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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS REPRESENTATION IN GEORGIA

PHYTOSANITARY CAPACITY EVALUATION (PCE) IN GEORGIA



FAO, on the request of the National Food Agency (NFA) of the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia, has launched a one-year Technical Cooperation Programme Facility (TCPF) to conduct a Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) in Georgia.

The NFA is the key institution for plant protection in Georgia. It holds the authority to supervise, monitor and control the safety and quality of food/feed, as well as any sanitary-hygienic, veterinary, plant protection and agrochemical measures in the country. During the TCPF project, the National Food Agency and other stakeholders will identify gaps in the phytosanitary system, analyse

phytosanitary legislation and learn how an efficient system should be designed and operated.

“Within the project, a national phytosanitary capacity development strategy shall be prepared based on the assessment using the IPPC PCE tool. Also, phytosanitary legislation shall be reviewed and legal recommendations provided,” said Orlando Sosa, implementation officer of the FAO’s Implementation Facilitation Unit for the International Plant Protection Convention.

On June 14-16, FAO and the NFA held a workshop on the application of the PCE modules and gap identification.



Zurab Chekurashvili, the head of the National Food Agency of Georgia, met a group of FAO experts to plan future activities and discuss the TCPF implementation process.

Chekurashvili emphasized that the TCPF will identify phytosanitary achievements and challenges in Georgia, resulting in the development of a strategic plan for phytosanitary capacity development and the creation of an efficient phytosanitary control system.



The Georgian plant health system needs to improve its ability to design and implement efficient policies, regulations and phytosanitary procedures. These measures will protect Georgia from the spread of pests, leading to greater agricultural productivity as well as an increase in the trustworthiness of Georgian agricultural products for international trade partners.

EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AIM FOR 'GREEN ECONOMY,' REDUCING DEFORESTATION

Greening the economy and improving air quality for a better environment and human health were two main themes of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, held 8-10 June in Batumi, Georgia. Participating countries also emphasized agriculture, forest management, water and food as key focus issues contributing to a "Green Economy."



The Conference provided a platform for all countries to identify urgent environmental issues, set priority directions and plan concerted efforts to promote sustainable development in the pan-European region.

The Conference endorsed a Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy in the pan-European region. The Framework equips countries with a common vision and outlines broad objectives for reducing environmental risks and contributing to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Addressing the Conference, FAO Deputy Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia Raimund Jehle underscored the importance of Climate-Smart Agriculture – a concept introduced by FAO in 2010 that has been well received by governments, regional and international agencies, the private sector and civil society.

"Climate-Smart Agriculture includes actions on-farm and beyond the farm and incorporates policies, institutions, technologies and investments," said Jehle. "This concept and its contribution

to a Green Economy constitute an important approach to supporting countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals."



Climate-Smart Agriculture takes an integrated approach, supporting countries and other players as they work to improve agricultural productivity and incomes, while building the resilience of agriculture to climate change. It can also reduce negative impacts of agriculture on the environment, for example by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Dwindling forest cover and illegal logging also received attention at the Ministerial Conference. At a side event organised by the UNECE-FAO Forestry and Timber Section, the Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy was presented as a policy tool for the forest sector launched in 2013. The action plan – prepared jointly by governments, academia, industrial associations and NGOs – lists possible actions for various actors in the forest sector.



Reducing forest cover and illegal logging cause serious threat to the forests in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Aiming to support countries in this region the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section has been working on the "Sustainable Management of Forest for Greener Economies in the Caucasus and Central Asia" project aimed to

provide a long term vision for forest sector. The project was presented at the conference side event, showing the outcomes and results achieved in the regions.

One of the countries showing example by taking the first steps to implement the forest sector action plan for a green economy in forestry training and education - was Georgia. Lessons learned in this field were presented at the event by the delegate Karl Amirgulashvili, Head of Forest Policy Service of the Ministry of Environment of Georgia. He highlighted the main activities being conducted under the forest sector reform and expressed the will to contribute to the green economy and creation of green jobs in the country.



"We strongly believe of the UNECE and FAO experience and the initiatives to be greatly supportive, and as continued cooperation which could be capacity development projects aiming through training and policy advisory services to assist Georgia and other countries in the region develop and implement context specific strategies and actions to more fully harness the potential of sustainable forest management for green economies," Amirgulashvili said.

Nearly 800 official delegates representing member States of the UNECE, organisations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organisations, Regional Environment Centres, non-governmental organisations, the business sector, media and representatives of the civil society attended the Conference.

FAO AND ILO WORKING TOGETHER TO STAMP OUT CHILD LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE

FAO and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) are reaching out to agricultural professionals to raise awareness about the importance of child labour issues.



The two agencies launched a [new e-learning course](#) designed for use by agricultural policymakers, programme designers and implementers, researchers and statisticians, to ensure that child labour prevention measures are included in agricultural and rural development programmes, in particular those targeting poor smallholders. The course covers all sectors: crops, livestock, forestry, and fisheries and aquaculture.

Globally, nearly 60 percent of all child labourers -- almost 100 million girls and boys -- work in agriculture. The worst forms of child labour include hazardous work that can harm their health and safety.

The agencies launched the course ahead of the UN's World Day Against Child Labour, to be celebrated on 12 June.

Towards zero child labour

"To achieve zero hunger, we must also achieve zero child labour," said FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva. "Child labour is certainly a complex issue, and it cannot be tackled alone. We need strong partnerships,

where everyone brings expertise and resources to the table," he said in remarks made at an event in Rome marking the World Day Against Child Labour.

Agricultural policies and programmes have a unique role to play in addressing the root causes of child labour, according to Graziano da Silva, and should be combined with adequate education systems that meet the needs of children and youth in rural areas. Together with social protection, and decent work policies for rural youth and adults, "we have the basic ingredients needed to end child labour in agriculture," he added.

"Consumers rightly expect that the people who put food on their plates and clothes on their backs should not be child labourers or forced labourers," said ILO Director-General Guy Ryder in a statement read at the event on his behalf. "Rural children should expect to benefit from quality education and decent work opportunities in their communities."



"Our e-learning course sends a clear message that it is imperative to end child labour in agriculture. This tool will help to build the capacity of agricultural stakeholders as well as labour stakeholders - and others - to fully engage where they can best contribute," Ryder added.

What is child labour?

Not all participation by children in agriculture is defined as child labour. Some involvement can be good - helping them to acquire knowledge and

develop skills that will benefit them in the future.

However, when children work too many hours or are engaged in dangerous tasks or work that is not appropriate for their age and harmful to their health or education, this is child labour, and must be eliminated.

Good agricultural practices, new technologies can help



The new FAO-ILO course addresses the need to implement labour-saving technologies to reduce demand for child labour as well as safer agricultural practices to reduce hazardous working conditions.

Something as simple as properly training oxen used to plough can make a difference. In some places, where oxen are not well-trained, children are harnessed in front of them as guides.

In many countries, children are commonly engaged in weeding. Technologies and practices that save time required for weeding - systems of rice intensification using row planting combined with mechanical weeders, for example -- can thus decrease the demand for child labour.

A new, energy-efficient fish-drying technology introduced in Africa, the *FAO-Thiaroye oven*, reduces exposure to harmful smoke, and requires less fuelwood, thereby reducing the demand for child labour for fuelwood collection.

The course was co-funded by the Government of the Netherlands. It is now available in English and will soon be available in French and Spanish.