



REVIEW OF PROGRESS MADE BY REU ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 41ST SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE (2019)

*(prepared by Piotr WŁODARCZYK, with inputs from Fazil DUSUNCELI, Viliami FAKAVA and
Zsuzsanna KERESZTES (plant health) and from Dono ABDURAZAKOVA (gender))*

I. Introduction

The 41st Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA), was held in Budapest, Hungary, on 1-2 October 2019. The main technical theme of the Session was “*Plant health in Europe and Central Asia*”, as decided by the ECA Executive Committee (ExCom).

Additionally to plant health, other agenda items of the 41st ECA Session included reports on the implementation of recommendations from the previous ECA Session (40th ECA Session, Budapest, Hungary, 27-28 September 2017), whose main technical theme was animal health, and on advancing gender equality in the region, as well as the election of the ECA Chairperson, two Vice-Chairpersons and other members of the ExCom.

II. Recommendations of the 41st ECA Session on plant health

Plant health issues were discussed based on three background papers covering the following aspects:

- Plant health in Europe and Central Asia – relevance, trends and developments
- Plant pests and diseases in the context of climate change and climate variability, food security and biodiversity risks
- Impact of global trade and human mobility on the health of agricultural crops and forests in Europe and Central Asia

Each of the papers included a set of draft recommendations for the Members and for FAO. The recommendations were adopted by ECA, and were included in the Appendix C of the ECA Session Report¹.

The main recommendations for the Members focused on the review of national phytosanitary systems, and the enhancement of national phytosanitary capacities, as needed to match the pest risk-related challenges posed by such current global developments, as the continuous increase of international trade in plants and plant products, including Internet trade, and the increase of international movements of people. When reviewing their national systems, countries were recommended to consider the IPPC Strategic Framework for 2020-2030 and plant health-related SDGs. Members were invited to support the use of new technologies in plant health, mitigate climate change effects and protect the environment. Members were also encouraged to support the activities under the International Year of Plant Health 2020.

¹ 41st ECA Session Report: <http://www.fao.org/3/nb770en/nb770en.pdf>

Furthermore, Members were invited to support phytosanitary research programmes, aiming at collecting more information on impacts of climate change on plant pests, develop strategies to deal with the expansion of pests, seek synergies between plant health-related and climate change-related activities, and enhance their national, regional and global cooperation on plant health issues, including with biodiversity bodies.

Countries were recommended to review their state of implementation of international standards on phytosanitary measures, their needs for further plant health-related guidance and to take action in relation to human mobility and internet trade as pathways for pests.

The recommendations of the 41st Session of ECA for FAO focused on providing technical support for countries in building their phytosanitary capacities and raising awareness on the importance of plant health issues for food security and economic development, as well as on the need for collection of data on links between climate change and pest challenges, on supporting of the enhancement of phytosanitary capacities to protect national territories and international trade, including through the implementation of international standards. FAO was also requested to support training programmes aiming at sharing knowledge on pest risk challenges and on ways to address them, and to support efforts taken by countries to enhance their international cooperation on plant health issues.

III. FAO REU's implementing activities in the area of plant health

FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia conducted a range of activities aiming at supporting Members of the region in efforts to enhance their national capacities in the area of plant health. The activities concentrated around the development and implementation of projects addressing aspects relating to the protection of plants from pests, as well as organization, co-organization and participation in meetings relating to plant health in the region.

1. Projects

FAO REU has been involved in a large number of development projects relating to the enhancement of national capacities of Member countries in the area of plant health or plant protection. The extent to which projects relate to protection of plants from pests vary. Some projects are strictly plant protection-oriented and focus on the enhancement of certain aspects of national systems, such as phytosanitary systems (relating to obligations in international trade under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)), systems for the sustainable use of pesticides, such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) or systems for pesticide management (registration, marketing, quality control). In other projects, the main focus may be on production systems for individual crops or categories of crops, where protection from plant pests is one of relevant aspects necessary for the comprehensive approach to the subject of the project. This is especially relevant for plants for planting, such as seeds, nursery stock or seed potatoes, as many categories of plants for planting usually undergo official certification for their quality and pest-freedom. This may also apply to horticultural crops (e.g. fruits or vegetables), which often require intensive protection against many different types of plant pests. A separate category are projects and systems for the control of transboundary pests.

