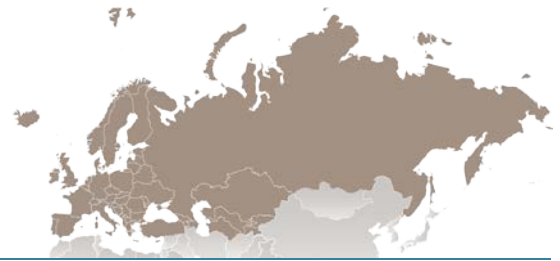




Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
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**Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition**  
in Europe and Central Asia

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE ONLINE CONSULTATION**

**10.09.2015 – 08.10.2015**

[➤ http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca/en/social\\_protection](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca/en/social_protection)

**Addressing the main challenges of food security  
and rural poverty reduction by incorporating social  
protection into national strategies and actions**

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## Topic note

To contribute to the knowledge building and dialogue on the social protection reforms in the post-Soviet countries, the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) has initiated an online consultation that will be hosted on the regional platform of the FAO Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN Forum in ECA).

### Purpose

This online consultation aims to add value to a regional study<sup>1</sup> on the current status and trends in the social protection reforms in the post-Soviet countries. This will provide an opportunity for individuals and organizations to contribute to the process by providing their views and opinions on the issues listed below.

### Outcomes/Expected results

The comments of experts and stakeholders will help REU in formulating and ensuring the success of the regional and country initiatives in social protection, in line with the FAO Strategic Objectives and the REU Regional priorities. The online consultation will have the additional benefit of increasing the awareness level on social protection issues among stakeholders at global, regional and country levels.

### Audience

The consultation is aimed at individuals and national institutions representing public and private sectors as well as civil societies and subregional and regional organizations and initiatives, especially those dealing with social protection, resilient livelihoods initiatives, agricultural and rural development, and food security and nutrition. Even though the geographical focus is on post-Soviet countries, contributors from other regions of Europe and Central Asia will be welcomed to join and share their experiences.

To read the background paper to this consultation please [click here](#)

### Issues to discuss:

- **Policies / strategies:** Are social protection programmes conducive to national agricultural and food security and nutrition policies, and vice versa? What strategies cover the support to rural population in case of floods, droughts and other environmental disasters?
- **Rural population:** Is the rural population included in social security and social assistance schemes, and to what extent? What are examples of social protection policies and programmes that make a specific effort to address the needs of rural residents? Are these rural dwellers always aware of such social protection programmes?

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<sup>1</sup> *The Comparative Study on Social Protection for Rural Population in Post-Soviet Countries* will provide policy recommendations at the intersection of social protection and the areas of FAO's technical competence, and also inform the development of the organization's strategy in the region.

- **Gender:** Is there evidence of the gender-differentiated impact of social insurance and social assistance programmes? What is the access of rural women to social payments if they are engaged in other forms of activities such as working in household plots, self-employment in agriculture, seasonal employment, etc.?
- **Stakeholders:** What would be the role of various stakeholders, including FAO-REU, to support governments and societies in creating social protection nets?

We look forward to a dynamic discussion and do believe that your recommendations will help REU to support governments and partners in addressing the main challenges of agricultural development and rural poverty reduction by incorporating social protection into national strategies and actions.

We wish to thank you in advance for participating in this important consultation!

Respectfully Yours,

*Dono Abdurazakova*

Gender and Social Protection Specialist  
FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

and

*Ceren Gurkan*

Food Security Officer  
Social Protection Division  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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### Recommended readings

- International Labour Office. 2014. *World Social Protection Report 2014/15: Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice*. Geneva, Switzerland, retrieved from [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_245201.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_245201.pdf)
- Background paper prepared by FAO-REU for the 39th ECA session.
- HLPE. 2012. *Social protection for food security*. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome 2012.

## Contributions received

### 1. Rangina Nazrieva, Tajikistan

In Tajikistan there is an overall lack of up-to-date research data, particularly on gender and agriculture (despite having some 74% of the population living in the rural area). Social security of rural population, and specifically women is also almost not well explored. In view of the forthcoming social security system reform in the country, the role of the FAO REU would be critical in trying to mainstream gender into the process and ensure rural women, including agricultural workers, smallholders etc. benefit from the reform and their voices are heard. This could be done, for instance through providing business-case scenario and showcasing the impact of such reform on rural population through targeted research and analysis. Also other vulnerable groups such as disabled (including women) etc. could be included into the impact assessment/research/analysis.

An experience of the social safety nets projects/initiatives as well as the lessons learnt through implementation of those project would well inform the above-cited analysis. There is also a need to make coordinated efforts, probably through the Donor Coordination Council to try and get into the reform process, propose/develop joint programming with key donors involved in the social sector reform etc.

### 2. Matraim Jusupov, Research Institute of Irrigation, Kyrgyzstan

Dear colleagues,

Thank you for addressing such an important issue related to social protection and sustainable livelihoods, especially for rural population in critical situations, as well as to food security and nutrition, that is not adequately addressed in many countries, including Central Asia.

Food security issues are closely connected to the overall economic development of the country. Therefore, in Kyrgyzstan the four main elements of the national food security policy have been initially chosen and still remain a priority, i.e.: (i) agriculture; (ii) marketing; (iii) social protection and healthcare; (iv) macroeconomics and public finance. According to the law of the Kyrgyz Republic, food security is considered ensured when the stock level of the official reserve covers basic food requirements of the vulnerable social groups for the period of not less than 90 days. In fact, in case of a crisis current stock of wheat in the official reserve will be able cover the needs of the population for not more than 30 days. The material and technical resource management system in its present state don't meet the national food needs not only in quantitative terms, but also in terms of assortment and quality of stored food. In case of an escalation of food security problem in the world, partial food self-sufficiency on the one hand and possible import barriers on the other, may pose a real threat of adverse changes in the food market of Kyrgyzstan, accompanied, as a rule, by the uncontrolled rise in inflation and the growth of social tension in the society. Currently the country has no system of monitoring and early warning of negative trends in the food market, both in the world and within the country.

Food security policy aims at enabling access for the population to the required quantity of food in accordance with the minimum standard rate of food consumption, based on availability, access and safety.

The priority areas of food security should be:

Meeting the national demand for agricultural products and processing industry;

Timely organization of storage and utilization of commodities and materials;

Improving efficiency of public financial management policies to ensure food security, including: (i) timely funding of measures aimed at handling of spring field work and autumn field work; (ii) timely financing of state stockpiles fund in order to store grains in amounts established by the legislation; (iii) enhancement of legal and regulatory framework for the efficient performance of the public procurement system; (iv) maintaining financial environment conducive to ensuring food security for all citizens;

Government safety control of produced and imported agricultural products;

Ensuring availability of safe and healthy food.

Ensuring food security for the sake of microeconomic stability. In this regard, the most important tasks will be: (i) to improve the tools for achieving macroeconomic stabilization; (ii) to establish a continuous system of monitoring and evaluation of the impact of changes in food prices on inflation; (iii) to maintain macroeconomic environment conducive to food security; (iv) to maintain consumer price stability through monetary regulation tools.

Antitrust regulation and improvement of the state price policy. In this regard, it is planned to achieve the following objectives: (i) to establish a continuous system of state control of consumer prices in national markets; (ii) strengthening of control over statutory compliance; (iii) interventions aimed at price stabilization in the market of bread products under excessive demand; (iv) antitrust regulation of artificial rise in prices resulted from agency transactions.

Policy measures to ensure the provision of food to socially vulnerable groups, in accordance with standards will be aimed at: (i) introduction of social standards and guaranteed state minimum social standards; (ii) ensuring guaranteed income to access to sufficient amount food in accordance with rational physiological norms; (iii) increasing the guaranteed minimum income.

Improving the quality and availability of information on food security.

Addressing the challenges within this priority area will directly involve the FAO project and will include: (i) strengthening the capacity of the Agency for Hydrometeorology for annual crop forecast / crop and food supply assessments; (ii) support to the National Statistical Committee in improving food safety statistics; (iii) development and establishing of an informational system of monitoring and assessment of changes in food prices, taking into account global trends and internal affecting factors.

Matraim Jusupov, expert on agriculture and water resources management

### 3. **Dono Abdurazakova, FAO REU, Uzbekistan**

Dear Rangina,

Thank you very much for your contribution. It is very valuable as it touches many topical issues: lack of research and data that would help to assess the current status and monitor change; rural women's access to social services which are so important for their empowerment and for the well-being of rural communities. The extent at which rural women are covered by social protection schemes (this may concern maternity benefits, pensions, cash transfers to low income households and others) might be of particular concern to Tajikistan, given the implications of the civil war (in early 1990s) and large scale labor migration which has implications to rural communities and traditional gendered division of labor in food supply chains. If I am not mistaken, an assessment of the impact of social assistance schemes in Tajikistan was conducted by the World Bank (2009) and there is an on-going initiative with the support of the EU and the World Bank – would be interesting and useful to hear about the cases of best practices and lessons learnt from it, and the current status of the reform which intends, among other things, to introduce means tested social assistance schemes.

Indeed, women left behind, in the absence of male workers, can be heavily involved in agriculture as contributors to their family small holdings but what kind of social payments they can count for? And are these payments sufficient to support them, in view of various risks the agricultural workers may face? What about rural women from the households that are in particular need? Issues concerning lesser access of rural women and other disadvantaged groups living in rural or urban areas and engaged in agriculture, to the benefits of social protection services seem to be similar to other parts of Eastern Europe and Central Asia as well. How this can be improved? Are there any examples of the initiatives at local level that tried to address this? And what could be the role of FAO in this effort? It would be useful and practical to hear the subscribers' views and opinions to this on-line discussion.

### 4. **Ceren Gurkan, FAO-HQ, Italy**

Dear Mr. Jusupov,

Thank you for your well-thought out and comprehensive contribution on the case of Kyrgyzstan. You rightly point out that there are many policy dimensions that need to come together in order to ensure food security at the national level.

Ensuring food security across the 4 dimensions (access, availability, utilization and stability) requires action not only at the macro-level, such as by ensuring sufficient food stocks and keeping inflation in check, but also action at the meso- and micro-levels. Fundamentally, the experience of food security and its consequences is an individual one. While aggregate calculations of food availability gives an indication of the food security status, it is not sufficient. Local market functioning and market integration (or public distribution centers that cover remote areas, thus assuring food access to the most geographically marginalized and vulnerable populations in the absence of markets) are key factors to ensuring that national, aggregate food availability translates to local food availability. There are many remote areas, which account for pockets of food insecurity even within nationally food secure



countries as a result of market failures, lack of roads and other basic infrastructure. Also, there is also the micro-level - the household and individual levels. In the context of market economies disposable income is one of the key determinants of whether or not individuals consume the amount and variety of food necessary to be considered food secure. This is where ensuring a coordinated and coherent approach across poverty reduction, food security and social protection come into play.

In the case of Kyrgyzstan, for example, in addition to the National Food Security policy, there is an ongoing dialogue on the National Social Protection Policy. There is an understanding that since the concentration of poverty is generally higher in rural areas than in urban areas, that there needs to be specific action that combines cash transfers with agricultural development, and other food security issues (important ones highlighted by Mr. Jusupov being of food safety standards and value-chain development). However, this cannot happen without taking into consideration the impact on target populations of other important policies, including the National Sustainable Development Strategy and, specifically, the potential impact of the development of cooperatives on the classification of those households as poor and vulnerable.

It would be interesting to solicit some experience from the region on the positive and/or negative impacts of different social protection and agricultural development/food security policies on the same targeted beneficiaries or regions - ie. cases in which a harmonious design and implementation of these sectoral policies led to multiplier effects for the poor populations, and vice versa.

## **5. Andrew MacMillan, Formerly FAO, Italy**

Dear Friends,

This is a very timely and important discussion, based on an excellent background note.

I don't feel very qualified to enter the discussion but nevertheless would like to make a general observation that could be relevant.

The fact is that currently many governments are reluctant to expand social protection programmes because of their fiscal implications. They tend to minimize their commitments on the usually spurious but fashionable grounds that social protection risks creating long term dependence. This may mean that, in promoting social protection for rural populations in which poverty is heavily concentrated, we need to be able to claim that this is an interim dependence-reducing measure. The better longer term (and more sustainable) solution to rural poverty would seem to come from raising food prices in ways that allow the market to funnel greater cash flows into rural areas, generating greater prosperity, more employment options, better wages etc. Once policies eventually push up food prices, some social protection will still be required targeted on the very poor in both rural and urban areas to enable them to eat healthily (especially as food prices rise), but the overall number of SP beneficiaries will fall.

