



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

ERC/18/REP

REPORT

**Voronezh,
Russian Federation
16-18 May 2018**

Thirty-first Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

All rights reserved. FAO encourages reproduction and dissemination of material in this publication. Non-commercial uses will be authorized free of charge. Reproduction for resale or other commercial purposes, including educational purposes, may incur fees. Applications for permission to reproduce or disseminate FAO copyright materials, and all other queries on rights and licenses, should be addressed by e-mail to copyright@fao.org or to the Chief, Publishing Policy and Support Branch, Office for Corporate Communication, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy.

FAO Member Nations in the Europe Region

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|--|
| 1. Albania | 19. Germany | 38. Republic of Moldova |
| 2. Andorra | 20. Greece | 39. Romania |
| 3. Armenia | 21. Hungary | 40. Russian Federation |
| 4. Austria | 22. Iceland | 41. San Marino |
| 5. Azerbaijan | 23. Ireland | 42. Serbia |
| 6. Belarus | 24. Israel | 43. Slovakia |
| 7. Belgium | 25. Italy | 44. Slovenia |
| 8. Bosnia and Herzegovina | 26. Kazakhstan | 45. Spain |
| 9. Bulgaria | 27. Kyrgyzstan | 46. Sweden |
| 10. Croatia | 28. Latvia | 47. Switzerland |
| 11. Cyprus | 29. Lithuania | 48. Tajikistan |
| 12. Czechia | 30. Luxembourg | 49. The former Yugoslav
Republic of Macedonia |
| 13. Denmark | 31. Malta | 50. Turkey |
| 14. Estonia | 32. Monaco | 51. Turkmenistan |
| 15. European Union (Member
Organization) | 33. Montenegro | 52. Ukraine |
| 16. Finland | 34. Netherlands | 53. United Kingdom |
| 17. France | 35. Norway | 54. Uzbekistan |
| 18. Georgia | 36. Poland | |
| | 37. Portugal | |

Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for Europe

First	-	Rome, Italy	10-15 October 1949
Second	-	Rome, Italy	10-15 October 1960
Third	-	Rome, Italy	8-13 October 1962
Fourth	-	Salzburg, Austria	26-31 October 1964
Fifth	-	Seville, Spain	5-11 October 1966
Sixth	-	St. Julian's, Malta	28-31 October 1968
Seventh	-	Budapest, Hungary	21-25 September 1970
Eighth	-	Munich, Germany, Fed. Rep. of	18-23 September 1972
Ninth	-	Lausanne, Switzerland	7-12 October 1974
Tenth	-	Bucharest, Romania	20-25 September 1976
Eleventh	-	Lisbon, Portugal	2-7 October 1978
Twelfth	-	Athens, Greece	22-27 September 1980
Thirteenth	-	Sofia, Bulgaria	4-8 October 1982
Fourteenth	-	Reykjavik, Iceland	17-21 September 1984
Fifteenth	-	Istanbul, Turkey	28 April-2 May 1986
Sixteenth	-	Krakow, Poland	23-26 August 1988
Seventeenth	-	Venice, Italy	3-7 April 1990
Eighteenth	-	Prague, Czechoslovakia	24-28 August 1992
Nineteenth	-	Killarney, Ireland	6-10 June 1994
Twentieth	-	Tel Aviv, Israel	29 April-3 May 1996
Twenty-first	-	Tallinn, Estonia	25-29 May 1998
Twenty-second	-	Porto, Portugal	24-28 July 2000
Twenty-third	-	Nicosia, Cyprus	29-31 May 2002
Twenty-fourth	-	Montpellier, France	5-7 May 2004
Twenty-fifth	-	Riga, Latvia	8-9 June 2006
Twenty-sixth	-	Innsbruck, Austria	26-27 June 2008
Twenty-seventh	-	Yerevan, Armenia	13-14 May 2010
Twenty-eight	-	Baku, Azerbaijan	19-20 April 2012
Twenty-ninth	-	Bucharest, Romania	2-4 April 2014
Thirtieth	-	Antalya, Turkey	4-6 May 2016
Thirty-first	-	Voronezh, Russian Federation	16-18 May 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS.....	v
MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL.....	v
MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE CONFERENCE	v
	Paragraph
I. Introductory Items.....	1-16
A. Organization of the Conference.....	1-2
B. Inauguration Ceremony.....	3
C. Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of Rapporteurs.....	4-7
D. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable.....	8-9
E. Statement by the Director-General.....	10-12
F. Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council	13
G. Statement by the Chairperson of the 30th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC).....	14
H. Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).....	15
I. Statement by the Spokesperson for the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Consultation	16
II. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Matters	17-20
A. Ministerial Round Table: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia in a Changing Climate	17-18
B. E-agriculture: the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the Development of Sustainable and Inclusive Food Systems and Trade Integration.....	19-20
III. Programme and Budget Matters.....	21-24
A. Decentralized Offices Network.....	21-22
B. Results and Priorities for FAO in the Region.....	23-24
IV. Other Matters	25-39
A. Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2016–2019 of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC).....	25-26
B. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 40th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA).....	27-28
C. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the Joint Session of the 39th European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 75th UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry	29-30
D. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 29th Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC).....	31-32
E. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 5th Session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish)	33-34
F. Date and Place of the 32nd Session of the Regional Conference for Europe.....	35-36
G. Any Other Business.....	37-39
Review and Endorsement of the Report of the Regional Conference	40
Closure of the Conference	41-42
	Page
V. APPENDICES.....	8
APPENDIX A – AGENDA.....	8
APPENDIX B – LIST OF DOCUMENTS.....	9
APPENDIX C – DECLARATION BY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS	11

SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL

- *Ministerial Round Table: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia in a Changing Climate* (Paragraph 18 k) and l)
- *E-agriculture: the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the Development of Sustainable and Inclusive Food Systems and Trade Integration* (Paragraph 20 i)
- *Decentralized Offices Network* (Paragraph 20 a) to h)
- *Results and Priorities for FAO in the Region* (Paragraph 24 a) to f)
- *Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 40th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)* (Paragraph 28 b)
- *Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the Joint Session of the 39th European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 75th UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry* (Paragraph 30 c) and d)
- *Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 29th Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC)* (Paragraph 32 e)

MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE CONFERENCE

- *Ministerial Round Table: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia in a Changing Climate* (Paragraph 18 a) to j) and m)
- *E-agriculture: the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the Development of Sustainable and Inclusive Food Systems and Trade Integration* (Paragraph 20 a) to h)
- *Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 40th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)* (Paragraph 28 a)
- *Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the Joint Session of the 39th European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 75th UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry* (Paragraph 30 a) and b)
- *Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 29th Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC)* (Paragraph 32 a) to d)
- *Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 5th Session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish)* (Paragraph 34 a), c) and d)

I. Introductory Items

A. Organization of the Conference

1. The 31st Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC) was held in Voronezh, Russian Federation, from 16 to 18 May 2018.
2. Representatives from 44 Members participated in the Regional Conference. Observers from three Members, one United Nations organization, one intergovernmental organization, two international non-governmental organizations and two civil society organizations were in attendance as well as two representatives from the private sector and one from the research and academia sector.

B. Inauguration Ceremony

3. The Inauguration Ceremony was opened with addresses by the Director-General of FAO, Mr José Graziano da Silva; Mr Alexey Gordeyev, Plenipotentiary Representative of the President of the Russian Federation at the Central Federal District; Mr Evgenii Gromyko, Deputy Minister for Agriculture of the Russian Federation; and Mr Alexander Gusev, Governor of Voronezh Region.

C. Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of Rapporteurs

4. Mr Alexey Gordeyev, Plenipotentiary Representative of the President of the Russian Federation at the Central Federal District, was elected by the delegates as Chairperson of the 31st Session of the ERC.
5. Mr Spyridon Ellinas, Alternate Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cyprus to the United Nations Organizations, was elected as first Vice-Chairperson of the 31st Session of the ERC.
6. Ms Gunnvör Berge, Deputy Permanent Representative, Norway, was elected as second Vice-Chairperson of the 31st Session of the ERC.
7. Her Excellency Delphine Borione, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France to FAO, the World Food Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and Mr Oleg Kobiakov, Head of Division for ECOSOC and United Nations Regional Commissions, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russian Federation, were appointed Rapporteurs of the 31st Session of the ERC.

D. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

8. The Chairperson introduced the Agenda and the Provisional Timetable and proposed to have a presentation by Finland on the 2020 International Year of Plant Health, under Any Other Business.
9. The Regional Conference adopted the agenda and timetable. The agenda is provided in *Appendix A*. Documents submitted to the Regional Conference are listed in *Appendix B*.

E. Statement by the Director-General

10. Mr José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO, welcomed the participating Ministers and dignitaries to the 31st Session of the ERC. The Director-General highlighted the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the role of the Regional Conference to reflect on how Europe and Central Asia can make the transition to sustainable agriculture and food systems in the context of a changing climate. He stressed the need to achieve sustainable increases in the quantity and quality of food while also reducing diet-related diseases and securing sustainable livelihoods for millions of agricultural producers.
11. The Director-General recalled that hunger in the world rose in 2017. He noted that the region as a whole had made substantial progress on reducing food insecurity but that marked differences remained between countries and that 14.3 million people in the region are still experiencing severe food insecurity in accessing food. He also stressed that many countries in Europe and Central Asia are faced with the

triple burden of malnutrition and highlighted the need to leverage the potential of agroecology and sustainable food systems to deliver healthy, high-quality diets for everyone.

