Sustainable food systems in North and Central Asia

A systematic approach for transitioning to healthier and more nutritional dietary patterns

4th Sub-regional Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Implementation of the SDGs

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Introduction

1. **Role of Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) in transitioning to healthy and nutritional diets and achieving the SDGs**

2. **State of the food system** in the NCA subregion

3. **Way forward in the NCA region:** Challenges and opportunities for SFS transformation
The Sustainable Food System approach

- SFS comprise all functions and actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products.

- SFS approach assesses food system activities against priority outcomes:
  1. Economic development: inclusive incomes, jobs & livelihoods
  2. Social equality: secure and safe food and nutrition
  3. Environmental protection: environmentally sustainable practices and resilience agriculture to climate

- Understanding interconnectedness and trade-offs between social, economic and environmental impacts.

- Aims at finding sustainable solutions for sufficient supply of healthy food.
Examples of trade-offs

Grain requirements for feed

Feed conversion rate
Kilograms of feed per kilogram of edible weight

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<tr>
<th>Kilograms</th>
<th>Milk</th>
<th>Carp</th>
<th>Eggs</th>
<th>Chicken</th>
<th>Pork</th>
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Source: Smil, Vaclav (2002). Eating Meat: Evolution, Patterns, and Consequences

HOW MUCH WATER IS NEEDED TO PRODUCE...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 KILO OF MEAT</th>
<th>1 KILO OF WHEAT</th>
<th>DAILY DRINKING REQUIREMENTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>15,000 LITRES</td>
<td>1,500 LITRES</td>
<td>2–5 LITRES</td>
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To produce enough food to satisfy a person’s daily needs takes about 3000 litres of water.
Within the 2030 Agenda, food systems transformation can help countries to deliver on all 17 SDGs. The 2021 UN Food Systems Summit will work to deliver these aspirations through five objectives:

1. Ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all
2. Shifting to sustainable consumption patterns
3. Boosting nature-positive production at sufficient scales
4. Advancing equitable livelihoods and value distribution
5. Building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stresses
“Making food systems sustainable, resilient and inclusive, and healthy diets accessible and affordable for everyone is paramount to building back better from COVID-19.”

Dr QU Dongyu
FAO Director-General
Where do we stand regionally

- Prevalence of hunger at the chronic or severe level is mostly very low (below 3.2%; FIES)
- Moderate and severe undernourishment between 16% and 20% of total population (FIES)
- Stagnation between 2014-18 (threatening attainment of SDG target)
- Multiple burden of malnutrition:
  - Obesity and overweight are on the rise
  - Prevalence of stunting mainly low (some medium declining trend)
- Inequality and under-investment in agriculture among main drivers behind the above trends
Where do we stand regionally? (cont’d)

- Slowdown in production growth in several countries in the NCA region, especially in Central Asia.
- Output growth more volatile in recent years (climate, trade, migration and remittances, and economy-wide fluctuations).
- Over-use of inputs (agro-chemical) and natural resources (water).
- Degradation of natural resource base (land, water, forest).
- The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the supply of and demand for food and reduced the purchasing power of rural households and the capacity, especially of women farmers, to produce and market their produce.
Way forward – SFS Transformation

Key priorities in the region:

• Improved institutional and policy environment to reduce inequalities and promote inclusive growth, and foster improved use and management of natural resources

• Increasing adoption of technical and institutional innovations along the supply chains

• Strengthening capacity to enhance food safety and access to nutritious food for all

• Increasing the capacity to reduce food loss and waste in an inclusive and sustainable way

• Attracting investment for green growth and carbon neutrality

• Harnessing digital innovations and technologies
Way forward – SFS transformation

Actions Required

- Improved **governance, systems-thinking, policy coherence and coordination.**
- **Data, evidence, and multi-sectoral analysis** to understand synergies and trade-offs within the food system and between the three dimensions of sustainability, determine clear priorities and change in behavior and choices.
- **Evidence-based, inclusive multi-stakeholder policy dialogue** to manage trade-offs between the different dimensions of sustainability, take the most balanced decisions and build stakeholder buy-in around these
THANK YOU!