The implication is that any argument for the immediate expansion of social protection in rural areas needs to be set in a broader policy framework with a special focus on food pricing policies.

The positive linkage between higher food prices and poverty reduction has been looked at by Derek Headey at IFPRI in “Food Prices and Poverty Reduction in the Long Term” (IFPRI Discussion Paper 1331, 2014).

Best wishes to participants,

Andrew MacMillan

## **6. Raissa Muhutdinova, Global Civil Initiatives, Kyrgyzstan**

Initially social protection policy in Central Asia, particularly in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, has been introduced as "a safety net" in periods of heightened risks due to rapid deterioration of living standards of households and individuals in (or near) poverty living in rural areas and highly depending on agricultural activities for primary income earnings. The provisional risks included, for instance, the aftermaths of environmental stresses and natural disasters, episodic financial and economic crises, sudden food and fuel price spikes, and other reasons of social, political and economic origins. However, practical experience eventually suggested, that expedient safety net interventions had transitory impacts because as soon as they were removed, the underlying issues that had locked people in vulnerable positions were still left intact. Unfortunately, neither Tajikistan nor Kyrgyzstan have well-integrated social protection systems to prepare the rural communities for timely, effective and long-lasting responses as these responses need thoughtful investments in longer-term, integrated large-scale rural population coverage interventions.

One of the suggestions to improve material well-being and reduce poverty in rural areas would be through the reallocation of labor from less to more productive agricultural activities in addition to better coordination and effective natural resource management, adaptation to climate change and its threats to those whose livelihoods depend on forestry, fishery, and agriculture. Of course such interventions depend, first of all, on local adaptability and national decision-making processes and participation of key stakeholders. It also depends largely on ideas about poverty and how it can be reduced, and on views, interpretations, and ideologies about women's roles in households, communities, and in the scope of work. This of course may differ between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and approaches to social protection system should be distinct as well.

Raissa Muhutdinova

CEO, Global Civil Initiatives, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

## **7. Dono Abdurazakova, FAO REU, Uzbekistan**

Dear Andrew (if I may),

Much appreciate your contribution.

In order to avoid ‘dependency traps’, the governments, specialized agencies and local authorities in a number of the countries in the region provide conditional cash transfers to low-income and poor rural households that have able adults. As an example of such policies,

the case of Azerbaijan can be mentioned where particular effort is made to encourage the applicants to the targeted social assistance programs to engage in crop production and cattle breeding. Not only the applicants from rural areas commit themselves to engage in income generating activities, but also the local authorities commit themselves to provide them with additional support, such as provision of agricultural equipment, machinery, repairs, etc. This approach is being practiced relatively recently, and it would be interesting and useful to hear about its results.

In this regard, participants to this forum are welcome to bring examples of social protection policies and programs that make a specific effort to address the needs of rural residents; and evidence of the their gender-differentiated impact.

## **8. Mikhail Antonenko, Institute of System Research in Agroindustrial Complex of NAS of Belarus, Belarus**

### **The third stage of economic reforms in agricultural sector of Belarus**

The second stage of economic reforms in agricultural sector of Belarus will be completed in 2016.

The first stage was implemented in 1992-1999. During this period social aspects of collective and state farms were separated from production. In 1993, about 95% of profit of collective and state farms was being spent on investments in social infrastructure rather than on development of production facilities.

The concept of rural development in market conditions was developed in 1994. According to the concept, all social facilities, that belonged to collective and state farms were subject to a compensation-free transfer to local governments. Social services of these facilities were to be provided to rural population free of charge. The Council of Ministers of Belarus adopted the appropriate decision. This process was completed by the beginning of the 2000s. The State Program of Rural Development, approved by the Decree of the President of Belarus, was implemented in 2005-2010. Social facilities were modernized, and gave the basis to establish 1481 agrocities. The second stage of agricultural sector reforms began on July 1st, 1999. At that time the new Civil Code has entered in force. It didn't include collective and state farms as forms of legal entities. They gradually began to transform into a commercial organization. Generally they transform into open joint stock companies and unitary enterprises. Today there are 468 joint-stock companies, 248 state unitary enterprises (including 237 municipal), 16 private unitary companies, 309 cooperatives (SPK) and 2 collective farms.

As a result of transformation of collective and state farms, indivisible funds of collective farms have been divided; means of production have been transferred to the ownership of legal entities, and labor force - to the private ownership of workers. Public ownership of state farms has been transferred to the ownership of the district councils. During this period, technical modernization of established commercial agricultural organizations was carried out. It resulted in losses in number of jobs. Over the past 20 years the number of employees in large-scale commercial agricultural organizations reduced to one-fourth - from 1 million workers to 250 thousand in 2014. The average size of agricultural organization today is about

6000 hectares of farmland and 250 employees. Agricultural land is owned by the state. State bodies provide land to farmers for permanent free and targeted use.

Development of the concept of the third and final stage of agricultural reforms in Belarus has been finished. It will consist in changing the principle of formation of development and salary funds of an enterprise. In the course of reforms employees quit their jobs in agricultural organization with their own labor force and establish legal entity – Management Company, which under the contract will be given the authority of an executive body of the Company or the powers of the head of the unitary enterprise. According to this contract employees will invest their work in agricultural organization and form their salary fund as a share of cash proceeds from the sale of products made. That average share now is about 30%.

Payroll management scheme will remain the same in agricultural organizations. But the amount of accrued salary fund will be transferred to the company development fund and reimbursement fund. Employees will work to create these funds, which in fact will be their obligation to the agricultural organization. It will help to resolve the challenges of motivation and financial improvement of agricultural organizations. Currently almost the entire amount of profits of enterprises and state support to the agricultural organizations are directed to pay the interest on commercial bank loans obtained to conduct technical modernization in previous years. Thus company development fund, which today is formed by a residual income and state support turned out to be empty.

In this regard, companies borrow money for development and at their expense form this fund, falling more and more into financial servitude of commercial banks, which have become the financial and credit "kulak-parasites."

To win the battle against the financial "kulaks" in competitive market conditions it requires changing the principles of economic functioning in the course of the third and final phase of agricultural sector reforms. It will take the next five years (2016-2020), which will be a five-year plan of radical change in the management system, including the economy of the agricultural sector.

Mikhail Antonenko, Ph.D .. Associate Professor, Head of the Labor and Social Relations sector of the Institute of System Research in Agroindustrial Complex of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Minsk.

*Mikhail Antonenko, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Head of the Labor and Social Relations, Institute of System Research in Agroindustrial Complex of NAS of Belarus*

## **9. Charita Jashi, Caucasus Development Group, Georgia**

### **New trends of social policy 2012- 2015 Georgian Case**

I would like to share the experience existing in Georgia regarding this issue. It is a really good opportunity to exchange good lessons from different countries.

Liberal economic reforms improved the efficiency of the economy, but harmed the majority of population, economic growth came at the cost of the poor, the number of which doubled and reached. The Economic policy of government has been focused less on poverty eradication

than economic growth. Growth in budgetary incomes did not match the growth of the effectiveness and adequacy of public expenditure. High levels of social exclusion and income disparities hampered the social status of the population.

The situation has changed radically since 2012. State Budget became more socially oriented. The government increased spending on pensions, social allowances, healthcare, education and agriculture industry.. Extensive reforms were launched to raise living standards in agriculture, which employs almost half of our population. Almost 61 % increased budget of Agriculture sector. 700,000 families received direct agricultural assistance. It is very important to support smallholder farmers to improve food security and decrease rural poverty and improvement of food safety regulations and administration to approximate Georgian standards and legislation with those of the European Union.

In 2013 began the Universal Health Care program, more than half population of Georgia citizens qualify under this category health state insurance. The new government has also implemented social programs for the agricultural sector (farmer`s promotion, preferential credit and other projects). It should be mentioned mention the vulnerable people with assistance, which has doubled the allowances for large families, single mothers, which is really important. However, the economic growth rate is lower, which hinders the economy. Obviously social trends are distinct priorities of the governments. Strengthen workers` rights through amendments to the Labor Code. Government spending on pensions, but social allowances do not ensure decent living for pensions.

Social protection increases access to public services and investment in human capital, helping to raise productivity of the labor force. Social protection may lead to a more cohesive society, better able to take crucial political and economic decisions, promoting social justice and gender equality.

Unfortunately active social policy is not considered yet in Georgia as fast as there is urgent needs , social protection is mainly focused on cash benefits , which not facilitate increased of employment.

The Agriculture sector is the main pillar of the Georgian economy **It is urgent to provide balanced social policy in the country, not only passive social policy, but active- through creation new jobs, strengthen professional education and intercommunication of main beneficiary.**

## 10. Sophia R. Kasymova, GEC, Tajikistan

Dear colleagues,

Let me share my opinion regarding gender aspect of social protection of the population in general, and of the rural population in particular using the example of the Republic of Tajikistan (RT). Nowadays the situation is that approximately more than half of the female population of the country (mainly rural women (past and present)) doesn't have access to social protection. These groups of women include:

- Rural women engaged in the informal sector of economy: (1) seasonal agricultural workers, (2) running their personal/family subsidiary farms;

- Women-migrants looking for a job outside their villages / areas / regions. For example, the majority of small traders in the markets, and waitresses working in cafes / diners in Dushanbe are (former) rural women;
- Women, who are not engaged in socially paid work, and have no work experience (mostly young women and children);
- Disabled women (physically/psychologically);
- Women with criminal records (this number increases every year).

In fact these female groups are isolated from social protection in the event of sickness, maternity, old age, and disability. Despite the fact that over the past 20 years: 1) the labor activity of women has increased many times, 2) therefore women contribute significantly to the financial security of their families, especially in regard to food security, 3) rural women are the primary labor force in agricultural production, which is the main sector of the economy of Tajikistan.

How has this situation come about?

In the background paper of the online consultation it is said: “in the Soviet times there were limitations to the system (social protection), as the access to social services was tied to the individual’s employment...”. This principle still works today. According to the law of the RT: *“Citizens who are subject to state social insurance, and who are paid for or pay compulsory insurance contributions themselves, in the cases provided by the law, have the right to basic social security (such as retirement pension, maternity benefits)”*. In practice, this means that those who work under an employment contract and has a legal status of an employee or a private entrepreneur can count on social support.

What should do those who are outside the labor legal environment? What should be done to change the situation for the better with focus on the long term, and with the resources available?

One of the answers is – to enter this legal environment. How?

In my opinion, it is important to legalize an informal labor market (as possible) - on the one hand, that is of course the prerogative of the officials. At the same time women can contribute to the legalization of the informal labor market. It is quite possible under the existing legislation. I will try to represent this situation with the help of the case. In a small village there is a young family with 3 children, a husband who is a labor migrant in Russia, and a wife who is engaged in parenting. They own an apricot orchard and a garden (about 0.3 ha). The woman works in both the orchard and the garden, she also disposes the harvest, sells some part of it, and holds over the rest for family consumption. An orchard and a garden are considered to be smallholdings. Despite the fact that this woman works from early in the morning until late at night, and contributes to the food safety of the family, officially she is considered to be unemployed. Therefore, in case of illness, pregnancy, disability, old age, she will be deprived from social protection. She can gain some kind of a social security guarantee from the state, if she registers her “smallholding” as a “personal or family dekhkan farm” and gets the status of a private entrepreneur.

My recommendations aim at ensuring the following within the frames of “*provision of support to stakeholders, including FAO-REU*” with resources available: 1) strengthening rural women and women engaged in agriculture to enter into the labor “legal environment” with further support from the social security system; 2) teaching them to be responsible for their future. Technically, this can be done through information and educational activities.

### **11. Lyudmila Cherenko, Institute of Demography and Social Studies, Ukraine**

According to many years of research, risks of monetary poverty of the rural population in Ukraine are 1.5-2.0 times higher than in the cities; this figure reaches the highest value during the period of economic growth. However, the most important problem for the rural population is a significant extent of deprivation with strong infrastructural aspects. Due to territorial inaccessibility, rural population has limited access to social services. The additional factor that adds to the problem is socio-demographic structure of the rural population. The most classic representative is a single female pensioner. Besides the majority of families with children who have extremely high risks of poverty live in countryside. Thus, rural population is very much in need of medical and pension benefits, as well as social services.

Unfortunately nowadays there are no programs targeted at the rural population in Ukraine. Neither social protection actions, nor state monitoring (poverty and social programs) take into account location characteristics and territorial differentiation.

I believe that this discussion is a very important step towards solving social security problems of the rural population. Establishing of a system of monitoring and assessment of social security programs with due account for location aspect may become the first step. This would be a vivid and compelling justification for insufficient effectiveness and efficiency of universal social protection programs for rural population. Such kind of assessments could be an effective tool for development of national strategies and policies to ensure the best result, while keeping the current parameters of public spending.

