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Organization of the  
United Nations

APRC/24/REP

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Sri Lanka  
31 January  
-2 February  
2024 (virtual)  
and 19-22  
February 2024  
(hybrid)

## **Thirty-seventh Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific**



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*FAO Member Nations in the Asia and the Pacific Region*

|  |                                  |                          |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Afghanistan                              | Kazakhstan                       | Philippines              |
| Australia                                | Kiribati                         | Republic of Korea        |
| Bangladesh                               | Lao People's Democratic Republic | Russian Federation       |
| Bhutan                                   | Malaysia                         | Samoa                    |
| Brunei-Darussalam                        | Maldives                         | Singapore                |
| Cambodia                                 | Marshall Islands                 | Solomon Islands          |
| China                                    | Micronesia (Federated States of) | Sri Lanka                |
| Cook Islands                             | Mongolia                         | Thailand                 |
| Democratic People's Republic<br>of Korea | Myanmar                          | Timor-Leste              |
| Fiji                                     | Nauru                            | Tonga                    |
| France                                   | Nepal                            | Tuvalu                   |
| India                                    | New Zealand                      | United States of America |
| Indonesia                                | Niue                             | Uzbekistan               |
| Iran (Islamic Republic of)               | Pakistan                         | Vanuatu                  |
| Japan                                    | Palau                            | Viet Nam                 |
|  | Papua New Guinea                 |                          |

*Date and place of the Sessions of the FAO Regional Conferences for Asia and the Pacific*

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| First          | - Bangalore, India, 27 July – 5 August 1953  |
| Second         | - Kandy, Ceylon, 20-25 June 1955   |
| Third          | - Bandung, Indonesia, 8-18 October 1956  |
| Fourth         | - Tokyo, Japan, 6-16 October 1958  |
| Fifth          | - Saigon, Republic of Viet Nam, 21-30 November 1960                                    |
| Sixth          | - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 15-29 September 1962   |
| Seventh        | - Manila, Philippines, 7-21 November 1964  |
| Eighth         | - Seoul, Republic of Korea, 15-24 September 1966                                       |
| Ninth          | - Bangkok, Thailand, 4-15 November 1968  |
| Tenth          | - Canberra, Australia, 27 August – 8 September 1970                                    |
| Eleventh       | - New Delhi, India, 17-27 October 1972   |
| Twelfth        | - Tokyo, Japan, 17-27 September 1974   |
| Thirteenth     | - Manila, Philippines, 5-13 August 1976  |
| Fourteenth     | - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 25 July – 3 August 1978                                      |
| Fifteenth      | - New Delhi, India, 5-13 March 1980  |
| Sixteenth      | - Jakarta, Indonesia, 1-11 June 1982   |
| Seventeenth    | - Islamabad, Pakistan, 24 April – 3 May 1984   |
| Eighteenth     | - Rome, Italy, 8-17 July 1986  |
| Nineteenth     | - Bangkok, Thailand, 11-15 July 1988   |
| Twentieth      | - Beijing, China, 23-27 April 1990   |
| Twenty-first   | - New Delhi, India, 10-14 February 1992  |
| Twenty-second  | - Manila, Philippines, 3-7 October 1994  |
| Twenty-third   | - Apia, Western Samoa, 14-18 May 1996  |
| Twenty-fourth  | - Yangon, Myanmar, 20-24 April 1998  |
| Twenty-fifth   | - Yokohama, Japan, 28 August-1 September 2000  |
| Twenty-sixth   | - Kathmandu, Nepal, 13-15 May 2002   |
| Twenty-seventh | - Beijing, China, 17-21 May 2004   |
| Twenty-eighth  | - Jakarta, Indonesia, 15-19 May 2006   |
| Twenty-ninth   | - Bangkok, Thailand, 26-31 March 2009  |
| Thirtieth      | - Gyeongju, Republic of Korea, 27 September-1 October 2010                             |
| Thirty-first   | - Hanoi, Viet Nam, 12-16 March 2012  |
| Thirty-second  | - Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 10-14 March 2014  |
| Thirty-third   | - Putrajaya, Malaysia, 7-11 March 2016   |
| Thirty-fourth  | - Nadi, Fiji, 9-13 April 2018  |
| Thirty-fifth   | - Thimphu, Bhutan, 1-4 September 2020 (virtual)  |
| Thirty-sixth   | - Dhaka, Bangladesh, 8-11 March 2022 (hybrid)  |
| Thirty-seventh | - Colombo, Sri Lanka, 31 January-2 February (virtual) and 19-22 February 2024 (hybrid) |

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## SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

### ***MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL***

- ***Results and priorities for FAO activities in the region (Paragraphs 25 a-u and 26 (a-d))***
- ***Country Office Network – Current Status and Way Forward for the Asia and the Pacific region (Paragraph 27)***

