



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
31 January 2022

Original: English

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Seventy-eighth session

Bangkok and online, 23–27 May 2022

Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda*

Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific: environment and development

Report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization on its seventeenth session

Summary

The Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization held its seventeenth session online on 8 December 2021. At the meeting, the Council noted the importance of reducing post-harvest loss and waste in order to transform food systems and contribute to the attainment of the related Sustainable Development Goals in the Asia-Pacific region. It also underscored the important role of sustainable agricultural mechanization in reducing post-harvest loss and waste.

The Council commended the Centre's progress and achievements in implementing its work programme, including the recognition received for its projects in 2021. While highlighting that mechanization was key for agricultural modernization and rural development, the Council recommended that the Centre's work in 2022 focus on the following areas, depending on availability of funds, to align with the priorities of the States members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific:

- (1) Climate-smart mechanization, conservation tillage, straw management, green equipment and digitalization (including smart precision farming for the reduction of grain loss);
- (2) Leveraging innovation (such as artificial intelligence and digital technologies);
- (3) Addressing the needs of vulnerable groups;
- (4) Building capacity and raising awareness on measures to improve post-harvest mechanization, transportation and storing;
- (5) Supporting member States in the establishment of custom hiring centres for innovative machinery, as well as testing stations for agricultural machinery, and the development of a new testing code through the Asian and Pacific Network for Testing of Agricultural Machinery initiative.

The Council endorsed the Centre's work report and financial status report for 2021 and workplan for 2022.

* ESCAP/78/L.1/Rev.1.

I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention

1. The Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization notes the importance of reducing post-harvest loss and waste in order to transform food systems and contribute to the attainment of the related Sustainable Development Goals in the Asia-Pacific region. It also underscores the important role of sustainable agricultural mechanization in reducing post-harvest loss and waste.

2. The Council recommends that the Centre conduct a study on the feasibility of establishing a regional agreement for the mutual recognition of agricultural machinery testing to enhance trade of safe and efficient machinery.

II. Proceedings

A. Discussion of the role of mechanization in reducing post-harvest loss and waste as part of efforts towards enabling food systems transformation

(Agenda item 2)

3. A representative of the Centre gave a presentation on the theme of the discussion, including the findings of a case study from China.

4. Members of the Council shared experiences from various countries on the challenges at the national level with regard to reducing post-harvest loss and waste and the efforts to address them. The Council highlighted the need for standardizing loss assessment methodologies; promoting improved supply chains through better infrastructure; separating research on loss from that on waste; and educating farmers on when and how to harvest while also taking into account the purpose or targeted markets. The need to guard against increases in losses due to improper or unsuitable use of machinery, to consider the economic aspects of the use of loss-reducing machinery and to promote awareness among, and action by, all stakeholders were emphasized.

B. Report on the Centre's activities and financial status for 2021 and discussion of the proposed plan of work for 2022

(Agenda items 3 and 4)

5. Representatives of the Centre presented the report on the activities of the Centre and its financial status for 2021 and the proposed plan of work for 2022.

6. The Council commended the Centre's progress and achievements in implementing its work programme, including the recognition received for its projects in 2021. While highlighting that mechanization was key for agricultural modernization and rural development, the Council recommended that the Centre's work in 2022 focus on the following areas, depending on availability of funds, to align with the priorities of the States members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP):

(a) Climate-smart mechanization, conservation tillage, straw management, green equipment and digitalization (including smart precision farming for the reduction of grain loss);

- (b) Leveraging innovation (such as artificial intelligence and digital technologies);
- (c) Addressing the needs of vulnerable groups;
- (d) Building capacity and raising awareness on measures to improve post-harvest mechanization, transportation and storing;
- (e) Supporting member States in the establishment of custom hiring centres for innovative machinery, as well as testing stations for agricultural machinery, and the development of a new testing code through the Asian and Pacific Network for Testing of Agricultural Machinery initiative.

7. The Council endorsed the Centre's work report and financial status report for 2021 and workplan for 2022.

C. Date of and venue for the eighteenth session of the Governing Council

(Agenda item 5)

8. The Council suggested that its eighteenth session be held in November or December 2022 back to back with one of the Centre's key events. Malaysia offered to host the eighteenth session of the Council, subject to confirmation and keeping in view any restrictions imposed owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

D. Other matters

(Agenda item 6)

9. The Council was informed that the term of its present members (2018–2022) would end at the seventy-eighth session of the Commission, to be held in May 2022. At the session, the Commission would hold elections for the Council for the next three-year term (2022–2025).

E. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council on its seventeenth session

(Agenda item 7)

10. The Council adopted the present report on 8 December 2021.

III. Organization

A. Opening, duration and organization of the session

11. The seventeenth session of the Council was held online on 8 December 2021.

12. The Executive Secretary delivered remarks to the Council via a video message. In her remarks, she highlighted that agriculture across the world, including in the Asia-Pacific region, was facing the severe, twin challenges of the disruptive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis. She underscored the key role of sustainable agricultural mechanization in addressing those challenges and strengthening food systems through an inclusive and equitable approach. She also expressed her appreciation to the Government of China, the Centre's host country, for renewing its financial support for the Centre for another five years, starting in 2021, and thanked other Council members for their continued financial contributions to the Centre.

B. Attendance

13. The session was attended by representatives of all nine members of the Council: Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; India; Malaysia; Pakistan; Philippines; Thailand; and Viet Nam.

14. Representatives of the Agriculture Machinery Centre of Bhutan and the Institute of Agricultural Machinery of the National Agriculture and Food Research Organization of Japan attended the session as observers.

15. In accordance with rule 12 of the Commission's rules of procedure, the Chair and Vice-Chair examined the credentials of all the representatives and found them to be in order.

C. Election of officers

16. The Council elected the following officers:

Chair: Ms. Thi Tam Dinh (Viet Nam)

Vice-Chair: Mr. Chin Chuang Teoh (Malaysia)

D. Adoption of the agenda

17. The Council adopted the following agenda with an amendment to item 2, changing "food" to "post-harvest":

1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Discussion of the role of mechanization in reducing post-harvest loss and waste as part of efforts towards enabling food systems transformation.
3. Report on the Centre's activities and financial status for 2021.
4. Discussion of the proposed plan of work for 2022.
5. Date of and venue for the eighteenth session of the Governing Council.
6. Other matters.
7. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council on its seventeenth session.

Annex I

List of documents

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
<i>General series</i>		
	The Centre's work report for 2021 and plan of work for 2022	3 and 4
ESCAP/CSAM/GC/2021/1	Report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization on its seventeenth session	
<i>Limited series</i>		
ESCAP/CSAM/GC/2021/L.1	Annotated provisional agenda	1 (c)
<i>Information series</i>		
	Role of mechanization in reducing food loss and waste in China: a case study for grain crops	2

Annex II

Financial statement of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization for the year ended 31 December 2021

(United States dollars)

Income

Contributions	1 802 980
Interest income	16 502
Total income	1 819 482
<i>Less: Expenditure</i>	(1 510 928)
Net income over expenditure	308 554
Fund balance as at 1 January 2021	4 641 120
Fund transfer from/to grants	250 000
Fund balance as at 31 December 2021	5 199 674

Annex III

Financial statement of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization for the year ended 31 December 2021, by project component (United States dollars)

	<i>Joint contributions: capacity development project</i>	<i>Asian and Pacific Network for Testing of Agricultural Machinery: cooperation project with Japan (phase II)</i>	<i>Enabling Sustainable and Climate-smart Agriculture in Cambodia, Indonesia and Nepal through Mechanization Solutions for Integrated Management of Straw Residue and Air Pollution Monitoring</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Income</i>				
Contributions	1 802 980	-	-	1 802 980
Interest income	15 364	511	627	16 502
Total income	1 818 344	511	627	1 819 482
<i>Less: Expenditure</i>	(1 385 630)	-	(125 298)	(1 510 928)
Net income over expenditure	432 714	511	(124 671)	308 554
Fund balance as at 1 January 2021	4 490 838	150 282	-	4 641 120
Fund transfer from/to grants	-	-	250 000 ^a	250 000
Fund balance as at 31 December 2021	4 923 552	150 793	125 329	5 199 674

^a Transferred from China-ESCAP Cooperation Programme global account.

Annex IV

Cash contributions to the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization for the institutional support account received for the year ended 31 December 2021
(United States dollars)

<i>Country/area</i>	<i>Year ended 31 December 2021</i>	<i>Year ended 31 December 2020</i>
Cambodia	2 000	2 000
China	1 700 000	1 548 000
India	-	30 000
Pakistan	4 980	-
Philippines	60 000	-
Republic of Korea	10 000	10 000
Sri Lanka	5 000	5 000
Thailand	15 000	15 000
Viet Nam	6 000	-
Total	1 802 980	1 610 000