



## Report

# Technical Consultation, Europe and Central Asia – SDG Implementation in REU's Programming Countries

Budapest, Hungary, 3–4 September 2019

### 1.0 Introduction

The *Technical Consultation, Europe and Central Asia - SDG Implementation in REU's Programming Countries* was organized to discuss existing efforts, institutional structures and capacities in Member Countries in support of the transformative, inclusive and participatory principles that are needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Based on the overall importance of the food and agriculture-related priorities of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the consultation included examples of national experiences, best practices and challenges that countries face in implementing the SDGs. Furthermore, emphasis was placed on integrated sectoral policies and coordination, mainstreaming the SDGs into policies and programmes while building on synergies among the SDGs, the principle of leaving no one behind (LNOB), multistakeholder partnership cooperation, and the importance of SDG indicators for monitoring progress.

### 1.1 Objectives

The consultation was carried out based on the following objectives:

- Exploring opportunities to strengthen SDG implementation at the country level through the FAO SDG guidelines *Transforming food and agriculture to achieve the SDGs*.
- Promoting the regional sharing of knowledge and experience in SDG implementation that help strengthen national capacities for more effective and integrated sectoral policies, strategies and programmes related to sustainable food and agriculture.
- Assessing the potential policy measures required for addressing selected SDG targets.
- Promoting multistakeholder and interministerial dialogue on SDG implementation to address SDG synergies and trade-offs.
- Identifying follow-up actions on the policy measures required for advancing SDG achievement and better understanding of possible FAO support.
- Mapping the support needed – including the capacities, resources, knowledge, tools and partnerships required to scale up SDG implementation, monitor progress and accelerate results.

### 1.2 Participants

The consultation was attended by government representatives (from ministries of agriculture, line ministries and SDG coordination bodies) and non-state actors working in the food and agriculture sector from selected countries of the region. It also was attended by relevant FAORs/AFAORs, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) senior management, REU Regional Initiative delivery managers, REU and SEC Strategic Programme focal points, the REU SDG coordination team, Strategic

Programme focal points from FAO headquarters, and staff from the FAO headquarters Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management (OSP) and Climate and Environment Division (CBC).

## 2.0. Day I - Transforming Food and Agriculture to Achieve the SDGs

### Session 1: Making Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries more Productive and Sustainable

After the welcoming words by Vladimir Rakhmanin, FAO’s Regional Representative, David Conte, from FAO’s Rural Poverty Reduction Programme Management Team, set the stage by [introducing](#) the relevance and importance of the SDGs in the context of the food and agriculture sector. Underscoring that the 2030 Agenda requires transformative change, he elaborated on the key priorities and challenges countries face in achieving sustainable development. By outlining the essential role that food and agriculture action plays, he elaborated on the actions required, the dos and don’ts, lessons learned, and how FAO supports SDG implementation, including the principle of leaving no one behind.

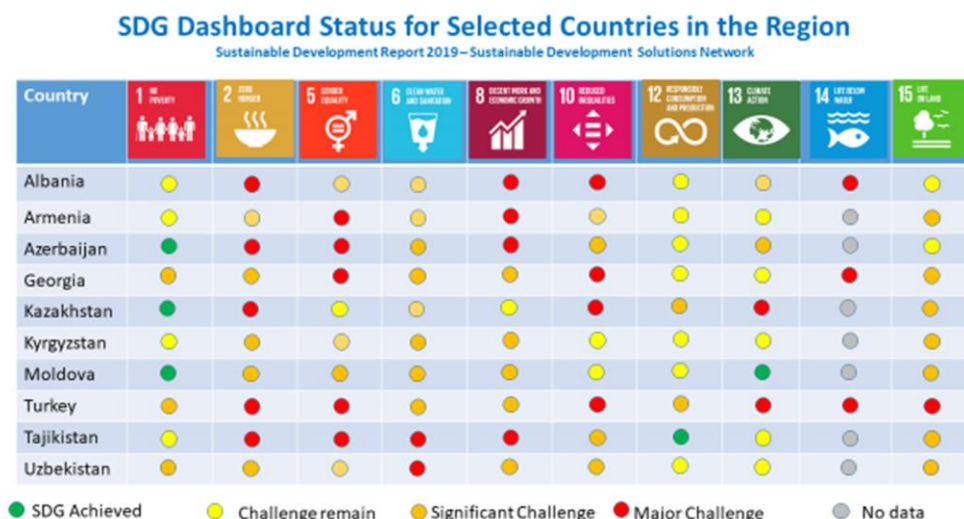
### **Regional drivers for SDG implementation: REU Regional Initiatives and contributions to SDGs**

Raimund Jehle, FAO Regional Programme Leader, [introduced](#) progress made in the region, the main regional drivers for SDG implementation, and REU’s Regional Initiatives and their contribution to the SDGs. By means of the “SDG Dashboard Status” (Figure 1), Jehle called attention to the main challenges impacting sustainable development in the region, including:

- Rural livelihoods and rural poverty: Sixty-two percent live in poverty.
- Farm structure: The majority of farms in the region are small-scale farms.
- Sustainability of food production and food systems and climate change: There has been an increase of land degradation.
- Food security and malnutrition: Obesity is increasing.
- Agrifood trade: WTO integration and export promotion.

By illustrating how REU’s Regional Initiatives aim to contribute to the SDGs, Mr. Jehle highlighted a number of priorities that need attention in the region, such as: a need to strengthen regional and multicountry cooperation; consideration of the universality of the SDGs; increased partnership cooperation and South–South cooperation/triangular cooperation; degradation of the natural resource base and changes in climate and weather; and the need to address aspects related to migration/refugees and gender equality.

Figure 1



## **Session 2: National Experiences in Implementing the SDGs: Where the Countries Stand**

Pytrik Dieuwke Oosterhof, Senior Sustainable Development Consultant, FAO, moderated a panel discussion that explored national approaches, the state of play, lessons learned, and challenges and opportunities regarding SDG implementation efforts in the region.