12. The Director-General noted that the region is vulnerable to climate change due to fragile ecosystems and limited capacities to manage risks, and he called for new approaches that pull together policies, programmes and investments. He recalled that FAO has a new Regional Initiative on strengthening national capacities to achieve sustainable natural resource management in a changing climate, and he reiterated FAO's commitment to facilitate broad-based and inclusive dialogues in order to assist Members as they strive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

F. Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council

13. The Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council, Mr Khalid Mehboob, addressed the delegates on the importance of regional conferences as an integral component of FAO's governance structure, providing regional perspectives into the FAO programme of work. He reiterated the relevance of FAO work for 14 of the 17 SDGs, in particular SDG 1 and SDG 2, and the close alignment of the FAO Strategic Objectives with the SDGs. In this regard, the 31st Session of the ERC had a unique and crucial role to play in defining FAO policies.

G. Statement by the Chairperson of the 30th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)

14. His Excellency Hinrich Johannes Thölken, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to FAO, delivered the statement as first Vice-Chairperson of the 30th Session of the ERC, and reminded the 31st Session of the ERC of the recommendations. He underlined the importance of the Regional Conference to sharpen the focus of FAO work in the region and informed that the 154th Session of the FAO Council and the 40th Session of the FAO Conference endorsed all the recommendations.

H. Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

15. The Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), His Excellency Mario Arvelo Caamaño, briefed the Regional Conference on key CFS activities and urged all stakeholders to engage actively in the ongoing CFS multistakeholder consultative processes, provide adequate human and financial resources, and strive to implement CFS policy. He acknowledged the role of FAO's decentralized network in offering guidance and support for implementing policy advice emanating from CFS recommendations and guidelines at regional and country levels.

I. Statement by the Spokesperson for the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Consultation

16. The Spokesperson for the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) informed the Regional Conference that agroecological practices in food-producing sectors (pastoralism, fisheries, forestry and agriculture) constitute real and ongoing innovation all over the world. He noted that small-scale food producers have solutions to address climate change and are the guarantors for the future of our planet and humanity. He highlighted the importance of agroecology in ensuring access to food and social justice, including women's rights, and noted that technologies present opportunities and challenges for all.

II. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Matters

A. Ministerial Round Table: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia in a Changing Climate

17. The Regional Conference discussed document ERC/18/2.

18. The Regional Conference:

- a) underscored the overarching objective of eliminating hunger and malnutrition in all its forms in Europe and Central Asia and noted the contribution of interregional collaboration to global food security and nutrition;

- b) called on governments to adopt a food systems approach for creation of policy coherence in the implementation of the SDGs and support the establishment or strengthening of coordination mechanisms that include all relevant sectors and stakeholders to design integrated policies and strategies for sustainable, efficient, inclusive and resilient agriculture and food systems;
- c) highlighted the potential of agroecological approaches, in particular for smallholders and family farmers, to accelerate the transition to sustainable agriculture and food systems and called on governments to promote such agroecological and other sustainable agricultural approaches as befits their national contexts;
- d) emphasized the need for research and quality data on agroecological and other sustainable agricultural approaches;
- e) noted that food safety and quality standards contribute to efficient and sustainable food systems;
- f) welcomed the International Conference on Food Safety and Risk Analysis jointly organized by the FAO Secretariat and the Russian Federation in May 2017 in Sochi;
- g) underlined the need to develop partnerships and put in place effective mechanisms to align investments from all sources, in particular the private sector, to the new policies and strategies for sustainable and resilient agriculture and food systems;
- h) noted the increased interest of consumers and producers in sustainable agricultural products, including organic products;
- i) highlighted the importance of reducing food loss and waste throughout the supply chain, including by consumer and producer awareness, education, and an enabling policy and regulatory environment;
- j) stressed the need for the agricultural sector to address climate change, both in terms of adaptation and mitigation, by taking appropriate measures at national, regional and global levels and encouraged FAO to continue supporting governments and multistakeholder dialogues in these efforts;
- k) requested that FAO i) support a food systems approach in rural and urban policies and planning; ii) incorporate agroecological approaches and diversification into the three Regional Initiatives; and iii) further develop its work on agroecology, for example in the context of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019–2028) and the Scaling up Agroecology Initiative, discussing this in FAO's technical and governing bodies;
- l) requested FAO to take the lead to facilitate, in collaboration with other relevant actors the development of methodologies to measure sustainability performance of all agriculture and food systems; and
- m) emphasized the need for special attention to be given to women and youth, especially with regard to access to resources and innovation.

B. E-agriculture: the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the Development of Sustainable and Inclusive Food Systems and Trade Integration

19. The Regional Conference discussed document ERC/18/3.

20. The Regional Conference:

- a) underlined the importance of developing e-agriculture as a tool for implementing Agenda 2030 and encouraged Members to share good practices and lessons learned from e-agriculture initiatives and applications;
- b) reiterated the importance of combining digital technological innovations with other innovations, including agroecology as well as enhanced capacities of all actors, in order to promote a development change in food and agriculture systems;
- c) highlighted the importance of ensuring the largest benefits and opportunities of e-agriculture by addressing geographical disparities in remote areas, by bridging gender and generational gaps, and by supporting digital literacy for social inclusion;
- d) highlighted the importance of youth in e-agriculture and of empowering them to develop e-agriculture solutions, also as a means of addressing rural youth employment;
- e) recommended enhanced participation in e-agriculture of the private sector, including small and medium-sized enterprises, and consumers to ensure efficient and sustainable food systems;