### ***MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE CONFERENCE***

- ***State of food and agriculture in the Asia and the Pacific region: Global and regional food security outlook (Paragraphs 12 c, d, h-k, and 13 a-g)***
- ***Building resilience through agrifood systems transformation (Paragraphs 14 a-h and 15 f-g)***
- ***Financing to end hunger for today and tomorrow (Paragraphs 16 a and f-h and 16 c and d)***
- ***How to fight food loss and waste in Asia and the Pacific region (Paragraphs 18 a-e and 19 c-f)***
- ***Transforming capture fisheries and aquaculture towards sustainability in Asia and the Pacific region (Paragraphs 20 d, g-i and 21 a and c)***
- ***Applying a “One Health” approach to accelerate agrifood systems transformation in the Pacific region (Paragraphs 22 a-h and 23 c-e)***

## I. Introductory Items

### **Organization of the Regional Conference**

1. The 37th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC) was organized in two parts: the Senior Officers Meeting (SOM) from 31 January to 2 February and the Ministerial Session from 19 to 22 February. The SOM was organized virtually and the Ministerial Session was conducted in-person with virtual participation.
2. The Regional Conference recognized the modernization and innovation in the modality and format of its 37th Session, with the SOM held in fully virtual modality in advance of the in-person Ministerial Session.
3. Representatives from 37 Member Nations and two observers participated in the Regional Conference. Representatives of intergovernmental organizations and five international and non-governmental organizations attended as observers. Representatives of four United Nations organizations and specialized agencies also attended as observers.

### **The Regional Conference and Inaugural Ceremonies**

4. Ms Shiromani Edirimanna, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Plantation Industries, Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and Mr Jong-Jin Kim, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative of FAO, presented opening addresses.
5. Ms Shiromani Edirimanna, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Plantation Industries, Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka welcomed delegates and participants to the virtual APRC and formally opened the SOM. Ms Edirimanna delivered opening remarks during the opening ceremony of the virtual SOM. Ms Edirimanna stressed that the Asia-Pacific region faced intricate challenges that required collaborative solutions and that the themes of the SOM of APRC 37, including regional food security, agrifood systems transformation and the goal of ending hunger, resonated with the region's pressing needs at this juncture. Reference was made to the diverse landscapes and cultures of the Asia-Pacific region that present both challenges and opportunities, requiring innovative, inclusive and sustainable solutions. Ms Edirimanna recognized the wealth of knowledge and expertise that FAO brings at country level, and underscored the importance of exchanging ideas, sharing best practices and forging partnerships that would pave the way for transformative change.
6. Mr Kim, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative of FAO, appreciated the strong support of the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for hosting the meeting and thanked its leadership and collaboration in organizing the Regional Conference. Referring to the newly adopted FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, Mr Kim noted the alignment with the updated regional priorities and looked forward to Members' interventions and suggestions on how these could contribute to agrifood system transformation in the region.
7. Referring to the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, Mr Kim stated that it is anchored in the agrifood systems transformation and added that the achievement of SDG 1 (No Poverty); SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) is fundamental to attaining all the other SDGs. Mr Kim highlighted that due to convergent crises, nearly 371 million people are undernourished in the Asia-Pacific region and this represents half of the world's undernourished. Against this background, global agrifood systems transformation is seen as the climate solution and as a key contributor to ensure food availability, accessibility and affordability. Finally, while providing examples of FAO's work in the region to accelerate agrifood systems transformation, Mr Kim commented that FAO is scaling up results on the ground through the implementation of its Strategic Framework and the prioritization of country and regional needs.

### **Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur**

8. Delegates unanimously elected Ms Shiromani Edirimanna, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Plantation Industries as Chairperson of the SOM.

9. Delegates unanimously elected Heads of Delegation of all participating countries as Vice-Chairperson of the SOM.
10. Delegates unanimously elected Ms Mercedita A. Sombilla, Under Secretary, Department of Agriculture, the Republic of the Philippines to serve as Rapporteur of the SOM.

### **Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable**

11. The Meeting adopted the Provisional Agenda which shown in Appendix A. Documents submitted to the Meeting are listed in Appendix B.