Panellists:

- *Eka Zdiadadze, Head of the Policy Analysis Department, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Georgia*
- *Ayhan Baran, Head of the EU and Foreign Relations Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Turkey*
- *Lilia Afrikyan, Secretary of the SDG Inter-Agency Committee, Prime Minister's Office, Armenia*
- *Voris Murodov, Head of the Department of Population Census of the Agency of Statistics, Tajikistan*

### *Turkey*

In elaborating on Turkey's approach to implement the SDGs, Ayhan Baran, Head of the EU and Foreign Relations Department in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Turkey, explained that an ongoing project supports the Ministry of Agriculture in implementing and monitoring the SDGs. Furthermore, an SDG action plan supports the positioning of the Ministry of Agriculture. Further actions that support SDG implementation in Turkey are: mapping of sector and strategic planning efforts; planned technical workshops with local stakeholders, civil society organizations and the private sector on SDG 2, SDG 14 and SDG 15; and awareness-raising workshops on the SDG indicators under FAO custodianship with the participation of ministries, universities, civil society organizations and the private sector.

### *Georgia*

Eka Zdiadadze, Head of the Policy Analysis Department in the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, explained that in Georgia, the SDG Council has guided SDG implementation since October 2017. As a part of the SDG institutional arrangements, the Minister of Agriculture has taken the lead on SDG 2. With the main aim of increasing the competitiveness of the agriculture sector, Zdiadadze highlighted that two strategies – on agriculture and rural development – will be merged in 2021. Zdiadadze furthermore referred to the “United Agro Project,” which unites all existing agriculture programmes under one umbrella in order to add efficiency to the government approach.

### *Armenia*

Lilia Afrikyan, Secretary of the SDG Inter-Agency Committee in the Armenia Prime Minister's Office, highlighted how the Armenian Government had put in place the relevant institutional reforms to implement the sustainable development commitments. She listed a number of key efforts, such as: the establishment of the SDG institutional structure, including the National Council on the SDGs; the development of a sustainable development strategy; data collection efforts; and the establishment of a reporting platform. Key challenges that were faced in the SDG implementation process in Armenia are: dialogue among civil society organizations, the private sector and other non-state actors; data collection; lack of funding; engagement of the private sector; awareness of the SDGs; and a change of government that impacted the progress on SDG implementation. Afrikyan underscored the important roles that FAO, alongside UNDP and UNICEF, plays in national SDG planning and implementation efforts.

### *Tajikistan*

Voris Murodov, Head of the Department of Population Census of the Tajikistan Agency of Statistics, introduced the main efforts that feature in the country's approach to implementing the SDGs, such as the establishment of a working group to help define indicators and a poverty reduction action plan. By emphasizing the need for a methodology for developing collective action, Murodov highlighted the work of an interagency group consisting of representatives of departments and ministries involved in the

SDGs. In terms of monitoring efforts, he stated that data are available for approximately 44 percent of indicators and that there is a need to prepare regional sets of SDG indicators, strengthen national reporting, and monitor the UN database. With a view to FAO's role in monitoring the SDGs, he identified the need for the following activities: mini projects for tracking indicators, assistance in methodology, and linkages with the population census and future censuses.

#### *Discussion*

The discussion reflected how approaches and methodologies to implement the SDGs vary significantly from country to country. Participants underlined the importance of effective coordination efforts that can be ensured by strong interministerial coordinating bodies. Political commitment from the highest level can help ensure the required cross-sectoral cooperation. Furthermore, panellists emphasized the need for innovative practices, including on gender-related aspects, the raising of awareness, common approaches to implementing the SDGs, resource mobilization, and strengthening international cooperation.

SDG data collection and monitoring efforts are a work in progress. Common challenges are the lack of data availability, the need to strengthen capacities, and the need to harmonize data collection and monitoring efforts across ministries.

In order to support national implementation efforts, FAO's help is needed in terms of identifying targeted grants, strengthening data collection and monitoring efforts, and supporting progress in the field of natural resources and climate change.

### **Session 3: SDG Guidelines: Transforming Food and Agriculture to Achieve the SDGs – How food and agriculture can help achieve multiple SDGs**

Presentations shed light on how food and agriculture can help achieve multiple SDGs. First, Reuben Sessa, from FAO's Sustainable Agriculture Programme Management Team, [introduced](#) the guidelines *Transforming food and agriculture to achieve the SDGs*, as well as tools and guides available. He also featured a practical example that illustrated how addressing and adapting to climate change contributes to multiple SDGs. Keigo Obara, FAO Food Security Officer, then elaborated on the [importance of improving nutrition and promoting balanced diets as a contribution to multiple SDGs](#). Finally, Krystal Crumpler, an FAO Climate Change and NDC Specialist, and Sessa explained in a [presentation](#) the commonalities and co-benefits of the SDG with nationally determined contribution (NDC) interventions and the importance of linking the 2030 Agenda with the Paris Climate Agreement and the NDCs.

#### *Questions and Answers*

In answer to the question of to what extent the involvement of independent experts and the mass media is necessary, the importance of creating a mix of external and internal experts was discussed. FAO representatives highlighted how the media is currently engaged in various ways. In 19 countries, various FAO programmes aim to mobilize the public, including young people, scout organizations and schools.

#### *Working groups*

Based on two actions from the guidelines *Transforming food and agriculture to achieve the SDGs* in support of the achievement of multiple SDGs, groups discussed per-country, selected actions that interlink with various SDGs. Groups identified the main stakeholders that can contribute to the implementation of the selected actions and discussed possible multidisciplinary policy measures to address the selected actions (See Annex III).