### **12. Alexander Kaygorodtsev, East Kazakhstan State University, Kazakhstan**

#### **The new version of the law on agricultural cooperation in Kazakhstan**

Small-scale production is one of the most serious problems of agro-industrial complex of Kazakhstan. For example, in 2014 the share of private farms accounted for 45.7% of total agricultural production, the share of farms was 31.1%, the share of agricultural enterprises - 23.2%.

Agricultural producers passively associate in cooperatives: as of July 1st, 2015 there are 1481 registered rural consumers' cooperatives.

Given the severity of the problem, on the September 23rd, 2015 members of the Majalis (lower chamber) of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan approved the bill “On agricultural cooperation”.

Currently there are five laws governing agricultural cooperatives in Kazakhstan that have internal conflicts that impede the development of cooperation in agriculture. The purpose of the bill is to define all types of agricultural cooperatives as commercial entities within the legal organizational form of production cooperatives.

Cooperatives are designed to meet the specific economic needs of producers in a participatory process under the leadership of the team members themselves.

Nowadays the majority of types of agricultural cooperatives, with the exception for agricultural production cooperatives, are non-profit organizations; therefore, they are not entitled to distribute profit among its members. This is an economic activity deterrent for agricultural producers.

According to the new version of the law, agricultural cooperative is a legal entity established as a result of a voluntary association of individuals and legal entities for joint cooperation in order to meet the diverse interests of its members.

The basic principles of cooperatives are enshrined in the bill:

- voluntary membership in a cooperative;
- mutual assistance;
- ensuring economic benefits;
- democratic governance, based on the equality of members of a cooperative (“one member - one vote”).

Since there is a possibility of legal entities entering cooperatives, it is stipulated that personal labor participation of members of a cooperative is optional, which is a new thing. Thus it is an incentive for potential members of a cooperative have an incentive to invest in the share capital, that allows them to participate in the distribution of profits without personal labor participation.

Speaking at the Parliament debate on the bill, Asylzhan Mamytbekov, the Minister of Agriculture of Kazakhstan said: “The priority for provision of state support will be primarily given to associations of farmers, which will be merged into cooperatives. It is very important for us to develop systematic measures that ensure that it is beneficial for farmers to associate”.

Farmers benefit from associations as it results in reduction of transaction costs: transportation, supplies, etc..

Agricultural cooperatives are the basis for the creation of equal competitive conditions for small producers, and for improvement of effectiveness of implementation of economic policies: the state will directly provide financial and technical assistance, which will reduce administrative costs and enhance the efficiency, and ensure that measures to support farmers are target oriented.

### **13. Alexander Kaygorodtsev, East Kazakhstan State University, Kazakhstan**



Dr Matraim Jusupov has informed us about the food security policy in Kyrgyzstan. This paper is quite well-designed. But how is this policy implemented in practice?

#### **14. Guljahan Kurbanova, FAO, Russian Federation**

Food security issues rivet more and more attention due to economic trends combined with socio-political tensions, marked at the beginning of this millennium, volatility of agricultural markets and food prices, crop yield reduction, a slowdown in agricultural production and continued growth in demand for food. Despite the progress made over the last two decades in the fight against hunger and malnutrition, chronic hunger still affects about 800 million people.

Nowadays the world has recognized that the improvement of food security and its stability is determined not only the responsibility of the state, it goes beyond it, and depends largely on the policy issues and social aspects including gender and migration. National borders constitute an obstacle to market interaction between the entities and economic actors. Regional integration between the countries and the formation of a single space contributes to the creation of larger markets, both for producers and consumers, and contribute to economic growth by reducing barriers to trade, capital and labor. Attempts in this area are undertaken the CIS and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU).

One of the major challenges that EEU and CIS countries are facing at the dawn of this new century is maintaining stable economic growth and agricultural development alongside with increasing inequality and migration. Meeting these challenges will help achieve sustained development of peoples' living conditions as well as better nutrition and food security for all. At present, countries in the region are facing difficulties such as market fluctuations, climate change and increasing inequality in society. The magnitude of the challenges is reflected in a number of factors, including food price shocks, fluctuations in staple food production, and trade policy measures distorting the market, and geopolitical situation.

Despite relatively stable economic growth in recent years, countries in the region remain vulnerable to socio-economic and political changes due to poverty, global economic trends and the financial crisis. In addition, unemployment, food insecurity and malnourishment, low life expectancy, and disease are prevalent across the region. In order to address these challenges, a multi-dimensional approach is essential; one that addresses both internal and external constraints on development and takes full advantage of regional cooperation. Implementing such a multi-dimensional approach helps to increase the efficiency of production, trade and limited natural resources. It also increases the endowment of knowledge and research potentials. Improvement of food security has to be combined with an appropriate social policy for mitigating challenges and helping to improve people's livelihoods as well as access to nutritional food and preparedness for any shocks.

In light of the above facts, it is clear that CIS and EEU countries need to further strengthen cooperation on social aspects through economic cooperation in order to achieve a sustainable agriculture at the same time by taking into account interest of different groups of people, in particular vulnerable ones, the and trade, and in order to improve food and nutrition security.

These two organizations have to be used as platforms and forums for solving related problems.

### **15. Olga Pashkevich, Institute of System Research in Agroindustrial Complex of the NAS of Belarus, Belarus**

#### **Gendered employment challenges in rural areas of Belarus and addressing these challenges**

Agro-industrial sector plays an important role in the economy of the Republic of Belarus and is one of the major sectors of the economy that defines the conditions for basic life support and growth in prosperity of the society and welfare of its citizens. Agro-industrial complex plays an important role not only in provision of food for people, but it contributes significantly to the solution of the problems related to employment and efficiency of national production. One person engaged in agricultural production requires approximately 7-10 related work positions in the economy sectors that support agriculture. And this proportion is growing constantly.

Acuteness of the problem of rural employment is defused by availability of jobs in large-scale agricultural production and social facilities of agrocities.

Development of small and medium enterprises in rural areas is leverage for employment. I would like to give a concrete example in order to show that the major challenges of gender employment in rural areas of Belarus are addressed through integration of social protection into national strategies and action plans, and through small and medium enterprise development. In October 2015 the Institute of System Researches in Agro-industrial Complex of NAS of Belarus together with the representatives of the Vileyskiy district of the Minsk region are planning to implement the project "Strengthening national capacities for promotion of women's entrepreneurship in rural areas based on the foreign experience", supported by UNESCO within the framework of program for 2014-2015.

The workshop will be held in the Vileyskiy district of the Minsk region. This region is a typical agricultural region. There are 49 thousand people living in the region, and more than 400 population centers. Due to the employment issues, there is an outflow of population from the region, especially of young and predominantly young women. The labor market is characterized by high social strain. There are 10 unemployed applicants per each position, 7 of which are women. Promotion of entrepreneurship could solve the problem of unemployment in the region.

The purpose of the workshop: identifying promising areas for business development in rural areas for women's employment.

The workshop will include a series of presentations on the awareness on the relevance of the project, as well as field studies on objects (village councils, home of crafts, cultural and tourist sites, farmsteads), and training courses.

The subject of the workshop is to deepen knowledge of experts on gender issues, as well as to give them an opportunity to make appropriate adjustments in the plans of social and economic development of rural areas. The result of the workshop will be the inclusion of

gender aspects into projects and programs for sustainable development of rural territories in the long-term, in order to address the needs and priorities of both men and women, aimed at improving the living standards of the rural population, generating employment and promotion of self-employment opportunities, as well establishing of a co-operative of entrepreneurs.

The target audience of the workshop includes: unemployed; those, who would like to engage in business activities; representatives of business; representatives of local authorities; representatives of the NGO for Sustainable Development "ZOVik"; scientists of the Institute of System Researches in Agro-industrial Complex of Belarus of the National Academy of Sciences; staff of the Centre of support for entrepreneurship; representatives from other regions who are interested in gaining experience.

The activities prior to the workshop included:

- monitoring of the situation on the labor market and the legal framework for business;
- population survey on the question: "What kind of activities are not represented in the region or not represented enough?"
- definition of the perspective directions for development of small business in rural areas with a focus on female employment;
- identification and ranking of rural area with possibilities for effective development of gender business;
- target group of about 30 unemployed women, and women who want to go into business for the training "How to become an entrepreneur";
- 10 effective entrepreneurs will be invited to become mentors for those who start their business in rural areas.

The guidance for "Promotion of female entrepreneurship in rural areas" and business model charter of the cooperative will be prepared for publication on the basis of the results of the workshop.

The publication will include recommendations on starting your own business, targeted at women, recommendations on business plan, fundraising for starting a business, case studies and descriptions of a successful business.

Involvement of women in business activities based on their own labor, will be achieved by raising awareness about resources of the region, demand for selected services in the region; developing knowledge about business planning, and fundraising.

The final stage of the project will be dissemination of information on the positive results in other regions of Belarus.

## **16. Dono Abdurazakova, FAO REU, Uzbekistan**

Dear friends,

I would like to draw your attention to the 39th session of the European Commission on Agriculture that took place in Budapest last week, on 22-23 September.

It should be particularly important to the participants of this discussion as access of rural women and men to social protection schemes was affirmed by the delegates representing the member states and independent civil society groups as a key element of FAO's work in Europe and Central Asia, along with combating land and soil degradation, addressing the needs of family farms, boosting nutrition through agriculture, and studying rural people's access to social protection schemes. You may find more details at <http://www.fao.org/europe/news/detail-news/en/c/330659/>

The members of the Commission were presented by the Background paper that focused on the gender dimensions of two social protection components - maternity benefits and pension schemes which are critical for rural women's economic empowerment and wellbeing. The Background paper's conclusions and recommendations were endorsed, and the delegates noted the need for further support to evidence-based research, presentation of good practices and use of success stories which will further facilitate FAO's efforts to provide the appropriate technical advice and support to the countries; creation of decent employment in rural areas and an enabling environment for gender-equitable income generation. FAO need to focus its activities within its mandate and core competencies and seek cooperation with other agencies whose core mandate includes gender equality issues and social protection.

In view of this year's "social protection" theme, please see a FAO informative [brochure / брошюру](#)

### **17. Yuriko Shoji, FAO, Turkey**

Dear Colleagues,

Sorry to contribute towards the end of a successful forum discussion. On a recent visit to Kazakhstan, we discussed with UN colleagues regarding the globally high rate of rural youth suicide. There must be good opportunities to work together with partners to create a safe, and attractive employment and small scale income generation environment in the FSN area. Even in MIC and emerging economies there are vacuums in socio economic infrastructure, especially at the lower end of spectrum. Perhaps knowing that their contribution has real impact on the national (and global) food security will be an incentive for disaffected youth, together with business opportunities.

Yuriko Shoji

Subregional Coordinator for Central Asia, FAO

### **18. Alexander Kaygorodtsev, East Kazakhstan State University, Kazakhstan**

Dr Sophia R. Kasymova has brought up a very important concern about social protection for women who are self-employed de facto, but unemployed de jure. In each country, this problem is solved in accordance with national legislation. Although, in my opinion, women

with children should not be considered unemployed, since they perform a socially useful function; in many countries such women can't rely on social protection. And even if a woman starts to work later all the time that was spent on taking care of her young children is not included in the length of employment for calculation of pensions. As a result, women who have more children have lower pension than those who have small-families. And this rule works not only in rural areas.

### **19. Zafar Berdinazarov, Centre for Economic Research , Uzbekistan**

*What kind of policy measures can be taken in order to facilitate spillover effects of the social protection and sustainable development policy issues in the country?*

All countries in the globe actively contributing their efforts in order to achieve spillover effects of the social protection and sustainable development policy issues in their country during last half centuries. There are several classical ways or policy measures which are taken by all countries, such as specific addressed socio-economic programs, goals and plans due to socio-economic policy conditions (situations) and development strategies of the country. These kind of policy measures (ways) required from all countries some specific or individual contribution in order to make decision for the vulnerable groups of population, especially for the population which are essential part of rural area.

But there is also another universal efficient way in order to facilitate spillover effects of social protection policies in rural area for all countries, especially for developing countries. The idea related and links with ICT (Information Communication Technologies) policy measures in the country. Particularly, feasibility of this idea related with cellular communication. Nowadays almost all countries have access for the cellular communication and using it widely. All agencies and companies of the globe trying to serve their clients through the ICT and providing useful information about their products and services, know-how, etc. Almost all countries cellular prescribes receiving general information (maybe in some developed countries more additional information) for free of charge from the government agencies due to extreme situations (earthquake, firefighting, flood, etc.).

