

34th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC 34)

14-17 May 2024

Concept Note

Side Event – Challenges for agrifood systems transformation in Landlocked Developing Countries in Europe and Central Asia

Friday, 17 May 2024, 09.00–10.00 hours (CEST/UTC +2)

Rome, Italy

Background

Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in Europe and Central Asia¹ face unique development challenges due to their absence of direct access to the sea. The significant increase in transportation costs, limited access to international markets and complex import–export procedures can greatly hinder agricultural development and food security. Many LLDCs in Europe and Central Asia are in need of support to: i) transform their agrifood systems to be more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable; ii) access advanced technologies, inputs and innovation to improve agricultural productivity; and iii) counter the effects of climate change, which can exacerbate existing challenges in water scarcity, soil degradation and the prevalence of pests and diseases.

In June 2023, FAO convened a high-level ministerial event to discuss common challenges and strengthen FAO's technical support by identifying actions to transform agrifood systems and accelerate and scale up progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. At this meeting, Ministers and high-level- representatives from Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and LLDCs issued a call for action² requesting, among other things, that the outcome of the event be shared at relevant upcoming fora, including the United Nations (UN) Food Systems Summit+2 Stocktaking Moment, the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States and the Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries.

Moreover, they also requested the establishment of a Ministerial network for SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs, with technical support from FAO, to share experiences, collectively build resilience to climate change and food insecurity, and secure investments to implement the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy and the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031 and to scale up the transformation of agrifood systems through such means of implementation as:

- the Hand-in-Hand Initiative;
- the One Country One Priority Product Initiative;
- the Green Cities Initiative;
- the Digital Villages Initiative;
- the Blue Transformation Roadmap; and
- innovative climate financing, including via the Green Climate Fund and Global Environment Facility.

¹ The Landlocked Developing Countries in Europe and Central Asia are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

² To read this call for action, dated Thursday, 29 June 2023, please visit <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/2765353f-5e7c-4217-9b70-563ea22f854a/content>.

The discussions at the event and the call for the establishment of the Ministerial network emphasize the need for increased advocacy for support, creative partnership building and information sharing. FAO is therefore organizing a side event for LLDCs at the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe.

Purpose

The purpose of the side event is to showcase meaningful FAO’s activities in LLDCs, in the region, that contribute to agrifood systems transformation through: i) land management and rural development; ii) the importance of effective science–policy interfaces; and iii) addressing climate change through land degradation neutrality. The role of partnerships and how they are crucial for agrifood system transformation in LLDCs will be highlighted. Similarly, the side event will provide regional insight on the functioning of the aforementioned informal Ministerial network.

The side event will also be an opportunity to bring attention to the Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries,³ to be held in Rwanda later this year. The key messages from the side event will be forwarded to the upcoming conference, the theme of which is “driving progress through partnerships”.

Format

Presentations from Member Countries highlighting good examples from FAO’s work in LLDCs. The side event will be broadcast online and interpretation will be available in four languages: English, French, Russian and Spanish.

The side event will take place at the Sheikh Zayed International Media and Knowledge Centre at FAO headquarters.

Agenda

| Time | Item | Details |
|-------------|-----------------|--|
| 5 min. | Introduction | Moderator: Mr Bradley Paterson, International Land Tenure Specialist, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia |
| 10 min. | Opening | Dr QU Dongyu, FAO Director-General |
| 30 min. | Country cases | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science–Policy Interface for evidence-based policymaking in agriculture – the case of Uzbekistan, presented by Mr Ibrohim Abdurahmonov, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan • Land management and rural development to support the agricultural sector – the case of Kazakhstan, presented by Ms Saule Zhuryanova, Deputy Director of the Department of Agri-food Markets and Processing of Agricultural Products, Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan • Addressing the challenges of climate change through land degradation neutrality – the case of the Republic of Moldova, presented by Mr Maxim Popov, Executive Director of the Agency for the Development and Modernization of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry of the Republic of Moldova |
| 10 min. | Q&A session | Facilitated by the moderator |
| 5 min. | Closing remarks | Ms Angélica Jácome, Director, FAO Office of SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs |

³ For more information on this conference, please visit <https://www.un.org/en/landlocked/about-third-un-conference-lldc>.