## **II. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Matters**

### ***A. State of food and agriculture in the Asia and the Pacific region: Global and regional food security outlook***

12. The Regional Conference:
  - a. noted the update on food and nutrition security in the region, the decrease in the Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU) rate and the fact that 23.5 percent of the population in the region was facing moderate or severe food insecurity, and that 1.9 billion people in Asia and the Pacific could not afford a healthy diet in 2021;
  - b. encouraged FAO to continue its efforts in publishing food insecurity data and outlook, highlighted the importance of accurate, reliable and timely food security and nutrition data for formulating policies and responses, and expressed concern regarding the paucity of data for some Asia Pacific countries, in particular, for the Pacific Island countries (PICs) and its impact on policy development and programme implementation;
  - c. requested clarification on the methodologies followed by FAO in collecting and analysing data on food security and nutrition, for the computation of cost and affordability of healthy diets, and encouraged closer consultations between FAO and interested national governments, especially in the absence of updated data from national governments;
  - d. underscored the importance of Members to provide up-to-date and unclassified data and complete information to FAO, as appropriate and in line with national capacities and resources, to allow timely analysis;
  - e. acknowledged that the main challenges facing the region relate to its ability to sustainably increase productivity and innovation, particularly in the face of resource limitations, climate change risks and the region's growing population as the medium- and long-term outlook highlights;
  - f. emphasized the importance of transparent, predictable, open and fair markets, underpinned by an effective multilateral trading system, for food security;
  - g. recognized that unjustified policy measures, especially export restrictions, hinder access to and availability of food for the most vulnerable, while acknowledging the importance of balancing the domestic food security needs of Member Nations both exporting and importing;
  - h. highlighted the importance of FAO's role in supporting the development of global and regional standards through the work of CODEX and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and in cooperation with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) in underpinning global rules-based trade;
  - i. acknowledged the importance of research and development and technologies in improving productivity to address the demand supply gap in the face of rising population and high demand;
  - j. highlighted the importance of improving resilience of food systems in the face of multiple crises, taking in to account local situations;



- k. expressed appreciation for FAO's efforts to enhance market transparency by providing up-to-date and credible data and information, in particular, in view of the increasing risks and uncertainties caused by conflicts extreme climate events, pests and diseases and economic shocks; and
  - l. noted the role of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), as an intergovernmental platform, other relevant FAO Governing Bodies and technical and policy committees in providing policy guidance and knowledge products for the implementation by Member Nations, in a voluntary manner.
13. The Regional Conference recommended FAO to:
- a. work with countries on tailor made support for food systems, responding to actual needs of Members;
  - b. support and direct resources towards climate change resilience and adaption and mitigation, towards improving the sustainability of food systems;
  - c. strengthen its work on transboundary animal disease prevention, pest management, soil health, disaster mitigation and relief, in order to better meet the needs of agricultural production in the region;
  - d. play a key role in enhancing transparency in agricultural markets through platforms such as the Agricultural Market Information Systems (AMIS) and in urging Members to provide timely, adequate, up-to-date and complete data, complying with national laws and policies;
  - e. actively utilize its expertise and engage in international environmental discussions convened by UN system entities in charge of climate change, biodiversity and plastic pollution, etc., by providing technical inputs based on existing guidelines and voluntary guidelines under discussion to serve as a foundation for the discussions, within its mandate;
  - f. continue and expand efforts to support Members to address water challenges, promoting effective and integrated water resource management in addressing food security, including focus on the Water-Energy-Food Nexus; and
  - g. work to address data gaps and limitation in the pacific, including through South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC), support and capacity building for enhanced data collection and analysis.

### ***B. Building resilience through agrifood systems transformation***

14. The Regional Conference:
- a. reiterated the need to boost resilience against climate change and disasters for enhancing food security nutrition and achieving sustainable development;
  - b. recognized the importance of the agrifood systems and ecological approach that not only strengthened resilience of agrifood systems but also reduced food loss and waste (FLW), reduce carbon emissions and enhance ecosystems;
  - c. appreciated the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, Regional Priorities, Strategy on Climate Change and Science and Technology Strategy as important frameworks to enable actions;
  - d. emphasized the importance of strategic foresight planning in the face of an uncertain environment;
  - e. underscored the need to address data gaps, especially in the Pacific, including with the use of the FAO's Damage and Loss Assessment methodology and online tools;
  - f. emphasized ensuring strong interface between science and practice, public and private sectors and the role of grassroot organizations in the agrifood systems;

- g. recognized the importance of digital innovations and blended finance, engaging the private sector in mobilizing resources for resilient, inclusive and sustainable agrifood systems transformation; and
  - h. highlighted the need to focus on specific issues including local food systems, low carbon, resilient and sustainable practices, and water issues; strengthen efficient, inclusive and resilient value chains and markets; boost initiatives under the Paris Agreement; and develop global standards for biosecurity and food safety, important for agrifood systems, early warning systems and anticipatory action.
15. The Regional Conference recommended FAO to:
- a. improve compiling, sharing and disseminating more information on useful technologies, agroecological and other innovative practices and collaboration examples through events and platforms, to develop partnerships between public research institutes and private sector, for promoting resilient and sustainable agrifood systems;
  - b. continue working with Members to support local communities and Indigenous Peoples' active participation in agrifood systems transformation at the global, regional/subregional, country and local levels, and recognize the important role of local communities and Indigenous Peoples traditional knowledge and practices in building resilience;
  - c. continue working to address data gaps and limitations in the Pacific, by supporting and building capacities for data collection and analysis, including on loss and damage, in order to better represent the diverse situation of Pacific communities;
  - d. continue supporting Members upon request to repurpose government support for agriculture producers towards climate resilient and low emissions agriculture;
  - e. work with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) in monitoring relevant initiatives and projects, and to prepare a follow-up report on its 2021 joint report with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);
  - f. scale up its support to countries that seek to access funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF), especially across all Pacific countries; and
  - g. ensure support to Members, especially vulnerable Pacific countries, in resilient and sustainable agrifood systems transformation to align with the *FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031*, the COP 28 global roadmap - Achieving SDG2 without breaching the 1.5 C threshold and regional initiatives.