If this is a fact why government organizations aren't uses or involve more efficiently in order speeding up (facilitate) their policy measures in social protection spheres through the ICT post. We are talking about delivering aspects of the social protection information through the cellular communication post to the vulnerable groups of population, especially for the women in rural areas for free of charge. In this case governments (upstream and downstream) should cooperate and facilitate ICT policy issues among IT companies and local government agencies on systematically base. All upstream and downstream government agencies and organizations have to establish and implement their social protection policy issues through the ICT delivering post.

People should know what kind of social protection policy measures have taken by the governments (upper and lower part), who are the vulnerable groups or treatment groups, what kind of preferences or rights they have, periods of vaccination, rehabilitation, information about job fairs etc.

This is a most efficient measure (way) how to involve people, especially vulnerable groups more actively react for the social programs which are taken by government and speed up spillover effects of social protection and sustainable development policy issues in the country.

## **20. Botir Dosov, Central Asia and the Caucasus Association of Agricultural Research Institutions, Uzbekistan**

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to comment on first and second issues of discussion.

Ensuring food security is an important socio-economic problem whose solution is of great importance for the Uzbekistan, and therefore it is the most important area of government policy in ensuring the preservation of its national security and state sovereignty, and a prerequisite for a national strategy of welfare improvement. Covering a wide range of national, economic, social, demographic and environmental factors, the policy of food security is implemented through the development and implementation of comprehensive measures aimed at increasing the production of domestic food products, creating the necessary social, institutional, and industrial infrastructure to provide the population with food, and ensuring social security of the population.

- Particularly important area is the development of the agricultural sector, introduction of advanced scientific developments and new technologies, enhancement of innovations, improvement of productivity and crop yields, and thus improving well-being and welfare of the rural population through increasing the incomes from agricultural activity.
- Availability of food in the country was achieved through the restructuring of agricultural production and increase investment in modern agricultural technologies, deepening of market reforms in the economy. As a result of these transformations Uzbekistan has achieved grain independence, increased production of meat and milk products, fruits and vegetables.

Access to food is provided by sustainable economic growth, the implemented measures on social security, price regulation, creation of socially-oriented institutional framework for sustainable food security and deepening of market reforms.

Utilization or the maintenance of a balanced and nutritious diet is provided by the implementation of national programs to improve food quality and integrated multi-sectoral program of food safety systems. At present, Uzbekistan, in general, produces enough calories for its entire people.

Stability of food security is ensured in Uzbekistan by undertaking measures to the adverse weather conditions, the maintenance of political stability, economic regulation of factors such as price regulation on essential food products, the adoption of measures in the event of low crop forecasting, etc.

The main mechanisms for ensuring food security in the Republic of Uzbekistan include:

- price regulation on the basis of indicative prices of major agricultural, food and socially significant products;
- provision of targeted food assistance to vulnerable population groups, which income levels do not allow them to provide adequate nutrition, especially children and women;
- improving of transport and communications infrastructure;

- establishing of specialized companies for advances, purchase, transportation, storage and wholesale of fruits and vegetables in order to ensure stable availability of basic foodstuffs for population;
- developing of new technologies for deep and complex food processing, storage and transportation of agricultural products;
- strengthening of scientific potential of the agricultural sector;
- improving the efficiency of the government support, focusing on creating enabling environment for financial stability and solvency of the producers;
- improving the efficiency of sanitary, veterinary and phyto-sanitary control system in accordance with international standards;
- provision to the newly created specialized companies the working capital and logistics needed;
- expansion of the volume of agricultural production by optimizing the allocation and increasing the efficiency of agricultural production of vegetables, melons, potatoes, produce, milk and eggs;
- increase the quantity of cattle and poultry at the expense of breeding, veterinary services and network and boosting of the poultry;
- development and expansion of greenhouses using alternative heat sources;
- monitoring of regular advances to processing enterprises for procurement of fruits and vegetables; and other measures towards development of agricultural sector and improving the welfare of the population.

## **21. Boris Karpunin, Russian Research Institute of mechanization of flax, Russian Federation**

Employment is the best method of social protection for rural population. All rural development programs should promote it. Unfortunately, when it comes to practice, Russian officials in the Ministry of Agriculture don't understand that any agricultural program should begin with demographic analysis of the territory covered by the program, and with conclusions on what demographic trends should be supported by the development program. Employed people are the mechanism for the implementation of the program, which is aimed at creating products that are required by the government and the population.

The next of importance is technical and operational part as an instrument for implementation of this program.

In Russia it is the opposite: at first the need of the state for a certain way of development is declared; then the financial and technical parts are given, while the section "Human Resources" (those who will perform activities) is given at the very end. But without social linkage to families of workers, social needs, etc. Thus agricultural programs in Russia don't aim at social protection of the population – it is not a direct intention of the state. It is a priori considered to do better for the population. Therefore many agricultural programs are poorly thought through, irrational and often don't succeed as well as it had been planned or could

have been planned. It is a question of competence and willingness of the officials from the ministries of agriculture – both regional and federal – to work.

## 22. Dilbar Alimjanova, Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan

Dear friends and colleagues,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to share experience, and would like to give my feedback regarding the second and third question of the discussion. Strong social policy is one of the basic principles of the national model of market reforms in Uzbekistan. Laws and regulations are adopted consecutively, **targeted social protection measures, and measures aimed at ensuring rights and interests of women and girls, especially in rural areas**, are implemented. By the way, nowadays 49% of the population of Uzbekistan lives in rural areas (as of January 1, 2015). Civil society institutions are involved in social protection programs. In particular, the **Women's Committee of Uzbekistan**, as one of the largest NGOs of the country is involved in the development and implementation of state programs; it initiates and carries out projects that address social, economic and humanitarian issues, social protection of rural women in the field of employment, including domestic labor, and family and individual entrepreneurship.

*Therefore I will briefly mention gender aspect of social protection especially in rural areas, measures to promote employment and encourage women to become entrepreneurs, and the role of the Women's Committee in this process.*

In 2004, the head of the state signed a decree “On Additional Measures to Support the Activities of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan”, which served as guidance in the work on provisioning of extensive support to women and girls in our society. Today the Women's Committee is actively developing a social partnership with state and public organizations.

*In regard to the protection of women' labor*, through efforts of labor unions international labor standards have been implemented in the contractual acts of the country. Each of these contractual acts includes special sections “Regulation of women' labor. Additional privileges and guarantees for women and persons engaged in family obligations”; these sections guarantee strengthening of social protection, equality of rights and opportunities for working men and women, respect for the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

*As for the support of domestic labor*, special attention should be paid to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan of January 5, 2006 “On Measures for Stimulation of Expansion of Cooperation Between Large Industrial Enterprises and Production of Services Based on Development of Domestic Labor”, which opens up additional opportunities for expansion of business activities of the population. This document aims at encouraging the creation of new jobs at homes for those who receive orders from large enterprises for production of small complementary parts or for labor-intensive activities and provision of services.

Besides the *Program of Measures to Secure Reliable Protection of Private Property, Small Business and Private Entrepreneurship, Remove Barriers on the Way of Their Accelerated Development*, in accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan,



was adopted this year. It is aimed at creating more favorable economic and legal conditions and incentives for radical improvement of the role of private ownership in the economy, and for elimination of existing barriers and restrictions for business organization.

*Ongoing projects and programs of social assistance to women and girls get a lot of publicity as a result of a direct work of structural divisions of the Women's Committee with the targeted population in each field and each area of the country, thanks to the active work with the media and partner organizations.*

Also, the *Women's Committee of Uzbekistan cooperates with international partners*. For example, a number of joint projects aimed at economic empowerment of rural women and girls, promotion of their employment by engaging in small business and private entrepreneurship, farming, services and domestic work have been implemented in recent years in all regions of the republic.

The following projects can be distinguished:

- The project to support the financial sector of the Republic of Uzbekistan (2014-2016) together with the German Savings Banks Fund. Information and advisory groups (IAG) for provision of advisory services for the development of small, private and family businesses have been established under the Women's Committees in 13 regions of the Republic. During the first half of the year 2015, 980 women were provided with advice on financial services, as well as with information on the development of entrepreneurship; 107 workshops aimed at raising awareness of representatives of small and private entrepreneurship, particularly women and young people, about finances were conducted; 155 workshops on the "First independent steps for graduates" for young people in colleges and high schools of the country were arranged in the format of desktop business game involving 3,265 students.
- The project "New social assistance programs to enhance income opportunities for vulnerable families" together with the **Formaper Agency** (Italy) within the framework of the institutional development and cooperation of the **European Union** (2013-2015), which involved 5 pilot mahallas (public authorities for people in local communities) of the country. "Information windows" aimed at development of female and youth entrepreneurship has been launched under these public authorities. "Information windows" has become a kind of a new platform for practical assistance to rural population in the development of entrepreneurial activity directly in the territory of compact habitation of people with assistance from authorized representatives and experts of various organizations on the basis of social partnership. During the year of activities, about 2,000 women and young people have applied to "Info-windows", 645 women have been involved in educational programs, 150 women have been provided with assistance in drafting business plans, and conditions for obtaining preferential loans (at 3% per annum) have been enabled. At the end of the project, 137 women and girls have started their business with the help of preferential loans.
- The joint project "Educational programs for rural women on entrepreneurship" together with the **National Commission of Uzbekistan for UNESCO**, implemented in three regions (Andijan, Kashkadarya, and Syrdarya region). There have been several 4-days workshops held on the basics of entrepreneurship and business planning for housewives, who are engaged in handicrafts, arts and crafts, and possess certain skills of national tailoring, etc., but do not have sufficient legal, economic and financial knowledge, and with low awareness of

the conditions created for the development of private entrepreneurship. These educational programs cover 75 women living in rural areas. As a part of these trainings, women have raised self-esteem, confidence in their abilities, legal and economic knowledge has been improved, practical assistance in preparing business plans has been provided. Such educational programs also contribute to the transition of women from the "informal" labor market to the formal, which also has a number of positive economic and legal consequences.

### **23. Dilbar Alimjanova, Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan**

Let me also focus on the following:

The overriding priority for Uzbekistan is to create necessary conditions to support employment of the population. National targeted programs to promote employment and job creation are being developed since 2009. These employment programs are approved by the Parliament. These programs pay particular attention to the employment for women and graduates of professional colleges and higher educational institutions.

For the first half of the year 2015 the following results have been achieved in the country:

441.8 thousand new jobs are created – 105.8 thousand of which are for women;

banks of the Republic in order to create and support women's entrepreneurship allocated loans worth 685.711 billions soums (this figure rose by 131.5% compared to the same period last year).

Together with the Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan workshops on attracting women and graduates of professional colleges to business were held in remote rural areas. Thus during the first half of this year, 370 rural women and girls willing to go into business were given certificates for the right to finance initial capital of their own business, 70 of which have already been funded.

State, non-commercial and non-governmental organizations pay a lot of attention to the compliance of conditions of work, conditions for its improvement, advanced training of employees, legal awareness of employees, etc. The program of employment and legal protection for women who work on a seasonal basis is being developed.

Let's study one of the cases.

The Women's Committee of the Kashkadarya region on the basis of social partnership with state and non-governmental organizations studied those families in the communities, which included women willing to work seasonally in raising and nurturing silkworms, without sacrificing housekeeping. As a result, 49,000 sericultural links were established; farmers have entered into employment contracts (for 1.5-2 months) with them.

Besides, more than 300 rural women were given jobs, thanks to the efforts made at the cocoons-processing enterprises by the Women's Committee of the region; these women were socially protected, since they were also given employment books.

These women were provided with two hot meals daily, with protective equipment, and their timely payment of labor was ensured.

At the same time, systemic public awareness campaign sought internal and local reserves among farmers and entrepreneurs (executives). Thanks to this work, for the first half of the year an additional 2,154 jobs have been created, in particular: 583 women were given jobs in farmers and dekhani enterprises, 200 - in catering, 89 - in housing and utility, and building sectors, 74 - in trade, and 522 - in other areas.

This experience of the Women's Committee of Kashkadarya region in the field of labor protection of women engaged in seasonal work will be studied and multiply into other rural areas.

#### **24. Botir Dosov, Central Asia and the Caucasus Association of Agricultural Research Institutions, Uzbekistan**

Dear Colleagues!

I would like to comment on the fourth question:

Stakeholders: What would be the role of various stakeholders, including FAO-REU, to support governments and societies in creating social protection nets?

As I understand the question - "support governments and societies in creating social protection nets" is the focus of the initiatives to be undertaken. To my understanding, in all countries, governments implement social protection measures. These measures are an integral part of national programs, strategies and visions of social and economic development. Across the region, there are likely common and various approaches to the provision of social protection of the population, depending on models of the economy, social aspects, covered the experience (transformations) and vision to further the social and economic development. Another question is: how effective and well-targeted social safety nets are? In many countries, there is the term "targeted / addressed social protection", which implies a target orientation. Again, it is easy to judge the effectiveness from a subjective point of view.