Projects addressing the enhancement of the capacities of national phytosanitary systems

The developing countries in Europe and Central Asia increasingly perceive phytosanitary systems as an important tool supporting their development. These systems are often considered as helpful for the increase of the productivity of agriculture, but also for gaining new export markets for the locally produced plants or plant products or for providing information which may form the basis for pest management programmes.

FAO is ready to support activities aiming at the enhancement of phytosanitary systems, which results in a number of development projects for a number of countries. The recipients of the project activities mentioned in this paper are fourteen REU programming countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, North Macedonia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan).

Through a regional FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP)² project, support has been provided to seven countries (Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, North Macedonia, and Ukraine) on surveillance systems, phytosanitary certification and laboratory diagnostics of quarantine pests. Moreover, guidance materials on Integrated Pest Management were developed and translated into national official languages for North Macedonia and for Ukraine.

The preparation of a dedicated project for Belarus, funded by the Russian Federation, is being finalized, aiming at comprehensive evaluation of the beneficiary country's national phytosanitary system, using the PCE Tool developed under the auspices of the IPPC Secretariat, and provision of recommendations for further adjustments to implement the provisions of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs). Moreover, purchase of up-to-date laboratory equipment and trainings for the staff of the national plant protection organization (NPPO) of Belarus have been planned under the project.

FAO has also been working with the Government of Azerbaijan on the development of a project that would support the upgrade of the plant pest surveillance system. In Azerbaijan, there are a number of pests which are considered to be absent, but this status needs to be re-confirmed through a robust surveillance system. Once the information is collected and analysed, it may provide the basis for the establishment of pest free areas (PFAs) in Azerbaijan, which may significantly help in opening new export markets. The implementation of this project on surveillance and PFAs may be carried out not only in Azerbaijan, but also jointly with another Central Asian country or countries.

Moreover, as a component of a Global Environment Facility-funded project³, FAO supported the enhancement of pest surveillance capacities in four countries in the region (Azerbaijan, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan).

A new development, which is slowly gaining interest in the developing countries of the region, is the IPPC ePhyto Solution system for the issuance and international exchange of electronic phytosanitary certificates. The system is used by the EU and its Members States and by Uzbekistan and is tested by the United Kingdom, while Norway and Ukraine have been registered in the system as countries preparing to fully join the system.⁴ Ukraine and Georgia are recipients of FAO projects relating to phytosanitary certification, including aspects relating to electronic phytosanitary certificates.

Projects addressing the development of national agricultural sectors, including plant health aspects

FAO has been providing the following technical support to a number of Member countries, addressing their priority needs for improved plant production and management practices, with components on effective plant protection and related phytosanitary issues.

FAO supported strengthening of the national capacities of the Ministry of Agriculture and the smallholders in Moldova in berry production (strawberries and raspberries), through the establishment of demonstration

² <http://www.fao.org/technical-cooperation-programme/en/>

³ <https://www.thegef.org/project/lifecycle-management-pesticides-and-disposal-pops-pesticides-central-asian-countries-and>

⁴ <https://www.ephytoexchange.org/landing/>

fields for introduction and implementation of production technologies and management practices, including integrated pest management of major pests and diseases affecting berry fruits, as well as their postharvest handling and marketing. It involved Training of Master Trainers and Farmers Field Schools and developed technical manual and extension materials for future farmers' trainings.

In Armenia, FAO is providing technical support through a pilot demonstration and trainings on good agricultural technologies and practices, including Conservation Agriculture (CA), no-till technology, use of drought-resistant varieties, advanced irrigation systems, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), and Disaster Risk Reduction/Mitigation (DRRM) in selected field sites.