- f) stressed that transparency, personal data protection, and appropriate safeguard methods are key to building trust in e-agriculture through clear regulatory frameworks and encouraged the development and application of international standards, including on interoperability and data use;
- g) noted that ICTs can support farmers, in particular smallholders, by providing them with tools for real-time monitoring, early warning systems, and disease control;
- h) underscored the advantages of inclusive, multistakeholder approaches for e-agriculture policy formulation and implementation; and
- i) requested that FAO:
 - i. continue to assist countries in Europe and Central Asia in transforming their agricultural sectors and leveraging the livelihoods of farmers, both women and men, through e-agriculture and to foster its responsible use through the three Regional Initiatives;
 - ii. collect and analyse good practices, tools and mechanisms in e-agriculture for knowledge sharing and provide policy advice and capacity development to maximize benefits and minimize risks;
 - iii. develop, in collaboration with national, regional and international partners, an inclusive capacity-development framework and strategy in e-agriculture; and
 - iv. provide a neutral regional platform on which to share knowledge and support the implementation of national e-agriculture strategies for countries in Europe and Central Asia.

III. Programme and Budget Matters

A. Decentralized Offices Network

21. The Regional Conference discussed document ERC/18/4.
22. The Regional Conference:
 - a) reiterated support for the proposed principles and general criteria for reviewing FAO's decentralized network coverage and highlighted the need for special emphasis on countries with lower income and taking due account of the principle of cost neutrality;
 - b) recognized the need to review FAO's global coverage to direct more effective support to Members by enhancing the capacity of decentralized locations while maintaining the technical capacity at FAO headquarters;
 - c) noted the review of country office staffing models to increase flexibility and to adjust to the emerging needs of the countries while ensuring transparency and merit-based human resources procedures and making use of opportunities offered by post vacancies;
 - d) acknowledged efforts made by the Organization in the region to strengthen national and international partnerships with key stakeholders for more effective normative and field support;
 - e) encouraged the strengthening of internal control systems and welcomed management's efforts in this respect;
 - f) appreciated the strong focus and work of the Organization at country level and recognized the 40th anniversary initiative as an opportunity to renew the Organization's commitment to its long-term presence in the field while assuring flexibility, efficiency and a high level of technical capacity;
 - g) underlined the continuing need to prioritize partnerships at the decentralized level, and to strengthen interregional cooperation; and
 - h) underlined the importance of still-closer collaboration of FAO with Rome-based and other United Nations agencies and of taking into account the future outcome of the ongoing discussion in relation to the United Nations development system.

B. Results and Priorities for FAO in the Region

23. The Regional Conference discussed document ERC/18/5.

24. The Regional Conference:

- a) recognized the importance of the Strategic Framework in providing direction for FAO technical work to address priorities in the region and ensure effective delivery of results at the country level;
- b) appreciated the work completed through the Strategic Programmes and the results achieved under the Regional Initiatives and other main areas of work in 2016–2017 in responding to the main priorities set by the 30th Session of the ERC;
- c) welcomed the alignment of the FAO Strategic Objectives with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and acknowledged the key role of the Strategic Programmes in integrating the Organization's technical work at the regional and country level to address multifaceted development challenges and provide efficient and adequate support to countries on the SDGs;
- d) acknowledged the importance of the proposed priorities for 2018–2021 to be aligned with the framework of the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and the Rome Declaration at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) and its Framework for Action;
- e) stressed the importance of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment; and
- f) requested FAO to:
 - continue the implementation of the two Regional Initiatives RI1) "Empowering smallholders and family farms for improved rural livelihoods and poverty reduction" and RI2) "Improving agrifood trade and market integration" and their use as a programmatic approach to ensure coherence and integrated support of the country programme implementation in support of achieving the SDGs;
 - link RI1 with the United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019–2028;
 - implement the third Regional Initiative "Sustainable natural resource management under a changing climate" (RI3) and ensure the linkage between RI1 and RI3 regarding sustainable agriculture and food systems;
 - support Members in applying Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT), Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food (RTF) and Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI), and ensure that the cross-cutting issues of gender, governance, climate change and nutrition are addressed; and
 - continue to support countries in the design and implementation of trade-related policies and strategies in line with World Trade Organization agreements, with a neutral and balanced approach.

IV. Other Matters

A. Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2016–2019 of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)

25. The Regional Conference discussed document ERC/18/6.

26. The Regional Conference took note of the revised "Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2016–2019 of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)" presented to the Regional Conference.

B. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 40th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)

27. The Regional Conference discussed document ERC/18/7.

28. The Regional Conference:

- a) endorsed the report and recommendations from the 40th Session of the ECA; and

- b) called upon FAO to further promote the prudent and responsible use of antimicrobials, the monitoring of such use, and the surveillance of antimicrobial resistance and stressed the need to phase out the use of antibiotics as growth promoters.

C. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the Joint Session of the 39th European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 75th UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry

29. The Regional Conference discussed document ERC/18/8.

30. The Regional Conference:

- a) endorsed the recommendations;
- b) requested that the EFC identify and discuss priorities of work for the region in its future sessions and issues to be brought to the attention of future sessions of the ERC;
- c) commended the work undertaken by FAO on forestry issues in the region and encouraged FAO to pursue and further enhance its forestry work, including on forest fires, invasive species, forestry education, and boreal and temperate forests; and
- d) supported the joint activities of FAO and UNECE in the field of forestry and welcomed the adoption of the EFC/COFFI Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work for 2018–2021.

D. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 29th Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC)

31. The Regional Conference discussed document ERC/18/9.

32. The Regional Conference:

- a) noted the recommendations in the Report of the 29th Session regarding management of inland fisheries and freshwater aquaculture in Europe;
- b) appreciated the concrete recommendations from the EIFAAC International Symposium on “Adaptation of inland fisheries and freshwater aquaculture to climate change”;
- c) requested that EIFAAC identify and discuss priorities of work for the region in its future sessions and issues to be brought to the attention of future sessions of the ERC;
- d) highlighted the role of EIFAAC as an important pan-European platform for scientific research and policy advice on inland fisheries and freshwater aquaculture, including recreational fishing; and
- e) called upon FAO to provide sufficient resources and encouraged Members to make voluntary contributions to that aim.

E. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 5th Session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish)

33. The Regional Conference discussed document ERC/18/10.

34. The Regional Conference:

- a) agreed that the CACFish reports become an integral part of the ERC in an independent agenda item;
- b) requested that the ERC identify and discuss priorities of work for fisheries and aquaculture development in the CACFish subregion in line with achieving the universal goals of the United Nations SDGs and the FAO Regional Initiatives for consideration by the 6th Session of CACFish, October 2018, Turkey;
- c) encouraged relevant Members of the ERC and CACFish observer countries to announce their intention to join the Commission; and
- d) noted the importance of increasing the level of fish consumption in diets of Central Asia and the Caucasus and the role of the Commission in aquaculture development and promoting sustainable resource use.

F. Date and Place of the 32nd Session of the Regional Conference for Europe

35. As no offers were made by the Delegations, the Chair announced that the Director-General will decide on the venue of the 32nd Session of the Regional Conference and the exact date, in consultation with the Europe Regional Group.

36. The Regional Conference noted the request to ensure involvement and participation of the private sector, civil society and academia in future Regional Conferences.

G. Any Other Business

37. The delegation of Finland drew attention to Finland's initiative to declare the year 2020 as International Year of Plant Health and the potential positive impact on several SDGs and FAO Strategic Objectives. The Regional Conference expressed support for the initiative.

38. The Regional Conference took note of the information provided by the delegation of Estonia on the initiative of an International Year of Rye.

Information Notes

39. The Regional Conference took note of the documents provided for information (ERC/18/INF/9, ERC/18/INF/10 and ERC/18/INF/11).

Review and Endorsement of the Report of the Regional Conference

40. The Regional Conference unanimously adopted the Report with the remarks stated during the adoption.

Closure of the Conference

41. The Director-General thanked the Government of the Russian Federation for being an excellent host of the conference, and all participants for their important contributions. Considering the specificities of this region and its differences, he proposed, as an example from other Regional Conferences, to consider in future conferences to dedicate time for discussions of the various subregions/groups of countries. He expressed his appreciation for the support and the endorsement of the three Regional Initiatives as well as the decentralization process. He also underlined the active participation and collaborative approach of civil society organizations throughout the Regional Conference. The private sector was not fully on board in many Regional Conferences, so the Director-General emphasized that more time needed to be dedicated to promote their participation. In closing, he also informed the Regional Conference on the latest developments on the repositioning of the UN Development system.

42. The Head of the International Relations Department, Mr Valery Sizov on behalf of the Russian Federation, offered their heartfelt thanks to all the participants for their attendance and active participation in a very positive exchange of views on the situation, on goals and tasks facing food security in the region. He also emphasized the many bilateral meetings where important decisions were taken on cooperation in the field of agriculture hoping for a productive continuation to the dialogue. He thanked on behalf of the Russian Federation the FAO Secretariat for the excellent organization and the support to the 31st Session of the ERC.

V. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – AGENDA

INAUGURATION CEREMONY

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1. Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of Rapporteurs
2. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable
3. Statement by the Director-General
4. Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council
5. Statement by the Chairperson of the 30th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)
6. Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
7. Statement by the Spokesperson for the Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Consultation

II. REGIONAL AND GLOBAL POLICY AND REGULATORY MATTERS

8. Ministerial Round Table: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia in a Changing Climate
9. E-agriculture: the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the Development of Sustainable and Inclusive Food Systems and Trade Integration

III. PROGRAMME AND BUDGET MATTERS

10. Decentralized Offices Network
11. Results and Priorities for FAO in the Region

IV. OTHER MATTERS

12. Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2016-2019 of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)
13. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 40th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)
14. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the Joint Session of the 39th European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 75th UNECE Committee on Forest and the Forest Industry
15. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 29th Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC)
16. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 5th Session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish)
17. Standing item: Date and Place of the 32nd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe
18. Any Other Business
 - 18.1. 2020 International Year of Plant Health

