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Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
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Organisation des Nations  
Unies pour l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная организация  
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

# FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

## Thirty-fifth Session

1-4 September 2020<sup>1</sup>

## Provisional Annotated Agenda

### Senior Officers Meeting

*1-2 September 2020*

### I. Introductory Items

1. **Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons, and Appointment of the Rapporteur**
2. **Adoption of Annotated Agenda and Timetable**

*(Please see Ministerial Session items from 3 to 14 on pages 8-10)*

### II. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Matters

#### 15. **The impact of COVID-19 on food and agriculture in Asia and the Pacific and FAO's response**

The COVID-19 pandemic is having profound and devastating consequences on the economies of the Asia and Pacific region. FAO has moved swiftly to conduct rapid assessments of the impact from farm to fork including food supply chain disruptions, food security and nutrition in 20 countries of the region, including the Pacific Islands. The effects of COVID-19-linked lockdowns on livelihoods and employment, agricultural activities, domestic and international trade as well as on availability of and access to food were analysed. Governments have responded through multiple measures including food security and social protection schemes, cash transfers and showed strong restraint in imposing restrictions on trade while emphasizing regional cooperation. FAO is providing policy advice and technical assistance to countries on areas such as increasing local food production, implementing COVID-19 related measures across the food system, safeguarding animal health, improving food safety and hygiene and promoting sustainable livelihoods in agriculture for vulnerable populations

<sup>1</sup> Rescheduled from 17-20 February 2020, Thimphu, Bhutan

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through its Technical Cooperation Programme as well as by reorienting existing donor-funded projects. FAO will continue to mobilize resources for developmental and humanitarian projects and build on its call for funding through the recently announced COVID-19 Umbrella Programme to assist countries to recover and build back greener and more resilient food systems.

#### **16. State of Food and Agriculture in Asia and the Pacific Region, including Future Prospects and Emerging Issues**

Food systems in Asia and the Pacific are changing rapidly along dimensions of both supply and demand due to economic growth as well as structural transformation, emerging technologies and urbanization. Due to structural transformation, the livelihoods of family farm households are becoming more complex and diversified, with a high reliance on sources of non-farm income. Non-farm income helps to alleviate poverty, but it may also pose challenges in making family farming competitive so that it can provide nutritious foods at affordable prices. New digital technologies are opening up new horizons in terms of natural resource management and improved competitiveness. Urbanization is leading to fundamental changes in food systems and food environments that affect consumers' food choices and how farmers connect with these new markets. Given that progress in alleviating hunger appears to have stalled in recent years after many years of rapid progress, it will be important to take full advantage of structural transformation, digital agriculture and urbanization in order to achieve zero hunger in Asia and the Pacific. Members are invited to share their experiences in how farmers, consumers and government policies are adapting to the emerging food systems in the region.

The Regional Conference will also review a report on the results of country consultations on technical issues held prior to the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific.

#### **17. Setting regional priorities to manage water for agriculture under conditions of water scarcity**

The region faces a severe intensification of water scarcity in the coming decades due to a range of drivers. Population growth, rapid urbanization and socio-economic development are leading to increased water and energy demand from the industrial and domestic sectors, in addition to extra demands on agriculture to expand and diversify food production. There is also a growing realization that water is the basis of the vital ecosystems that underpin sustainable food systems and cannot be overexploited. These drivers are taking place in a region with low per capita water availability, coupled with already high exploitation of water resources (much of it for irrigation) and rapid declines in water quality (making it unavailable for many uses including in some cases for agriculture). Climate change, which is leading to shifting and unpredictable monsoons and slow-onset disasters such as drought, desertification and aquifer salinization, will exacerbate the situation. It is therefore of paramount importance that countries strategically plan their water resources allocation and review their water, food security, environment and energy policies to make the best use of each single drop of water. The paper outlines a range of technical, investment and policy approaches that FAO is developing in close collaboration with Members in Asia and the Pacific region. Delegates are invited to provide guidance on how FAO can best support member countries in ensuring that agriculture sectors across Asia are consuming water in a sustainable manner and maximizing water productivity, even as the availability of water resources declines and becomes more variable.

