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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE

Thirty-third Session

Łódź, Poland, 10–13 May 2022

Draft Report

I. Introductory Items

A. Organization of the Regional Conference

1. The 33rd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC) was held in Łódź, Poland, from 10 to 13 May 2022. Following formal consultations with the host country, the Republic of Poland, and the Europe Regional Group, and in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health concerns, the ERC agreed to conduct this session in a hybrid modality, on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent. Some representatives attended in person in Łódź and others participated virtually, with the Rules of Procedure of the ERC for holding a physical meeting suspended.

2. The Regional Conference was attended by 261 participants, including nine ministers, eight deputy ministers and state secretaries, and representatives from 52 Members. One observer from among the Member Nations, six United Nations organizations, 16 intergovernmental organizations, two international non-governmental organizations and six representatives of civil society organizations were in attendance, along with eight representatives from the private sector and five representatives from the research and academia sector.

B. Inauguration ceremony

3. The Inauguration Ceremony was opened by the Secretary of the 33rd session of the ERC, with addresses by His Excellency Henryk Kowalczyk, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Poland; His Excellency Zbigniew Rau, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland; the Director-General of FAO, Dr Qu Dongyu; His Excellency Mr Janusz Wojciechowski, Commissioner for Agriculture of the European Commission; and Mr Tobiasz Bocheński, Governor of Łódź Voivodship.

C. Welcome from a high-level official from Poland

4. His Excellency Henryk Kowalczyk, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Poland, welcomed the participants and highlighted the importance of the Europe and Central Asia region in the worldwide agricultural system. The region is

among the key producers of agricultural raw materials and food, and it is a source of new ideas and inspiration in the field of agriculture and food systems for the entire world.

5. Poland is an example of a successful transformation. Since the early 2000s, the country has modernized its agricultural sector and shifted its status from an importer to a net exporter of food. As this session focused on sustainable food systems, Deputy Prime Minister Kowalczyk underlined the role of countries in the region during the United Nations Food Systems Summit process, where they adopted ambitious national objectives and engaged in regional and global initiatives. He stressed the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine in explaining record-high prices for agricultural inputs and products. He stated that meeting the 2030 Agenda and attaining the Sustainable Development Goals is at risk.

6. Deputy Prime Minister Kowalczyk highlighted the region's internal diversity and stressed its common traditions and values. He also pointed out that the region offers enormous material and intellectual resources that can be used to assist countries outside the region. He wished that the Thirty-third Session of the ERC could be held in circumstances more conducive to calm and productive debates. However, he still hoped that the outcomes of the discussions would help find solutions to the problems the region faces. He underlined the importance of FAO's role as an active forum for regional and global discussion and cooperation on agriculture and food security.

D. Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of Rapporteurs

7. His Excellency Zbigniew Rau, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, was endorsed by the delegates to chair the Session.

8. Her Excellency Frida Krifca, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Albania, was elected as first vice-chairperson of the Thirty-third Session of the ERC.

9. His Excellency Marcel Beukeboom, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations in Rome, was elected as second vice-chairperson of the Thirty-third Session of the ERC.

10. His Excellency Thomas Kelly, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Agencies in Rome, and Mr Jiří Jílek, Permanent Representative of Czechia to FAO and the World Food Programme, were appointed as rapporteurs of the Thirty-third Session of the ERC.

E. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

11. The Chairperson introduced the Agenda and Provisional Timetable, which were adopted by the Thirty-third Session of the ERC. The agenda is provided in Appendix A. Documents submitted to the Thirty-third Session of the ERC are listed in Appendix B.

F. Statement by the Director-General

12. Dr Qu Dongyu, FAO Director-General, extended his gratitude to the Government and people of Poland for hosting the Thirty-third Session of the ERC. He noted the critical times we are facing and the grave challenges to food and nutrition security in the region and around the world.

13. He said that the impact of the war in Ukraine and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are negatively affecting our lives, health and economies. The Thirty-third Session of the ERC offered a key moment to discuss responses and to share proven solutions, he said, with the goal of offering better support for policymakers across the region in addressing the challenges.