### ***C. Financing to end hunger for today and tomorrow (SDG 2)***

16. The Regional Conference:
- a. expressed concern that the region was home to the largest number of malnourished people and was far from meeting the SDG 2 targets;
  - b. noted that the SDGs were interconnected – there are wide ranging drivers of hunger and malnutrition including poverty, urbanization, climate change, social protection policies, agricultural productivity, sanitation facilities, etc.;
  - c. emphasized the twin approach towards ending hunger by 2030: short-term actions to avoid setbacks during ongoing crisis, as well as long-term investments to address the root causes of hunger together with poverty, inequalities, malnutrition and the weak performance of agrifood systems;
  - d. noted that direct targeting of nutrition interventions was effective in reducing hunger and malnutrition in rural as well as urban areas.
  - e. emphasized that the lack of adequate and affordable finance was a key challenge in meeting the SDG target, and highlighted the utmost importance of ensuring access to affordable finance for climate-vulnerable and resource-poor countries;

- f. highlighted that a comprehensive approach was needed to mobilize the necessary additional financing, including increasing domestic resource mobilization and leveraging international investments, attracting direct foreign investment and accessing international financial flows, including official development assistance (ODA) and climate finance;
  - g. emphasized the importance of involving the private sector for mobilizing finance towards SDG 2-related investments through various mechanisms, including public-private and farmer partnerships, blended finance and innovative approaches; and
  - h. recognized that the transformation of the agrifood systems hinged on prioritizing smallholder family farms and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).
17. The Regional Conference recommended FAO to:
- a. coordinate with UN system entities, including the other two Rome-based Agencies, and IFIs, for mobilizing additional resources;
  - b. undertake a study on the financing situation, and the requirements to achieve SDG 2 in the Pacific region, upon availability of resources;
  - c. support countries in formulating sustainable and inclusive bankable initiatives;
  - d. facilitate collaboration among countries in the region through SSTC and other cooperative modalities it being vital for knowledge exchange and bridging knowledge gaps;
  - e. provide support to develop country-specific financial investment plans, tailored to the specific context of each country with particular focus on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and high-mountain and Himalayan countries, and continue facilitating private sector engagement in agrifood systems transformation, in line with the *FAO Strategy for Private Sector Engagement, 2021-2025*; and
  - f. provide technical support to countries upon the request for repurposing of subsidies towards attaining sustainable agrifood systems transformation.

#### ***D. How to fight food loss and waste in Asia and the Pacific region***

18. The Regional Conference:
- a. welcomed FAO's initiative to bring this topic to the APRC Agenda;
  - b. emphasized that addressing FLW required a holistic systems approach, including links to responsible consumption, behavioural change and circular economy;
  - c. acknowledged the impact of FLW on food and nutrition insecurity, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, environmental challenges and degradation of natural ecosystems, and the importance of addressing this issue to develop resilient agrifood systems;
  - d. highlighted that addressing the multifaceted problem required a comprehensive and collaborative approach with participation of all stakeholders, including government, private sector, civil society and consumers;
  - e. appreciated the normative work carried out by FAO on this topic, especially towards developing the "Regional Strategy on Food Loss and Waste Reduction in Asia and the Pacific" based on five pillars: raise awareness and encourage collaboration between state and non-state partners; identify and address the critical loss and waste points; support investments and governance mechanisms; and monitoring the progress on the SDG indicator 12.3 for FLW.
  - f. underscored the key gaps in data and information on FLW, particularly in the Pacific region, and the contribution of FAO in deepening the assessment on FLW – how much FLW occurs and why, and the pilot initiatives focusing on these topics; and

- g. highlighted the importance of achieving SDG target 12.3.1 – halving food waste and reducing food losses, and appreciated the efforts of FAO towards strengthening capacities of countries to report on the Food Loss Index.
19. The Regional Conference recommended FAO to:
- a. undertake capacity building and awareness creation among state and non-state actors on reducing FLW and facilitate collaborations for investments in innovative technologies;
  - b. identify good practices and facilitate knowledge sharing and cross learning among countries and experienced organizations to increase the momentum of action and have a catalytic impact on reducing FLW;
  - c. support countries to assess the situation of FLW, identify scientific evidence-based policies, while also contributing to policy formulation and governance mechanisms for reducing FLW and supporting countries to report on the Food Loss Index;
  - d. intervene on FLW mitigating mechanism for countries based on the Food Loss Index;
  - e. contribute to strengthening the circular economy for managing FLW and contribute to agrifood system transformation; and
  - f. strengthen the linkages with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) processes, given the importance of this topic for climate change and GHG emissions.

