

**Web Annex 2:****The Seventh Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of Central Asia and International Conference on Food Security in Samarkand*****Seventh Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of Central Asia***

1. FAO has been organizing meetings of the Ministers for Agriculture of Central Asia since May 2020. The seventh such meeting was held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan on 9 March 2023 on the first day of the International Conference, under the theme “Cooperation on Food Security in the context of Climate Change”.
2. The meeting focused on the challenges posed by climate change in Central Asia, where countries need to develop their agriculture for reducing poverty and achieving food and nutrition security.
3. Climate change is already affecting food security through increasing temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and greater frequency of some extreme events. Distributions of pests and diseases are changing, affecting production negatively. Risks of food system disruptions are also growing. In the Central Asia region, which is already water stressed, increased water scarcity under climate change will present a major challenge for climate adaptation.
4. A key ingredient for generating a sustainable development path is a significant strengthening of the current mechanisms of regional cooperation. Regional institutions are required to support the development of such a path.
5. The regional cooperation process can be supported in the form of environmental cooperation programmes aiming to facilitate communication and cooperation between the beneficiary countries in addressing transboundary environmental issues while also facilitating the exchange of information, best practices and experience between the beneficiaries and FAO Members.
6. FAO expressed its readiness to facilitate multi-sectoral dialogue and support cooperation among the five Central Asian countries, with the opportunity to exchange knowledge and lessons learned from their neighbours with similar environmental and socioeconomic challenges.
7. Ministers reaffirmed the need to find and apply new solutions to create environmentally sustainable and climate change-adapted food systems, with the use of innovative approaches and mechanisms. They also expressed their readiness to put into practice the concept of interaction in the field of food security.

***International Conference on Food Security in Samarkand***

8. The International Conference on Food Security was held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan from 7 to 8 September 2023.
9. The Conference was organized by the Government of Uzbekistan with technical support from FAO. Over 20 Ministers and Deputy Ministers for Agriculture from Europe, Central Asia and other regions, as well as high-ranking representatives of development partners, regional groupings and United Nations agencies, alongside with experts from international organizations and financial institutions, participated in the Conference.
10. The aim of the International Conference was to review the current state of food security in the world and in Central Asia, deliberate on some key agrifood system challenges hindering progress towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, and attempt to identify solutions to these challenges, with special attention to the problems of landlocked countries.
11. The state of implementation of measures to achieve the goal of SDG 2 “Zero Hunger”, including specific tasks to eliminate hunger, improve food security and nutrition, and develop sustainable agriculture until 2030, were analysed.

12. Participants were informed about the implementation of the decisions of the UN Food Systems Summit held in September 2021 in New York.
13. FAO provided technical support to the Conference by delivering the keynote address on “Joint action to promote food systems transformation and strengthen food security” and by organizing eight technical sessions in the afternoon of the first day.
14. The eight technical sessions were held in parallel and were organized around multiple topics, including strengthening agrifood systems sustainability in landlocked countries, access to healthy diets, climate change impacts on food security, food security challenges and envisioned solutions in some countries, strengthening gender equality in rural areas, agrifood trade promotion with focus on landlocked countries, and innovative agricultural development and digital agriculture, etc.
15. The Conference underscored the importance of joint actions by countries and international and regional organizations to ensure food security in the context of multiple uncertainties and challenges and expressed concern over the global food security situation.
16. The “[Samarkand Declaration](#)” was published as a result of the International Conference.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The full text of the Samarkand Declaration is given in Annex 1.

