



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia Impact of COVID-19 and social protection: What measures work? 8 July 2020

What: Virtual meeting (Zoom Webinar live streamed to YouTube)

When: 08 July 2020, 10.00-11.30 (Budapest time)

Language: English-Russian (simultaneous translation to be provided)

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected Europe and Central Asia, and FAO is playing a role in understanding, assessing and responding to its potential impacts on people's lives and livelihoods. To identify best innovative practices to respond to the pandemic, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia is organizing a series of webinars to facilitate a multi-stakeholder dialogue through knowledge sharing and exchange of experiences among relevant actors in the countries in Europe and Central Asia region. Issues of particular concern to the region include cross-border trade, domestic food markets, food value chains, livestock, and food security and nutrition.

This webinar organized on 8 July is part of these series, and is dedicated to social protection defined by FAO Social Protection Framework as a key strategy for poverty reduction, food security, nutrition and resilience. As ample evidence in all regions of the world has demonstrated, social protection have proven to increase household food security; eliminate barriers to access essential services; strengthen rural livelihoods / production capacity and improve household resilience to withstand and cope with shocks and crises, all contributing to the reduction of rural poverty.

Through this webinar, FAO is providing a platform for sharing information among countries and stakeholders on addressing COVID-19 impacts and challenges in the food and agriculture sector in Europe and Central Asia.

Objective of the webinar

Evidence collected in the region suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic is having widespread impacts on health, FSN, household income, employment, and resilience. In addition to the traditionally disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, many households and categories are pushed into poverty due to job and income losses. Particularly, this relates to rural households; informal workers; small holders and agricultural producers and food value-chain workers as these categories usually have limited access to resources to allow them to cope with the negative impacts. On top, they are usually the ones who are hardly covered by social protection.



Since the COVID-19 evolved, many countries in the region have scaled up their social protection programmes. In fact, 98.3 per cent of countries in Europe and Central Asia have introduced measures that cover all functions of social protection. The variety and scale of the adopted measures trigger to identify what worked and what didn't to meet the needs of the most vulnerable groups in the region. Of particular interest are the issues related to access to social protection of small holders, agricultural workers and other groups of population residing in rural areas.

The webinar will facilitate the exchange of experiences on how to cope with and mitigate the COVID-19 impacts, challenges and opportunities in implementing social protection measures. The discussion aims to go beyond inventories and policy declarations, into 'how to' matters, and focus on the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, with relevance, outreach and coverage to rural population.

Key messages:

- The fight against COVID-19 is particularly challenging in rural areas. . Policy measures need to pay attention to social protection for the rural populations to avoid spread of poverty and hunger.
- Vulnerable rural populations, in particular women, are significantly affected by the direct and indirect economic and social impact of COVID-19, leading to an increase in hunger and poverty. Gender-sensitive design and implementation of social protection interventions is crucial to
- ensure that rural women can participate in, and equally benefit from, these interventions.
- For rural areas, if implemented in conjunction with productive and economic interventions, social protection can support farmers to continue producing during or after the crisis to ensure food security for themselves and others.

Speakers

1. Mr. Benjamin Davis, Leader, FAO Strategic Programme to reduce rural poverty;
2. Ms. Natalia Winder Rossi, Associate Director, Programme Division/Chief Social Policy, UNICEF;
3. Representatives of government and non-government organizations and agencies from Albania, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Romania and the Russian Federation.
4. Moderator: Ms. Ana Ocampo, FAO Social Protection Officer.

Target audience

National stakeholders, including public and private sector, CSOs and academia in Europe and Central Asia region.

**AGENDA
(Tentative)**

10:00-10:05	Opening remarks	Mr. Nabil Gangi, Deputy Regional Representative, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
10:05-10:15	Introduction: Social protection as a tool to respond to COVID -19 impact	Mr. Benjamin Davis, Strategic Programme Leader, FAO



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10:15 - 10:55	Panel discussion: Challenges and opportunities in addressing COVID-19 through social protection measures	Panel discussion
10:55 – 11:25	Q&A	
11:25- 11:30	Concluding	Mr. Benjamin Davis, Strategic Programme Leader, FAO

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