***E. Transforming capture fisheries and aquaculture towards sustainability in Asia and the Pacific region***

20. The Regional Conference:
- a. highlighted the region's leadership in capture fisheries and aquaculture, contributing with over 70 percent of global production; the aquaculture sector is projected to grow by over 20 percent by 2030;
  - b. acknowledged that, when managed and developed sustainably, aquatic food systems in both marine and freshwaters, including aquaculture and fisheries of the region, contributed significantly to improving food and nutrition security and livelihoods, specifically enhancing women's participation along the value chain;
  - c. welcomed FAO's Blue Transformation vision in the context of Asia and the Pacific region to increase the contribution of fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic foods value chains to provide a more significant proportion of nutritious food and resilient livelihoods in the region;
  - d. recognized that the Blue Transformation promotes sustainable aquaculture intensification, effective management of all fisheries and upgraded value chains to ensure the social, economic and environmental viability of aquatic food systems;
  - e. recognized that the sustainable management of capture fisheries needed decisive action on critical aspects, including capacity building for better data collection systems, improved stock assessment methods for effective management action, reducing overcapacity, overfishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and rebuilding stocks, as well as integrating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction into fisheries management practices and policies;
  - f. recognized the potential for further aquaculture development into more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable aquatic food systems through innovation, investment and partnerships; a transformed aquaculture sector would strengthen aquaculture's contribution to world food security, improved nutrition, secure livelihoods, economic and social development and environmental recovery;

- g. welcomed the work of FAO and underscored the need to continue supporting improvements to stock assessment and management practices, improving data collection and analysis, promoting greater innovation and investment in aquaculture transformation, strengthening and investing in small-scale fisheries and aquaculture, and promoting aquatic foods in nutritious and healthy diets;
  - h. expressed concern over the issue of the impact of climate change on capture fisheries and aquaculture in the region, specifically the vulnerability of the PICs, environment challenges and sustainability of mangroves, and on policies and activities supporting smallholder fishers; and
  - i. commended the work of the newly created Committee on Fisheries (COFI) Subcommittee on Fisheries Management and recognized its role in improving the fisheries management in the region.
21. The Regional Conference recommended FAO to:
- a. support actions needed for promoting the implementation of the Blue Transformation Roadmap in regional initiatives, along with enhancing access to blue and climate finance for improving resilience and strengthening knowledge exchange and regional cooperation;
  - b. work with Members to identify the types of support required and support capacity building for Members by providing guidance on national policy directions, improving data for fisheries management decision-making, addressing IUU fishing, supporting small-scale fisheries, promoting innovation for sustainable and efficient aquaculture, addressing issues related to seafood trade, and encouraging the role of aquatic foods in a nutritious and healthy diet;
  - c. continue efforts to support accurate and timely data collection and analysis towards improving stock assessments in the region, particularly addressing multispecies and multigear fisheries;
  - d. engage actively by providing technical inputs in international environmental discussions convened by UN system entities in charge of climate change, biodiversity and environmental pollution (with special attention to plastics);
  - e. provide support for Members to meet their existing and novel biodiversity and conservation obligations, to increase resilience for aquatic ecosystems and ensure continued reporting under SDG indicator 14.4.1 to measure global progress against SDG 14.4; and
  - f. provide support to fisheries and aquaculture initiatives that are helping to provide solutions to other agrifood sectors.

***F. Applying a “One Health” approach to accelerate agrifood systems transformation in the Pacific region***

22. The Regional Conference:
- a. recognized the importance of One Health in food systems transformation that addresses threats to the health of humans, animals, plants and the environment – and associated diseases (zoonotic, transboundary animal and waterborne) and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) – food safety, nutrition, and food security risks;
  - b. acknowledged the unique challenges faced by the Pacific Islands region, affecting human, animal, plant and environmental health due to its vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change (such as rising sea levels and salinity, the increased frequency of extreme weather events and vector-borne diseases), natural disasters, geographic remoteness, limited arable land, increasing population pressures and small economies;
  - c. encouraged FAO to continue supporting the establishment of subregional systems and structures, as well as helping create or reinforce national One Health coordination mechanisms with all necessary sectors, build on the successful momentum of the One Health Joint Plan of Action and the work with the Quadripartite (FAO, UNEP, the World Health Organization