#### **18. Building resilience of small-scale fisheries to ensure food security and nutrition in the Pacific**

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Fisheries are an important source of food, income and cultural identity. This is particularly the case for the Pacific Island nations. The people of the Pacific Islands, on average, consume two to three times the global average of fish per capita per year and fish accounts for 50 to 90 percent of animal protein in the diets of coastal populations, with the largest share coming from coastal fisheries. Coastal fisheries play an indispensable role in the fight against a ‘triple burden of malnutrition’ – undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and overweight and obesity. However, marine resources that support coastal communities in the region are often threatened or poorly managed. This situation is further exacerbated by land-based issues such as deforestation, land degradation, pollution, as well as the impacts of climate change in coastal areas. There is a growing interest and momentum to safeguard the contributions of coastal fisheries to food security and nutrition, while enhancing the socio-ecological resilience of fishing communities in the Pacific. FAO has supported Members through enabling community participation in governance, implementing regional and international policies, and improving access to and safety of fish in domestic markets to ensure food security and nutrition in the face of climate change. Given the multisectoral nature of the issues faced in coastal areas, increased synergies among partners and programmes supported under various financing mechanisms will be required. Members are invited to provide guidance on how FAO can best support Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in scaling up such efforts.

### **19. Building sustainable and resilient food systems in Asia and the Pacific**

A traditional approach to achieving food security concentrates action on food supply chains and increasing agricultural production to ensure the availability of food supply so that consumers may have access to more affordable food. This approach has characterized many of the policies and measures implemented to pursue food security in Asia and the Pacific. In combination with broad-based economic growth, this approach has enabled many countries in the region to reduce hunger and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to food security. However, recent evidence suggests that progress toward the ultimate goal of ending hunger has stalled. At the same time, many countries in the region wrestle with the triple burden of undernutrition, micronutrient deficiency, and obesity and overweight, as well as worsening environmental degradation and growing external threats, including increased incidence of extreme climate-induced disasters. Nutritious foods are often expensive and unaffordable due to factors throughout food systems, including food production, food supply chains and food environments, as well as consumer demand and the political economy of food. For example, fruits and vegetables are notably more expensive in Asia and the Pacific than in other parts of the world. Part of the reason for these sub-optimal outcomes is that the traditional approach to food security neglects developments in the wider food system and goals that do not specifically involve enhancing agricultural productivity and food supply. Delegates will hear how the adoption of a food systems approach can provide a more effective basis for action toward a sustainable food system that reduces food loss and waste, is nutrition-sensitive, equitable and resilient. Examples of specific policies and measures involving a range of public and private institutions will be used to highlight the potential benefits of a food systems approach, while also illustrating challenges that will need to be overcome if these benefits are to be realized.

## **III. Programme and Budget Matters**

### **20. Results and Priorities for FAO activities in the Region**

The Regional Conference will consider how FAO activities have addressed previously agreed regional priorities during 2018-2019 and will provide guidance on areas of regional priority for 2020-2021 and beyond, in the context of FAO’s Strategic Objectives and the 2030 Agenda. The discussion will be informed by the results of FAO’s work in the region, the Medium Term Plan 2018-21 (reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21; priorities and recommendations of

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the Regional Technical Commissions; and the plans and priorities of partners such as the Regional Economic Organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector. FAO will provide an overview of the results achieved through the Regional Initiatives, including lessons learned. The Regional Initiatives serve as a mechanism to ensure effective delivery and impact of FAO's work on the key priorities of the region contributing to the Strategic Objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

#### **21. Decentralized Offices Network**

The paper will outline the way forward, challenges and opportunities for FAO's decentralization policy, taking into consideration the conclusions of the 159th Session of the FAO Council (4-8 June 2018) and the 41st Session of the FAO Conference (June 2019) on the need to continue efforts to strengthen the technical capacity of the Organization including through the review of FAO's decentralized network coverage and of the country office staffing model. The paper will present for consideration the outcomes of the corporate Internal Review of FAO Regional Structures carried out in 2018-2019, and the progress made in the implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution RES/A/72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system launched in January 2019 across the region, with priority attention to the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) collaboration format.

### **IV. Other Matters**

#### **22. Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2020-2023 for the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific**

Development of a Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2020-2023 for the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific is recommended, in accordance with the Assessment of FAO Governance Reforms (C 2015/26 Rev.1), to enable continuity and longer-term planning and accountability.

#### **23. Date and Place of the 36th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific**

#### **24. Any other matters**

Any other business.

#### **Adoption of the Report of the Senior Officers Meeting**

The Rapporteur will introduce the Report of the Senior Officers Meeting prepared by the Drafting Committee for consideration and adoption. The meeting will adopt the report, with appropriate amendments, by consensus.