Through a project in Georgia within the ENPARD III programme, FAO has been supporting the country's agricultural sector. The project aims to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) to improve the provision of extension services to small farmers to increase their competitiveness. The project focused on the development and implementation of identified demonstration plots, showcasing improved practices and innovative technologies and approaches on Good Agricultural Practices, Climate-Smart Agriculture and Integrated Pest Management for tomatoes, cucumbers and potatoes, as well as Water Management and Post-Harvest Management.

An FAO project in Abkhazia aimed to develop the capacity of farmers, rural households and national experts on appropriate methods and approaches in Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Major key outputs included; (1) Improved extension service through the establishment of a Commission for Plant Protection and Forest Health in Abkhazia, and (2) Strengthened capacities of farmers through the creation of privately managed Farmer Field Schools, and pilot demonstrations for farmers' trainings on key aspects of Integrated Pest Management for major crops and pests.

FAO's technical assistance will provide support to improved national institutional and technical capacities in North Macedonia to promote climate resilience in the agricultural sector. This includes support to the development of irrigation and drainage strategy, institutionalization of damage and loss assessment methodology, and national policies and plans relevant to climate change and agriculture. The second output focuses on improved climate smart agricultural innovative technologies and practices demonstrated in field plots for farmers' trainings including pest and diseases management practices based on weather and climate parameters.

In Uzbekistan, FAO implements a project on rice crop production and management, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic and the Rice Research Institute. The main objective of the project will be to strengthen national capacities in integrated rice production and management to increase productivity. It will include integrated rice crop and pest management techniques demonstrated and validated with farmers' participation.

An FAO TCP facility project is implemented in Tajikistan to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, national specialists and farmers on the improvement of seed potato production and sustainable crop management. The project will establish pilot demonstration plots with improved varieties for the integrated potato production and management systems for season-long training of national experts and farmers. The project will also develop technical guidelines and relevant extension materials and information for public access and for future trainings.

Another FAO TCP project implemented in Georgia will provide the capacity building support to Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) Information and Consultation Center (ICC) for effective extension support. Pilot demonstrations of innovative production, management, postharvest and processing for Training of Master Trainers and Farmers Field Schools will be established to provide

technical knowledge and skills on sustainable agriculture production and management practices including Integrated Crop Management, Climate-Smart Agriculture, Integrated Pest Management, Conservation Agriculture, Marketing and Value Chain Analysis.

A regional GEF project on integrated natural resources management in drought-prone and salt-affected agricultural production landscapes is currently implemented in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The project aims at scaling up sustainable and climate-smart agricultural management practices, such as conservation agriculture or integrated pest management, and support diversification of crops for providing the necessary adaptability and resilience to drought and soil salinity.

FAO has been providing support to Azerbaijan within a project supporting the establishment of a national system for the production of pest-free seed potatoes. Potatoes belong to key staple crops across Central Asia, with high importance for national food security in the countries. The project aims at the establishment of a system of production of seed potatoes starting from the *in vitro* stage, going through the production of minitubers in greenhouses through to the multiplication in the field and certification. As potato is a host plant for many pests, relevant requirements for pest freedom will be formulated and sampling and laboratory testing will be conducted at all steps of the production, allowing for meeting the requirements and certification of the obtained produce as pest-free seed potatoes.

Georgia, with the support of FAO, has been implementing a project for the enhancement of its nursery production system. The key plant health-related components are the establishment of a repository of pest-free material maintained in conditions preventing pest infestations, which could serve as the source of material for further multiplication, establishment of an association of nursery producers, as well as drafting relevant regulations on registration of nurseries, official controls and certification of nursery material in Georgia, similar to the European Union's CAC category⁵. Furthermore, in order to provide guarantees for pest-freedom of the nursery material, Georgia is planning to introduce a system of its labelling, analogical to the EU's plant passport system.⁶

In order to create favourable conditions for the increase of export of food products of plant origin, but also to more fully exploit the existing potential of the country in plant production, Tajikistan has been interested in enhancing its national phytosanitary food safety and phytosanitary systems. The products, which are going to be supported through the enhanced phytosanitary system, should be fruits (fresh or dried) and vegetables, with the view to enhance their exports.