- [WHO] and WOA) and move beyond disease prevention and control, AMR and food safety issues;
- d. supported propagating a whole-of-society and whole-of-government (central and decentralized structures) One Health approach, including civil society, academia and private sector, and ensuring inclusion of community led, bottom-up approaches that integrate local cultural knowledge and experiences;
  - e. noted the paucity of data in the region, including data on disease prevalence and transmission, particularly for the livestock plant, forestry and fishery subsectors;
  - f. promoted collaboration, data sharing and evidence-based decision-making by analysing the effectiveness of government policies to strengthen deficient policies and create new ones;
  - g. recognized that strengthened biosecurity, biosafety and phytosanitary approaches in the agrifood sector are critical, not only to safeguard human health from zoonotic diseases (diseases that can spread from animals to humans), but also to prevent the emergence of AMR and shocks to the economy, as well as to preserve biodiversity and the environment, and enable sustainable livestock production and transformation; and
  - h. recognized FAO's leading role in global One Health initiatives, and strongly encouraged FAO to continue supporting One Health capacity development and technical interventions relevant to the priorities of the environment, agriculture (including fisheries and forestry) and health sectors.
23. The Regional Conference recommended FAO to:
- a. ensure that national One Health activities include environment, agriculture, human and animal health sectors in baseline One Health assessments, the establishment of One Health coordination mechanisms, the development of One Health policies and the implementation of One Health programmes that include environment, human and animal health priorities;
  - b. utilize internationally agreed-upon One Health frameworks, such as the One Health Joint Plan of Action endorsed by FAO and its Quadripartite partners, to implement One Health programming in subregions and countries;
  - c. specifically related to the PICs, engage with PIC members to understand their specific needs and capabilities to inform the establishment of a Pacific One Health Network, and create linkages with existing networks in the region to catalyse actions and activities;
  - d. apply the One Health approach to promote the development of a regionally integrated disease surveillance system to improve response coordination resilience and health outcomes;
  - e. accelerate the application of the One Health approach with the whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach with key government agencies, stakeholders and donors responsible for and focused on human, animal and plant health, agriculture, the environment (biodiversity, pollution and climate change) and disaster management; and
  - f. scale up FAO's support to countries that seek to access funding from the Pandemic Fund to support One Health, disease and AMR activities.

### **III. Programme and Budget Matters**

#### ***A. The Strategic Framework, priorities and results in the Region***

24. The Regional Conference considered two documents related to FAO's programme of work in the region. The first document summarizes the results for FAO in the region in the biennium 2022-2023. The second document presents FAO's regional approach towards its priorities and ways of working, following the four Regional Priorities, which are fully aligned with the

Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 endorsed by the 42nd Session of the FAO Conference.

25. The Regional Conference:

- a. endorsed the continued relevance of the four Regional Priorities to guide FAO's work in the region in 2024-2025 and beyond;
- b. recognized the relevance of the individual PPAs mapping to each of the four Regional Priorities in the proposed results framework and in the achievement of the *four betters*;
- c. highlighted the importance of validating the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and adapting the Regional Priorities to each country and local context;
- d. noted the significance of the work of the Regional Commissions – the Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific (APHCA), the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC), the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC), the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) and the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS) – and region-level activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and IPPC in standards setting, development of voluntary guidelines and implementation of globally endorsed legal instruments in key technical areas of the Organization's mandate;
- e. recognized the major actions carried out by FAO and the results achieved by the Organization in responding to the main priorities identified by APRC 36;
- f. recognized the delivery and outcomes of FAO's work in the region, particularly in light of the extraordinary challenges posed by the overlapping crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of food, feed, fuel, fertilizer and finance (5F) crisis;
- g. acknowledged the importance of continued delivery of normative and knowledge products and services, such as regulations, voluntary guidelines, legal instruments and studies at national and regional levels, and policy dialogue based on evidence;
- h. noted the full alignment of FAO's country-level planning process and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), building on UN development system repositioning efforts to collectively support country ownership and address priorities and gaps in national SDGs;
- i. welcomed the regional and country foresight analyses in the region;
- j. noted the importance of FAO's work to affirm the central role of agrifood systems in addressing climate change and placing emphasis on increasing the productive capacities of agrifood systems in a sustainable and climate neutral fashion;
- k. highlighted the importance of supporting smallholder farmers as critical players in building sustainable agrifood systems transformation, including by ensuring their access to productive and affordable agricultural inputs and markets;
- l. appreciated the implementation of FAO's key corporate initiatives in the region, including the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, the One Country One Priority Product, and the 1000 Digital Village Initiative, also as important means to promote digital inclusiveness and scale up investments for sustainable agrifood systems;
- m. emphasized the need for accurate baseline data and monitoring to inform strategic decision-making in the region and to measure results;
- n. welcomed and encouraged FAO's efforts to support Members in the region in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of soils, land and water, as well as biodiversity and agroecological and other innovative approaches, including through sharing expertise and knowledge through important initiatives, such as the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS);

