

Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)

Thirty-second Session

Tashkent, Uzbekistan (to be confirmed)

5-7 May 2020

(DRAFT) PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA

For discussion at the ECA Executive Committee Meeting on 2 Jul 2019

I. Introductory Items

- 1. Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of Rapporteurs**
- 2. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable**
- 3. Statement by the Director-General**
- 4. Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council**
- 5. Statement by the Chairperson of the 31st Session of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)**

The statement of the Chairperson of the 31st Session of ERC will provide a brief overview on the outcome of the deliberations of the 31st Session of ERC (Voronezh, Russian Federation, 16-18 May 2018) on matters related to the Europe and Central Asia region.

- 6. Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)**
- 7. Statement by the Spokesperson for the Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Consultation**

II. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Issues

Ministerial Round Table (to be decided after consultations with Members):

Approximately one to two important topics pertinent for the region are discussed under this section of the agenda. The Europe Regional Group (ERG), at its expanded meeting on 28 March 2019, to which Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were also invited, discussed a long list of potential topics for the Agenda of the Thirty-second Session of the ERC. Following the meeting, additional proposals were collected from Members during the month of April. Based on the received inputs and the feedback received at the Informal Consultation and Executive Committee meeting of the European Commission on Agriculture, both held on 17 May 2019, the ERC Secretariat prepared the below shortlist of the proposed topics¹ for this part of the Agenda. The revised list includes also the views of the Secretariat for consideration by the Members. Members are invited to discuss the shortlisted topics and provide their feedback to the Secretariat.

¹ Topics are consolidated by also taking into account i) the topics covered at previous ERCs, ii) the Recommendations of the previous three ERCs, and iii) the collected long list of proposals – all presented at the Informal Consultation and [available on the REU website](#)

Proposal 1: Sustainable consumption and healthy diets in Europe and Central Asia

The Secretariat suggests to select this topic for the Ministerial Round Table discussion, considering the foreseen biennial topic to be adopted by 41st Conference for 2020-2021 as suggested by Council “Promoting healthy diets and preventing all forms of malnutrition”.

The need to shift to more sustainable diets and food systems is increasingly evident, but achieving these goals is certainly not simple. According to FAO’s definition, the sustainability of diets goes beyond nutrition and the environment to include economic and sociocultural dimensions. The preservation of biodiversity, also, is a key factor in developing sustainable food and agriculture; biodiversity influences food security, dietary health and livelihood sustainability. The growing levels of obesity and associated non-communicable diseases also present challenges for the Europe and Central Asia region. Rapidly changing food systems in the region have profound implications for diets and nutrition, and there is a pressing need to make food system deliver more nutrition in a sustainable way.

Within this topic, the Secretariat would outline the status of this complexity and the related challenges, taking into consideration the universality of the Sustainable Development Goals and SDG 2 and SDG 12 in particular. Elements to be considered in this context are different aspects along the food systems, such as nutrition-sensitive agriculture, inequalities in access to healthy diets, nutrition-sensitive social protection, and biodiversity. As contributions to solutions towards more sustainable and inclusive food systems, the topic also may include issues of sustainable agriculture and value chains, rural-urban linkages, urban agriculture and urban forestry. The background document would outline policy recommendations in addressing the issue.

It would be expected that the Members would review the recommendations and provide their positions, especially with regard to achieving SDG 2 and SDG 12.

Proposal 2: Solutions for youth, employment and developing rural areas in relation to the United Nations Decade of Family Farming

The topic is putting focus on the important aspects of youth and employment in rural areas in light of the UNDF for which also a regional action plan is going to be presented in 2020 and thus to be considered as a possible second key topic for the ERC.

Rural areas in Europe and Central Asia face multiple challenges, taking into consideration the small farm structure in many countries of the region. Poverty in rural areas has been decreasing over the years, but this trend has slowed and is currently stagnating. Rural poverty has a strong gender dimension; women have less access to land, economic resources, technology, knowledge and extension services, and thus they have limited opportunities for employment and income. Additionally, youth often do not find adequate living and employment conditions in rural areas, thus resulting in outmigration as they seek those opportunities elsewhere.

As there are many concurrent and interconnected development constraints for rural areas, it is essential to address these issues in a holistic and integrated manner. One key goal is to maintain rural areas as a space for providing livelihoods attractive to young people, helping them see their futures in rural areas instead of migrating elsewhere. It also is important to attract investment to agriculture and to support the diversification of the rural economy, leaving no one behind.

Keys to supporting rural development and reverting the trend of outmigration include the creation of employment and alternative income opportunities, support for the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT), Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI), and territorial approaches.

The Secretariat would present within this topic an overview of the challenges and trends regarding the situation related to smallholders, with a specific focus on rural youth, in addition to touching on investment needs for rural areas and discussing policy options to revert the trend and provide solutions.

The Members would be requested to share their views and to exchange experiences to support investment in rural youth.