## **3.0 Day II: Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

### **Session 4: REU's Support to Countries**

Valeria Rocca, FAO Regional SDG Adviser, [presented](#) SDG progress made in the region as well as REU's available support. In introducing the central themes of the 2030 Agenda, Rocca presented key steps that countries have taken to nationalize the SDGs, emphasizing that common challenges faced are related to a lack of awareness and of financial and technical resources. She highlighted how SDG implementation fosters opportunities to strengthen strategic efforts and to increase interministerial cooperation and collaboration with non-state actors to mobilize resources, for example. In order to continue and scale up efforts in the region, FAO supports countries in national SDG implementation and monitoring efforts through baseline reports and action plans; awareness-raising workshops; Voluntary National Reviews (together with the UN Country Teams); and dialogue with non-state actors, as well as through its role as the custodian of the 21 SDG indicators.

#### *Discussion*

Feedback from the audience indicated that SDG nationalization processes are, in many cases, steered from the top down. In order to align national and local efforts and include input from all relevant stakeholders, SDG planning and implementation processes should, ideally, be built on a two-way approach. To facilitate a bottom-up approach, the building of capacity among stakeholders is needed. Furthermore, there is a need to mobilize agriculture civil society organizations.

### **Session 5: Coherent Sectoral Policies and Coordination**

A panel discussion moderated by Sumiter Broca, FAO Senior Policy Officer, explored examples that illustrate coherent policy processes in terms of how countries promote multistakeholder and interministerial dialogue, which cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms and institutional capacities exist, and the strengths, weaknesses and gaps that are at play.

#### Panellists:

- *Mane Tapaltsyan, Deputy Head of the Agriculture Programmes Implementation Department, Ministry of Economy, Armenia.*
- *Aslan Musabekov, Chief Specialist, Strategic Planning and Regional Development Unit, Ministry of Economy, Kyrgyzstan.*
- *Sultonsho Hamidov, Head of the Department of Regional Development and Implementation of Development Programme, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Tajikistan.*

#### *Armenia*

Mane Tapaltsyan, Deputy Head of the Agriculture Programmes Implementation Department in the Armenia Ministry of Economy, explained the priorities in the country's SDG implementation: poverty reduction, human development and increasing economic growth. While a multisectoral action plan is in place, the next step is to integrate the SDGs into sector-specific plans. The main challenges experienced in the SDG implementation in Armenia are: commitment to the principle of LNOB, the level of inequality, and the need to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups. She identified a number of actions necessary to further support SDG implementation, such as: reviewing sectoral policies, increasing policy coherence, collaborating and sharing views more strongly, mainstreaming the SDGs into existing mechanisms, enhancing cross-ministerial dialogue, raising awareness through campaigns, and including regional and local authorities in the SDG implementation processes.

#### *Kyrgyzstan*

Aslan Musabekov, Chief Specialist in the Strategic Planning and Regional Development Unit in the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Economy, highlighted that the SDGs were mainstreamed into the national strategy guiding SDG implementation efforts as a result of Kyrgyzstan's 2016 Voluntary National Review. In addition, sectoral programmes were adapted in line with the SDGs in a number of areas, including clean water, better living standards and others. Currently, there is a need to prepare human

resources and to address challenges related to data collection and reporting on smallholders in the country.

#### *Tajikistan*

Sultonsho Hamidov, Head of the Department of Regional Development and Implementation of Development Programme in the Tajikistan Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, stated that the meeting in question is considered useful in terms of exchanging experiences and support in SDG implementation. He explained that Tajikistan has a national SDG strategy that was developed with the engagement of key stakeholders. Furthermore, a working group on agriculture supports the development of indicators. The working group includes civil society stakeholders. The main challenges are the localization of indicators and ensuring the participation of civil society.

#### *Questions and Answers*

The need to further strengthen coherence was highlighted by participants, and a request to conduct a comparative analysis in the region was made by Kazakhstan. The analysis could establish an “FAO rating” of progress on SDG implementation related to food and agriculture in the region.

### **Session 6: Leaving No One Behind**

A panel discussion moderated by Dono Abdurazakova, FAO Senior Gender and Social Protection Adviser, focused on how the mainstreaming of the principle of LNOB and gender aspects is approached. The challenges, best practices and opportunities that countries face while addressing the principle of LNOB also were discussed.

#### *Panellists:*

- *Zaza Chelidze, Statistical Expert, FAO, Georgia*
- *Sabina Aliyeva, Senior Specialist, Employment, Income and Rural Development Problems, Agricultural Economics Research Center, Azerbaijan*

#### *Georgia*

In introducing Georgia’s experiences in addressing the principle of LNOB, Zaza Chelidze, FAO Statistical Expert in Georgia, explained that internally displaced people (IDPs) represent 7 percent of the population. These groups face health-related problems as well as obstacles related to access to land and private property. The 2030 Agenda provides an opportunity to address the needs of vulnerable groups through strengthening social integration and elevating economic status by, for example, increasing capacity in the agriculture sector and supporting employment in rural areas. Opportunities that come with tackling these aspects are income generation, the strengthening of skills, and the development of agriculture support programmes.

#### *Azerbaijan*

Sabina Aliyeva, with the Agricultural Economics Research Center in Azerbaijan, explained that in the context of LNOB, challenges exist related to refugees and displaced people *vis-à-vis* SDG 16. In view of the agriculture sector, Aliyeva highlighted how in Azerbaijan two projects target rural youth employment (Amal) as well as women in agriculture – in particular, women’s ownership in the agriculture sector. While some measures are in place that help addressing an inclusive approach to LNOB, such as the e-agri system, there is a need to scale up efforts by, for example, focusing on the role of small- and medium-sized farmers and increasing investment across the agriculture sector to address the needs of rural women.

#### *Discussion*

The discussion reflected challenges related to the unknowns of women employed in the food and agriculture sector. Efforts to help register women and to ensure reporting on the status of women can help uncover and gain recognition for women’s role in the food and agriculture sector.

Highlighting the importance of social protection measures in ensuring LNOB, Kyrgyzstan shared a good practice of “social productive cash contracts”, which aim to lift the most vulnerable people out of poverty. However, lack of knowledge is experienced as an obstacle for the engagement of rural vulnerable populations.

