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	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	联合国 粮食及 农业组织	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	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
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TWENTY-EIGHTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE

Baku, Azerbaijan, 19 and 20 April 2012

Agenda Item 8

Report from the outcome of the debate of the 37th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) on “Land reform and farm performance in Europe: a 20-year perspective”

1. The most striking feature of land reform in the post-Soviet states has been the overall shift from collective to individual land tenure in agriculture, generally accompanied by privatization of legal land ownership. Individualization of farming has been one of the main factors that acted to arrest the initial transition decline and led to agricultural recovery in the Region. In countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the recovery point for agricultural growth is closely linked with the observed watershed dates for individualization of farming. Furthermore, the rate and the attained level of recovery are higher in countries in regions that pursued decisive individualization policies (the Trans-Caucasus and Central Asia), while in countries with less sweeping individualization reforms (European CIS) the recovery has been sluggish.
2. In addition to resumption of agricultural growth, land reform and individualization have also led to significant improvements in agricultural productivity due to the higher incentives in family farming. Greater production and higher productivity have contributed to significant poverty reduction observed since 2000. Rural incomes rise with the increase of the land allotments in family farms and with the increase of the share of output that farms are able to sell. To ensure continued improvement of rural family incomes and poverty mitigation, policy measures should be implemented that facilitate enlargement of very small family farms and encourage the access of small farms to market channels and services. Enlargement of small farms requires development of land markets both for buying and selling of land and for land leasing. Improvement of market access requires development of services for sale of products (collection, sorting, packing, quality control), availability of competitive processing plants, and rental arrangements for farm machinery and mechanical services.
3. Further productivity improvements require re-establishment of extension and advisory services, attention to animal health through modern veterinary services, and introduction of artificial insemination for higher-yielding breeds. FAO was requested to engage in shaping these policies and provide technical assistance in respective areas of expertise including policy advice to governments in support of sustainable intensification of production for small farms.

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5. Member countries took note of the role of smallholder agriculture in their countries and recommended that FAO:
- (i) continues efforts to promote the Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Land Tenure in the Region;
 - (ii) assists member countries in drafting laws for agricultural cooperatives, and advising countries on programmes for development of farm cooperatives;
 - (iii) assists countries in developing other farm services for smallholders; and
 - (iv) collaborates with ministries of agriculture to develop their capacity to promote a level policy playing field for smallholders.
6. Civil society organizations drew the attention of the ECA to concrete instances of land grabbing and the uneven position of smallholders in defending their tenure rights, emphasizing the need to ensure access to land for the rural population.