Another country, in which plant health systems are supported by FAO, is Uzbekistan. The country has successfully completed its accession to the IPPC in January 2020, and is very much interested in the enhancement of its phytosanitary system in line with the IPPC and ISPMs, in order to stimulate plant exports. One of the major crops, where Uzbekistan is looking for progress, is potato. A new project focuses on upgrading the national system for potato seed production, as well as on improvements in the production of ware potatoes, with protection from pests being one of the key areas of expected improvement in terms of increasing yields, preventing crop losses and enhancing the food safety of the country.

Projects addressing pesticide management systems and Integrated Pest Management systems

The Global Environment Facility-funded and FAO-managed project "Lifecycle Management of Pesticides and Disposal of POPs Pesticides in Central Asian countries and Turkey" is intended to address the disposing

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31992L0034&from=EN>

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosecurity/trade_eu_en

of POP-pesticides and strengthening the capacity to manage pesticides and related waste materials through their whole life cycle in a sound and sustainable manner. In order to prevent renewed accumulation of obsolete agro-chemicals needing future costly disposal, FAO promotes sustainable and ecosystem-based intensification of crop production. This requires integration and harmonization of all appropriate crop production policies and practices, aimed at increasing crop productivity, as well as strengthening national capacities to enhance data collection for evidence-based plant protection. The project is active in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkey and works through three technical components with the following specific, complementing objectives:

Component 1: Reduce threats from POPs and other obsolete pesticides posing high risks to public health and the environment.

Component 2: Strengthen legal and institutional framework for proper pesticide management across their full life-cycle. Among others, a regional technical webinar is being organized on Empty Container Management and container management system assessment in four countries.

Component 3: Reduce the use of pesticides through the introduction of alternative plant production and protection approaches. In 2020, more than 400 farmers in the beneficiary countries of this project were trained on Integrated Pest Management, with emphasis on the use of biological methods of pest control and enhancement of sustainable crop production.

Projects addressing the management of transboundary pests

Project development efforts were initiated on prevention and management of emerging plant health challenges in the region. Among the most common plant health problem across the region are rust diseases of wheat, namely yellow, leaf and stem rusts. For effective management of these diseases, international collaboration and continuous surveillance is essential due to their transboundary nature and frequent changes in population composition resulting from mutations. In this respect, a project has been developed with the support from the FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme to facilitate collaboration among seven countries in Central Asia and Caucasus. Within the project, designed for five years, support will be provided for international collaboration, surveillance, capacity building, development of resistant varieties and farmer trainings. For implementation of these activities, close collaboration is foreseen with ICARDA (International Center for Agricultural research in Dry Areas), CIMMYT (International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center) and with the Regional Cereal Rust Research Center in Izmir, Turkey.

Additionally, a TCP project has been formulated to address the challenge of a newly introduced strain of banana Fusarium wilt disease (Fusarium Tropical race 4 (TR4)) in the southern coast of Turkey. The disease is threatening banana productions worldwide following its spread in Asia and its recent jump to Near East, Africa and Colombia. Within the project, support is foreseen in development of a national strategy and conduct of surveillance, awareness raising and capacity development to prevent spread of the disease and its potential impact on production and livelihoods.

2. Meetings

In Europe and Central Asia, every year there are a number of meetings dedicated to various aspects of agricultural or rural development, including meetings that focus on plant protection. The end of 2019 and 2020 were expected to be special years, due to the proclamation of 2020 by the General Assembly of the United Nations as the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH).

A number of countries made plans to organize plant health-related events within the framework of IYPH. Unfortunately, beginning of 2020 brought with it the COVID-19 pandemic and, in response to numerous

infections, many governments imposed restrictions on interpersonal contacts, including travelling and organization of meetings, thus making the events impossible. Moreover, in many countries governments decided to suspend the organization of meetings and to give priority to saving health and lives of their citizens, as well to provide support for national economies. Similarly, FAO decided to suspend the missions of its officers within projects being implemented, in order to prevent their exposure to the risk of infection.