Overall, the need to step up government efforts in addressing the principle of LNOB was voiced, including through gender mainstreaming, women’s empowerment, social protection, education, enhancing monitoring and disaggregated data collection, and sharing best practices. Also highlighted were strengthening coordination and the need to establish comprehensive, multisectoral approaches, or “umbrella strategies,” that ensure LNOB forms an integrated part of national SDG action plans.

### **Session 7: Multistakeholder Partnerships**

A panel discussion moderated by Darya Alekseeva, FAO Regional Partnership Development Officer, explored opportunities and challenges related to partnership cooperation, including the engagement of non-state actors, success factors and challenges faced in developing multistakeholder partnerships.

Panellists:

- *Karine Sureni Danielyan, Chairperson, Association “For Sustainable Human Development,” Armenia*
- *Saltanat Rakhimbekova, Coalition for Green Economy and G-Global Development, Kazakhstan*
- *Hüseyin Özkan Sivritepe, Dean of Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, Konya Food and Agriculture University, Turkey*

#### *Armenia*

Partnerships are needed in order to respond to the interconnected nature of the 2030 Agenda. Karine Sureni Danielyan, Chairperson of the Association “For Sustainable Human Development” in Armenia, underscored the importance of addressing the environmental dimension of sustainable development from an integrated perspective. However, a systematic approach to the prevention of environmental problems is lacking. Another challenge raised by Danielyan is the need to focus on continued efforts that go beyond government terms and support long-term SDG implementation efforts. She furthermore called attention to the role of the media, which predominately focus on critical and negative stories.

#### *Kazakhstan*

As an example of the contributions of civil society organizations in Kazakhstan, Saltanat Rakhimbekova, from the *Coalition for Green Economy and G-Global Development*, highlighted a number of initiatives, such as a forum focused on the role of rural women and rural employment, the Expo 2017 hosted by Kazakhstan, and the partnership between Coca-Cola and the United Nations Development Programme. She furthermore referred to a green technology centre; training programmes for farmers; and the “Green Bridge Partnership Program,” which helps facilitate the dissemination of green technologies, reduction of the carbon footprint, and the development of capacity. In reiterating the need for the raising of awareness, Rakhimbekova underscored the importance of media coverage.

#### *Turkey*

Elaborating on the role of universities in partnership development, Hüseyin Özkan Sivritepe, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Sciences at Konya Food and Agriculture University in Turkey, explained how his university benefits from national and international funds and provides courses and services to civil society organizations and the private sector. As success factors for effective partnership cooperation, he mentioned investment in “zero waste” and production planning as well as crop rotation of plants as a model that can be adapted to different agriculture and crop productions.

#### *Discussion*



The discussion reflected how the development of service and marketing cooperatives has been important in Kazakhstan. Digitalization and marketing of products can help ensure trust and branding , such as in developing partnerships aimed at organic farming. In Armenia, the work of an organization that issues certificates was highlighted. The organization works with rural communities to promote organic and environmentally friendly production methods.

### **Session 8: Data Collection and Indicators**

Zaza Chelidze, FAO Statistical Expert, [introduced](#) the importance of the SDG indicators for informing policy-making processes and monitoring progress. Explaining the key priorities in developing a national SDG monitoring framework, he underscored the importance of national ownership, the need for data disaggregation, and the importance of addressing data gaps and ensuring long-term national strategic efforts that take into consideration the cross-cutting nature of the 2030 Agenda. The introduction was followed by a moderated panel discussion that considered the importance of the SDGs for national policy-making; challenges in SDG data collection; coordination mechanisms; and results, challenges and future plans.

Panellists:

- *Aleksandre Arabuli, Head of the Statistics and Analysis Division, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Georgia*
- *Aslan Musabekov, Chief Specialist, Strategic Planning and Regional Development Unit, Ministry of Economy, Kyrgyzstan*

#### *Kyrgyzstan*

Aslan Musabekov explained how a national committee for the implementation of the SDGs was created and how the work on the monitoring system, among others, consisted of establishing a matrix of national indicators. In the agriculture sector, challenges exist with a view to data collection and the availability of data.

#### *Georgia*

In introducing Georgia's efforts in implementing the SDGs, Aleksandre Arabuli, Head of the Statistics and Analysis Division in the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, explained that the SDG nationalization process is supported by targeted strategic efforts that are coordinated by the prime minister. A national matrix of the SDGs is established to support the monitoring of implementation efforts. Challenges faced in Georgia's monitoring efforts are the lack of available data and the need for methodology, disaggregation of data and financial resources.

#### *Discussion*

The discussion reflected the need for increased capacity, knowledge, adequate methodologies to monitor the SDGs, and strengthened coordination. In Georgia, a value chain analysis has helped identify bottlenecks in the statistical system and improved coordination among the statistical agencies and line ministries. Furthermore, technical assistance, education and training on methodologies can help develop the capacities required to monitor the SDGs. The need to digitalize statistics was highlighted, including utilizing online platforms and digital tools that help enhance data collection efforts.

### **Session 9: Identifying Follow-up Action**

In order to identify follow-up actions, groups discussed which steps are needed to strengthen coherent sectoral policies and coordination for SDG implementation; addressing LNOB; multistakeholder partnerships to mobilize existing capacities, competences and technologies for SDG achievement in



support of national process; and SDG data collection and indicators for accountability and monitoring of progress. Furthermore, capacity development needs and required support from FAO were identified.

#### I) Coherent sectoral policies and coordination for SDG implementation

Groups pointed out that the progress of SDG implementation varies from country to country. Furthermore, the importance of incorporating the SDGs into national development plans and strategies was reiterated. In order to strengthen coherence in national SDG implementation, there is a need to adapt legal and institutional structures. Clarification as to which SDGs and targets fall under which institutional responsibility is needed. Groups highlighted how a national board or council is useful for supporting the effective coordination and mainstreaming of the SDGs. The building of capacity of coordinating bodies was raised, as was a suggestion to include an FAO representative on the board/council.