Closure of the Senior Officers Meeting.

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## Information Items<sup>2</sup>

**a) Report on the Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific (APHCA)**

The document describes the current work of the Commission. Topics include the development of sustainable animal production and health systems in Asia and the Pacific in view of the increasing impacts of climate change, complexities in food chains and the rise of animal and public health threats including African Swine Fever (ASF) and antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

**b) Report of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission**

The document will present the recent work of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission and will describe activities that, through instruments such as the FAO 1995 *Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries*, promote the full and proper utilization of living aquatic resources. It will review the state of marine resources, and activities to conserve and manage resources, to promote marine and coastal fisheries enhancement, and to foster relevant training and research activities.

**c) Report of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) and the Fourth Asia-Pacific Forestry Week (APFW 2019)**

The document presents the recent work of the Commission and the set of recommendations from the 28th Session of the APFC. It will describe APFC activities on landscape restoration; community forestry, forest trade and markets, technology and its influence on forests and forestry, forests and climate change and the *Third Asia-Pacific Forestry Outlook Study*. The document will also update delegates on APFW 2019, one of the largest and most important forestry gatherings in the Asia-Pacific region, which was held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, from 17 to 21 June 2019. The overall theme was “forests for peace and wellbeing.” The event had five streams: restoring our forests and landscapes; people and forests living in harmony; building a resilient environment; promoting responsible trade and markets; and innovating governance and institutions.

**d) Report of the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC) and Update on Fall Armyworm in Asia and the Pacific**

The document will report on the recent work of the Commission. It will describe APPPC work to coordinate and promote development of regional plant protection systems, assistance to member countries to develop effective plant protection regimes, to set standards for phytosanitary measures, to advance integrated pest management and to facilitate information sharing. The document will also update delegates on the current situation of the Fall Armyworm in the region, including the recommendations and best practices for preparedness, surveillance and mitigation strategies and the effective use of integrated pest management (IPM) and biological control. These recommendations are the result of a consultative meeting held in Bangkok from 20 to 22 March 2019 with the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) and the FAO Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP).

**e) Report on African Swine Fever (ASF) in Asia and the Pacific**

The document will update delegates on the situation of ASF in the region. Globalization has increased the pathways for the disease to spread through the movement of pig and pig products. ASF is a severe threat to pig production systems and it is now in the region. This Information

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<sup>2</sup> If they so wish, delegates may comment on the information items under "Any Other Matters".

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Item will describe the work to improve emergency preparedness, prevention and control of the disease.

**f) Report on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)**

The document will update delegates on the current work around AMR in the region. There is a growing urgency for the Asia and the Pacific region to strengthen collaboration and coordination efforts between agriculture, human health and environment sectors in the use and discharge of antimicrobials. The rise of AMR threatens the region's capacity to successfully treat a wide range of diseases.

**g) Report on work in the Fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in Asia and the Pacific**

The document will update delegates on FAO's work on combating IUU Fishing in the region and encourage regional Members to accede to the Agreement on Port State Measures, which is fundamental to the fight against IUU Fishing.

**h) Report on the FAO Regional Consultative Meeting on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors in Asia and the Pacific**

The document will update delegates on the Regional Consultation held in July 2019. The forum brought together multistakeholder experts and cross-sectoral representatives to discuss mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation across all agricultural sectors and the ongoing process to develop the Convention on Biological Diversity's post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

**i) Report by the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) of the Regional Synthesis of lessons learned from, and trends identified in the Country Programme Evaluations: in Asia and the Pacific 2014-2019**

The purpose of the regional synthesis is to inform FAO Regional Conferences about results, issues and lessons learned from OED evaluations completed between 2014 and 2019, as well as enhance the utilization of evaluation reports at the regional level through the development of tailored evaluation products.

