



Informal Consultation for Europe and Central Asia

Budapest, 18-19 May 2015

Final draft annotated agenda for the 39th ECA

Opening of the Session

1. **Adoption of the agenda**
2. **Appointment of the Rapporteur**
3. **Innovation in family farming**

Innovation in family farming¹ highlights that family farms should not be considered an obstacle, but rather as part of the solution for ensuring long-term global food security, rural poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. Therefore, promoting innovation in family farming is globally becoming a priority as well as in member nations in Europe and Central Asia. In the last twenty years, the agricultural sector in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia has been marked by an overall shift from collective to individual land tenure, generally accompanied by privatization of legal land ownership. This has (i) created a massive number of family farms with unequal access to knowledge, markets, conditions and opportunities for innovation, and (ii) left governments with challenges regarding policies and institutional capacities to adequately address innovation demands.

Therefore, a study has been launched for the Region, which contains country- and subregion specific challenges related to fostering innovation in family farming including policy options. Strong focus has to be placed on the demand for a transition from linear, top-down, non-inclusive national research systems, serving centralized economies in the past, towards inclusive, decentralized and pluralistic agricultural innovation systems² that facilitate and coordinate the activities of all stakeholders involved in agricultural innovation. Family farms across the region show extreme diversity in size, market and

¹ [Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN \(2014\): State and Food of Agriculture 2014 – Innovation in family farming.](#)

² The term 'agricultural innovation system' refers to the individuals, organizations and enterprises that bring new products, processes and forms of organization into use to achieve food security, economic development and sustainable natural resource management. Like any 'system', it encompasses the different stakeholders or actors as well as the linkages between them. It also includes the so-called 'enabling environment' which, as the name suggests, includes the factors making it all possible, such as political commitment and vision; policy, legal and economic frameworks; budget allocations and processes; governance and power structures; incentives and social norms (FAO, 2012).

knowledge access and other characteristics, some of them region-specific, which implies diversity in the policy options for agricultural innovation systems.

The study concluded will provide *inter alia* conclusions related to the role of family farms for achieving food security as well as the challenges faced by agriculture and institutions that support agriculture innovation, which will be presented to the members.

It is expected that the members review the recommendations from the analysis but also provide information regarding their experience at national, regional and local level. The discussion on this topic should result in policy recommendation fostering innovation in agriculture and also giving clear guidance to FAO regarding its focus of work in the next biennium.

A decision box containing the recommendations from the discussion will be prepared for adoption at the ERC 30th Session.

4. Combating land degradation for food security and provision of soil ecosystem services in Europe and Central Asia – International Year of Soil 2015

Linked to the International Year of Soils 2015, land degradation is a key challenge to food security and soil ecosystem services in the Region and specifically in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Driven by biophysical and socio-economic factors, aggravated by effects of climate change and unsustainable use of land and water resources, it is one of the greatest threats by a majority of European and Central Asian countries. Soils, a core component of land resources, are under increasing pressure, and the number of areas reaching the limits of their productive capacity is fast increasing.

To address the challenge, under the Global Soil Partnership, the European Soil Partnership³ and the associated sub-regional Eurasian Soil Partnership⁴ were launched in 2013. Country partners have started drafting the implementation plan for the (sub-) regional partnerships to move into concrete field action at regional, national and local levels.

FAO and other international partners have been promoting a global framework for assessing land degradation on different scales that can provide a baseline, assist in targeting investment and planning interventions for efficient, equitable and sustainable agricultural development. Though the development of this baseline is a long-term task, it is important to progress in order to achieve the proposed target of a “30 percent increase in the area of land under crops, grazing land and forestry under sustainable land management” of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

³ The European Soil Partnership was established in Berlin on October 31 2013. The Secretariat is based in Ispra, Italy, at the Joint research Centre of the European Commission -

<http://www.fao.org/globalsoilpartnership/regional-partnerships/europe/en/>

⁴ The Eurasian Soil Partnership was established in Moscow in 18-20 November 2013. The Secretariat is based in Moscow, Russian Federation, at the Eurasian Center for Food Security -

<http://www.fao.org/globalsoilpartnership/regional-partnerships/europe/en/> and <http://ecfs.msu.ru/ru/epp/epp.php>

The background paper presented by the Secretariat will highlight the status, trends, challenges and costs related to land/soil degradation in the region of Europe and Central Asia. It will also specify the potential contribution of healthy soils for food security and nutrition, climate change adaptation/ mitigation and ecosystem services in the region for guiding policy reforms and investment decisions related to sustainable soil management.

Members will be requested to support the execution of the implementation plans of the (sub) regional soil partnerships and endorse priority actions (e.g. upscaling of integrated natural resources management in drought-prone and salt-affected agricultural production landscapes in Central Asia and Turkey) in order to successfully arrest and reverse current trends in soil degradation at regional, national and local levels and tackle interlinked challenges of desertification, land degradation and drought in line with the 10 year UNCCD strategy (2008-2018).