Perhaps it would be more appropriate to make efforts to improve the efficiency of social protection. Here, it is necessary, first of all, to identify barriers to the effectiveness and efficiency of the social protection, and which will/can be addressed by the initiatives that could be undertaken FAO-REU, with the participation of the various stakeholders. Identification of potential stakeholders in the country will also require a thorough approach. Different stakeholders may play different roles. In addition, as we all know, the effectiveness of the involvement and participation of various stakeholders depends on coordination between them, between their efforts and contributions.

Here, I see the role of FAO in coordination interactions or creating a mechanism of interaction between the various stakeholders in the countries. These mechanisms or the models can be integrated into existing system / framework in the social protection. Herewith, the "motivation" is an important factor, that is the identifying the particular interests of potential stakeholders. Sustainable motivation of stakeholders has a positive impact on the system of social protection. However, commitment/interest and sustainable participation of stakeholders in supporting governments and societies to create a system of social protection can be achieved by a broad public awareness and information campaign.

This campaign, probably, need to start with the answer to the basic question: What is social protection? why is it so important? why social protection is a commitment of not only governments, but also a wide range of stakeholders?

Again, I see here a leading role FAO-REU.

## **25. Larysa Kobelianska, Ukraine**

Ukraine has a huge agricultural potential. Proper development of this potential and its use could not only resolve the issue of poverty eradication and food insecurity of the population, but could also contribute to provision of essential agricultural products to population in dozens of countries. However, crises, complicated political and social situation, external aggression, the annexation of the part of the territory don't create favorable conditions for development.

As statistical data and research results show, rural women are the most vulnerable social group in this situation. Rural women comprise 53% of the rural population of Ukraine; they are heads of 53% of households; and in fact sustainability of development and stability of well being in general can be judged by the economic status and level of social security of these women. Unfortunately today this level is extremely low.

Thus, the average salary of women in agriculture is very low in principle, and at the same time it comprises only 89.3% of men's salary. 48% of rural women have limited access not only to quality, but also to any medical care in principle, due to the lack of medical facilities close to their homes (bad roads, poverty, lack of affordable transportation makes it impossible to use medical facilities that are located in major towns and cities). 32% of rural women don't have access to drinking water in their homes (they use outdoor wells); 58% - don't have canalization and water supply in their homes. It does not only prove that the quality of life is low- it proves the lack of basic living conditions, and is the evidence of extreme poverty. The need in preschool institutions is met only for 28% of the rural population.

The capabilities, that the government has, and those that it can provide for its citizens determine the level of social security. Currently there is a deep and radical reform of social services in Ukraine. Trying to get away from egalitarianism and making all the components of social protection targeted is a chance to reduce poverty of rural women and give them a chance to develop their potential.

I believe that the experience of social protection reforms in Ukraine might be very interesting and illustrative. I'm ready to talk about it more in further discussion.

Sincerely yours,

Larisa Kobelianska, expert on gender police issues, Ukraine

## **26. Mikhail Antonenko, Institute of System Research in Agroindustrial Complex of NAS of Belarus, Belarus**

There is an interesting experience in formation and implementation of social security and food security and nutrition (the first question of the discussion) policies/strategies in the agricultural sector of Belarus. It is different from other post-soviet republic, and can be used by them.

The Government of the Republic of Belarus carries out social security, wage, healthcare, environmental, and other state policies. For this purpose it establishes a system of subordinate bodies of state management and executive bodies, including industrial and agricultural enterprises management.

Labor collectives of enterprises and institutions, and not politicians and their parties represent the political elite of Belarus. They always win convincingly in equal competition in the parliamentary and local elections. In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus the right to nominate parliamentary candidates, including the House of Representatives (the parliament), is vested in public associations (parties), labor collectives and citizens (Article 69). Labor collectives monitor the activities of executive bodies, when delegating their political representatives in the Parliament.

Labor collectives of enterprises nominate 110 parliamentary candidates, i.e. all territorial constituencies. At the previous elections 103 delegates from this list were elected. Political parties nominated more than 500 candidates, and only 4 of them were elected. There were only 50 self-nominated candidates nominated through gathering signatures, and only 3 of them were elected. The results of the elections of deputies of the lower house of the Parliament suggest that the political elite of the Belarusian society comprises of labor collectives of enterprises and institutions. Their representatives pass laws, approve the main directions of domestic and foreign policy, pass laws on the foundations of social protection, etc. (Article 97 of the Constitution).

The political elite in all countries demands passing laws in their own interests from its representatives in the Parliament, i.e., adoption of laws, which satisfy its economic interests. Deputies of the Parliament of Belarus adopt laws in the interests of the labor collectives that are the political elite of the society.

In terms of the growing economic challenges in the economy of Belarus, the political elite must take over control of the economy, i.e., establish its own management structures with the legal status of legal entities. In the future the economic management function, including social protection, agricultural development, should be passed from state authorities to the bodies of labor collectives. As of today the level of development of the productive forces has increased qualitatively and surpassed the existing national industrial relations that resulted in the slowdown in the economic development of the country. The political elite of the Belarus is able to resolve this contradiction, and to establish new public (and not state) work relations.

## **27. Akbota Jappar, Research Center “Sange”, Kazakhstan**

Dear friends and colleagues, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to take part in the discussion! I would like to add a few comments based on the research experience of our company.

Mr Kaygorotsev brought up a very serious issue of the need to associate agricultural producers in cooperatives. The idea of consolidation is good in terms of reducing the cost of transport, fuel, raw materials, etc.

As our recent study shows - large farms with livestock of more than 500 heads are the most competitive in the milk market of Kazakhstan. Such households have the following opportunities: 1. To enter into agreements for direct supply of their products to milk processors without intermediaries (packers). It leads to more attractive price. In addition, purchasing of large amounts of hay and fodder, etc. allows them to reduce costs per unit of raw materials. Only large farms can afford to carry out breeding work, and therefore: 1. Increase the efficiency of cows by increasing milk yield; 2. Have a sustainable milk yield during the year; 3. Ensure production of high quality products.

Therefore the benefits of cooperation are clear. But it invites some questions. As you know, it is necessary to take into account a number of issues during the process of association, especially in regard to finances and property. Small farmers often don't have sufficient knowledge to be able to combine and use all the advantages of integration properly, as well as the right to divide the costs and profit. Therefore off-site training sessions for the purpose of consolidation (associations) of agricultural producers should be carried out, and they should not be just theoretical. As we see it, it is necessary to involve successful entrepreneurs to ensure that they share their skills and knowledge in their field.

The second point is. As the past experience has shown, programs of concessional lending for agricultural development are of great importance for the development. For the last year several large-scale farms with a full production cycle were established through the program "Ydys" in the Almaty region. But it is much more difficult for small farmers to obtain such loans. And their knowledge and skills of proper management of a credit might not be enough. Therefore it is necessary to develop the practice of lending for agricultural cooperatives, but the training will be mandatory.

2. An important issue of rural poverty has been mentioned in the comment of Lyudmila Cherenko. Risks of rural poverty in Kazakhstan are extremely high as in Ukraine. And the deprivation aspect of poverty is particularly pointed. Limited access to social sphere leads to the fact that children either are not able to get high school education or live with relatives since there is no school in the village. Village people may have large areas of land, but due to the lack of water, they don't farm it. Paternalism is a serious issue. Often there are pensioners in families who provide for the rest of the household members with their pension income (adults, over 18). Unfortunately, there is no universal solution for the issue of rural infrastructure. We should not forget that Kazakhstan is a country with an extremely low population density in rural areas. Therefore, solution of problems should be targeted and local. The level of local executive bodies is really important.

From our point of view, it is necessary to establish: 1. a system of training on effective management for rural akims. Since the process of improvement of infrastructure can be started with one's own forces. After all, local executive bodies are able to clean up the streets, lay out squares, arrange places of leisure. 2. Create a system of incentives for akims to improve the situation in their village. Very often it is only needed to support a new entrepreneur, in order to help him get the paperwork done, to provide land area, etc.

## 28. Jamilya Sopukeeva, Academy of Government Management under the President of KR, Kyrgyzstan

Available in Russian:

### Социальная защита в сельских регионах Кыргызстана: поиск альтернативных форм

#### *Текущая ситуация*

Кыргызстан одна из наиболее бедных стран на постсоветском пространстве. По данным Национального статистического комитета, в 2014 году уровень бедности, рассчитанный по потребительским расходам, составил 30,6% от общей численности населения. За чертой бедности проживали 1,8 миллиона человек, из которых 68,2%, или 1,2 миллиона человек - жители сельских регионов.

В статистике Кыргызстана также используется понятие черты крайней бедности, как границы минимального уровня питания на уровне 2100 ккал в день. За чертой крайней бедности в 2014 году проживали 71 тыс. человек (1,2% от общей численности населения), из которых 60% являлись сельскими жителями.

В стоимостной оценке черта бедности составила 2485,42 сомов (46,33 долл.) на душу населения в месяц, крайняя черта бедности 1465,67 сомов (27,32 долл.) на душу населения в месяц. Стоимость крайней черты бедности (или доля продуктов питания) составила 59% от черты бедности.

В настоящее время, по итогам третьего квартала 2015 года, величина прожиточного минимума в Кыргызстане составила 5019,74 сомов (80 долл.) на душу населения в месяц. 65% прожиточного минимума составляет стоимость продовольственных товаров, или 3262,82 сомов (52 долл.) на душу населения в месяц.

Согласно «Информационному бюллетеню по продовольственной безопасности и бедности», среднедушевые доходы в первом квартале 2015 года по результатам обследований уровня жизни составили 3039 сомов (50 долл.) в месяц, среднедушевые расходы на питание составили 1468 сомов (24 долл.) в месяц, или 48,3% дохода.

Очевидна высокая концентрация населения вокруг черты бедности, что увеличивает вероятность перехода существенной части населения из категории небедных в категорию бедных и наоборот, что частично объясняет тенденции изменения уровня бедности. Анализ чувствительности линии бедности показывает, что при росте черты бедности на 5%, доля бедных возрастает на 5 процентных пунктов, а при снижении линии бедности на 5% доля бедных уменьшается на 4,8 процентных пунктов.

Отметим, что черта бедности ежегодно индексируется на значение индекса потребительских цен, среднегодовое значение которого за январь-сентябрь 2015 года уже составило 7,4%. В июне на заседании правительства министр экономики Олег Панкратов сделал прогноз на 2016 год: «Инфляция составит 10,2%. На ее рост окажут влияние немонетарные факторы. Это рост цен на продукты питания на 10-15%, на непродовольственные товары - на 13%, на услуги - на 10%».

Сокращение бедности, обеспечение продовольственной безопасности и питания являются важнейшими задачами для государства. В целях решения этих задач

правительством приняты «Программа развития социальной защиты населения Кыргызской Республики на 2015-2017 годы» и «Программа обеспечения продовольственной безопасности и питания в Кыргызской Республике на период 2015-2017 годы». Кроме того, Кыргызстан является первой и пока единственной страной в Центральной Азии, которая решила определить минимальные стандарты социальной защиты на основе национального диалога (ABND - Assessment-Based National Dialogue).

### ***Альтернативные формы социальной помощи***

Среди схем социальной защиты, единственной схемой, основанной на критерии бедности, является ежемесячное пособие малообеспеченным семьям, имеющим детей (ЕПМС). Получателями пособия являются несовершеннолетние дети в семьях, имеющих среднедушевой доход меньше гарантированного минимального дохода (ГМД).

Критерием бедности для выплаты социального пособия является ГМД, а не черта бедности или прожиточный минимум, как это принято в большинстве других стран. В отличие от черты бедности и прожиточного минимума, индексируемых в соответствии с ростом цен (индексом потребительских цен), ГМД - это норматив, утверждаемый постановлением правительства. С 1998 года ГМД пересматривался всего три раза и с июля 2015 года составляет 810 сомов (13 долл.), или 17% от стоимости прожиточного минимума. Средняя величина ЕПМС составляет 685 сомов (10 долл.) на одного ребенка.

При определении адресной группы, среднедушевые доходы жителей сельских регионов рассчитываются на основе расчетов Национального статистического комитета по оценке условных (вмененных) доходов, получаемых населением от сельскохозяйственной деятельности. Расчетные условные доходы индексируются по индексу цен сельхозпроизводителей. Для определения доходов от использования земельного надела, от приусадебного участка, а также сельскохозяйственных животных также требуется справка сельской управы (айыл окмоту) с указанием размера, категории земли и количества сельскохозяйственных животных.

