



Preparation of the Region for COP 29 and specific issues

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s work on climate change is guided by the Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031¹ and the Action Plan 2022–2025 for the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change². The FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (FAO REU) has developed a framework for the regional application of the Action Plan, which aims to steer all activities related to climate mitigation and adaptation in the region over the period 2024-2025.

As part of its work on climate change, FAO plays an important role in supporting countries' preparation for the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This paper outlines FAO's activities to ensure agrifood systems are at the forefront of COP29 discussions and contribute to the region's climate action agenda.

As the decision-making body of the UNFCCC, COP serves as the primary global forum to address climate change. A significant breakthrough occurred at UNFCCC COP21 in 2015, when 190 countries signed the Paris Agreement, committing to limit global temperature rise to below 2 °C, with efforts to limit the increase to 1.5 °C, while collectively working to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Agriculture was recognized as a key item at COP23, in 2017, with the adoption of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) ([decision 4/CP.23](#)). Recognising the potential of agriculture in tackling climate change, the KJWA was established to advance discussions on agriculture under the UNFCCC. It concluded at the COP27, in 2022, and has been followed by the establishment of the four-year Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security (SSJW) ([decision 3/CP.27](#)).

UNFCCC COP28, held in November 2023 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), marked an important step for the inclusion of agrifood systems in the UNFCCC process.

The first **Global Stocktake (GST)**, a two-year process that will take place every five years, concluded at COP28. The GST reviews progress made by Parties on adaptation, mitigation and climate finance, and provides recommendations for the way forward. The first iteration of the GST recognised the link between agrifood systems, food security, nature and climate change, calling on countries to attain “climate-resilient food and agricultural production and supply and distribution of food”.

Another significant development was the launch of the **Emirates Declaration on Agriculture, Food Systems and Climate Action**³ on the first day of COP28. Since then, 159 signatory countries have committed to integrating food systems considerations into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Long-term Strategies and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

In the context of ongoing negotiations regarding the focus and roadmap of the **Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security (SSJW)**, a positive development emerged with the launch of the **Sharm el-Sheikh Support Programme**. This three-year initiative aims to enable knowledge sharing and help countries unlock finance and support for farmers and local communities.

Climate finance for agrifood systems was also high on the agenda at COP28. Both the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) announced replenishments, and the Loss & Damage Fund was officially operationalized. It is estimated that approximately USD 7.1 billion were

¹ <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/f6270800-ec7-498f-9887-6d937c4f575a/content>

² <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/1d94e946-646e-4a2b-9b8c-396bb6f9b53b>

³ <https://www.cop28.com/en/food-and-agriculture>

mobilized during COP28 for climate action in agrifood systems. Furthermore, COP28 witnessed the championing of the Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation (**FAST**)⁴ initiative established under the COP27 Presidency. Marked by the inception meeting at COP28, the FAST Partnership resulting out of the Initiative, seeks “to improve the quantity and quality of climate finance contributions towards the transformation of agriculture and food systems, to support adaptation efforts, and to maintain a 1.5 °C pathway while ensuring food and economic security.” FAO hosts the FAST Partnership’s Task Force.

The **UNFCCC COP29** will convene during 11–22 November 2024, in Baku, Azerbaijan. It extends the opportunity for FAO to continue its support to COP Presidencies. By collaborating with Azerbaijan and other countries in the region, FAO REU is striving to position agrifood systems at the forefront of negotiations and as a key component of the Presidency's Action Agenda.

FAO supports the preparation of UNFCCC COPs through three main pillars of activities:

- **Negotiations:** Support the COP Presidency and Parties/Member countries in preparing for their participation in the negotiations related to agrifood systems and food security. As a UN agency and observer organisation to the UNFCCC, FAO also submits statements to the UNFCCC on key topics such as the GST, the SSJW, and NAPs. Those statements aim to provide relevant information to inform the work of the UNFCCC.
- **Engagement in the COP Presidency’s Action Agenda and Thematic Tracks:** FAO actively collaborates with the COP Presidency to ensure that the Action Agenda, Initiatives, and Declarations prioritize solutions for agrifood systems and food security.
- **Advocacy and outreach on agrifood systems solutions to be part of climate solutions:** supporting the organisation of events and other outreach activities to raise global awareness on the critical role of agrifood systems in climate action.