As decision box containing the recommendations from the discussion will be prepared for the adoption by 30th ERC.

5. Gender-sensitive analysis of social protection programs for rural residents

The positive impact of social protection on rural development is widely recognized, making it a crucial element of pro-poor policies including the post-2015 agenda. From this perspective, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is committed to supporting governments and partners in addressing the main challenges of agricultural development and rural poverty reduction by incorporating social protection into regional and national strategies and actions. To build knowledge and understanding of the benefits of social protection programmes for women and men living in rural areas, which are particularly relevant in view of social protection reforms ongoing in the region, a comparative analysis of existing social protection programmes in the CIS Countries and Georgia has been prepared.

The situation of the social protection programmes in the CIS countries and Georgia is different in comparison to other parts of the world as in the process of transition to a market economy, the countries have had to abandon the universal system in order to move to a more targeted approach that would reach the neediest. Drawing on the information from the study and the social protection programmes in other countries of the Region, the background paper for the topic is prepared synthesizing information from the Region and presenting policy recommendations and lessons learned regarding the use and implementation of social protection programmes in the Region for the member countries as well as further work proposals for FAO in the coming biennium.

The members may want to review the results of the study and the synthesis in the background paper and share their experiences regarding social protection programmes on rural development in their country and provide suggestions to improve the existing programmes and give recommendations for the future work of the organization.

As decision box containing the recommendations from the discussion will be prepared for the adoption by 30th ERC.

6. **Addressing social and economic burden of malnutrition through nutrition-sensitive agricultural and food policies in the region of Europe and Central Asia**

Despite a significant growth in food production over recent decades, stunting among children under five years and under-nutrition is still present in some countries of the region. Moreover, due to economic and nutritional transition, the prevalence of overweight and obesity are on raise in all countries, a phenomenon associated with unbalanced and monotonous diets, micronutrient deficiencies and sedentary lifestyle. The consequences of malnutrition are multiple and diverse, including non-communicable diseases (NCDs) - main cause of disabilities and mortality worldwide with high social and economic costs. The cumulative cost of all NCDs, for which overweight and obesity are leading factors, were estimated at about US\$1,4 trillion in 2010 (SOFA, 2013). The social cost of malnutrition, measured by the “disability-adjusted life years” is high worldwide. Beyond the social cost, malnutrition causes high costs to national economies due to lost productivity and employment, high health care costs, missed educational targets and income opportunities. Without action, these problems may expand and become greater. The challenge for policy-makers is how to address under-nutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, while at the same time avoiding or reversing the scaling up of overweight and obesity in the region.

The objective of the discussion on this topic is to update on social and economic burden of malnutrition and diet-related non-communicable diseases in the region of Europe and Central Asia and to recommend a set of policies, strategies and priority actions to reduce social costs and inequalities in nutrition applicable to various clusters of countries in the region in line with the ICN2 Framework for Action. Policy options for bringing major shifts in the ways the malnutrition is addressed by placing the accent on prevention, promoting the advantages of agri-food systems, nutrition-enhancing and food-based approaches in combating micronutrient malnutrition will be highlighted. Policy options would range from those related to food systems aiming at to achieve better quantity, quality, diversity and sustainable availability of nutrient-rich foods, to consumer-centred policies that would facilitate food choices for healthy diets, and to market oriented policies that would make the access to quality and safe food, and nutritionally balanced diets for all income groups of population, including the most vulnerable. The role of various sectors, partnerships and actors in implementing the ICN2 Framework for Action - public and private sectors, civil society, smallholders and family farms will be detailed along with exploring possible mechanisms for more effective inter-sectorial coordination and ways of improving policy coherence across major sectors with an impact on nutrition. The paper will include reflection on strategies for strengthening the linkages between agriculture, food and nutrition, recognizing the importance of matching supply and demand side policies and programmes while taking into account the potential for transformation of raw materials through the food supply chain, perspectives of value chains development and shortening food chains, capitalizing biodiversity for nutrition and other policies to support transition to sustainable food production and consumption within emerging global and regional challenges and trends.

It is expected that the members review the outcomes of the background document and policy recommendations and also recommendations for future actions of FAO and of the members.

Recommendations issued from the discussion held during the ECA will be presented in a decision box for the ERC.

7. Costs Proposal for the Organization of Future Sessions of the FAO European Commission on Agriculture

Following the decision of the 38th Session of the ECA and the 29th European Regional Conference the Secretariat was requested to prepare a detailed cost proposal of holding the future sessions of the ECA in Ankara, Budapest or Rome. The secretariat will present the detailed cost analysis to the members of the ECA. The document will provide an overview regarding the costs, which have been analyzed and also give detailed information on the costs, which are comparable in all three locations.

The members are requested to review the costs proposal for the organization of the future session sessions of the ECA and make a recommendation regarding the future holding of the session of the ECA.

8. Election of members of the Executive Committee

9. Other business

10. Date and place of the Fortieth Session

11. Summary of conclusions presented by the Rapporteur

Closing of the Session