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**Web Annex 1: Building sustainable and resilient food systems
in Asia and the Pacific - Note on COVID-19**

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1. Food supply chains and systems have been disrupted across the Asia and Pacific region since February 2020. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on food, agriculture and livelihoods have clearly demonstrated the need for investing more in sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems. While the health crisis did not turn into a food security crisis due to prompt actions by countries, it is important to use the challenge posed by the pandemic as an opportunity to build back better.
2. The immediate, or short-term, impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on food systems derive from the near universal response of governments to impose movement restrictions, which have affected activities related to crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry and all value chains associated with those sectors.^{2,3,4} The restrictions resulted in difficulties for farmers, farm labourers, service providers, extension officers, input suppliers, processors and other actors in the food system to perform their tasks. The restrictions also affected consumers by shifting food demand from schools and food service providers to markets and supermarkets, as consumers stayed home, forcing traders and farmers to find new outlets for food production. Farmers producing perishable products in labour-intensive value chains are in an especially vulnerable position. The loss of income due to the economic downturn may have also reduced demand for higher-value products such as meat, fish, fruits and vegetables. This can result in a deterioration of nutritional status, especially for the poor whose demand patterns depend substantially on their incomes and will shift towards more energy-based diets.⁵
3. The COVID-19 pandemic and measures to control its spread revealed that many parts of food supply chains depend on various types of labour and workers including migrants.⁶ The pandemic may accelerate the trends towards more mechanization, which will increase labour productivity but will also require investments in improved social protection and safety net programmes. These programmes may need to cover more people and provide more generous benefits to ensure food access for all, while also reducing the administrative burden needed to access the funds.⁷ Rethinking agricultural policies in the COVID-19 context will require coherent strategies that integrate technology investments, digital literacy support and improved trade logistics to enable robust farmer-input market linkages and farmer-market connectivity and traceability down the supply chain.
4. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed our food system's vulnerabilities to health hazards and zoonotic diseases. It is clear that we must broaden our focus, especially in downstream supply chains, to go beyond security and safety to include health risk mitigation to humans. Rebuilding a resilient urban food ecosystem requires appropriate infrastructure and market management to better monitor, regulate, and enforce safety and health regulations. More systematic research is needed to better understand the role of ecosystems in pandemics and de-risking food systems.⁸ Effective implementation of the One Health approach, promoting coordinated multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary responses, has the potential to reduce risks and improve health and well-being of all people and livestock. To date, most One Health efforts have invested primarily in the public health sector followed by the veterinary sector; however it has become apparent that involving the forestry and wildlife sectors, as well as responsible land-use planning, are equally important.⁹
5. Sustainable natural resource management underpins sustainable food systems and acknowledges the

² FAO.2020. Mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on the livestock sector

[<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca8799en>]

³ FAO. 2020. Sustainable crop production and COVID-19. [<http://www.fao.org/3/ca8807en/CA8807EN.pdf>]

⁴ FAO.2020. The effect of COVID-19 on fisheries and aquaculture in Asia

[<http://www.fao.org/3/ca9545en/CA9545EN.pdf>]

⁵ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2020. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020.

Transforming food systems for affordable healthy diets. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9692en>

⁶ FAO.2020. Food supply chain and trade disruptions in Asia under COVID-19: a regional analysis with policy response options. [<http://www.fao.org/3/ca9473en/CA9473EN.pdf>]

⁷ FAO.2020. Impacts of coronavirus on food security and nutrition in Asia and the Pacific: building more resilient food systems

⁸ UNEP and ILRI. 2020. Preventing the next pandemic: Zoonotic diseases and how to break the chain of transmission. Nairobi, Kenya.

⁹ FAO.2020. Global emergence of infectious diseases: links with wild meat consumption, ecosystem disruption, habitat degradation and biodiversity loss [<http://www.fao.org/3/ca9456en/CA9456EN.pdf>]

intrinsic connections between human health, resilient landscapes, economic stability and productive livelihoods. To emerge from the current crisis stronger and better, investing in measures that protect and restore nature and that promote inclusive, low emission and resilient development will be critical to retain momentum in the drive to promote sustainable and resilient food systems.¹⁰ Members and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) are identifying investments in green recovery measures in the land, water, forests, and fisheries sectors that can help promote short-term economic recovery and employment as well as strengthening long-term well-being and resilience.

¹⁰ FAO.2020. COVID-19: Investing in sustainable natural resource management for green and inclusive recovery in Asia and the Pacific