Выплата ЕПМС по форме и способу предоставления является пассивной формой социальной защиты. К тому же маленький размер ЕПМС не позволяет решить проблему бедности и, тем более, устойчивости доходов сельских жителей. Тем не менее, семьи в трудной жизненной ситуации, которые не могут самостоятельно заработать средства для доступа к достаточному количеству и качеству питания, в большей степени зависят от социальных пособий и в меньшей степени - от доходов от сельскохозяйственной деятельности.

Создание у малоимущих семей мотивации на поиск возможностей наращивания среднедушевых доходов должно стать одним из приоритетных направлений социальной политики. В поиске альтернативных форм социальной защиты Министерство социального развития (МСР) в настоящее время рассматривает возможности внедрения на добровольной основе социального контракта.

Социальный контракт для определенной группы получателей пособия реформирует ЕПМС из безусловного трансферта в обусловленный трансферт. Предполагается единовременная выплата годового размера пособия семьям, взявшим



на себя определенные обязательства, например, вложение полученных средств в приносящие доход активы, прохождение обучения и, если понадобится, социальная адаптация.

Другой формой обусловленного трансферта может стать участие бедных в общественных работах в формате «продукты за работу», или «семена (саженцы, удобрения и т.п.) за работу». Объектами общественных работ может стать инфраструктура села (дороги, ирригационные системы и т.п.).

При выборе целевой группы для ЕПМС социальные органы руководствуются двумя критериями: наличие несовершеннолетних детей и среднедушевой доход семьи ниже ГМД. При выборе целевой группы для социального контракта добавятся дополнительные критерии, например, такие как наличие трудоспособных членов семьи и определенных активов.

Можно предположить, что трудоспособные члены семей получателей ЕПМС, ведут пассивный образ жизни, о чем свидетельствует их нежелание принимать участие в общественных оплачиваемых работах (ООР) - по данным МСР, всего 1% от зарегистрированных безработных принимают участие в ООР. О наличии трудового потенциала семьи, или же скрытых источников дохода также говорит тот факт, что, по экспертным оценкам, заявленные доходы семей меньше, чем их фактические расходы. При наличии активов (земли, сельскохозяйственных животных) семьи получателей ЕПМС, не имея стартового капитала и знаний, не могут повысить свои доходы (по данным МСР, 59% семей со свободным трудовым потенциалом имеют возможность заниматься индивидуальной предпринимательской деятельностью).

Следует отметить, что в Кыргызстане и прежде предпринимались попытки внедрения в той или иной формы обусловленных социальных трансфертов. Так, например, в 2002 году был начат эксперимент по единовременной выплате годовой суммы пособия. Основной целью эксперимента являлась поддержка самозанятости в бедных семьях для того, чтобы они могли выйти из категории получателей пособия. В 2002 году в эксперименте приняли участие 25 семей, в 2003 году - 250 семей, в 2004 году - 618 семей и в 2005 году - свыше 9000 семей.

В 2005 году: из 9308 семей, единовременно получивших годовую сумму пособия, в животноводческую деятельность вложили средства 6758 семей, или 72,6% семей, в земледельческую деятельности - 1546 семей, или 16,6%, в швейное производство - 230 семей, или 2,5%, в предпринимательскую деятельность в виде мелкой торговли вложили средства 774 семьи, или 8,3%.

По данным Министерства труда и социальной защиты, уже в следующем 2006 году 10% семей перестали получать пособие. С учетом результатов эксперимента и приобретенного опыта, министерством рассматривался вопрос о внесении изменений в Закон «О государственных пособиях в Кыргызской Республике», предусматривающих выплату годовой суммы пособия, в целях стимулирования самозанятости семей. К сожалению, политические события в 2005 и 2010 годах прервали эти реформы.

Сегодня МСР намерено разработать альтернативные, активные формы социальной защиты, в целях повышения эффективности социальной политики. Подобный подход может повысить адресность социальной защиты, так как снизятся ошибки включения

семей с трудовым потенциалом и скрытыми источниками дохода, а также ошибки исключения бедных семей, не имеющих детей, но с низким уровнем среднедушевого дохода.

*Джамиля Сопукеева, специалист по социальной защите*

## **29. Aroa Santiago Bautista, FAO-REU, Hungary**

Dear colleagues and friends,

Let me contribute to such an interesting and important discussion by focusing on the promotion of gender-sensitive social-protection schemes. As it has been discussed by many of you in relation to CIS countries, women's overrepresentation in unpaid work remains an issue that has direct implications not only for women's access to income and recognition of their work, but also for women's access to social protection schemes.

I have been working in Albania in the production of a Country Gender Assessment, and I can say that the situation is again very similar: Women are over-represented in unpaid and domestic work, and, especially in family farming, their work remains unregistered. Despite the fact that land was allotted in the 90s among the population as individuals, land has been de facto been distributed by families and registered in the name of the head of the households (usually men). This male-dominated registration happens as well with the holdings: Only 6 percent of agricultural holdings are registered by women. This increases the invisibility of women as active contributors to small holdings and family farming and therefore, it limits their access to social benefits that are provided to owners of these holdings.

Furthermore, per each dollar that is earned by a man in skilled agriculture and fishery in Albania, women earn an average of 0.62 USD (FAO, 2014; UN Women, 2012). When pensions are calculated based on average salaries, the gender pay gap is translated in older ages into gender-based pension pay gaps. As some of you already mentioned, in family agriculture in which women do not have land, holdings or earnings registered at all, they run the risk of even not receiving pensions at all or receiving minimum non-contributory ones.

In the case of agriculture, the hazards that unpredictable climate events may pose to food security and income stability are an added value to social protection schemes. These social protection plans need to be adapted to agricultural peculiarities (seasonal investments-earnings, natural hazards, lower population density in rural areas, etc), as well as to the actual situation of women and men in agriculture (what we call equity as a means to reach equality), so governments need to conduct deep gender-sensitive situation-analysis before designing any social protection scheme for rural areas. Just extending urban social protection schemes may not suffice.

It is important also to consider additional positive effects that the improvement of social protection schemes can have. As the 2015 FAO SOFI (The State of Food Insecurity) report demonstrates, social protection can contribute to an increased productivity and poverty reduction. Then we can presume that it can even partially slow-down out-migration and internal migration (from rural areas to urban areas) that many countries from Eastern Europe

and Central Asia are facing, if social protection schemes reduce income instability and poverty in rural areas.

Finally, as documented in the background paper for the FAO European Commission of Agriculture 2015 (prepared by Dono Abdurazakova), social protection in the event of motherhood is quite comprehensive in CIS countries (in terms of women's leave entitlements). This can be perceived by some companies as a burden, so in this case, increasing men's rights (as well as responsibilities) on parenthood is a need.

I think, then, that based on what has been discussed so far in the forum and the info presented here, it can be affirmed that it is urgent to:

- 1) Find a way to make visible and quantifiable women's contribution to family farming and unpaid work. (making co-registration of land and holdings mandatory can be a way to do so), and ensure that women have access to information about their social benefits and rights;
- 3) Ensure that women, as well as men, are protected in the event of natural disasters (draughts, floods, etc), and that social protection schemes are gender-sensitive and are well adapted to agricultural and rural peculiarities;
- 4) Pay special attention to pension schemes, since elderly are in many cases those amongst the poorer (especially in the context of out-migration or social changes that reduces family and community protection networks); and
- 4) Promote men's rights and social benefits in regards to parenthood and reproductive responsibilities, so both women and men have shared household responsibilities and can be equally competitive in the market.

### **30. Dono Abdurazakova, FAO REU, Uzbekistan**

I am writing to thank you for valuable contributions provided over last week and even more to the on-line discussion. These insights reflect experiences and context of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, to mention a few. The issues raised by the participants of the Forum over last week or so, show that while there is a clear consensus on the need to integrate social protection into national food security and poverty reduction strategies, the strategies need to be accompanied by broader measures that would take into account learning and knowledge sharing among farmers, local authorities, and specifically rural women.

These strategies need not only ensure access to credits but also raise awareness on how to better use them for the long-lasting benefits of rural households. And there is a challenge of access to social services (educational institutions, children day care facilities, medical assistance), availability of drinking water and tap water, sewage, and other facilities that may significantly contribute to deprivation in rural areas, increase work and time burden for rural women, especially in poor households which at the end affects the impact of social protection schemes. I cannot but fully agree with the points made by many participants, and particularly by Mr. Boris Karpunin, that the best solution in addressing 'social protection' needs would be employment, and decent employment that lead to sustainable well-being of rural households, and all rural development programs need to pay greater attention to that, by assessing the

context, looking at the issues from demographic, gender and social need perspective. The question that has been raised and where it would be still useful to hear feedback, related to effectiveness of social assistance schemes. Agree, that much depends on the level of coordination among various stakeholders at country and local levels, and we should think how best we can ensure the FAO's role in it. Thanks you for all contributions that are very important for us, and look forward to hearing and learning more from you.

Dono Abdurazakova

Gender and Social Protection Specialist

FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

### **31. Saydagzam Khabibullaev, «Land of Plenty Agro Distribution LLC», «Real Estate Strong Partners LLC», Uzbekistan**

Allow me to thank you for the opportunity to participate in this discussion. I would like to give my compliments to each participant involved in the preparation of the discussion and to the participants of the discussion!

I'll move straight to the questions, since I have a completely different opinion about the described issues, and will not address them.

Question 1. I will definitely answer YES! to this question. Otherwise it'll imply that policies / strategies work against people. On the other hand, how does a participant of the process (i.e. a citizen of the country) see it? If to compare with many people, who want to have their say, but don't want to leave their offices and move farther than their administrative positions, I've had an experience and still keep touch with agricultural workers by the nature of my work. Do they feel the effect of social protection? It is difficult to talk about their opinions since the world has changed greatly! To this day respected strategists from other countries and large organizations are willing to introduce their standards in their everyday life. As a result, they remain dissatisfied and push their opinions: "Those have...", "But abroad there is...". With all due respect to these organizations I want to stress one thing - there shouldn't be a unitary standard for all! Sometimes the benefit can be found in contentment with what we have! But, this does not exclude the need to develop and achieve new heights and all other aspirations! I will say even more: "There are special dictators who tell how to live, hiding behind the opinion that in the market economy one can do either one way or another". At the same time they are totally dependent on the changing economy, whether it is called developed or any other name is still dependent on many factors. So, if these guys don't have a clear understanding where the economic situation is moving to, how could they recommend something they know so little about! Strategies of rural population in case of floods, droughts and other environmental disasters require endless development, as even in developed countries, they are at the level of compensation for loss of property and loss of loved ones, loss of property, etc. In Uzbekistan, since I was an employee of both civil service and rural industry I can tell you that best efforts are used in order to avoid a large number of human casualties; and as for their property and other belongings new methods of insurance and compensation in case of an insured event and natural disasters are used. In this regard the

government chooses to compensate for losses caused by drought or floods in terms of a non-grown agricultural product that was supposed to grow. In addition there is a number of mitigation measures, that many participants of the discussion on Central Asia are aware of.

Question 2. Rural population is included in many social programs. One of the programs is provision of housing (new buildings) in rural areas. As for the price and other aspects - it's not for me to decide, that's why I'll skip this part! There is a number of other programs, which provide for the welfare of rural population. There is a number of programs that are being worked out, which eventually will have to provide business and entrepreneurship opportunities in rural areas, one of which is to simplify the registration of participants of entrepreneurial activity in the village. Awareness is a striking theme for many people, who want to pass on this work to companies that provide mobile services and other types of information coverage. I will speak for myself. On September 18th, I conducted a roundtable discussion on the topic "Status of investment promotion in agriculture"; on October 16th, I'm going to conduct a second round of the roundtable discussion on the topic "Ways of stimulating activities to attract investment in agriculture and topical issues of insurance activity related to agriculture"; and I also intend to conduct the third round of the round tables on November 18th. As for the awareness of rural population (I like this formulation a lot!) it's my civic position to do my best to contribute to it.

Question 3. The evidence of gender-differentiated impact - what should be the purpose? When we speak of a man that went away and shouldered his wife - she as a supporter of her family asks such a question. In the preamble you have answered the question: "Who of the villagers gets allowance?". I will not give figures, since they can be easily found, and then the one who seek it shakes his head with displeasure. It is everyone's business, how to understand these figures! What I care about is what do you put at the head of this discussion as a gender equality? I can definitely say from my experience that the majority of rural workers are women. Therefore social programs mostly address their need. This includes provision of medical examinations, etc.; those that have the goal to detect and treat certain diseases. Also I'm not going to write about every social program, but I will say one thing - we do our best to meet the expectations of the rural population of our country. I also have questions to draftsmen of laws and regulations on whether these adopted and published laws and regulations are meaningful. Through my own contribution I try to make them accessible to all, ignoring the gender identity, meaning that a family should benefit and not only those who focus on a gender differentiation.