The restrictions imposed had a lot of impact on a number of high-level phytosanitary meetings, including the Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-15), which was postponed twice in 2020, and was finally cancelled. Similarly, the Global Plant Health Conference - one of the main events of IYPH, which was to take place in Helsinki, Finland in October 2020, was postponed at first, but finally had to be cancelled.

Similarly, the workshop on emerging plant pests and diseases in the context of the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH), which was to be organized in Turkey jointly by the Regional Office and the Sub-Regional Office in Ankara (SEC), had to be postponed. Despite the pandemic, SEC has organized a virtual stand at the International Online Seed Fair organized by the Turkish Seed Industries Association.⁷ Moreover, the Turkish Post Office has released a post stamp dedicated to the IYPH⁸, in collaboration with FAO.

Nevertheless, some plant health-related meetings did take place in the region, with FAO involvement in some of them.

In November 2019, the Eurasian Economic Commission organized in Moscow a seminar on plant health issues relating to the authorization of entities to carry out the tasks of national plant protection organizations and on electronic phytosanitary certificates (the IPPC ePhyto Solution system).

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 the work of the International Plant Protection Convention on the development of international standards continued, with meetings of standard setting-related bodies held online. Within the standard setting process, FAO REU co-organized the IPPC Regional Workshop for Europe and Central Asia, which focused on the review of draft international standards submitted for the IPPC consultations, but also provided an opportunity for countries get better acquainted with the IPPC procedures for standard setting. Despite earlier plans for the workshop to be hosted by Azerbaijan as a face-to-face meeting, the workshop could only be held online. It was co-organized by the IPPC Secretariat, the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO) and FAO REU. Apart from REU's involvement in the organization of the workshop itself, prior to the workshop the Office organized an additional meeting to support the preparation of countries to the workshop. Furthermore, after the IPPC Regional Workshop, REU organized another meeting, which was dedicated to providing detailed guidance for countries on the procedures for the upcoming IPPC Call for Topics: Standards and Implementation (2021). This was the first such workshop, but more similar regional meetings can be organized on other phytosanitary topics, should this be of interest to Members.

At the local level, trainings were facilitated to producers of medicinal and aromatic plants in Isparta province of Turkey on integrated production of the medicinal and aromatic plants and management of relevant pests and diseases. Furthermore, participation of a trainee from Turkey was facilitated to attend an international training workshop on management of the Fusarium wilt disease in banana.

⁷ <https://www.turktedonlineseedfair.com/>

⁸ <https://www.ptt.gov.tr/Lists/EmisyonProgramlari/Attachments/25/2020%20EMİSYON%20PROGRAMI.pdf>

Currently, REU is preparing a webinar on plant pest surveillance in the region, with the participation of experts from several countries, and in collaboration and participation of experts from FAO Plant Production and Protection Division and the IPPC Secretariat.

IV. Gender-related observations of the 41st ECA Session and FAO REU's implementing activities

During its 41st Session, the Commission made several important gender-related observations, calling for the holistic approach in addressing the root causes of gender inequalities, by persistently mainstreaming gender equality concerns in FAO interventions throughout the region, with the aim to improve rural women's access to resources and economic opportunities, including farm and off-farm income-generating opportunities and entrepreneurship. This should be complemented by women-specific initiatives to empower them to have the voice in decision-making and exercise control over the use of income and productive resources. The Commission also recommended to build partnerships in order to create enabling environment for women-inclusive value chains.

Since the 41st Session of ECA, FAO has been continuing its work in compliance with the "Regional Strategy for Gender Equality (2019-2022)" and its action plan, which are now reinforced by the renewed "FAO's Policy on Gender Equality (2020-2030)", its goals, objectives and minimum standards.