**ANNEX 1****International Conference on Food Security, Samarkand 7-8 September 2023  
Declaration**

Ministers of Agriculture of countries of EurAsia and the Middle East, as well as high-ranking representatives of development partners, regional groupings, and United Nations agencies, experts from international organizations and financial institutions and others, assembled in Samarkand on September 7 and 8, 2023 at the International Conference on Food Security organized by the Government of Uzbekistan with technical support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations have conducted productive discussions on ensuring food security:

1. Underscored the importance of joint action by countries and international and regional organizations to ensure food security in the context of multiple uncertainties and challenges;
2. Expressed concern over the global food security situation, particularly for populations that are already food insecure and lack access to healthy diets, noting that current projections indicate that around 670 million people will still be hungry in 2030;
3. Noted that the International Conference afforded an opportunity for dialogue at regional and international levels, providing a forum for developing solutions to a wide range of issues affecting food security;
4. Noted that there are only seven years left to implement the 2030 Agenda, and agreed to accelerate and intensify their common efforts to progressively realize the Sustainable Development Goals;
5. Acknowledged the UN Secretary-General's Call to Action for Accelerated Food Systems Transformation at the UN Food Systems Summit+2, in particular the six action areas outlined in the call to action;
6. Committed to progressively implement a 'holistic' food systems approach centred on feeding growing populations in ways that contribute to people's nutrition, health and well-being, restore and protect nature, are climate neutral, and adapted to local circumstances into plans and action programmes at national and regional levels;
7. Emphasized the importance of promoting healthy diets for all, especially children and adolescents, by implementing food-system based dietary guidelines, making social protection nutrition sensitive and ensuring that children benefit from comprehensive school feeding programmes;
8. Expressed concern over the growing threat posed by climate change to food security in Central Asia and the rest of the world;
9. Emphasized that climate change impacts cut across national boundaries, especially in relation to water resources and land degradation, and therefore require international cooperation to tackle successfully;
10. Emphasized the importance of incorporating climate change adaptation and mitigation measures into countries' medium-term programs for inclusive growth;
11. Agreed on the need to promote agriculture in the most environmentally friendly way that supports biodiversity, with the optimal use of water resources;
12. Recognized that agriculture is highly dependent on clean and sufficient water in order to contribute to food security and is the largest water user worldwide;

- 13.** Emphasized the importance of good water management, governance and diplomacy for optimal use of scarce water resources and creating a healthier society and environment not only in Central Asia, but also in other arid and semi-arid countries;
- 14.** Recognized the transformative potential of digital technologies and broader innovation in agricultural technologies in addressing the challenges of achieving resilience, sustainability and inclusion of agrifood systems,
- 15.** Acknowledged women's role and contribution to agrifood systems, and affirmed the importance of empowering rural women to increase their capacity to contribute to agrifood systems transformation, sustainable rural livelihoods and improved food security;
- 16.** Emphasizing the importance of the integration of science, education and production to increase the quality and effectiveness of the agricultural production system";
- 17.** It is noted that investments in youth and expansion of opportunities in the industrial system are of key importance for the development of industrial security and nutrition";
- 18.** Confirmed necessary efforts to support state support for small and family households for the expansion of access to production, natural and financial resources;
- 19.** Emphasized the important role of international financial organizations and social development of "green" technological and agricultural economy;
- 20.** Recognized the need for developing approaches, measures and policies to successfully address gender equality concerns in the context of agrifood systems;
- 21.** Noted with concern the growing uncertainties about the prospects for agri-food trade and the global economy in the near future, including slowing economic growth, the impact of trade restrictions and barriers for the global food security and nutrition, especially in the developing countries, continued inflation, especially for staple foods, high oil prices, and slower growth in trade, including trade in agrifood products;
- 22.** Recognized the importance of trade in agri-food products for food security, particularly in the context of landlocked developing countries;
- 23.** Noted the importance of finding alternatives to high food import bills in landlocked developing countries by investing in domestic agriculture and encouraging local food production and supply, while promoting sustainable use of natural resources.
- 24.** Underscored the importance of unhindered access to and use of fertilizers for sustainable agri-food production and ensuring global food security and nutrition, especially in the developing countries;
- 25.** The participants expressed profound gratitude to the Government and people of Uzbekistan for their warm hospitality and generous support for the preparation and organization of the International Conference on Food Security. They reiterated their commitment to continuing to work on food systems transformation and food security in the context of the 2030 Agenda.