Proposal 3: Investing in the development of sustainable value chains: Aspects of plant and animal health and food safety in Europe and Central Asia

The topic of Animal health has been discussed at the 40th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) and plant health will be widely discussed at the 41st Session of the ECA in October 2019. Furthermore, the Report of the 41st Session of the ECA will be presented at the 32nd Session of the ERC under the ECA Agenda item on the second day of the conference. The Secretariat therefore suggests to eventually include a document on 'One health' as Information Item rather than having the topic for discussion. In such case Members could still share their views on the topic under Any Other Business.

Plant and animal pests continue to threaten agriculture and food systems in Europe and Central Asia. Both aspects have been discussed at the European Commission on Agriculture in 2017 and in 2019. In addition to their direct negative effects on plant and animal health, pests and diseases or their treatment may present problems within the food chains, affecting the safety of our food supply. Unsafe food has negative consequences for consumer health and socio-economic development. Moreover, emerging issues, such as Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), and transboundary pests and diseases are posing threats and call for timely and coordinated solutions.

The rearing of animals and the production of livestock are important for nutrition, livelihoods and incomes, and thus they contribute in important ways to food security in the region.

Biodiversity is a key aspect of life on earth. Plant and animal resources and ecosystem services help stabilize the climate and are a primary source of income for nearly half of the Earth's population. Countries trade plants and plant products to support economic development and assure food security.

Developing sustainable value chains, in addition to providing employment and decent incomes in rural areas, addressing all dimensions of sustainability (economic, social, and environmental) along the food chain play a key role in achieving nutritious and healthy food, other goods, and environmental services for all. Particular attention is to be given for integrating smallholders into food value chains, fostering access to markets, towards sustainable and inclusive food systems.

In the background paper for this topic, the Secretariat would present the current challenges and priorities in this area, with a focus on policy recommendations and actions for the improvement of sustainable value chains.

The Members would be expected to review the recommendations and present their views and actions on how to increase sustainability and address the issues of plant and animal health and food safety risks in Europe and Central Asia.

III. Programme and Budget Matters

8. Decentralized Offices Network

The FAO Secretariat will provide an overview regarding the status of the country offices network in the region including the proposed principles and general criteria for reviewing FAO's decentralized network coverage, as well as the review of country offices' staffing models, in accordance with corporate guidance and in light of the UN Reforms and associated recent changes. Members are expected to review the situation and make recommendations to enhance the Organization's effectiveness and efficiency at regional and country level.

9. Results and Priorities for FAO in the Region

The FAO Secretariat will provide an overview of the main results achieved through the implementation of the Regional Initiatives (RIs) in the PWB 2018-19, including lessons learned and its contribution to the SDGs (Agenda 2030) in the region and the priorities for 2020-21 and beyond. Members are expected to review the results presented and provide feedback on the lessons learned and on the implementation modalities of the Regional Initiatives (RIs).

FAO's work in the Europe and Central Asia region is based on the Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs), and the regional and subregional challenges. Following the priorities for the region identified at the 31st Session of ERC in 2018, the region has prepared the work programme for 2020-21 taking policy processes, such as the Agenda 2030 and the Paris agreement into consideration. The programme in 2020-21 will continue with the implementation of the Regional Initiatives on small holders and family farms (RI1), Agrifood trade and market integration (RI2) and Sustainable natural resource management in a changing climate (RI3), as a programmatic umbrella supporting the work at the country and regional levels. Members are expected to review the work programme and the focus of the Regional Initiatives and provide feedback on the contribution to the SDGs at national and regional levels.

10. Regional synthesis of lessons learned from, and trends identified in the country programme evaluations to the Regional Conference

Suggested by the Chair of the Europe Regional Group (ERG) based on the letter from the Chair of the Programme Committee.

IV. Other Matters

11. Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2020-2023 of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)

The implementation of the Multi-year Work Programme (MYPOW) is a mechanism designed to enhance the role of the Regional Conferences in the governance and decision-making process of FAO. The paper will present the progress made towards the indicators and targets of ERC as a Governing Body.

12. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 41st Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)

A summary report from the deliberations of the 41st Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA), which took place from 1 to 2 October 2019, in Budapest, Hungary, will be presented.

13. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the Joint Session of the 40th European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 77th UNECE Committee on Forest and the Forest Industry

A summary of the outcomes and recommendations of the joint session of the 40th European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 77th UNECE Committee on Forest and the Forest Industry, which took place from 4 to 7 November 2019, in Geneva, Switzerland, will be presented.

14. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 30th Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC)

A summary report from the deliberations of the 30th session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC), which took place from 11 to 13 September 2019, in Dresden, Germany, will be presented.

15. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 6th Session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish)

A summary report from the deliberations of the 6th session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish), held from 15 to 18 October 2018, in Izmir, Turkey, will be presented.

16. Date and Place of the 33rd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe

17. Any other business²

Review and Endorsement of the Report of the Regional Conference

The draft Report, introduced by the Rapporteurs, will be reviewed and discussed for endorsement.

Closure of the Conference

Information Notes

Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 43rd Session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)

The outcomes and recommendations of the 43rd session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), which took place from 4 to 8 November 2019 in Rhodes, Greece, will be presented.

Other proposals? (Proposal 3 detailed above)

² If they wish, delegates may comment on information notes under “Any other business”.