Review and Endorsement of the Report of the Regional Conference

Closure of the Conference

APPENDIX B – LIST OF DOCUMENTS

(www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/erc31/documents/en/)

Symbol	Title
ERC/18/1	Provisional Annotated Agenda
ERC/18/2	Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia in a Changing Climate
ERC/18/2 Web Annex	Web Annex for document ERC/18/2: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia in a Changing Climate
ERC/18/3	E-agriculture: the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the Development of Sustainable and Inclusive Food Systems and Trade Integration
ERC/18/3 Web Annex	Web Annex for document ERC/18/3: E-agriculture: the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the Development of Sustainable and Inclusive Food Systems and Trade Integration
ERC/18/4	Decentralized Offices Network
ERC/18/5	Results and Priorities for FAO in the Region
ERC/18/5 Web Annex 1	Overview of FAO's Strategic Objective Programmes
ERC/18/5 Web Annex 2	Contribution of Results in the European and Central Asia Region to FAO Strategic Objectives in the 2016-17 Biennium
ERC/18/5 Web Annex 3	Planned Contribution of Results in the Europe and Central Asia Region to FAO Strategic Objective Output Targets in the 2018-19 biennium
ERC/18/6	Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2016-2019 of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)
ERC/18/7	Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 40th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)
ERC/18/8	Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the Joint Session of the 39th European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 75th UNECE Committee on Forest and the Forest Industry
ERC/18/9	Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 29th Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC)
ERC/18/10	Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 5th Session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish)

INF SERIES

Symbol	Title
ERC/18/INF/1	Information Note
ERC/18/INF/2	Provisional Timetable
ERC/18/INF/3	Provisional List of Documents
ERC/18/INF/4	Statement by the Director-General
ERC/18/INF/5	Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council
ERC/18/INF/6	Statement by the Chairperson of the 30th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)
ERC/18/INF/7	Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
ERC/18/INF/8	Statement by the Spokesperson for the Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Consultation
ERC/18/INF/9	Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 41st Session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)
ERC/18/INF/10	Outcome of the Regional Symposium on “Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets in Europe and Central Asia”
ERC/18/INF/11	Report on Support to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the Region
ERC/18/INF/12	Statement of Competence and Voting Rights Submitted by the European Union and its Member States

APPENDIX C – DECLARATION BY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Budapest, 27 April 2018

As Civil Society Organizations (small-scale farmers, pastoralists, fishers, Indigenous People, agricultural and food workers, consumers, women, youth and NGOs) from across different regions, we are rights holders and active members of the food system. Through our collective efforts, we work to guarantee the right to adequate food. We urge States in our Region to be coherent and supportive in their policy-making.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is fast approaching. Despite the fact that the SDGs are not as ambitious as we would like, and have a number of limitations, we are convinced that it will be impossible to achieve them without a drastic paradigm shift towards Food Sovereignty.

This paradigm shift starts with the implementation of existing human-rights based instruments that civil society organizations, such as the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Adequate Food, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure (VGGT), the International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines), the UN Convention on the Protection for Migrant workers and members of their families, as well as many of the policies that the Committee on World Food Security and Nutrition (CFS) have agreed upon. We are also optimistic that the Human Rights Council will vote to adopt the United Nations declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.

We need implementation and monitoring!!! And we need it now!

The FAO and some States have finally recognized that agroecology, which many communities of small-scale food producers from across the world already practice, is the holistic approach necessary for nutritious food production and healthy food consumption. Our knowledge, territories (including both land and water), communities, organizations as well as our capacity to be increasingly less dependent on external inputs are the pillars of agroecology. Our agroecological practices in all food producing sectors (pastoralism, fisheries, forestry and agriculture) constitute real and on-going innovation all over the world. We small-scale food producers have the solutions to stop global warming and combat climate change. We are the guarantors for the future of our planet and humanity. We strongly believe that through agroecology we can ensure that the Commons are not commodified and that everyone has access to food and social justice. The Commons are key to the preservation of our environment and to providing opportunities for youth. Agroecology is also important to draw attention to women's rights and ensure respect for women.

We will not tolerate the use of agroecology for narrow, private interests, green and/or blue-washing.

New technologies present opportunities and challenges for all. E-agriculture is not an innovation per se, as agroecological systems already have appropriate scale technology across food systems. We are all feeling the effects of the incredible concentration of power in the E/web economy. A handful of companies are monopolizing the entire sector, controlling and commercializing data in a way that violates peoples' fundamental rights. Today e-agriculture is presented as the new green revolution. However, there are insufficient controls on the regulation and ownership of data, on the impacts of the concentration of the food sector and the consequences of the States' obligations to uphold their citizen's right to food.

Therefore, we will only use e-agriculture/digital technologies in the specific ways that we believe can support our model of production. We will not allow e-agriculture to become a new tool to privatize our knowledge, make us more dependent, make us redundant, and ultimately replace us with robots in the future!