Question 4. As for the participation of stakeholders, including FAO-REU, only thing I see is a greater openness of the goals; an openness to dialogue and development of opportunities to conduct economic research in collaboration with local civil society institutions. Sometimes in a conversation the only piece of advice I'm given is to refer to someone, who is responsible for something - but it is not an option. In other words the answer I would like to have is: "I will forward your request to this person and will press for its consideration". Since joint actions always have the goal - to ensure social welfare of the population, not only in specific countries, but in other countries of the world too, it enjoins each of the participants upon being aware of what is happening!

Please take my compliments to each of the participants and facilitators of this debate. I hope I didn't upset anyone with my words and I hope for understanding, if I sounded judgmental to

you (in fact, I support the fact that one can judge oneself, but no one else!). I had not even thought to throw stones at anyone, since I'm still learning to be useful to anyone who lives in this immense world with me!

Best regards

### **32. Ceren Gurkan, FAO-HQ, Italy**

Dear participants,

Thank you all for your insightful comments that covered a range of in-depth analyses of challenges that are facing countries in the region. I would like to highlight one particular comment made by Ms. Guljahan Kurbanova: "Improvement of food security has to be combined with an appropriate social policy for mitigating challenges and helping to improve people's livelihoods as well as access to nutritional food and preparedness for any shocks."

The rationale behind these consultations was an attempt to highlight examples of how different policies, in this case focusing on food security, agriculture, social protection and gender, can work together to bring a result that is greater than the sum of its parts for vulnerable rural populations. We have seen examples of different policies from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan to Ukraine and Georgia. What has come out as a clear message is the need for countries in the region to foster exchange on active social policies that attempt not only to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable populations but also aim to foster job creation and graduation from poverty.

The role that FAO can play in this regard can certainly be to promote greater East-East Cooperation, and to leverage lessons-learned and capacities that exist within the region, in addition to provide technical support and advice to link social protection to agricultural interventions for food security and nutrition, to linking social protection to a rural enabling environment as well as linking social protection for FSN and agricultural production to rural services.

On a final note, I wish to point out that this year's World Food Week's theme is on social protection and agriculture, which also coincided with the State of Food and Agriculture 2015: breaking the cycle of rural poverty (<http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/2015/en/>). This recent SOFA release presents evidence that social protection programmes can reduce poverty and food insecurity when effectively targeted and adequate transfers are provided for. Additionally, the report outlines how programmes targeted at women have stronger food security and nutrition impacts, and that social protection stimulates investment in agricultural production and other economic activities. Social protection enhances nutrition, health and education, with implications for future productivity, employability, incomes and well-being. This makes it an important policy lever that should be enhanced to promote inclusive growth and increase resilience and food security and nutrition of vulnerable people in urban as well as rural settings.

Thank you all for your invaluable contributions and for promoting this discussion in the ECA region!

*Ceren Gurkan,*

*Food Security Officer, Social Protection Division of FAO-HQ*

### **33. Dono Abdurazakova, FAO REU, Uzbekistan**

Dear friends and colleagues,

The on-line consultation provided an opportunity to get evidence and experts' opinions on the current status and challenges that the social protection reforms process faces in the region. As was mentioned in the Topic note provided to the discussion participants, the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia differs from other parts of the world due to its recent history of the well-developed social protection system. However, the system had to be adjusted and confirmed to the needs of market oriented economies. This brought new challenges and priorities that all countries of the region are now facing: with the globally

growing recognition of social protection as an important poverty reduction instrument, it has a new role to play in the region. This tendency is well captured by the contributors who brought the examples and concrete cases of current policies and practices that aim to address the needs of rural women and men, including young women and men, by creating jobs and expanding social assistance measures. Proposed solutions range from the greater use of ICT tools to greater attention to women's rural entrepreneurship.

It is remarkable that the end of this consultation coincided with the release of the FAO's annual flagship publication - *The State of Food and Agriculture 2015* - known as the SOFA report- which this year has been dedicated to the role of social protection in fighting poverty and hunger, through promoting agricultural and rural development. Social protection is featured prominently in the recently adopted sustainable development goals, and has been the theme of World Food Day celebrated on October 16th. The FAO report provides ample evidence that social protection helps the poorest to meet their basic consumption needs, especially when they are unable to work, but such help is itself a basis for the gradual improvement of the livelihoods of the poor, when they go along with supportive agricultural programmes.

Summarizing this consultation, I would like to extend my thanks to all contributors for taking time to responding so comprehensively to the questions raised by the forum, and generously sharing their views, knowledge and opinions. Recommendations from the experts for FAO-REU to enhance its efforts and support to the governments and partners in creating comprehensive social protection nets and integrate them into national development strategies and policies are in line with the conclusions from the above report.

The contributions from the experts to this discussion are particularly important as they take into account the unique experience of this region in relation to social protection policies and practices. This consultation helped to extend and deepen our knowledge and understanding of how best FAO can utilise the social protection as a tool in implementing its mandate in food security, poverty reduction and agriculture development in this region. Country examples brought to the discussion can serve as the cases for further study of their impacts.

This dialogue was also a good opportunity to get to know active practitioners and experts working in this area. The time limits of this event do not prevent us from keeping in touch. Hope to continue to remain in touch, network and engage in further exchange of views, ideas and practices beyond this online consultation.

*Dono Abdurazakova,*

*Gender and Social Protection Consultant, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia*

## Background document

The need for social protection in improving food security and nutrition and reducing rural poverty is widely recognized. However, access to social protection remains an issue.

The World Social Protection Report released in 2014 states that only 27 percent of the global population enjoys access to comprehensive social security systems, whereas the other 73 percent is covered only partially or not at all<sup>2</sup>.

From this perspective, the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia differs from other parts of the world because of its recent history with the social protection system of the Soviet era, which was recognized worldwide for comprehensiveness, universality and accessibility.

Cash transfers and in-kind benefits covering basic needs of urban and rural groups such as food, energy, housing, and public transport were non-contributory, with free education (including tertiary-level) and health care complementing the system. Both women and men residing in rural areas and engaged in agriculture were entitled to social security, including pensions and maternity benefits for rural women.

There were limitations to that system as well, as the access to social services was tied to the individual's employment and social benefits were oriented towards certain population categories (such as war or labour veterans) or towards employees of certain industries, regardless of their income level. State pensions were extended to rural dwellers somewhat later than those granted to industrial workers and civil servants<sup>3</sup>, and their amount was lower.

Over the past two decades significant work has been carried out in the region in reforming the national welfare systems to match the demands of market economies. Some countries have achieved greater progress in transforming their systems, while others have introduced partial measures largely retaining the past system of privileges. While the overall picture is fragmented, it is characterized by the coexistence of contributory and non-contributory schemes and the introduction of targeted social assistance programmes that provide cash to disadvantaged population groups.

Reforms in the national welfare systems have been accompanied by important shifts in poverty and food insecurity rates, punctuated by economic transition. While poverty rates have fallen significantly in the region over the past decade, poverty and undernourishment in rural areas remain an issue. In Eastern Europe, for example, the incidence of rural poverty is from one to three times that of poverty in urban areas<sup>4</sup>.

In the rural context, agriculture continues to account for a significant share of employment and gross domestic product. Women are particularly affected, as many men go to urban areas in search of employment, leaving women with the entire burden of farm and family work.

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<sup>2</sup> ILO. 2014. *World Social Protection Report 2014/15: Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice*. Geneva, Switzerland.

<sup>3</sup> Beginning in 1964.

<sup>4</sup> IFAD. 2011. *Rural Poverty Report*. Rome.



These ongoing demographic changes along with labour migration and gender gaps in life expectancy, as well as gendered differences in accessing higher quality jobs, have also affected social protection policies and programmes. Implementation of social protection policies in rural areas runs into additional challenges due to the higher incidence of poverty, the higher degree of informal labour in the countryside, and prevailing sociocultural norms and practices that confine women to their households or insecure jobs. At the same time, evidence suggests that a significant portion of the beneficiaries of social assistance schemes that target low-income groups reside in rural areas. As such, ensuring coherence among social protection and agricultural and rural development policies and programmes is key to addressing rural poverty and food insecurity for rural populations. Evidence and experience show that implementation of social protection schemes, such as cash transfers, can have positive impacts on agricultural productivity, household food consumption, and local economic development<sup>5</sup>. Harnessing these linkages can ensure that social protection schemes, when coordinated and targeted with agricultural development programmes, can not only help to lift people out of poverty and food insecurity, but can also contribute to the structural transformation of the agriculture sector with higher agricultural productivity and household incomes.

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<sup>5</sup> FAO. 2013. *Information Note: Recognizing the linkages between social protection and agriculture*. From Protection to Production Project.

## Launching Message (10.09.2015)

# Addressing the main challenges of food security and rural poverty reduction by incorporating social protection into national strategies and actions

until 30 September 2015

### How to participate

Post your comment on the **FSN Forum in ECA website** or send it to **FSN-moderator@fao.org**



Dear Colleagues,

We would like to invite you to the regional online consultation on **“Addressing the main challenges of food security and rural poverty reduction by incorporating social protection into national strategies and actions”**, which will be hosted on the regional platform of the FAO Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition **from 10th until 30th of September 2015**.

This online consultation is promoted by the **FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia** (FAO-REU) and aims to add value to a regional study on the current status and trends in the social protection reforms in the post-Soviet countries. This will provide an opportunity for individuals and organizations to contribute to the process by providing their views and opinions through a constructive dialogue.

The comments of experts and stakeholders will help FAO-REU in formulating and ensuring the success of the regional and country initiatives in social protection, in line with the FAO Strategic Objectives and the Regional priorities. The online consultation will have the additional benefit of increasing the awareness level on social protection issues among stakeholders at global, regional and country levels.

The consultation is aimed at individuals and national institutions representing public and private sectors as well as civil society and subregional and regional organizations and initiatives, especially those dealing with social protection, resilient livelihoods initiatives, agricultural and rural development, and food security and nutrition. Even though the geographical focus is on post-Soviet countries, contributors from other regions of Europe and Central Asia are welcome to join and share their experiences.

*Your FSN Forum Team*

**Issues to discuss:**

- **Policies / strategies:** Are social protection programmes conducive to national agricultural and food security and nutrition policies, and vice versa? What strategies cover the support to rural population in case of floods, droughts and other environmental disasters?
- **Rural population:** Is the rural population included in social security and social assistance schemes, and to what extent? What are examples of social protection policies and programmes that make a specific effort to address the needs of rural residents? Are these rural dwellers always aware of such social protection programmes?
- **Gender:** Is there evidence of the gender-differentiated impact of social insurance and social assistance programmes? What is the access of rural women to social payments if they are engaged in other forms of activities such as working in household plots, self-employment in agriculture, seasonal employment, etc.?
- **Stakeholders:** What would be the role of various stakeholders, including FAO-REU, to support governments and societies in creating social protection nets?

Please post your comments in Russian or English here:

[www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca/en/social\\_protection](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca/en/social_protection)

If you are not yet our member please register here:

[www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca/en/user/register](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca/en/user/register)

For any question contact us at [FSN-moderator@fao.org](mailto:FSN-moderator@fao.org)

We look forward to a dynamic discussion and do believe that your recommendations will help REU to support governments and partners in addressing the main challenges of agricultural development and rural poverty reduction by incorporating social protection into national strategies and actions.

We wish to thank you in advance for participating in this important consultation!

Respectfully Yours,

*Dono Abdurazakova*

Gender and Social Protection Specialist

FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

and

*Ceren Gurkan*

Food Security Officer

Social Protection Division

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

## Digest No 1 (18.09.2015)

**Addressing the main challenges of food security and rural poverty reduction by incorporating social protection into national strategies and actions**  
until 30 September 2015

 **How to participate**

Post your comment on the FSN Forum in ECA website [www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca) or send it to [FSN-moderator@fao.org](mailto:FSN-moderator@fao.org)



Dear Participants,

We would like to share with you Digest №1 of the online consultation "[Addressing the main challenges of food security and rural poverty reduction by incorporating social protection into national strategies and actions](#)" covering the period from 10th until 17th of September.

This consultation is promoted by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and hosted on the regional platform for Europe and Central Asia of the FAO Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition.

We are **thankful for the first contributions** made by experts from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Italy, who highlighted the importance of this topic for the region. Interest for this consultation goes beyond the region; there have already been some 630 hits on the consultation web-page from 85 countries all around the globe.

