



FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE

Thirty-first Session

Voronezh, Russian Federation, 16-18 May 2018

PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA

I. Introductory Items

1. **Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of Rapporteurs** (*for decision*)
2. **Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable** (*for decision*)
3. **Statement by the Director-General**
4. **Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council**
5. **Statement by the Chairperson of the 30th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)**

The statement of the Chairperson of the 30th Session of ERC will provide a brief overview on the outcome of the deliberations of the 30th Session of ERC (Antalya, 4-6 May 2016) 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**

II. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Issues

8. **Ministerial Round Table: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia in a Changing Climate** (*For discussion and decision*)

Agriculture in Europe and in particular Central Asia is largely based on smallholder and family farms which are major contributors to employment and food security. However, unsustainable practices, economic decline in many rural areas, social, demographic and migration as well as other key factors, in particular climate change, are having a major negative effect on these production systems, the related

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income and livelihood levels, as well as biodiversity and use of natural resources. Major transitions and innovative approaches are therefore necessary to move towards more sustainable agriculture and food systems. An important concept in this context is agroecology. It is a concept/approach that goes “from farm to table” covering the various aspects of food production but also distribution and consumption, nutritional impact, resource and energy efficiency, social wellbeing and cohesion, etc. It is significant that agroecology looks at how food is grown, distributed and consumed using a systems perspective.

At the same time, agriculture and food systems are uniquely placed to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Agriculture is not only key to ending hunger and malnutrition (SDG 2), but equally important to ending poverty (SDG 1) as a large employer and an important economic sector (SDG 8). Agriculture is the main user of water (SDG 6) and land (SDG 15) and essential for achieving sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG 12). It is both strongly affected by and contributes to climate change (SDG 13). Agriculture and food systems can and have to strongly contribute to achieving the SDGs¹.

Achieving sustainability in food and agriculture requires the creation of an enabling environment for the adoption of sustainable practices by stakeholders. It also requires better integration and cross-sectoral work to deliver on the multiple SDGs, consistently integrating international commitments, such as those under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Paris Agreement or the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Convention on Biological Diversity's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2010-2020.

The background document for the ERC 2018 ministerial session will discuss issues and possible pathways for developing sustainable agriculture and food systems by countries, using agroecology² as a specific example of an approach to address social, economic and environmental aspects in an integrated way. It will discuss ways and provide suggestions on how to enhance the contribution of agriculture and food systems to achieving the SDGs, the Paris Agreement and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity.

It will also provide suggestions for FAO's related support to countries, and in the region in the framework of FAO's Regional Initiatives on Sustainable Natural Resource Management in a Changing Climate; Agri-Food Trade and Market Integration; and Support to Smallholders and Family Farms.

Member countries will be encouraged to review the document based on guiding questions leading to a concluding agreement among the members and share their experiences on improving the sustainability of their food systems, natural resource management and achievement of SDGs. The Round Table will debate on how relevant Ministries need to engage more broadly across sectors and stakeholders and across countries in order to integrate the above perspectives and achieve the set goals. It will also discuss national and regional pathways to accelerate progress towards sustainable agriculture and food systems that support the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity.

The Ministerial Round Table should result in inputs to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2018, which will focus on SDGs 6, 7, 12, 13 and 15.

9. E-agriculture: the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the Development of Sustainable and Inclusive Food Systems and Trade Integration *(For discussion and decision)*

In a resource-constrained world, information and communication technologies (ICTs) offer unprecedented opportunities for accelerating agricultural development for more efficient and integrated food systems, from production to consumption, entirely new models for service delivery and fair and

¹ The linkage of sustainable food systems to the SDGs was also clearly indicated in the 2014 Rome Declaration on Nutrition and the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition as well as reconfirmed at the Regional Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets in Europe and Central Asia in December 2017, in Budapest.

² The results from the Second FAO International Symposium on Agroecology in April 2018 will be displayed as a Web Annex to the document.

inclusive trade, and social and financial inclusion. However, these ‘digital dividends’ are not automatic and not everyone can benefit equally. Hence, actions at system level to overcome the challenges and systematic commitment from governments to upscale, including the creation of an enabling environment, are pertinent for generating a development change through ICTs in agriculture (e-agriculture). The session on e-agriculture will aim at intensifying the dialogue and regional exchange on benefits and challenges in applying ICTs in agriculture, food livestock, forestry and fisheries; call upon the membership to share good practices associated with e-agriculture; and identify policy options and needs of FAO support in the region.

