
The importance of holistic policy planning and a ‘food systems’ approach

Co-organized by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and Chatham House¹

Date: 3 November 10:00 – 12:00 CET

Event duration: 2 hours

Proposed venue: Online only, Zoom webinar

Audience members register here in advance:

https://chathamhouse.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJovduqurzkoG9bgal3KjPdyf4_3zhod_Atw

Event outline

The importance of holistic policy planning and a ‘food systems’ approach in the ECA (Europe and Central Asia) region

Challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, trade disruptions, climate change and related natural disasters, migration and displacement, inflation and rising costs of energy are compromising food security and supply-chain resilience and are driving up food prices. They are in addition, to the long-standing unsustainable methods of food production which are contributing to the climate crisis, air and water pollution, deforestation, biodiversity loss, soil degradation and the emergence of zoonotic diseases.

Particularly, the latest crisis threatens also in the ECA region increased levels of food insecurity, and both the double burden of malnutrition and the incidence of diet-related disease are increasing in high- and middle-income countries alike.

Against this backdrop, the question of how best to achieve sustainability in food systems, and how to operationalize a ‘food systems approach’ has become an ever more urgent focus of policy for governments around the world.

One year on from the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), in close cooperation with the Issue-Based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems (IBC-SFS)², we are bringing together governments from the Europe and Central Asia region, the donor community, the UN Country Teams, civil society, and industry, to discuss holistic food systems approach and processes.

¹ Chatham House has a long history of researching and advising on the challenges involved in redesigning food systems. Its expertise lies in bringing disparate strands of research and policy together, identifying synergies and trade-offs, and offering recommendations on how these may be managed in support of sustainable, resilient, equitable food systems.

² The IBC –SFS was established in April 2020. The IBC members are: FAO (acting as Secretariat), WHO, UNICEF, WFP, UNECE, WMO, UNDP, IFAD and UNEP. The main rationale for the establishment of an IBC dedicated to sustainable food systems is to capitalize on the expertise of several UN agencies to provide UNCTs, and thus Member Countries, with a multi-sectoral and coordinated approach on sustainable food systems, to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs

Drawing on the experience of the governments of Armenia and Tajikistan, the key findings of the regional UNFSS stocktake report, and looking to innovation and best practice from across the wider region, this webinar will provide a moment to consider the value of – and difficulties in – adopting a ‘systems’ approach of holistic policy planning to deliver national food systems that are sustainable, equitable and support better health and livelihoods. We will explore key opportunities for such holistic planning to support the delivery of the UNFSS National Pathways – for example, the importance of prioritizing greater cross-border connectivity to support export growth, or of investing in renewable energy to support modernized irrigation systems that support productivity growth while lessening farmers’ exposure to energy price shocks. We will consider the impact that the war in Ukraine has on food systems in the region and share insights on how best to build resilience at the local, national, and regional level amid growing global market uncertainty.

Agenda

10:00 – 10:05: Introduction from the Chair

Chair: Emma Williams, Associate Fellow, Chatham House

10:05 – 10:15: Reflections on ECA’s experience of UNFSS 2021 and work since then

Raimund Jehle, FAO Regional Programme Leader for Europe and Central Asia, and Co-Chair of the Issue-Based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems (IBC-SFS)

10:15 – 10:30: Presentation of holistic policy planning and food systems approach, findings of Chatham House stocktake of UNFSS dialogues in the ECA and latest thinking on trade-offs and challenges in the region

Laura Wellesley, Senior Research Fellow, Chatham House

10:30 – 10:40: Q&A with the speakers

10:40 -11:15: Panel discussion, aiming to share experience and lessons learned from the UNFSS process

Chair: Emma Williams, Associate Fellow, Chatham

- *Mr Arman Khojoyan, Deputy Minister of Economy, Republic of Armenia*
- *Mr Jyri Olilla, National Convenor, Adviser at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland*
- *Ms Françoise Jacob, Resident Coordinator, Serbia (TBC)*
- *Mr Suhron Irgashev, Representative, Environmental Protection Committee, Tajikistan*

11:15 – 11:25: Q&A

Panellists and the audience

11:25 – 11:55: Group discussion zooming in on some of the major trade-offs facing stakeholders in the region

Moderated discussion with Chair asking questions to the audience

Chair: Mary Kenny, Coordinator of the Regional Initiative on ‘Transforming food systems and facilitating market access and integration’, FAO

11:55 – 12:00: Wrap up

Mary Kenny, Coordinator of the Regional Initiative on ‘Transforming food systems and facilitating market access and integration’, FAO

Emma Williams, Associate Fellow, Chatham House

Contact point

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