- o. highlighted the importance of FAO's work to promote sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the region, including the need to protect the marine environment, conserve and build fish stocks and address IUU fishing;
  - p. appreciated the importance of FAO's work on antimicrobial diseases, Fall Armyworm, as well as other invasive pests and diseases in the region;
  - q. highlighted the need to ensure that nutritious and healthy diets are accessible to all in Asia and the Pacific region;
  - r. emphasized that the performance evaluation of activities undertaken by FAO Regional and Country Offices is pivotal to achieve regional priorities and the SDGs concerning agriculture, food security and nutrition;
  - s. emphasized the important role of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) in agrifood systems transformation in the region for interested countries;
  - t. underscored the need for strengthening engagement cooperation and collaboration between the national government, regional and subregional organizations and FAO Regional and Country Offices, and encouraging these offices to proactively reach out to national governments, regional and subregional organizations in the interest of achieving SDG targets; and
  - u. recalled the importance of addressing a balanced representation of Members from the Southwest Pacific region in FAO's Governing Bodies.
26. The Regional Conference recommended FAO to:
- a. support the establishment of acceleration zones, incubators and innovation hubs to improve uptake of innovations and technologies for sustainable agrifood systems;
  - b. strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders, in particular national governments and private sector, as well as through SSTC, while bearing in mind the need to avoid duplication of efforts;
  - c. include the biennial theme of integrated water resources management as an explicit area of emphasis in the Regional Priorities; and
  - d. promote gender equality and youth involvement in the development of sustainable agrifood systems, including through vocational training for youth so they can play a catalytic role in realizing sustainable food and agriculture in the region.

***B. Country Office Network – Current Status and Way Forward:  
A policy paper***

27. The Regional Conference:
- a. appreciated the update on Decentralized Offices with a proposed way forward to strengthen the Organization's work at country level in response to guidance from the Governing Bodies;
  - b. endorsed the overarching guiding principles of tailoring the proposed approach to countries' evolution, specificities and needs; building in flexibility, agility and strengthened capacity; reflecting modern ways of operating and delivering; implementing changes in a progressive manner; and maintaining the overall regional budgetary allocation to the FAO Country Office Network;
  - c. noted proposed measures and models to adjust the FAO Country Offices to better respond to Members' expectations on FAO's support and delivery, depending on budgetary considerations under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and beyond, and for further discussion among Members in the FAO Governing Bodies;
  - d. noted that the Report *Review of Management and Administration in FAO* of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit included recommendation related to the decentralized structure;



- e. requested FAO to proceed with a transparent process of consultation with countries to move towards the progressive finalization and implementation of the arrangements that will be agreed upon; and
- f. took note of the geographical extent and agroclimatic diversity of the Asia and the Pacific region, and underscored the need for increasing FAO capacity in the region.

#### **IV. Other Matters**

##### ***A. Date and place of the 38th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific***

28. The Regional Conference noted the expression of interest of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the 38th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific in 2026.
29. The Regional Conference:
  - a. emphasized the importance of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific as a key opportunity for Members from Asia and the Pacific region to come together to discuss priorities, needs and to share experiences and good practices on agrifood system transformation, including any special issues of interest to the Members in the Asia and the Pacific region, pertaining to the mandate of FAO within the region; and
  - b. commended FAO's ongoing efforts in seeking to foster greater efficiency and effectiveness in Regional Conferences, while recognizing the new modality and format of the 37th Session of Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, and underscored the need to continue considering the circumstances of the Asia and the Pacific region, including in terms of the large geographic range and multiple time zones, in establishing inclusive and equitable arrangements with regard to the timing, format and modality for each Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific in line with Rule XXXV (Regional Conferences) of the Basic Texts.

#### **V. Concluding items**

##### **Closure of the Regional Conference**

30. The Chairperson, Ms. Shiromani Edirimanna, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Plantation Industries, Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, thanked the participants for their positive contributions, which had led to the conduct of a successful 37th Session of the APRC. The Chairperson subsequently declared the APRC closed.
31. Participants expressed their appreciation to the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for hosting the SOM and to FAO for the efficient preparation and organization.

