

**Side event**  
**organized by the Civil Society Facilitation Committee**

**CONCEPT NOTE<sup>1</sup>**

**United Nations Decade of Family Farming and Peasants' Rights in Times of Crisis**

**Wednesday, 11 May 2022, 16.00–17.00**

**33rd Session of the Regional Conference for Europe**

**Background**

This side event aims to discuss the solutions that the United Nations Decade of Family Farming brings for food security in times of crisis and the necessity of elevating human rights in rural areas and across the food and farming sector.

The side event is organized by the Nyéléni Food Sovereignty Network in Europe and Central Asia, a political and social alliance of grassroots, community-based movements and organizations representing small-scale food producers (including pastoralists and fishers), indigenous peoples, agriculture and food workers, consumers, non-governmental organizations and academics.

Globally and in Europe and Central Asia, rural society has been impacted by multiple crises, each of them aggravating the effects of the others. The climate crisis already had been affecting the livelihoods of small-scale family farmers and impacting biodiversity and soil. The COVID-19 pandemic, a global health problem, aggravated existing economic and social inequalities. The war in Ukraine has generated a humanitarian crisis and has threatened food security. Increases in food and energy prices continue to generate more vulnerabilities related to the loss of employment, access to healthy affordable food, and the realization of human rights.

These ongoing crises demonstrate the importance of strengthening local food production and reducing dependence on food imports. Small-scale family farmers, who have proven to be resilient throughout these crises, can be instrumental in elevating human rights in food and agriculture – a key element in building sustainable food security.

**Objectives and key messages of the event**

The key objective of this side event is to demonstrate the interrelatedness of these topics, particularly in times of crisis, in the framework of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDFE). Additional goals are to highlight the solutions provided by the human rights approach based on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) and to emphasize the importance of agroecology.

Policies for food systems transformation need to consider the following key messages:

- the elevation and application of the human rights-based approach in the transformation of food systems is a key strategy to further strengthen the resilience of the sector in times of crisis and to benefit from the proven resilience of small-scale farmers;
- food security and food sovereignty<sup>2</sup> are different approaches, with the latter considering grassroots food movements, involving citizens and producers, and offering the opportunity to

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<sup>1</sup> This concept note does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of FAO.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on food sovereignty, visit <https://foodsecurecanada.org/who-we-are/what-food-sovereignty>.

contribute to bolstering local production, decreasing import dependency and strengthening diversification;

- the war in Ukraine is a serious threat to national, regional and global food security, as dependence on food imports – particularly grain from the Russian Federation and Ukraine and oilseeds and fertilizer from Belarus and the Russian Federation – will result in challenges for low-income countries and low-income and food-deficit countries, with a risk of social unrest;
- short food chains that contribute to strengthening the resilience and application of agroecology will maintain biodiversity and increase sustainable production, ensuring access to healthy and affordable diets for all people, leaving no one behind;
- accelerating the implementation of the European farm to fork and Green Deal policies will support the strengthening of local sustainable food systems and facilitate access to healthy and affordable diets for the rural population, both instruments to responding to ongoing crises.

### **Purpose and expected outcomes**

- emphasize the importance of the UNDFP and the UNDROP in time of crisis and beyond;
- demonstrate the need to strengthen local food systems and production in order to build sustainability and food security;
- highlight the solutions provided by an agroecological approach, as based on the FAO 10 Elements of Agroecology;
- clarify the distinction between food security and food sovereignty;
- argue why it is essential to strengthen the capacities of small-scale farmers and their organizations and to elevate human rights in the food and agricultural sector, particularly using the UNDROP.

### **Panellists**

**Moderator:** Aida Jamangulova, Director of the Agency for Development Initiatives in Kyrgyzstan

**Side event coordinator:** Olcay Bingöl, European Coordination Via Campesina, ECVC/ Nyéléni ECA

### **Speakers**

**FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia:** Morten Hartvigsen (Regional Initiative Delivery Manager) (virtual participation)

**FAO Country Office:** Raimund Jehle (FAO Representative in Republic of Moldova)

**Academia:** Olena Borodina (Head of the Department of Economy and Policy of Agrarian Transformations of Institute for Economics and Forecasting NAS of Ukraine)

**Civil Society Organization Representative:** Ramona Duminicioiu (Eco Ruralis, Romania)

### **Languages**

Interpretation for the side event will be available in English, Russian, French and Spanish.