In preparation for the session, the background paper will define the terms related to e-agriculture; discuss its multiple benefits against the challenges in Europe and Central Asia; raise the case for e-agriculture strategy at national level; and share FAO's experience. Policy options will be identified and FAO assistance explored.

III. Programme and Budget Matters

10. Decentralized Offices Network *(for discussion)*

The FAO Secretariat will provide an overview regarding the status of the country offices network in the region including the proposed principles and general criteria for reviewing FAO's decentralized network coverage, as well as the review of country offices' staffing models. The paper will also refer to the anniversary initiative for the 40th Anniversary of FAO country representations, highlighting the importance of FAO's field programme. Members are expected to review the situation and make recommendations to enhance the Organization's effectiveness and efficiency at regional and country level.

11. Results and Priorities for FAO in the Region *(for discussion and decision)*

The FAO Secretariat will provide an overview of the main results achieved through the implementation of the Regional Initiatives (RIs) in the PWB 2016-17, including lessons learned and its contribution to the SDGs (Agenda 2030) in the region and the priorities for 2018-19 and beyond. Members are expected to review the results presented and provide feedback on the lessons learned and on the implementation modalities of the Regional Initiatives (RIs).

FAO's work in the Europe and Central Asia region is based on the Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs), and the regional and subregional challenges. Following the priorities for the region identified at the 30th Session of ERC in 2016, the region has prepared the work programme for 2018-19 taking policy processes, such as the Agenda 2030 and the Paris agreement into consideration. The programme in 2018-19 will continue with the implementation of the Regional Initiatives on small holders and family farms (RI1) and Agrifood trade and market integration (RI2) as a programmatic umbrella supporting the work at the country and regional levels. In addition, the secretariat will introduce a third Regional Initiative complementary to the ongoing work related to sustainable natural resource management in a changing climate (RI3). Members are expected to review the work programme and the focus of the Regional Initiatives and provide feedback on the contribution to the SDGs at national and regional levels.

IV. Other Matters

12. Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2016-2019 of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC) *(for discussion)*

The implementation of the Multi-year Work Programme (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.

13. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 40th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) *(for discussion and decision)*

A summary report from the deliberations of the 40th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA), which took place from 27 to 28 September 2017, in Budapest, Hungary, will be presented.

14. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the Joint Session of the 39th European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 75th UNECE Committee on Forest and the Forest Industry *(for discussion and decision)*

A summary of the outcomes and recommendations of the joint session of the 39th European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 75th UNECE Committee on Forest and the Forest Industry, which took place from 9 to 13 October 2017, in Warsaw, Poland, will be presented.

15. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 29th Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC) *(for discussion and decision)*

A summary report from the deliberations of the 29th session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC), which took place from 6 to 8 September 2017, in Stare Jablonki, Poland, will be presented.

16. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 5th Session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish) *(for discussion and decision)*

A summary report from the deliberations of the 5th session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish), held from 10 to 12 October 2016, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, will be presented.

17. Standing item: Date and Place of the 32nd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe *(for decision)*

18. Any other business³

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

³ If they wish, delegates may comment on information notes under “Any other business”.

Information Notes

Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 41st Session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)

The outcomes and recommendations of the 41st session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)⁴, which took place from 16 to 20 October 2017 in Budva, Montenegro, will be presented.

Outcome of the Regional Symposium on “Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets in Europe and Central Asia”

The Regional Symposium on “Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets in Europe and Central Asia”⁵, with over 250 participants from 44 countries, was held in Budapest from 4 to 5 December 2017, with the overall aim to promote and leverage the food system approach and potential for improving diets, nutrition and health of all in a multi-sectoral collaborative and coherent manner. The regional event was co-organized by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, in close collaboration with UNICEF, World Food Programme and the FAO project GCP/GLO/674/RUS.

The information note contains details on the regional symposium outcomes and key messages related to four thematic areas of the symposium: (i) Nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems; (ii) Food demand and food environment; (iii) Improving nutrition of children; and (iv) Governance, leadership and accountability for nutrition.

Report on Support to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the Region

The document will outline the action and support provided by FAO to the countries of the region on how the achievement of the SDGs at country level, as well at regional level, was supported in 2017.

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/gfcm/meetings/info/en/c/886377/>

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/europe/events/detail-events/en/c/1034293/>