FAO can:

- Conduct a comparative analysis that will help countries assess what progress is to be made.
- Allocate financial support aimed at aligning strategic documents.
- Provide technical assistance to identify and develop programmes that support strategic efforts.
- Support the raising of awareness about the SDGs.

#### II) LNOB

The working groups reiterated the importance of integrating the principle of LNOB into strategies, policies and programmes. To strengthen efforts that ensure no one is left behind, groups identified the need to raise awareness, increase resource mobilization, ensure the active participation of vulnerable groups and relevant stakeholders, and engage the media.

FAO can:

- Invest in strengthening efforts that help integrate the principle of LNOB into national and regional strategies, policies and programmes by, for example, grants and funds.
- Support trainings and workshops.
- Provide technical assistance to support the evidence-based formulation of social policies.

#### III) Multistakeholder partnerships

The group work underscored the need to strengthen multifaceted cooperation at the national level through the development of partnerships with international stakeholders, non-state actors, the private sector, local stakeholders and civil society organizations. Ensuring a participatory approach to policy-making and strengthened dialogue was highlighted by the groups.

FAO can:

- Support the establishment of platforms that enhance dialogue.
- Help identify relevant stakeholders.

#### IV) Statistics and data collection

The working groups reiterated the critical role of statistics and data to support evidence-based policy-making. A number of priorities were identified, such as the need for harmonizing methodologies and reporting approaches; an increased focus on local data collection efforts; the digitalization of information technologies and statistics; and ensuring the independence of statistical agencies. The consideration of engaging research bodies and tapping into opportunities related to open-source and non-traditional data were highlighted with a view to the strengthened availability of data.

FAO can:

- Support the creation of dissemination platforms for statistics.

- Provide technical assistance that helps improve data collection capacities and that broadens data sources.

## 4.0 Summary

In wrapping up, Raimund Jehle, FAO Regional Programme Leader, summarized the following observations, priorities and recommendations that were raised during the technical consultation of the SDGs:

### Main points

- A transformation process is taking place at the country level.
- The raising of awareness is still important.
- The importance of agriculture's contribution to the SDGs is recognized and reconfirmed, including related to the nationally determined contributions, etc.
- Partnership examples are promising and need to be further replicated.
- The need to foster coherent sectoral policies and the importance of LNOB is recognized.

### Challenges

- National processes to implement the SDGs are still to be improved.
- Sector-driven policies.
- Existing data gaps form an obstacle to monitoring and evidence based policy formulation.
- Formulating concrete policy measures and clarity about SDG synergies and trade-offs.
- Partnership cooperation and the engagement of the private sector.

### FAO, next steps

- Continue raising awareness among agriculture stakeholders.
- Develop a toolkit for policy measures to understand synergies and trade-offs.
- Increase support on data analysis and collection.
- Facilitate further multistakeholder dialogue with the different partners.
- Support the countries in the review of nationally determined contributions.
- Focus on youth and employment.
- Create a network or platform of SDG practitioners in the region with the aim of sharing experiences, learning from peers and coordinating efforts.

### Member Countries, next steps

- Promote the holistic approach to SDG implementation at the country level.
- Continue interagency dialogue and capacity development.
- Develop the capacity of high-level officials on the SDGs.
- Make efforts to link nationally determined contributions to the SDGs.
- Initiate multistakeholder approaches to increase the involvement of the private sector and civil society organizations.
- Enhance multidimensional policy formulation.

## 5.0 Recommendations

As a result of the feedback expressed by participants of the SDG Consultation, and building on the needs, priorities and challenges listed in the previous chapters, the following recommendations can be taken into consideration with a view to Member Countries and to REU:

### Member Countries

While commitment is expressed to coherently implement and monitor the SDGs at the national level, participants expressed a need to further improve national SDG-related processes. In order to ensure that the food and agriculture priorities contribute to achieving sustainable development, responsible ministries can strengthen engagements and contribute to the national processes by:

- Formulating sector strategies that align with national sustainable development efforts, if they exist. These strategies should be built on participatory processes that take into consideration key stakeholders' feedback, including local interests, priorities and needs.
- Ensuring that the responsible ministry is represented in the national SDG mechanisms or national platforms responsible for implementing the SDGs.
- Ensuring that relevant non-state actors are included in SDG-related priority setting, including vulnerable groups and women.
- Mainstreaming the principles of LNOB into sector strategies, programmes and partnerships.
- Responding to the lack of awareness on the SDGs by, for example, initiating campaigns or outreach strategies that increase the public knowledge of the SDGs among the public.
- Exploring how the food and agriculture sector can build on SDG synergies and contribute to all the dimensions of sustainable development – through, for example, integrated assessments and the identification of cross-cutting priorities.
- Creating enabling environments or platforms that help develop multistakeholder partnerships.

## REU

REU has a key role to play in supporting Member Countries in the above-mentioned endeavours. However, in order to effectively support countries, REU's capacity to support Member Countries in its SDG-related efforts should be strengthened. Furthermore, clarity on REU's strategic approach, along with stronger internal communication channels, can ensure that targeted support is provided. In order to address these needs, the following observations and recommendations are suggested:

- REU Strategic Plan on the SDGs

In order to strengthen REU's approach in support of SDG implementation and monitoring efforts, consideration should be given to developing a REU Strategic Plan on the SDGs that addresses the internal and external priorities, needs and challenges defined during the consultation.<sup>1</sup> The plan should incorporate initiatives and priorities and milestones to be achieved within a selected timeframe. A roadmap and action plan should accompany the strategic plan.

Aspects to be considered include: institutionalizing SDG-related efforts in REU's work streams, actions that help enhance monitoring capacities and data availability, the establishment of partnerships, the development of a communication plan, training, and efforts to build capacity. The strategic plan should, moreover, outline specific actions of importance to strengthen multistakeholder partnerships as well as efforts to mainstream the principle of LNOB (for example, identifying or aiming to establish concrete pilot partnerships or programmes that demonstrate how to approach these aspects). Consideration should be given to developing an approach to LNOB, possibly as an FAO-wide initiative.

