

FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC)
Thirty-fourth Session
Rome, Italy, 7-11 May 2018

Side Event

FAO Strategic Programme: Delivery through Three Regional Initiatives

9 May, 2018, 13:30 hrs (Sheikh Zayed Centre)

Background

The Near East and North Africa (NENA) region faces a series of interconnected challenges that limit food security and sustainable agricultural development. To effectively address these, FAO has channeled its work through three Regional Initiatives (RIs) since 2014 to effectively identify pan-regional issues and solutions. These Regional Initiatives focus on “*Water Scarcity*”, “*Small-scale Family Farming*”, and “*Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition*”. These serve as the main mechanism to ensure effective delivery in a coordinated way and demonstrate impact of FAO’s work on the key priorities of the region, guided by FAO’s Strategic Programmes. In so doing, they provide alignment to the various programmes undertaken throughout the countries, encourage a collaborative environment, and ensure connectivity between FAO and the major regional bodies.

The **Regional Initiative on Water Scarcity** pursues food and water security for sustainable social and economic development amid an unprecedented severe escalation of water scarcity. Since 2014, this initiative has focused on seven areas of work: policy, governance reform, water management and productivity, water supply management, climate change and drought management, water pollution, and water monitoring. It has established a Regional Collaborative Strategy on sustainable agricultural water management, a Regional Drought Management System, Sustainable Land and Soil Management System, and a Regional Knowledge Platform on climate change and water. The initiative has started a four-year programme on “Implementing the 2030 Agenda for water efficiency/productivity and water sustainability in NENA countries” that aims to improve water accounting, water efficiency/productivity, a water sustainability and nexus approach, and effectively communicate the importance of this challenge for the region.

The **Regional Initiative on Small-scale Family Farming** aims to bring small-scale farmers back to the heart of rural growth and development to ensure rural poverty reduction and hunger eradication. Since 2014, the initiative developed the first comprehensive understanding of small-scale family farming in the region. This research provided the basis for strategically building out the initiative’s work that now focuses on three pillars of work: (i) developing sustainable and innovative practices to boost the agricultural productivity of farmers and their associations, (ii) strengthening rural organizations and institutions’ capacities to improve access to rural services and markets, and (iii) developing and incentivizing decent rural employment opportunities and complementary social protection mechanisms. It has developed regional programmatic work on social protection in rural areas (including a regional e-learning series), child labour in agriculture (including a regional assessment and national support (e.g. Lebanon)), the enhancing of producers’ organizations and cooperatives (currently in Egypt, Lebanon, Oman and Sudan) and enhance value chains efficiency (i.e. Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen). It is also developing research and programmatic work on how to support small-scale farmers to adapt to the impacts of climate change in the region.

The **Regional Initiative on Food Security and Nutrition** promotes food and nutrition security through evidence-based policies and programmes designed to build resilience of households, communities, institutions and systems to shocks. Since 2014, the initiative has focused on developing food security and nutrition policies and investment frameworks, which has included a collaboration with the World Health

Organization on a Regional Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition. It has supported the development of food security information, such as early warning systems. With such systems, it has focused on disaster risk reduction and resilience practices. This is then coupled with preparedness and crisis response mechanisms, including cluster coordination and resource mobilization for emergency response. The initiative's work aims to ensure timely responses to conflict and emergency situations, including in Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. As such, the initiative coordinated the Yemen 2017 Emergency Livelihood Response Plan.

There is strong collaboration and synergy between the initiatives to ensure a coordinated and effective response, which will continue to be strengthened, especially on cross-cutting themes such as climate change and gender.

Objectives of the Side Event

This side event intends to illustrate how the *Strategic Programmes* and *Regional Initiatives* have assisted countries to achieve results in the NENA region within the context of agreed priorities.

The side event is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

- Enhance awareness and appreciation of the value added of FAO's *Strategic Programmes* and *Regional Initiatives* in guiding prioritization at regional and country level and in supporting programme delivery;
- Facilitate mutual experience sharing among countries on the possibilities that cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagements offer in terms of enhanced impact, synergy and coordination;
- Explore opportunities for networking, partnerships and resource mobilization to further enhance the impact of the *Strategic Programmes*.

Audience, agenda and expected results

The Side Event will gather high-level representatives, ministers and senior officers, of NENA member countries, regional bodies such as League of Arab States (LAS) and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), technical and resource partners, and will be moderated by FAO Senior Management. The side event will include short presentations on: (i) highlights of the FAO Strategic Programmes (SPs) and how they address challenges and key priorities on: sustainable agriculture (SP2), food systems (SP4), sustainable livelihoods through poverty reduction (SP3) and building resilience for food security and nutrition (SP1, SP5) and (ii) the relevance of the FAO Strategic Programmes and Regional Initiatives. It will then transition into a round table with representatives from selected countries. Participants will make recommendations to the NERC concerning discussed themes above. This will be followed by a discussion with a view to not only developing an understanding of what has been undertaken, but what the future directions could be. This event can also be used as an opportunity to discuss key topics within the Regional Initiatives that would benefit from resource mobilization.

Tentative agenda of the Side Event on <i>Strategic Programmes</i> (Chair: ADG-RNE)	
5 minutes	Opening Remarks (ADG/RR-RNE ¹)
25 minutes	Introductory Presentations: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highlights on how the FAO <i>Strategic Programmes</i> address challenges and key priorities on: sustainable agriculture (SP2), food systems (SP4), sustainable livelihoods through poverty reduction (SP3) and building resilience for food security and nutrition (SP1, SP5) (<i>Mr Clayton Campanhola, Strategic Programme Leader SP2</i>) 2. Relevance of the FAO <i>Strategic Programmes</i> and <i>Regional Initiatives</i> in responding to regional and country priorities

¹ Assistant Director General and Regional Representative for the Near East and North Africa

	<i>(Mr Pasquale Steduto, Regional Programme Leader)</i>
25 minutes	Round table with three country representatives and a representative of the LAS/AOAD <i>(Moderator: ADG/RR)</i>
25 minutes	Discussion, Q/A <i>(Moderator: ADG/RR)</i>
10 minutes	Summary on the way forward <i>(Dominique Burgeon, SPL, SP5)</i>

Panelists:

Lebanon: **Ms. Wafaa Dikah Hamze**, Senior Adviser-Ministry of Agriculture, Vice President National Commission for Lebanese Women, National Coalition-Women for Politics, Founder NOWARA, Former Minister for Parliament Affairs

Tunisia: TBC

Egypt: TBC