**j) United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition and Follow-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)**

As recommended in 2014 by Members at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), the United Nations (UN) General Assembly proclaimed in 2016 the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025<sup>3</sup>, a time-bound framework to implement the ICN2 commitments. The Nutrition Decade is a vehicle to advocate for more policy and programme implementation, increase nutrition investments and align existing efforts towards achieving a healthier and more sustainable future. In April 2018, a first report giving an overview of progress made in implementing the Nutrition Decade was submitted to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Paragraph 91 of this report<sup>4</sup> elucidated that the Decade's Work Programme provides for the convening of dialogues among all stakeholders to review progress in implementing the Nutrition Decade. The mid-term review of the Nutrition Decade is envisaged for 2020 in order to assess and evaluate the achievements in individual policy areas of the ICN2 Framework for Action, as reflected in the action areas of the Work Programme of the Nutrition

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<sup>3</sup> [www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/259](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/259)

<sup>4</sup> <https://undocs.org/A/72/829>

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Decade, over the time period from 2016 to 2020. The process leading to the mid-term review will include a series of consultations and dialogues with various stakeholders, including with FAO Members participating in the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, with the aim of evaluating progress made towards implementing the ICN2 global commitments and seek guidance on future priority areas and the way forward for the second half of the Nutrition Decade.

**k) Update of the Vision and Strategy for FAO's Work in Nutrition**

This Information Item will update delegates on the drafting of a new Vision and Strategy for FAO's work in Nutrition. The Food and Nutrition Division (ESN) of FAO headquarters is leading a collaborative process in drafting a new Vision and Strategy based on evaluation recommendations and increased knowledge and evidence for food-systems approaches to raise levels of nutrition. The new Vision and Strategy will consider 1) all forms of malnutrition; 2) food systems over and beyond nutrition-sensitive agriculture; 3) the current global context building on the outcomes of ICN2, the Rome Declaration on Nutrition, and the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition; 4) a robust implementation plan and accountability framework; and 5) regional specific considerations.

**l) Food Loss and Waste Measurement linked to the Food Loss Analysis Methodology**

This Information Item will update delegates on FAO's Food Loss Analysis Methodology for identifying critical loss points in food supply chains, and will highlight their importance and relevance in the efforts of countries to measure and implement actions to reduce food loss and waste toward meeting SDG target 12.3.

**m) International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) 2020**

In December 2018, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH). The year is a once in a lifetime opportunity to raise global awareness on how protecting plant health can help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect the environment and boost economic development. As part of this, FAO, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and their partners are leading the global effort to promote plant health in 2020 and beyond. The IPPC is a global treaty, signed by over 183 countries, that provides a framework for protecting plant resources from pests and diseases. It leads to the development of international plant health standards and promotes safe trade among all countries.

**n) The Digitalization of Food and Agriculture**

The global food system continues to face considerable challenges in being able to provide enough food of adequate quality to feed an ever-growing population. The world is also changing at a fast pace with the emergence of an array of technologies. Digital technologies offer unique opportunities for improving food production and trade, especially to smallholder farmers, and in helping to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This paper discusses the potential of the digitalization of agriculture and documents FAO's initiatives to support countries in developing and implementing digital strategies and applications.

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## **Ministerial Session**

*3-4 September 2020*

### **3. Statement by the Director-General**

### **4. Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council**

### **5. Statement by the Chairperson of the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific**

The Chairperson of the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific will provide a brief statement on the outcome of the deliberations of the 41st Session of the FAO Conference (Rome, 22-29 June 2019) and the 159th Session of the FAO Council (Rome, 4-8 June 2018) on matters related to the Asia and the Pacific region.

### **6. Second Joint FAO and Pacific Community (SPC) Ministers for Agriculture and Forestry Meeting Communiqué**

The Second Joint FAO and Pacific Community (SPC) Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting was held in Apia, Samoa from 30 September to 4 October 2019 during the second Pacific Week of Agriculture. This item will include statements made at the meeting.

### **7. Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)**

The CFS Chairperson will provide an overview of the main outcomes of the 46th Plenary Session of the CFS (Rome, 14-18 October 2019) reporting on the activities undertaken in 2018-2019.

### **8. Statement by the Spokesperson of the Civil Society Consultation**

The spokesperson of the Civil Society Consultation will present the statement/declaration of the outcome of the consultation.

### **9. Statement by the Spokesperson of the Private Sector Consultation**

The spokesperson of the Private Sector Consultation will present the statement/declaration of the outcome of the consultation.

### **10. FAO's Hand-in-Hand Initiative: a New Approach**

The Hand-in-Hand Initiative is an evidence-based, country-led and country-owned initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to accelerate agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development to eradicate poverty (SDG 1) and end hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG 2). In so doing, it contributes to the attainment of all the other Sustainable Development Goals. The initiative adopts a robust match-making approach that proactively brings together target countries with donors, the private sector, international financial institutions, academia and civil society to mobilize means of implementation that support accelerated actions. It prioritizes countries and territories within countries where poverty and hunger are most concentrated or where national capacities are most limited. It also introduces a framework for monitoring and impact analysis.