Activities undertaken

Under the leadership of FAO’s Office of Climate, Environment and Biodiversity (FAO OCB) and in close collaboration with the regional and country offices, FAO has provided country and regional level support through the following activities:

- **Support to the Presidency’s agenda:** FAO actively contributed to shaping the new COP29 initiative, “*Harmoniya 4 climate resilience empowering farmers, villages and rural communities,*” which was presented at the 60th meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies on 4 June 2024. *Harmoniya* will focus on three main goals: Firstly, to clarify the landscape of existing initiatives on climate change and agrifood systems and offer a platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration. Secondly, to make investments in agrifood systems more attractive, by working closely with Multilateral Development Banks and Agricultural Public Development Banks. Finally, to support the development of climate-resilient villages and rural communities, strengthening the role of women farmers and young farmers.
- **Events and outreach:**
 - FAO REU organised a side event titled “*Climate action in agrifood systems in Europe and Central Asia: Bridging and aligning national and regional priorities and global commitments in the context of UNFCCC COP29*” during the European Regional Conference hosted by Moldova on 14–17 May 2024 in Rome. The event included interventions from Azerbaijan’s Ministry of Agriculture, as well as from representatives from Georgia, Germany, the European Commission, the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program, Uzbekistan, and the World Farmers’ Organisation. It focused on learnings from COP28, and setting national and regional priorities for COP29, with a focus on collaboration and inclusion.

⁴ <https://www.fao.org/climate-change/action-areas/access-to-climate-finance/fast/en>

- A representative of the FAO REU Climate Change Team presented the outcomes of COP28 and an overview of key considerations for COP29 during the Food Systems Regional Technical Workshop held in Budapest between 21–23 May.
- **Country level support - Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) COP29 Azerbaijan:** this TCP project became operational in February 2024. It supports the government of Azerbaijan in the preparations for COP29 and mainstreaming agrifood systems in negotiations and discussions. Activities will include developing discussion papers and information notes, coordinating with the COP Presidency and other Ministries, and supporting events and outreach activities.
- **FAST Partnership:** FAO REU has supported FAO OCB in the organization of the first Partnership Members Meeting in April 2024, as well as engagement with Azerbaijan, which officially joined the Partnership as the Board Member and co-chair, and potential members, such as the Eurasian Development Bank.

Looking ahead

FAO is committed to supporting a successful COP29. Regarding the **Presidency's Action Agenda**, FAO will continue to actively support the development of the "*Harmoniya initiative*". Furthermore, as COP29 priorities and themes related to agriculture and agrifood systems are further defined, FAO will provide ongoing support to the Presidency's team to ensure that these critical issues are effectively addressed within the COP29 framework.

FAO REU, in close collaboration with the Azerbaijan FAO office and FAO OCB, will develop a comprehensive **national COP29 communications plan** to elevate Azerbaijan's specific issues and priorities in the agricultural sector, while also showcasing the country's successful approaches in sustainable agriculture and climate change. The communication and outreach activities supporting COP29 will include the development and promotion of **a national narrative, key messages and materials** for different audiences, **stakeholder engagement** to help build consensus and support for highlighting Azerbaijan's priorities at COP29, and dissemination of the outcomes and commitments made.

As part of awareness raising activities, FAO REU is planning to organise several **workshops, study tours, and events** including:

- **Climate workshop in Baku, Azerbaijan, in September 2024.** Building on climate workshops organized by FAO REU in 2022 and 2023 and organized in collaboration with UNFCCC, this pre-COP29 workshop will bring together representatives from Member States in the region. The workshop will train the participants on key themes related to the UNFCCC COP processes, such as the preparation of Biannual Transparency Reports (BTRs) under the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF). A second iteration of the workshop, targeting FAO employees, will be organised at the end of September 2024 in Budapest.
- **Food Safety study tour in Azerbaijan.** The study tour will be organised in collaboration with the Azerbaijan Food Safety Agency and other relevant stakeholders and is planned to take place on 22–26 July 2024. It will include:
 - Field visits to farms that enhance food safety while mitigating climate change impacts.
 - Capacity building for farmers on climate-smart food production techniques that also enhance food safety.
 - Market visits and/or meetings, exploring how local food systems manage food safety concerns related to food waste and how regulations adapt to minimize risks.
- **During COP29,** FAO will host **side events** focusing on the presentation of results achieved in the first year of the FAST Partnership, regional efforts on supporting the transition to the Enhanced Transparency Framework and preparation of Biannual Transparency Reports as well as support to updating NDCs.

In addition, FAO REU plans to launch a **publication** before COP29 that **analyzes the climate mitigation and adaptation ambitions of NDCs** submitted by countries in REU. This publication will also provide an overview of the policies, strategies, and frameworks established by countries to address climate change in agrifood systems. Furthermore, it will offer guidance, resources, and information on tools to support the 2025 update of NDCs, with a specific focus on agriculture and agrifood systems for both adaptation and mitigation.

At the country-level, FAO REU will continue work with six countries in the region (Moldova, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) under the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) and to support the preparation of BTRs.

In addition, FAO REU will continue to support the **FAST Partnership**, notably on refining the engagement strategy, reaching out to and engaging members in the region, and providing regional inputs into the Partnership's key deliverables.