To achieve a paradigm shift we also demand special attention be accorded to:

- The adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Living in Rural Areas that will strengthen and build on the existing rights of rural people and that will have

recognition within the international human rights framework.

- We must end all public funding that supports extremely unhealthy processed food models that cause health issues, malnutrition and food injustice. Public funding, including *climate funding*, *needs to clearly prioritize agroecological small-scale food production*, equal access to adequate and nutritious food, which is a universal, basic human right. This involves ensuring justice in food systems through fair production, distribution and access to territorial markets, reducing conflicts and exploitation as well as recognizing the structural factors that create injustice and malnutrition in the Region. *This is in line with SDG 12, Responsible Consumption and Production and SDG 2, End Hunger.*
- The full implementation of Women's Rights. Women's rights are still under attack in this Region, and we call on States to clearly support and implement active policies to fully uphold these rights according to CEDAW guidelines. These guidelines support equality between men and women in their access to productive and economic resources and active participation in government and institutional decision-making processes.
- The full implementation of Decent Work. SDG 8 aims to provide decent work for all. There is still a deficit in decent work in agriculture. Labour laws in the Region are becoming increasingly weak, and exclude agricultural workers from labour laws and social protection schemes. Despite the existing international treaty that affirms migrant workers' rights, there is persistent trafficking and discrimination against migrant workers who are forced to work in hazardous and isolated conditions and who are often victims of forced labour.
- An end to the mass administration of antibiotics to livestock and poultry. Intensive animal production for food has resulted in the development of antibiotic resistant strains of many highly dangerous bacteria. UN agencies have highlighted the serious threat that AMR poses to people across the world. If no action is taken, there is an increasing risk that millions of people will die due to antibiotic resistant bacteria by 2050.
- Ensure full and equal access to adequate and nutritious food (which is a universal, basic human right) through an inclusive process, which works alongside agencies, local and national government, agroecological producers, CSOs and other social justice actors. It should ensure justice in food systems through fair production, distribution that guarantees fair prices to producers and affordable prices for consumers in order to reduce conflict and exploitation and recognize the structural factors which create injustice and malnutrition in the Region.
- States consider the Decade of Family Farming and the Decade of Nutrition as a unique opportunity for policy coherence and governmental commitment. This commitment is based on human rights obligations and is not a mere formality! These two Decades must be considered as a real opportunity to ensure policies and public investments that benefit and support small-scale producers and family-owned farms across the region. Small-scale food producers are the only way to ensure agroecology, which guarantees the right to adequate and nutritious food, is truly implemented.

We welcome and express our further engagement in the FAO's decentralization process. Small-scale food producer organizations and other CSOs must play a central role in this process. We declare our willingness to be the main actor in all the stages of implementation of the three regional initiatives.

We hope to continue improving our partnership with the FAO in this region, increasing our political impact and strengthening our role in decision-making processes.

We call on the FAO to commit to do more to uphold the right to adequate food and nutrition.

Recommendations

1. **Recommendation for Sustainable Agriculture** and Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia in a Changing Climate
 - Future activities that strengthen sustainable agriculture and fisheries should build on the

interesting discussions and productive outcomes of the 2nd International Symposium on Agroecology. Agroecology is the key to the necessary change in our food systems.

- We welcome the FAO's continued commitment to agroecology. We commit to supporting the building of the FAO's internal capacity to support agroecology as a science, a practice and a social movement. Furthermore, we commit to the development of indicators to monitor the impacts of agroecology with civil society as well as the creation of an internal mechanism to enhance interdepartmental and interregional collaboration in agroecology and the development of a public funding system to continue to strengthen the joint work of the FAO and civil society.
 - We invite the FAO to foster the support provided to its Member States and to civil society, through its development of policy and legal frameworks that promote and support agroecology and sustainable food systems.
 - As Civil Society Organizations, we collectively invite the FAO to:
 - encourage the involvement of small-scale food producer organizations and other CSOs in scaling up the agroecology initiative;
 - focus the implementation of its three regional initiatives on activities that strengthen agroecology in its economic, environmental and social capacity at local, national, regional and international level;
 - develop projects and programmes that improve small-scale food producers' access to local markets, which is a key part of sustainable agriculture and fisheries;
 - support the exchange and spread of traditional sustainable agricultural and fishing practices among small-scale food producers, with a specific focus on pastoralists and Indigenous People;
 - prioritize, acknowledge and support small-scale food producers' investments when developing programmes and projects related to sustainable agricultural investment;
 - promote rural women's rights through empowerment and capacity building initiatives.
2. **Recommendation on E-agriculture for the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the development of sustainable and inclusive food systems and trade integration:**
- carry out an assessment of the on-going initiatives in alliance with technological sovereignty initiatives;
 - propose a regulatory framework that prevents any privatization of data;
 - support the precautionary principles in all policy recommendations on the implementation of e-agriculture;
 - follow the CSO's lead in initiatives on e-agriculture

The CSOs Recommendations to the FAO:

- make all relevant documents available and support the translation of the most relevant documents into different national languages;
- facilitate exchanges between food producers;
- facilitate exchanges between food producers and consumers to ensure greater food justice;
- support monitoring activities to uphold the right to food and nutrition, including at the relevant human rights bodies and the CFS;
- support CSOs in monitoring the implementation of the VGGT, SSF Guidelines and other relevant international guidelines;
- promote decent rural employment ;
- actively engage with CSOs in all stages of implementation and monitoring of the regional initiatives, including their design.