**Appendix A****Agenda****Senior Officers Meeting****31 January – 2 February 2024 (Virtual)****Introductory items**

1. Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons, appointment of the Rapporteur
2. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

**Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Matters**

19. State of food and agriculture in the Asia-Pacific region: global and regional food security outlook and foresight
20. Building resilience through agrifood systems transformation
21. Financing to end hunger for today and tomorrow (SDG 2)
22. How to fight against food loss and waste
23. Transforming capture fisheries and aquaculture towards sustainability in Asia and the Pacific region
24. Applying the One Health approach to accelerate agrifood systems transformation

**Programme and Budget Matters**

25. The Strategic Framework, priorities and results in the Region
26. Decentralization

**Other Matters**

27. Any other matters
28. Date and place of the 38th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific

## **Ministerial Meeting**

**19 – 22 February 2024**

### **Introductory items**

3. Statement by the Director-General
4. Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council
5. Statement by the Chairperson of the 36th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific
6. Statement of the Third Joint FAO and Pacific Community (SPC) Ministers for Agriculture and Forestry Meeting
7. Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
8. Statement of the Spokesperson of the Civil Society Consultation
9. Statement by the Spokesperson of the Private Sector Consultation

### **Ministerial Roundtables**

13. Ministerial Roundtable on food security and nutrition in the Asia-Pacific region: Lessons from convergent crises and actions going forward
15. Ministerial Roundtable on building resilience through agrifood systems transformation
16. Ministerial Roundtable on investment and financing for poverty reduction and modernization in Hand-in-Hand Initiative countries
17. Ministerial Roundtable on saving food, saving water and reducing losses and waste

### **Special Ministerial Events**

10. Accelerating achievement of the SDGs through Science and Innovation: Championing modernization and digitalization for small holders in aquaculture and livestock for agrifood system transformation in the Asia-Pacific region
12. Special Ministerial Meeting for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and Land Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs)

### **Host Country – Sri Lanka’s Special Ministerial Event**

30. Agrotourism in Asia and the Pacific – accelerating rural development and enhancing livelihoods<sup>1</sup>

### **Plenary Sessions**

14. Prioritization of country and regional needs
18. Review and adoption of the report of the 37th APRC

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<sup>1</sup> Showcasing of agrotourism in Sri Lanka by the Host Government and panel discussion on experiences, innovation and potential in the Asia-Pacific region by invited Ministers.

**Appendix B****List of Document**

<https://www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/aprc37/documents/en/>

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

| <b>Symbol</b>   | <b>Title</b>  |
|-----------------|---|
| APRC/24/1       | Provisional Agenda  |
| APRC/24/2       | Provisional Annotated Agenda  |
| APRC/24/3 Rev.1 | State of food and agriculture in the Asia and the Pacific region: Global and regional food security outlook |
| APRC/24/4       | Building resilience through agrifood systems transformation   |
| APRC/24/5       | Financing to end hunger for today and tomorrow (Sustainable Development Goal 2)                             |
| APRC/24/6       | How to fight food loss and waste in Asia and the Pacific region   |
| APRC/24/7 Rev.1 | Transforming capture fisheries and aquaculture towards sustainability in Asia and the Pacific region        |
| APRC/24/8       | Applying a “One Health” approach to accelerate agrifood systems transformation in the Pacific region        |
| APRC/24/9       | Results for FAO in the Asia and the Pacific Region – 2022-23  |
| APRC/24/10      | Priorities for FAO in the Region under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31                                  |
| APRC/24/11      | Country Office Network – Current Status and Way Forward: A policy paper                                     |

**INF Series**

| <b>Symbol</b>       | <b>Title</b>  |
|---------------------|---|
| APRC/24/INF/1       | Note to Delegates   |
| APRC/24/INF/2 Rev.2 | Provisional Timetable   |
| APRC/24/INF/3 Rev.1 | Provisional List of Documents   |
| APRC/24/INF/4       | Statement by the Director-General   |
| APRC/24/INF/5       | Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council   |
| APRC/24/INF/6       | Statement by the Chairperson of the 36th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific        |
| APRC/24/INF/7       | Statement of the Third Joint FAO and Pacific Community (SPC) Ministers for Agriculture and Forestry Meeting |
| APRC/24/INF/8       | Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)                                  |
| APRC/24/INF/9       | Statement by the Spokesperson of the Civil Society Consultation   |
| APRC/24/INF/10      | Statement by the Spokesperson of the Private Sector Consultation  |

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|----------------------|---|
| APRC/24/INF/11 Rev.1 | Report of the Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia and the Pacific (APHCA)                    |
| APRC/24/INF/12       | Report of the thirty-seventh Session of the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission                               |
| APRC/24/INF/13 Rev.1 | Report of the Thirtieth Session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC)                            |
| APRC/24/INF/14       | Report of the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC)  |
| APRC/24/INF/15       | Report of the Twenty-ninth Session of the Asia and the Pacific Agricultural Statistics Commission (APCAS) |
| APRC/24/INF/16       | Pacific Action Plan on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors (2024-2030)                 |
| APRC/24/INF/17       | Strategic Regional Foresight for the Asia and the Pacific region  |