19–22 February 2024

I. Introductory Items

- 3. Statement by the Director-General**
- 4. Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council**
- 5. Statement by the Chairperson of the Thirty-sixth Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific**
- 6. Statement of the Third Joint FAO and Pacific Community (SPC) Ministers for Agriculture and Forestry Meeting**
- 7. Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)**
- 8. Statement of the Spokesperson of the Civil Society Consultation**
- 9. Statement by the Spokesperson of the Private Sector Consultation**

II. Ministerial Roundtables

- 13. Ministerial roundtable on food security and nutrition in Asia and the Pacific region: Lessons from convergent crises and actions going forward**

Food insecurity and malnutrition in the region are rooted in poverty and inequalities and exacerbate vulnerabilities to shocks and crises. The region accounts for half of the world's severe food insecurity, with more than one billion people being food-insecure and two billion unable to afford a healthy diet.³ Poverty is still widespread, despite the region's impressive economic growth in recent decades, and is further challenged by the vicious poverty-disaster cycle.

Over the last three years, the compounded impacts of COVID-19, recurrent climate and natural hazards and the food, feed, fuel, fertilizer and finance (5F) economic crisis, as well as protracted conflict, on food security and nutrition in the region have pointed to some critical issues. The “riskscape” is much more complex, requiring a sound understanding of risk drivers, many of them being beyond the agriculture sector. It is critical to have a robust multi-hazard risk monitoring system to detect crisis early, and pre-defined thresholds to trigger fast and effective actions based on information and evidence. There is the need to further explore the use of big data and new technologies, in partnership with the private sectors, to generate near-real-time changes in climatic and socioeconomic contexts and anticipated impacts and integrate this information into national disaster risk management systems. Social protection, which is a key instrument in emergency response, could be a long-term solution for food security, nutrition and resilience, if designed to address the underlying vulnerabilities. Finally, it is important to learn from responses to the crises to enable relevant and timely policy adjustments and plans to prevent future crises and mitigate their impacts. This event will provide an important opportunity to reflect on the convergent crises and their impacts on food security and nutrition in the region, to share experiences from Members' responses, and to discuss opportunities for preventing and managing the risk of future crises.

- 15. Ministerial roundtable on building resilience through agrifood systems transformation**

Building resilience to climate change and multiple shocks and stresses is the biggest challenge in Asia and the Pacific. Across the subregions, all SDG indicators related to disaster and climate resilience are regressing. Moreover, risks are growing at a rate that outstrips our collective efforts to reduce them. Risks are also increasingly interconnected, having profound and compounding impacts, as seen in the last three years with recurrent climate and natural hazards, COVID-19, the 5F economic crisis and protracted conflict in the region.

³ FAO. 2023. *Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Asia and the Pacific*.

Transforming agrifood systems to be more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable remains key in tackling the main challenges in the region. Agrifood systems are both highly vulnerable, bearing a large part of loss and damage, and contribute to increased risks and exacerbated vulnerabilities. Rethinking resilience through agrifood systems transformation requires that systems approaches and integrated action be strengthened in order to address the drivers of risks and vulnerabilities. Examples of such action exist and can go at scale, such as: integrating ecosystem restoration and biodiversity action and harnessing climate change mitigation to reduce disaster risks; alternatives to land tenure issues, gender and unequal access to nutritious food; or adapting national social protection systems to support resilient and just transition. Solutions and partnerships for promoting blended finance, mobilizing private sector investments, and increasing access to technologies are also emerging. This event will provide an important platform to reflect on progress, discuss new opportunities and “walk the talk” to accelerate agrifood systems transformation in order to build resilient economies and societies in the region.

16. Ministerial roundtable on investment and financing for poverty reduction and modernization in Hand-in-Hand Initiative countries

The Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative targets the poorest countries – least developed landlocked countries (LLDCs), least developed SIDS, countries in food crises, and large countries with significant hotspots of poverty. It takes a multilateral approach to accelerate agrifood systems transformation and sustainable rural development in order to strengthen agrifood system capacities to deliver nutritious and healthy diets for everyone and improve household incomes (towards achieving SDGs 1, 2 and 10).

Members’ progress under HIH over the last biennium is starting to produce exciting results and lessons learned. During the 90-minute ministerial roundtable, Members and investors will have the opportunity to showcase their aspirations, progress, success stories and lessons learned in investment and financing for poverty reduction and modernization under the HIH Initiative. The roundtable will also inform potential new HIH countries about opportunities to engage.