The relevance and urgency of holistic and cross-sectional approaches to gender equality remains a priority, and capacity development and awareness raising on issues related to mainstreaming of the principles of gender equality and leaving no one behind in relation to agriculture and rural development remain at the core of the FAO work in the region. The focus is to target both FAO and national partners, ranging from the ministries of agriculture, forestry and fishery, national statistical offices and other government agencies to non-government agencies and civil society organizations, engaged in sustainable food systems, agriculture and natural resource management. Since September 2019, several interventions, which provide technical assistance to the governments to enhance their capacities to formulate and implement gender-responsive and socially inclusive agricultural and rural development policies, have started with FAO support and are currently underway in Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

Policy support should be based on evidence formed by disaggregated data analysis, and that is why FAO continues production of country gender assessments of agriculture and rural development. These days, the country gender assessments are being finalized for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine and Serbia. In addition to the overview of agriculture and rural development, the reports present the qualitative and quantitative data analysis on the impact and outcomes of the COVID-19 crisis on rural communities and women in particular. Similar work is starting these days with FAO support in Moldova and Azerbaijan. At the same time, we could observe the impact of earlier produced assessments. For example, in 2019, FAO presented the first gender assessment for Uzbekistan, which served the country office and national partners in developing the new Country Programming File, assisted the UN Country Team in developing the Country Common Assessment and contributed to the UN report that reviewed the country's progress in implementing the CEDAW commitments (May 2020). As a result of knowledge sharing and awareness raising, the State Committee on Forestry has developed its first sectoral strategy on gender mainstreaming, which is currently in the process of approval.

In 2020, REU adopted a wake-up call for impact: "Animal health and production strategy for FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia 2020–2025", following the outcomes of the regional capacity

development workshop for advancing gender equality and social inclusion in livestock sector in the region organized in autumn 2019.

FAO is also becoming more active in strengthening its partnerships, including with the UN sister agencies. The Country Gender Assessment for Bosnia and Herzegovina has been produced jointly with UN Women. Collaboration with the regional UN Inter-Agency Coalition on Gender Equality resulted in FAO's greater involvement in policy review processes at the regional level, such as the Beijing+25 Regional Review Meeting (October 2019), where in recognition of its knowledge-generating and practical work targeting rural women, the Organization was invited to lead the preparation of one of the official documents to review progress and identify challenges in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action on empowering rural women in the ECA region. In addition to that, FAO led a session dedicated to Gender and Climate Change issues and organized a side event in cooperation with UNDP, UN Women and the Government of Azerbaijan.

Policy support includes continuous capacity development targeting FAO, government agencies at central and local levels, civil society organizations and various rural institutions including extension, organized in Georgia, North Macedonia, Kazakhstan and Turkey throughout 2020.

To further build knowledge in the areas relevant to its mandate, FAO currently supports region-specific studies in pesticides and in fisheries and intends to start at least three regional overviews: a) in social protection; b) in gender and climate change; and c) in gender and rural advisory and extension services.

Examples and cases of on-going gender mainstreaming efforts include support to the most vulnerable women's groups in four pilot areas in Uzbekistan to sustain forests management in mountainous areas of the country, where FAO introduced alternative income-generating opportunities for women to decrease their dependence on grazing and illegal logging and sustain their livelihoods. To collect good and promising practices, FAO initiated the first Gender Newsletter in the region, to identify and showcase the work that demonstrates how taking into account gender concerns leads to greater effectiveness and results of the project. FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia: Gender Newsletter⁹ released in autumn 2020 is available in English and Russian languages and intention is to produce it on a quarterly basis.

The implementation of the FAO interventions was affected by the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic crisis, which is having negative impact on food systems and livelihoods. To address it, FAO developed the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme for Europe and Central Asia designed to proactively and sustainably address the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. The programme has a stand-alone proposal to support rural women within the overarching long-term goal for resilience of food systems and livelihoods, emphasizing the urgency for addressing gender inequalities in rural areas as the COVID-19 crisis exacerbated many vulnerabilities of rural women engaged in family farm and off-farm employment due to increased unpaid care work and limited mobility.

The ExCom is invited to:

- note the update on progress made on the implementation of recommendations of the 41 ECA Session.

⁹ REU Gender Newsletter can be found at <http://www.fao.org/3/cb1926en/cb1926en.pdf>