In terms of strengthening support to Member Countries, the strategic plan can include identification of targeted grants, strengthening data collection and monitoring efforts, and support for progress in the field of natural resources and climate change, among others. Further aspects to consider are: the capacity building of stakeholders, strengthening coordination, and the need to establish comprehensive multisectoral approaches or "umbrella strategies" that build on the synergies and trade-offs among sectors – hence, strategies that take into consideration the

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<sup>1</sup> See chapter 4.0, Summary of the consultation report.

interlinkages among the food and agriculture sector and other sectors. These strategies should be included in national SDG action plans as well as in national development plans, if available.

- Human Resources

In order to strengthen REU's capacities on sustainable development, it is strongly recommended that dedicated funding be allocated to support the SDG activities at country and regional levels, ensuring the continuity of FAO engagement and consistent contribution in supporting SDG-related processes – from actual implementation to monitoring, reporting, follow-up and review. The support of dedicated human resources on the SDGs (a regional SDG adviser to ensure the overall coordination of the SDG work and a number of national or international consultants recruited for ad hoc tasks) has been key in REU. However, to guide the strategic efforts needed to accelerate the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs with its members and partners, it is recommended to strengthen the current structure.

- Communication

Awareness of the SDGs is key for developing an understanding of how the goals and targets can be translated into projects and programmes, as well for monitoring and evaluation purposes. In order to ensure that the SDGs are fully mainstreamed into all of REU's workstreams, improved communication channels are needed. Strengthened communication can help raise awareness of the SDGs and create a better understanding as to what specific project-related outcomes contribute to specific goals, targets and indicators. The development of a communication plan – as a part of a strategic plan – could be considered a means to strengthen channels of communication of SDG-related priorities, practices and information flows. In terms of external communication and outreach efforts, strategies that enhance knowledge of the SDGs should be developed.

- Compilation of Tools

In order to support REU's colleagues and Member Countries in mainstreaming the SDGs into programming and other efforts, it is recommended to develop a guide or tool box that compiles tools and guidelines considered relevant for mainstreaming the important concepts of the 2030 Agenda.

## Annex I: Agenda, Technical Consultation, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Implementation in Europe and Central Asia, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU)



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



### Technical Consultation

#### Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Implementation in Europe and Central Asia FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU)

Budapest, Hungary, 3–4 September 2019

Venue: *Hotel Mercure Castle Hill*

#### – Final Agenda –

3 September	Day I: Transforming Food and Agriculture to Achieve the SDGs
08.30–09.00	Registration of participants
09.00–09.15	<p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Vladimir Rakhmanin, Regional Representative, FAO</i></li> <li>• <i>Raimund Jehle, Regional Programme Leader, FAO</i></li> </ul>
	<b>Session 1: Making Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries more Productive and Sustainable</b>
09.15–10.00	<p>Introduction to the workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food and Agriculture in the 2030 Agenda; FAO Strategic Objectives and contributions to the SDGs; Principles of sustainable food and agriculture. <i>David Conte, Rural Poverty Reduction Programme Management Team, FAO</i></li> <li>• Regional drivers for SDG implementation: REU Regional Initiatives and contributions to SDGs. <i>Raimund Jehle, Regional Programme Leader, FAO</i></li> </ul> <p>Questions and answers</p>
10.00–10.30	Coffee break
	<b>Session 2: National Experiences in implementing the SDGs: where the countries stand</b>
10.30–12.00	Panel discussion moderated by <i>Pytrik Dieuwke Oosterhof, Sustainable Development Consultant, FAO</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introducing national approaches to SDG implementation related to sustainable food and agriculture, highlighting state of play, lessons learned, challenges and opportunities.</li> </ul> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Eka Zdiadadze, Head of the Policy Analysis Department, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Georgia</i></li> <li><i>Ayhan Baran, Head of the EU and Foreign Relations Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Turkey</i></li> <li><i>Lilia Afrikyan, Secretary of SDG Inter-Agency Committee, Prime Minister's Office, Armenia</i></li> <li><i>Voris Murodov, Head of the Department of Population Census of the Agency of Statistics, Tajikistan</i></li> </ul>
	<b>Session 3: SDG Guidelines: <i>Transforming food and agriculture to achieve the SDGs</i> – How food and agriculture can help achieve multiple SDGs</b>
12.00–13.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable Food Agriculture. Introduction to the guidelines <i>Transforming food and agriculture to achieve the SDGs</i>. A practical example of how addressing and adapting to climate change contributes to multiple SDGs. <i>Reuben Sessa, Sustainable Agriculture Programme Management Team, FAO</i></li> <li>The importance of improving nutrition and promoting balanced diets as a contribution to multiple SDGs. <i>Keigo Obara, Food Security Officer, FAO</i></li> </ul> <p>Questions and answers</p>
13.00–14.00	Lunch
14.00–15.00	<p>Country Group Work – Using the Guidelines <i>Transforming food and agriculture to achieve the SDGs</i> to support achieving multiple SDGs</p> <p>Choosing up to two actions from the SDG guidelines, each group will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discuss how the selected actions interlink different SDGs;</li> <li>assess who are the stakeholders who can contribute to the implementation of the selected actions; and</li> <li>discuss possible multidisciplinary policy measures to address the selected actions.</li> </ul>
15.00–15.30	Group reporting
15.30–16.00	Coffee break
16.00–17.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating SDG co-benefits from agriculture, forest and fisheries NDC interventions. <i>Krystal Crumpler, Climate Change and NDC Specialist, and Reuben Sessa, SP2 Management Team, FAO</i></li> </ul> <p>Feedback from countries, questions and answers</p>
17.00–17.30	Wrap up – summary of the day

<b>4 September</b>	<b>Day 2: Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</b>
	<b>Session 4: REU's Support to Countries</b>