17. Ministerial roundtable on saving food, saving water and reducing losses and waste

This ministerial roundtable will highlight the critical role these elements play in enhancing inclusivity, sustainability, and resilience within agrifood systems. Food Loss and Waste (FLW) accounts for about a quarter of all water used in agriculture and is linked to 8 to 10 percent of annual greenhouse gas emissions. Achieving SDG target 12.3, which aims to halve food waste by 2030, could lessen environmental impacts by up to one-sixth. This target includes reducing food losses throughout the supply chain, including post-harvest. Minimizing FLW is pivotal in addressing food insecurity and malnutrition, mitigating environmental degradation, combating climate change, and preventing the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. It also opens up opportunities for livelihoods. FAO supports countries in combating FLW by developing national strategies, conducting awareness campaigns, piloting food loss measurements for specific commodities, launching initiatives to reduce losses, enhancing waste management (especially in urban areas), and helping scale up best practices for FLW.

In the region, water scarcity is intensifying, with over 90 percent of the population on the brink of a water crisis, and the demand-supply gap projected to reach 40 percent by 2030. Even Southeast Asia, traditionally considered water-abundant, is increasingly facing scarcity. The Water Scarcity Programme is dedicated to promoting sustainable agricultural water use. The programme has evaluated the extent of water scarcity in the region, explored effective management responses, and created various tools and approaches to assist partner countries in adopting adaptive scarcity management strategies. The programme advocates for practical water accounting and the development of transparent, rational and evidence-based water allocation processes. It also stresses the importance of policy coherence and addressing water tenure issues.

III. Special Ministerial Events

10. Accelerating achievement of the SDGs through Science and Innovation: Championing modernization and digitalization for small holders in aquaculture and livestock for agrifood system transformation in Asia and Pacific region

Science and innovation are emerging as prominent components of the evolving global development agenda. A wide range of approaches, technologies and practices exist that can contribute to the SDGs and agrifood systems transformation – ranging from digital tools and biotechnologies to innovations related to agroecology and agroforestry. The FAO Science and Innovation Strategy is the result of an extensive, inclusive and transparent consultation process. It has been designed as a key tool to support the delivery of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31 and builds on three mutually reinforcing pillars: (i) strengthening science and evidence-based decision making; (ii) supporting innovation and technology at regional and country levels; and (iii) serving Members better by reinforcing FAO’s capacities.

FAO advanced its work on innovation in 2023 through the development of the Regional Action Plan for Asia and the Pacific for implementation of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy, which incorporated diverse contributions from the country, subregional and regional levels. In 2023, two regional dialogues were organized to facilitate cross-country learning and support, and to enable exchanges of experiences on innovative strategies aimed at driving systemic change within the agrifood sector. Building on this, the ministerial roundtable will focus on highlighting the centrality of science and innovation in achieving the SDGs and agrifood systems transformation. It will provide an important platform for sharing robust science and evidence-based options for achieving the SDGs, and aims at assisting countries in making informed decisions regarding the co-creation, adaptation and adoption of appropriate and context-specific technologies and innovations.

12. Special Ministerial Meeting for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)

The end of 2023 indicates that only seven years are left for the United Nations to achieve the SDGs. Achieving the SDGs appears ambitious despite some early gains. The foregoing view applies particularly to SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs because of their unique development circumstances. Most of these countries are import-dependent, making them extremely vulnerable to global economic turbulence. For example, the ongoing war in Ukraine has resulted in significantly increased prices of, and constrained access to food, fertilizer, animal feed, fuel and finance in all of SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs.

This special ministerial event for SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs will discuss and promote localized advocacy, knowledge sharing and creative partnership building, drawing on the results of other regional and global initiatives to advance the national agrifood systems transformation agenda in SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs.

IV. Host Country – Sri Lanka’s Special Ministerial Event

30. Agritourism in Asia and the Pacific – accelerating rural development and enhancing livelihoods

Agritourism is growing especially fast in Asia and the Pacific, fueled by several factors. Asia is home to an increasing number of affluent urbanites who want to disconnect from time to time in a natural setting, such as the one offered by agritourism farms. The region is also considered a “foodie” paradise and is home to bustling markets and street-food stalls. Governments across Asia and the Pacific are increasingly turning their attention towards agritourism, acknowledging its potential to unleash untapped opportunities. Agritourism can diversify revenues from farming as well as counteract market fluctuations. Integrating tourism more into countries’ natural and cultural resources and not merely focusing on traditional sun-and-sand products can promote and diversify tourism and can potentially lead to more sustainable tourism development in the future. Focused on Asia and the Pacific region, this event will discuss the benefits of agritourism as an alternative to traditional tourism, the

challenges and barriers to agritourism development, and the key factors that contribute to successful agritourism. The event also seeks to identify collaborative opportunities for promoting agritourism.

V. Plenary Sessions

14. Prioritization of country and regional needs

Asia and the Pacific region faces various challenges in the food and agriculture sectors, such as food insecurity, malnutrition, climate change, emergence of infectious diseases and endemic disease burdens, natural resource degradation and depletion, and natural disasters. This session will allow the heads of country delegations to deliver their statements. Delegates will be invited to outline their views on the priorities for addressing national and regional needs in three to four minutes each.

18. Review and adoption of the report of the 37th APRC