Background

Across the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region, governments and stakeholders are actively discussing food systems in preparation for the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), through Member States dialogues (i.e. national dialogues) and independent dialogues. Based on game changing and systemic solutions at country and regional levels, the development of pathways to transform food systems, as an essential driver of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), builds upon previous, and ongoing, policy efforts in food and nutrition security, agriculture and food production, environmental protection, investment and social support sectors.

Policy makers in the ECA region face challenges which may be common to many countries, such as the need to improve the nutritional status for all, and stem the tide of overweight and obesity; providing an equitable, sustainable food system, while minimizing negative effects on the environment and reducing the contribution to climate change and GHG emissions. Determining how to ensure a balanced, just, and fair food systems transition – economically, socially and environmentally - to provide safe, nutritious food for all, protect the environment, support livelihoods, and address inequalities, requires policy-makers to foster multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration and cooperation. This is a central element of coherent policy development, and people-centred solutions, where all those engaged in food systems can fulfill their aspirations and reach their full potential, ensuring that no one is left behind.

The Regional dialogue is convened to discuss key policy and governance issues related to sustainable food systems, as well as to share information and experiences on opportunities, challenges, and appropriate policy actions for sustainable transformation of the food systems in Europe and Central Asia, in the context of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In particular, the regional dialogue will highlight the following key messages:

- Strong governance and holistic national and regional approaches are needed for a sustainable food systems transformation
• Food systems need to be equitable and promote the livelihoods and nutritional status of the most vulnerable in food systems both in urban and rural areas (including small-holders, children, youth, women) with a view to addressing their specific needs, access safe, nutritious food, and enabling them to be drivers of change through their food choices.

• Boosting nature-positive production and building climate-resilient food systems require regional approaches aimed, among others, at measuring the contribution of food production to GHG emissions, improving circularity and resource efficiency in food production and manufacturing, as key to reduce the impact of food production on the environment.

• Innovation through participatory engagement processes and structures is required to create food systems solutions that deliver co-benefits and mitigate trade-offs.

As a result of the two main panel discussions, knowledge and experiences will be shared on:

- appropriate measures to address the specific nutritional challenges of the most vulnerable members of our society, focusing on children, youth and women;
- means to shape food demand through actions of government and civil society, including consumers, to drive sustainability through their food choices and actions;
- building equitable, inclusive food systems which allow small-holders and small and medium-sized enterprises to reach their maximum potential, and contribute to sustainable value chains;
- drivers for adjusting food systems to more sustainable models which meet food and nutrition security needs, with reduced depletion of natural resources and negative environmental impacts;
- aligning policies with nature positive production, including financial support to incentivize a just transition to sustainable agriculture and greening of value chains.

In addition, a “food systems community” for the ECA region has been set up on the UNFSS Community website which will feed into the event, on 25 May 2021, and allow for continued dialogue, information exchange and sharing of best practice following the event.

The results of the regional dialogue will be submitted to the global UN Food Systems Summit Secretariat and will feed into the Summit’s report.

**Target Audience**
Government representatives from Europe and Central Asia (i.e. Ministers of Agriculture, Environment, Economy, Health, Social Affairs, and relevant technical staff from the Ministries; UN staff; academia, CSOs and private sector working on food systems-related issues; farmers; producer’s organizations; general public interested in food systems)
### Draft Agenda (2.5 hours)

25 May, 2021

**Policy and governance issues to transform food systems in Europe and Central Asia**

*Russian/English simultaneous interpretation.*

The event will be organized through the zoom platform, and on YouTube.

Q&A option in the chat, and comments from the audience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Video - Intro:</td>
<td>Quotes, or key messages/aspirations from people and governments in the region (collected from the ongoing national dialogues and independent dialogue in the region)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:02</td>
<td>OPENING SESSION - Setting the scene</td>
<td>Welcome by the Moderator: Conny Czymoch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Welcome by Vladimir Rakhmanin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FAO Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:02</td>
<td>Opening remarks and statements</td>
<td>Dongyu Qu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FAO Director General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:10</td>
<td>Agnes Kalibata, UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy to the 2021 UN Food System’s Summit</td>
<td>Olga Algayerova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UNECE Executive Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>Session 1: Policy and governance issues at stake to accelerate food systems transformation sustainably in the ECA region:</td>
<td>Jessica Fanzo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of Global Food &amp; Agricultural Policy and Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>John Hopkins University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Overcoming food systems challenges sustainably in the ECA region through stronger governance and holistic, coherent policies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Draws on the regional SOFI (launching on the 12 May, 2021), the IBC-SFS region specific issues paper, etc.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:40</td>
<td>Video:</td>
<td>Photo Sharing Contest: A selection of photos on sustainable food systems (organized through the Food Systems Community for Europe and Central Asia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A photo collage showing activities and actions for sustainable food systems in the region</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Panel discussion
Session 2: Shaping our food systems to be more equitable, by empowering all consumers and protecting the most vulnerable by ensuring access to safe, nutritious food, and inclusive economic livelihoods.

The discussion contributes to: *Action Track 1, Action Track 2, and Action Track 4*

Facilitated by UNICEF or WHO (TBC)

Key priority policy/governance issues to be discussed:

- Addressing nutritional needs and vulnerabilities of the most vulnerable in food systems both in urban and rural areas (including small-holders, children, youth, women) and how food systems can be more targeted to their nutritional needs.
- Providing the most vulnerable actors in food systems (focus on children and youth) with the tools and knowledge to access healthy diets, reduce food safety risks, *make healthy and sustainable food choices*, and fulfill their aspirations and vision of sustainable food systems in the future.
- *Improving value chains and reaching market opportunities*: for inclusive, equitable food systems, the specific needs of smallholders and SMEs must be considered, including additional challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to support livelihoods, and provide an enabling environment for sustainable agriculture and improving the supply of nutritious, diverse foods.
- *Ensuring smallholders, and SMEs have access to* resources, finance, services, information, innovation, technologies, digital solutions.
- Supporting vulnerable groups and people-centred approaches requires *integrated, multi-sectoral food policy decision making* – e.g. linking agriculture policy to nutritional outcomes, linking social protection programmes to better nutrition and safer food for low-income population groups.

Video:
From a group working on environmental issues (e.g. Footprint Network)

Panel Discussion
Session 3: Improving the sustainability of food systems, by minimizing negative impacts on the natural resource base by promoting nature-positive and climate-resilient food production, and re-shaping financing for greener outcomes.

The discussion contributes to: *Action Track 3 and Action Track 5*

Facilitated by UNDP and WMO

Key priority policy/governance issues to be discussed:

Key policy/governance issues to be discussed:

- *Agri-food policy decisions and approaches to manage natural resources and reverse and/or prevent biodiversity loss*, manage natural resources, including water, for sustainable agri-food production.
- *Greening value chains, reducing environmental and climate impacts*, climate smart agriculture, reducing food loss and waste, circular economy, technologies and innovation, measuring the contribution of food systems to GHG emissions for informed policy, public subsidies.
Economic incentives and policies for SFS, greening VCs: Public policy options to drive nature based approaches, including the greening of value chains. Targeting finances, subsidies, grants, for agri-food sectors, for better nutrition, food safety, environmental outcomes. Responsible investment, and public and private financing options.

12:00 12:20  Take home messages
          Summing Up

12:20 12:30  Conclusion

            Closing Video