9.00–9.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of REU's support on SDGs in the region; challenges and opportunities. <i>Valeria Rocca, Regional SDG Adviser, FAO</i></li> </ul>
<b>Session 5: Coherent Sectoral Policies and Coordination</b>	
9.30–11.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tackling the three dimensions of sustainability: an introduction to the importance of policy coherence. <i>Sumiter Broca, Senior Policy Officer, FAO</i></li> </ul> <p>Panel discussion moderated by <i>Sumiter Broca, Senior Policy Officer, FAO</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples of coherent policy processes</li> <li>Promoting multistakeholder and interministerial dialogue</li> <li>Cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms</li> <li>Strengths and weaknesses/gaps and institutional capacities</li> </ul> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Teréz Szabó, Head of the Department on Environmental Strategic Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Hungary</i></li> <li><i>Aslan Musabekov, Chief Specialist, Strategic Planning and Regional Development Unit, Ministry of Economy, Kyrgyzstan</i></li> <li><i>Mane Tapaltsyan, Deputy Head of the Agriculture Programmes Implementation Department, Ministry of Economy, Armenia</i></li> <li><i>Sultonsho Hamidov, Head of the Department of Regional Development and Implementation of Development Programme, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Tajikistan</i></li> </ul>
11.00–11.30	Coffee break
<b>Session 6: The Principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB)</b>	
11:30-12:30	<p>Panel discussion moderated by <i>Dono Abdurazakova, Senior Gender and Social Protection Adviser, FAO</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mainstreaming the principle of LNOB and gender aspects in regional and national policy and programming efforts</li> <li>Challenges, best practices and opportunities in addressing the principle of LNOB at the country level</li> </ul> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Sabina Aliyeva, Senior Specialist, Employment, Income and Rural Development Problems, Agricultural Economics Research Center, Azerbaijan</i></li> <li><i>Zaza Chelidze, Statistical Expert, FAO, Georgia</i></li> </ul>
12.30–13.30	Lunch
<b>Session 7: Multistakeholder Partnerships</b>	
13.30–14.30	<p>Panel discussion moderated by <i>Darya Alekseeva, FAO Regional Partnership Development Officer, FAO</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-state actors' engagement</li> <li>Success factors and challenges in multistakeholder partnerships</li> <li>Actions needed to enhance multistakeholder partnerships</li> </ul> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Hüseyin Özkan Sivritepe, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, Konya Food and Agriculture University, Turkey</i></li> <li><i>Karine Sureni Danielyan, Chairperson, NGO Association "For Sustainable Human Development," Armenia</i></li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Saltanat Rakhimbekova, Coalition for Green Economy and G-Global Development, Kazakhstan</i></li> </ul>
<b>Session 8: Data Collection and Indicators</b>	
14.30–15.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction from FAO on the importance of SDG indicators for informing policy-making processes and monitoring progress: Integrating SDG indicators into the monitoring framework of sectoral policies. <i>Zaza Chelidze, Statistical Expert, FAO</i></li> </ul> <p>Panel discussion moderated by <i>Zaza Chelidze, Statistical Expert, FAO</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of the SDGs for national policy-making</li> <li>• Challenges in SDG data collection</li> <li>• Coordination mechanisms established to integrate the SDG indicators into national plans</li> <li>• Results, challenges and future plans</li> </ul> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Aleksandre Arabuli, Head of the Statistics and Analysis Division, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Georgia</i></li> <li>• <i>Aslan Musabekov, Chief Specialist, Strategic Planning and Regional Development Unit, Ministry of Economy, Kyrgyzstan</i></li> </ul>
15.30–16.00	Coffee break
<b>Session 9: Identifying Follow-up Action</b>	
16.00–17.00	<p>Group work (by country):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country-specific actions towards implementing the SDGs in food and agriculture (in areas discussed under the various sessions)</li> <li>• Identifying areas where support is needed from FAO</li> </ul>
17.00–17.30	Group reporting
17.30	Summary and conclusion

## **Annex II: Technical Consultation: Europe and Central Asia – SDG Implementation in REU’s Programming Countries**



### **Technical Consultation, Europe and Central Asia – SDG Implementation in REU’s Programming Countries**

**3–4 September 2019**

**– Concept Note –**

#### **SDG Implementation in Europe and Central Asia: The Role of Food and Agriculture**

In the context of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Europe and Central Asia region as a whole has made considerable progress towards eradicating hunger. Despite this progress, significant challenges persist when it comes to food security and nutrition for all, the triple burden of malnutrition (overweight and obesity in combination with undernourishment and micronutrient deficiencies), rural poverty, land ownership, climate change, land degradation, gender equality and access to social services.

Comprising more than 50 countries, the Europe and Central Asia region is vast and diverse; agriculture and food systems are key sectors, providing employment and livelihoods. Efforts in the food and agriculture sector have the potential to advance progress on multiple SDGs simultaneously and thereby accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Realizing this potential will require policies that foster the sustainability and resilience of food systems. It will, moreover, be necessary to apply an integrated approach to implement the SDGs and to reduce the risks of negative interactions among different parts of the food systems while building on the synergies among them.

While countries are actively implementing activities that help achieve the SDGs, it is critical that efforts support the transformative change that is embedded in the 2030 Agenda. This transition requires, among other actions: changing how sectors are governed, restructuring institutions, engaging in better dialogue, strengthening policy coherence, developing partnerships, aligning investments, and prioritizing those actions that achieve measurable results on the ground.<sup>2</sup> Targeted plans and agreements for rapid, scalable results play important roles in supporting the required transformative change. Additional aspects that can support transitioning to sustainable development are: rural investment, strengthened farmers’ co-operatives, public-private partnerships, accessible policy forums and better coordination across ministries, all with a focus on people, their resilience and livelihoods, as well as on the environment.<sup>3</sup>

#### **REU’s Support to Member Counties in Implementing the SDGs**

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<sup>2</sup> *Our priorities – The Strategic Objectives of FAO*. FAO, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> *Transforming food and agriculture to achieve the SDGs – 20 interconnected actions to guide decision-makers*. FAO, 2018.

The FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) operates approximately 130 projects in the region and assists Member Countries in meeting the SDGs through the Country Programming Frameworks (CPF). The CPFs are signed between FAO and the Member States and are aligned to FAO's overall Strategic Framework. The FAO Strategic Framework identifies five objectives as entry points for grounded and comprehensive policy programmes and plans that help maximize the contribution of food and agriculture to achieve sustainable development. These are:

1. Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.
2. Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable.
3. Reduce rural poverty.
4. Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems.
5. Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises.

Supporting the framework, the SDG guidelines *Transforming food and agriculture to achieve the SDGs*<sup>4</sup> help promote policy integration and strengthen the national contributions to achieve a broad range of SDG targets. As countries actively support the implementation of the SDGs, there is a need to further build on and operationalize these guidelines.

### **Technical Consultation – SDG Implementation in REU's Programming Countries**

In order to discuss existing efforts, institutional structures and capacities in Member Countries, REU is organizing the *Technical Consultation, Europe and Central Asia – SDG Implementation in REU's Programming Countries*. The consultation will discuss policy and programming efforts in support of transformative, inclusive and participatory principles to achieve the SDGs.

Based on the overall importance of the food and agriculture-related priorities of the 2030 Agenda, the consultation will include examples of national experiences, best practices and challenges related to implementing the SDGs. Building on the FAO SDG guidelines *Transforming food and agriculture to achieve the SDGs*, the consultation aims to discuss how these can be used by countries in order to accelerate SDG achievement.

The consultation will go into further depth on some key areas that can support SDG implementation in countries, such as integrated sectoral policies and coordination, mainstreaming the SDGs into policies and programmes while building on synergies between the SDGs, multistakeholder partnership cooperation, and the importance of SDG indicators for monitoring progress.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the consultation is to share experiences and knowledge on SDG implementation as well as to identify priorities that can help Member Countries in advancing their SDG implementations. The consultation will also help to determine areas where REU can support countries in achieving sustainable development.

### **Objectives**

1. Explore opportunities to strengthen SDG implementation at the country level through the FAO SDG guidelines *Transforming food and agriculture to achieve the SDGs*.
2. Promote regional sharing of knowledge and experience in SDG implementation related to sustainable food and agriculture to help strengthen national capacities for more effective and integrated sectoral policies, strategies and programmes related to sustainable food and agriculture.
3. Assess potential key policy measures required for addressing selected SDG targets.

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<sup>4</sup> FAO publication available at <http://www.fao.org/3/I9900EN/i9900en.pdf>.

4. Promote multistakeholder and interministerial dialogue on SDG implementation to address SDG trade-offs and synergies.
5. Identify key follow-up actions on the policy measures required for advancing SDG achievement and better understanding of possible FAO support.
6. Map the support needed – including capacities, resources, knowledge, tools and partnerships – to scale up SDG implementation, monitor progress and accelerate results.

### **Participants**

Government representatives (from ministries of agriculture, line ministries and SDG coordination bodies) and non-state actors working in the food and agriculture sector from selected countries of the region; relevant FAORs/AFAORs, REU senior management, REU Regional Initiative delivery managers, REU and SEC Strategic Programme focal points, the REU SDG coordination team, Strategic Programme focal points from FAO headquarters, and staff from the FAO headquarters Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management (OSP) and Climate and Environment Division (CBC).

### **Venue/Time**

The technical consultation of the SDGs will take place on 3–4 September 2019 at (Venue Hotel Mercure Castle Hill) in Budapest, Hungary.

### **Format**

The technical consultation will consist of presentations, panel discussions and working group discussions.

## **Annex III: Session 3, Results Working Groups**

### Group 1: Albania and Republic of Moldova

Action: Connecting smallholders to markets (Action 2).

SDGs: 1, 2, 5, 8, 9.

Stakeholders: State bodies: central (ministry of agriculture, economy, trade, labour), local (municipalities), non-state (farmers, producers, investors, customers).

Needs: Policy measures: food safety, fiscal and tax policies, internal trade laws.

### Group 2: Armenia and Georgia

Action: Connecting smallholders to markets (Action 2).

SDGs: 1 (1.1, 1.2, 1.4), 2 (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.b.1), 8 (8.1, 8.2, 8.3) 9, 12, 15, 13.

Stakeholders: The ministry and agencies in this field: international monitoring organizations, non-governmental organizations, the participation of science in this field, work at the regional level, local self-government bodies.

Needs: Programmes to fulfil existing standards, promote and support the bottom-up process. Programme for cooperation. Providing safe food and logistics. The development of new technologies and innovations.

### Group 3: Azerbaijan and Turkey

Action: Reduce losses, encourage reuse and recycling, promote sustainable consumption (Action 8).

SDGs: 2, 6, 7, 12.

Stakeholders: Public institutions from ministries (agriculture, forestry, education, environment, tax, environment), public sector (farms, cooperatives, unions, distributors, storage unions), food industry, media, local authorities, municipalities, final consumers.

Needs: Developing multidimensional integrated strategies.

### Group 4: Tajikistan

Action: Enhance soil health and restore land (Action 5).

SDGs: 2, 15.

Stakeholders: Farmers' associations, state committee on soil and land, Ministry of Agriculture.

Needs: How to ensure accountability: based on recent meeting on SDGs, assign indicators to some agencies to ensure the ownership. Programme on forest restoration, soil degradation, certain measures of mitigation, sustainable technologies.

### Group 5: Kyrgyzstan

Action: Connect smallholders to markets (Action 2).

SDGs: 1, 5, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15.

Stakeholders: State, local executive authorities, non-governmental organizations, financial institutions.

Needs: Further policy integration of actors. Mandatory strategic documents, methodology and monitoring, the right farm support policy.