CSOs Recommendation to States

- ensure that the CAP, the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and national food and agriculture policies adhere to human rights and subsequent policies and guidelines. Ensure that they also respect all agricultural and food workers' rights according to fundamental work rights;
- recognize the multidisciplinary nature of food and agriculture policies based on the human right to adequate food. States should create national and municipal/local food policy councils as well as laws that uphold the right to adequate food;
- support and give priority to small-scale fisheries in their direct sales. Support them become more visible in policies. Ensure and protect the rights of access of small-scale artisanal fishers to their traditional fishing grounds and ensure their interests are equally included in governance. Promote community-based fishery resource management. Validate and recognize traditional knowledge and the role of women in fisheries;
- protect and promote small-scale fisheries through the implementation of the International Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries. Small-scale fisheries have a low impact on the environment and provide high quality, nutritious food and are a means of securing these livelihoods of local populations;
- halt infrastructure developments, including large-scale aquaculture, port constructions, oil and gas projects and sea-bed mining, which are known to have damaging effects on the natural environment and prevent the implementation of SDG 14;
- phase out destructive fishing practices, including technologically advanced fish location, and stop all privatization of fisheries resources;
- carry out periodical national monitoring activities that assess the implementation of standards related to the right to food, such as those that the Committee on World Food Security carries out;
- prioritize the involvement of rights holders over third party actors such as private sector actors, in decision-making and monitoring processes and recognize the crucial distinction between rights holders and stakeholders;
- implement a regulatory approach to data, based on human dignity and human rights. Work with independent small-scale technology experts who support data management sovereignty and control;
- implement policies through the decade of family farming that genuinely prioritize small-scale food producers, family farming, fisheries and food justice in the distribution of agroecologically produced food;
- reconsider the legal framework for smallholder and family farming and fisheries' activities. Promote the creation of national legal status for the promotion and support of family farming and end the criminalization of traditional practice and food systems;
- support agroecology as the primary model of production, including through research and innovation that recognizes the importance of food producers' knowledge;
- ban the use of Glyphosate and all synthetic pesticides and fertilizers that are harmful to health, land, soil and water;
- adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other people living in rural areas;
- actively support the adoption of the UN Treaty on transnational corporations and human rights;
- stop the negotiation of free trade agreements that are an obstacle to Food Sovereignty, family farming and the right to adequate food;
- improve public services for rural populations;
- adopt active policies that recognize and promote women's rights;
- we urge governments to ban the mass administration of antibiotics to livestock and farmed fish (aquaculture) and call on governments to recognize the transmission of drug-resistant pathogens as work-related diseases;
- ensure all agricultural, fishing and food workers have their right to join independent trade unions and partake in collective bargaining upheld without being criminalized;

-
- we call on governments to reduce carbon emissions in industries and ensure sustainable livelihoods and employment;
 - implement active policies that ensure decent livelihoods for all young people in rural areas, encourage food, agricultural and fishing production, as well as decent employment and infrastructure in rural areas;
 - respect, protect and promote Indigenous People's rights to land and natural resources, including their traditional ecological knowledge, practices and innovations;
 - implement and promote Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure (VGTT) as well as the International Guidelines Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines) at national and local level, based on the States' human rights obligations;
 - we call on States to uphold the right to water and recognize the vital importance of access to water for small-scale food and agricultural producers. Water, as part of the Commons, should be managed by public bodies and protected from commodification and privatization;
 - promote the decentralized governance of food production and agriculture with the full participation of rights-holders, including consumers;
 - promote active policies for universal access to nutritious food, including through the extension of land access rights and the offer of training to urban marginalized groups;
 - protect and promote local markets as public utility services, including short and direct food supply chains and public procurement that favour produce from small-scale local food producers. We should do this while bearing in mind the recommendations on 'Connecting Smallholders to Markets' adopted by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS);
 - ban zero hours employment contracts that cause workers and their families to suffer malnutrition and poverty;
 - we urge States to take responsibility for stopping armed conflict and creating peace in the Region and neighboring States of the Region, so that people are not forced to leave their land or become migrant workers;
 - guarantee a concerted and intentional response to the rising xenophobia and racism affecting large groups of migrant food and agricultural workers, urban migrant communities, young people and women;
 - create public policies that respect and promote rural women's rights to access productive and economic resources (especially land, seeds, loans and housing). Design appropriate instruments that draw attention to rural women's central role as food producers and seed keepers;
 - promote and preserve agrobiodiversity.