It is a pleasure for us to **welcome 18 new FSN Forum registered members** from 11 countries: Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, Uzbekistan, and Turkey. It is worth mentioning that the gender balance is impressive; 72% of the newly registered experts are women.

To post your comment or to read the comments already received, please visit the web-site:

English: [www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca/en/social\\_protection](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca/en/social_protection)

Russian: [www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca/social\\_protection](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca/social_protection)

For any question contact: [FSN-moderator@fao.org](mailto:FSN-moderator@fao.org)

Your opinion matters to us! And indeed, we look forward to receiving more comments and actively engage with you during the next two weeks!

*Yours,*

*FSN Forum Team*

**Please read online the first comments of the following experts:**

- [Rangina Nazrieva, expert on social development and gender, Tajikistan](#)
- [Matraim Jusupov, expert on agriculture and water resources management, Research Institute on Irrigation, Kyrgyzstan](#)
- [Dono Abdurazakova, expert on social protection and gender, FAO REU, Uzbekistan](#)
- [Ceren Gurkan, expert on social protection and food security, FAO-HQ, Italy](#)
- [Andrew MacMillan, former FAO, Italy](#)

## Digest No 2 (29.09.2015)

**Addressing the main challenges of food security and rural poverty reduction by incorporating social protection into national strategies and actions**  
until 7 October 2015



### How to participate

Post your comment on the **FSN Forum in ECA website**  
or send it to  
**[FSN-moderator@fao.org](mailto:FSN-moderator@fao.org)**



Dear Members,

We are happy to see that the online discussion **“Addressing the main challenges of food security and rural poverty reduction by incorporating social protection into national strategies and actions”** has picked up speed and keeps attracting new insightful comments.

To give you more time to join in and to share your views we have therefore decided to **extend the deadline until 7 October 2015**.

You can see all comments received to date, the background and the guiding question on the website in [English](#) and [Russian](#).

We look forward to receiving your comments.

*Your FSN Forum Team*

## Digest No 3 (07.10.2015)

**Addressing the main challenges of food security and rural poverty reduction by incorporating social protection into national strategies and actions**  
until 7 October 2015

 **How to participate**

Post your comment on the FSN Forum in ECA website [www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca) or send it to [FSN-moderator@fao.org](mailto:FSN-moderator@fao.org)



Dear Colleagues,

We are getting closer to the end of the E-consultation on "[Addressing the main challenges of food security and rural poverty reduction by incorporating social protection into national strategies and actions](#)".

Please take your chance to contribute to the experts' dialogue and express your views on this important topic. The summarized outputs of this consultation will be shared with you next week. In the meantime, please see the overview of the last weeks prepared by our co-facilitator - Dono Abdurazakova.

To post your comment or to read the comments received, please visit the website:

English: [www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca/en](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca/en)

Russian: [www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca)

For any question contact: [FSN-moderator@fao.org](mailto:FSN-moderator@fao.org)

Yours,

*FSN Forum Team*

**Dono Abdurazakova**

I am writing to thank you for valuable contributions provided over last week and even more to the on-line discussion. These insights reflect experiences and context of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, to mention a few. The issues raised by the participants of the Forum over last week or so, show that while there is a clear consensus on the need to integrate social protection into national food security and poverty reduction strategies, the strategies need to be accompanied by broader measures that would take into account learning



and knowledge sharing among farmers, local authorities, and specifically rural women.

These strategies need not only ensure access to credits but also raise awareness on how to better use them for the long-lasting benefits of rural households. And there is a challenge of access to social services (educational institutions, children day care facilities, medical assistance), availability of drinking water and tap water, sewage, and other facilities that may significantly contribute to deprivation in rural areas, increase work and time burden for rural women, especially in poor households which at the end affects the impact of social protection schemes. I cannot but fully agree with the points made by many participants, and particularly by Mr. Boris Karpunin, that the best solution in addressing 'social protection' needs would be employment, and decent employment that lead to sustainable well-being of rural households, and all rural development programs need to pay greater attention to that, by assessing the context, looking at the issues from demographic, gender and social need perspective. The question that has been raised and where it would be still useful to hear feedback, related to effectiveness of social assistance schemes. Agree, that much depends on the level of coordination among various stakeholders at country and local levels, and we should think how best we can ensure the FAO's role in it. Thanks you for all contributions that are very important for us, and look forward to hearing and learning more from you.

*Dono Abdurazakova*

Gender and Social Protection Specialist

FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

## Overview of the E-consultation (28.10.2015)

# Addressing the main challenges of food security and rural poverty reduction by incorporating social protection into national strategies and actions

Dear Colleagues,

We are happy to share with you the overview on the Online Consultation "Addressing the main challenges of food security and rural poverty reduction by incorporating social protection into national strategies and actions" that ran on the regional platform of the FAO Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition ([http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca/en/social\\_protection](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/eca/en/social_protection)) from the 10th of September until the 8th of October 2015.

**Thank you all for the expressed interest and shared knowledge and insights during this true dialogue!**

As an output, this consultation harvested 33 very comprehensive views, reflecting the rich experience and evidence of 25 experts from 11 countries (viz. *Belarus, Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan*). Participants had very diverse affiliations such as governmental bodies, scientific and research institutions, civil society organizations (including women groups and committees), international and inter-regional organizations and initiatives, developing programmes, private companies and self-employed experts. We were pleased to observe a growing rate of women-experts participation in this online consultation compared to the previous regional discussions of the FSN Forum (i.e. 60 percent vs 5-30 percent, respectively).

This consultation also meant to increase the awareness on social protection issues among various stakeholders at regional and country level. For that purpose, the consultation was widely promoted and over 20 000 people were directly informed through various global and regional communication channels and professional networks. As a result, the geographical scope of the consultation's page was wide, drawing over 1200 clicks from 96 countries during the period of this consultation.

In closing, we would like to share with you two concluding messages from our co-facilitators – **Ms Dono Abdurazakova** and **Ms Ceren Gurkan** – who are specialists on social protection and food security with an experience on the targeted region.

The complete proceedings of this online consultation are available in English and Russian; please follow the links to download them in your language of preference:

[E-consultation Proceedings in English](#) / [Материалы онлайн-консультации на русском языке](#)

If you would like to explore more about the global social protection read the summary and the proceedings of the recently closed online discussion on "Nutrition-Sensitive Social Protection Programs Around the World – What's being done and to what effect?" by following the link:





<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/forum/discussions/social-protection-nutrition>. This e-discussion took place on the FAO Global FSN Forum from August 25 until September 12, 2015.

Please feel free to circulate this message among your colleagues. We will continue to be available for you through [fsn-moderator@fao.org](mailto:fsn-moderator@fao.org) and keep you informed on upcoming events.

We look forward to seeing you again in the upcoming discussions!

*Your FSN Forum Team*

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**Dono Abdurazakova**  
**Gender and Social Protection Consultant, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia**

Dear friends and colleagues,

The on-line consultation provided an opportunity to get evidence and experts' opinions on the current status and challenges that the social protection reforms process faces in the region. As was mentioned in the Topic note provided to the discussion participants, the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia differs from other parts of the world due to its recent history of the well-developed social protection system. However, the system had to be adjusted and confirmed to the needs of market-oriented economies.



This brought new challenges and priorities that all countries of the region are now facing: with the globally growing recognition of social protection as an important poverty reduction instrument, it has a new role to play in the region. This tendency is well captured by the contributors who brought the examples and concrete cases of current policies and practices that aim to address the needs of rural women and men, including young women and men, by creating jobs and expanding social assistance measures. Proposed solutions range from the greater use of ICT tools to greater attention to women's rural entrepreneurship.

It is remarkable that the end of this consultation coincided with the release of the FAO's annual flagship publication - [The State of Food and Agriculture 2015](#) - known as the SOFA report- which this year has been dedicated to the role of social protection in fighting poverty and hunger, through promoting agricultural and rural development. Social protection is featured prominently in the recently adopted sustainable development goals, and has been the theme of World Food Day celebrated on October 16th. The FAO report provides ample evidence that social protection helps the poorest to meet their basic consumption needs, especially when they are unable to work, but such help is itself a basis for the gradual improvement of the livelihoods of the poor, when they go along with supportive agricultural programmes.

Summarizing this consultation, I would like to extend my thanks to all contributors for taking time to responding so comprehensively to the questions raised by the forum, and generously sharing their views, knowledge and opinions. Recommendations from the experts for FAO-REU to enhance its efforts and support to the governments and partners in creating

comprehensive social protection nets and integrate them into national development strategies and policies are in line with the conclusions from the above report.

This consultation has demonstrated that despite the progress made in the countries of the region in implementing reforms and modernizing the social protection systems, the challenges continue to persist, and these challenges are particularly acute in rural areas due to greater poverty risks. The discussion participants particularly stressed “the need to address vulnerabilities and access to social protection of rural women – working de-facto, but not de-jure” (Mr. Kaygorodtsev, Kazakhstan). The contributions from the experts to this discussion are particularly important as they take into account the unique experience of this region in relation to social protection policies and practices. This consultation helped to extend and deepen our knowledge and understanding of how best FAO can utilise the social protection as a tool in implementing its mandate in food security, poverty reduction and agriculture development in this region. Country examples brought to the discussion can serve as the cases for further study of their impacts.

This dialogue was also a good opportunity to get to know active practitioners and experts working in this area. The time limits of this event do not prevent us from keeping in touch. Hope to continue to remain in touch, network and engage in further exchange of views, ideas and practices beyond this online consultation.

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**Ceren Gurkan**  
**Food Security Officer Social Protection Division of FAO-HQ**

Dear participants,

Thank you all for your insightful comments that covered a range of in-depth analyses of challenges that are facing countries in the region. I would like to highlight one particular comment made by Ms. Guljahan Kurbanova: “Improvement of food security has to be combined with an appropriate social policy for mitigating challenges and helping to improve people’s livelihoods as well as access to nutritional food and preparedness for any shocks.”



The rationale behind these consultations was an attempt to highlight examples of how different policies, in this case focusing on food security, agriculture, social protection and gender, can work together to bring a result that is greater than the sum of its parts for vulnerable rural populations. We have seen examples of different policies from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan to Ukraine and Georgia. What has come out as a clear message is the need for countries in the region to foster exchange on active social policies that attempt not only to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable populations but also aim to foster job creation and graduation from poverty.

The role that FAO can play in this regard can certainly be to promote greater East-East Cooperation, and to leverage lessons-learned and capacities that exist within the region, in addition to provide technical support and advice to link social protection to agricultural interventions for food security and nutrition, to linking social protection to a rural enabling

environment as well as linking social protection for FSN and agricultural production to rural services.

On a final note, I wish to point out that this year's World Food Week's theme is on social protection and agriculture, which also coincided with the State of Food and Agriculture 2015: breaking the cycle of rural poverty (<http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/2015/en>). This recent SOFA release presents evidence that social protection programmes can reduce poverty and food insecurity when effectively targeted and adequate transfers are provided for. Additionally, the report outlines how programmes targeted at women have stronger food security and nutrition impacts, and that social protection stimulates investment in agricultural production and other economic activities. Social protection enhances nutrition, health and education, with implications for future productivity, employability, incomes and well-being. This makes it an important policy lever that should be enhanced to promote inclusive growth and increase resilience and food security and nutrition of vulnerable people in urban as well as rural settings.

Thank you all for your invaluable contributions and for promoting this discussion in the ECA region!

## Facilitators of the consultation

### Dono Abdurazakova

Dono Abdurazakova is a Gender and Social Protection Consultant with the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia. She has extensive experience working in policy advice, research and practice in social issues in countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Being affiliated with the UN for the last 20 years, she has been working closely with governmental agencies, NGOs and donor agencies performing multiple tasks in implementing their commitments and policies to promote equal and just societies.



Prior to joining the UN, Dr. Abdurazakova has also been a Senior Lecturer, Assistant Professor and Deputy Dean of Tashkent State University (Faculty of Oriental Studies). She holds a degree equivalent to PhD (History), and published a range of monographs, book chapters, journal articles, reports and conference papers on issues related to social development.

### Ceren Gurkan

Ceren Gurkan is a Food Security Officer working in the Social Protection Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome, Italy. She has her B.A. in Economics and International Relations from Brown University and her MSc in Development Management from LSE. She is an economist with specific expertise in the area of food security policy and programme formulation, food security information systems and household vulnerability analysis. Additionally, she has been focusing on the development of a



policy mapping tool looking at the coherence between food security and nutrition, agricultural and rural development and social protection. Finally, she has been technically backstopping FAO's support to the National Social Protection Dialogue ongoing in Kyrgyzstan.