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The initiative deploys sophisticated tools, including advanced geospatial modelling and analytics, to identify the biggest opportunities to raise the incomes and reduce the inequities and vulnerabilities of the rural poor, who constitute the vast majority of the world's poor. It uses these tools to present an evidence-based view of economic opportunities and to improve targeting and tailoring of policy interventions, innovation, finance and investment, and institutional reform. Hand-in-Hand adopts a market-oriented food systems approach to increasing the quantity, quality, diversity and accessibility of nutritious foods available in local, regional and national food markets. The Initiative prioritizes countries where national capacities and international support are most limited or where operational challenges, including natural or human-induced crises, are greatest. This is in keeping with the UN's commitment to "leave no one behind."

### **11. Prioritization of Country and Regional Needs**

The Asia and the Pacific region faces various challenges in the food and agricultural sectors, such as food insecurity, malnutrition, climate change, emergence of infectious diseases and endemic disease burdens, natural resource degradation and depletion and natural disasters. This session allows the heads of country delegations to deliver their statements. Delegates are invited to outline their views on the priorities for addressing national and regional needs in three to four minutes each.

#### **Review and Endorsement of the Report of the Senior Officers Meeting**

The draft report of the Senior Officers Meeting will be reviewed and endorsed.

The Report will be introduced by the Rapporteur.

### **12. Bytes to Sustain Our Bites: Leveraging Innovation and Digital Agriculture for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

Agriculture has always been knowledge-intensive. Although there has been significant path-breaking research and innovations in the field of agriculture, farmers have primarily been dependent on their individual or community wisdom, primarily because of difficulties in accessing information. Digital technologies are changing this situation by delivering the types of knowledge that farmers need to understand and utilize easily. Furthermore, digital technologies are transforming not only farming but also the entire value chain from farm to fork. Countries need to build capacities, develop policies, frameworks and the regulatory environment, and re-engineer processes to efficiently transition from labour-intensive towards data-driven agriculture.

Emerging and established technologies such as mobile communication technologies (smartphones, 5G networks including NB-IoT), drones, satellite imagery, big data, artificial intelligence, edge computing, sensor networks and distributed ledger technology (e.g. blockchains) hold great potential to transform every aspect of food and agriculture. From planning through to production, post-harvest, marketing and consumption, technology can efficiently safeguard both the producers' and consumers' interests. Furthermore, in the face of fast changing climatic conditions, countries and their farmers need to develop a high level of adaptability and resilience to effectively manage and mitigate vagaries of changing or extreme climatic conditions.

This event will consider key questions that innovation has the potential to resolve and look at drivers that are inspiring innovation. How can we strengthen and enable smallholder family farmers to take advantage of data-driven agriculture to improve their livelihoods? How do we enable the production of nutritious food while simultaneously decreasing environmental degradation? The session will also look at drivers for innovation such as the need to protect crops and livestock while fighting against antimicrobial resistance (AMR), increasing resilience in the face of natural disasters, reducing the

distance food travels, and protecting people from zoonosis to achieve a world without hunger and malnutrition.

### **13. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS): Driving Food System Transformation Toward Sustainable Healthy Diets**

Highlighting the CFS's collaborative approach toward global policy convergence, this agenda item will underline the ongoing process by the CFS and its partners to develop Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition – guidelines that will be ready for adoption at CFS 47 in February 2021. Participants will come away understanding the CFS, its core products, and the need for cross-sectoral, whole-of-government approaches to transform the global food system toward one where diets are healthy for both people and the planet.

### **14. UN Food Systems Summit**

In 2021, the UN Secretary-General will convene a Food Systems Summit as part of the UN Decade of Action. The Summit reflects the prominence that the 2030 Agenda has given to improved health and nutrition, reduced poverty, improved ecosystem services, and social inclusion and to the key role that future food systems will play in the achievement of these goals. Although food systems stakeholders are beginning to take action and change behaviour, the many independent initiatives of governments, private sector and civil society that have emerged in support of more sustainable food systems lack a common framing of the complex interactions, dependencies and trade-offs intrinsic to food systems. This is constraining the ability of societies with different priorities, and with different agro-ecological and institutional potentials to identify and implement appropriate pathways towards more sustainable food systems.

### **Adoption of the Report of the Conference**

### **Closure of the Conference**