14. Director-General Qu Dongyu said that the ongoing destruction in Ukraine is causing enormous human suffering and leaving production value chains and supply chains destroyed. He noted that some countries are highly dependent on the Russian Federation and Ukraine for their food (including raw

material for animal feed), fuel and fertilizer supplies, and among them are many low-income, food-importing countries. He also stressed the impact on all consumers in the region and globally, as the increase in food, energy and fertilizer prices is decreasing purchasing power and putting the next harvest at risk.

15. He highlighted that the Thirty-third Session of the ERC is an opportunity to discuss these matters, along with potential approaches that can prevent an even greater crisis. He reiterated that Members can rely on FAO to facilitate the emergency response and recovery assistance and to strengthen resilience in food systems, in line with FAO's mandate and capacity. He referred to the policy recommendations set out in document ERC/22/14. He also referred to the FAO Ukraine Rapid Response Plan and the need to mobilize resources.

16. Director-General Qu Dongyu stressed the importance of the four betters and underlined that the FAO Strategic Framework articulates FAO's vision of a sustainable and food-secure world for all, while leaving no one behind. As FAO is host of the United Nations Food System Summit Coordination Hub on behalf of the United Nations System, he committed the Organization to supporting Members in implementing their national pathways, including by providing technical expertise and mobilizing resources in line with regional priorities.

17. He also talked about the generation gaps in Europe and Central Asia, including digital gaps. He said that FAO is leveraging the European Union's rich experience in developing smart villages to enable the digital transformation of other villages in the region. He also pointed to the importance of green agriculture, which plays a vital role in transforming local agrifood systems. Climate-sensitive approaches are necessary to lessen the burden on natural resources while reducing poverty, hunger and malnutrition. In this context, the Director-General recalled FAO initiatives such as One Country One Priority Product, the Digital Village Initiative, and the Regional Technical Platform on Green Agriculture, which aim to foster sustainable agrifood systems and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

G. Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council

18. The Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council, Mr Hans Hoogeveen, informed the delegates about the outcomes of the 169th Session of the FAO Council, which focused on the impact of the war in Ukraine on global food security and related matters under the FAO mandate. He highlighted the challenges related to food insecurity and malnutrition in the region and globally, exacerbated first by the COVID-19 pandemic and further by the war in Ukraine. He underlined the importance of strengthening international market transparency and policy dialogue in order to minimize uncertainty and disruptions in agricultural commodity markets.

19. Mr Hoogeveen complimented Members for progress made in the region over the past few years in many important policy areas that can serve as a model for other regions. He also welcomed FAO initiatives such as the draft FAO Science and Innovation Strategy and the draft FAO Strategy on Climate Change. He noted their importance for enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainable management of natural resources in order to curb the degradation of natural resources and preserve biodiversity. He called for joint efforts to help transform agrifood systems in the region, building on the momentum created by the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit. He highlighted the main areas of the FAO programme of work in the region and mentioned the importance of the Thirty-third Session of the ERC in helping define FAO policies and address the emerging challenges in partnership with governments, the private sector, regional organizations and others, in order that no one is left behind.

20. Mr Hoogeveen also highlighted the crucial roles that women and youth play as key actors in transforming agrifood systems and pointed to their potential to be active agents of change and builders of resilience. He emphasized that there are still challenges in fully integrating their roles into effective action plans.

H. Statement by the Chairperson of the 32nd Session of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)

21. His Excellency Jamshid Abdukhakimovich Khodjaev, Minister for Agriculture of Uzbekistan, delivered the statement as Chairperson of the Thirty-second Session of the ERC. He reminded the Thirty-third Session of the ERC of the outcomes and recommendations of that session, which were endorsed by the 165th Session of the FAO Council in 2020 and by the Forty-second Session of the FAO Conference in 2021.

I. Statement by the chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security

22. The chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), His Excellency Gabriel Ferrero y de Loma-Osorio, briefed the Regional Conference on key CFS activities.

23. He pledged the full commitment of CFS to work hand in hand with FAO and the entire United Nations system. He also highlighted that when everyone was prepared to start addressing the impacts of COVID-19, the world was confronted by the impacts of the war in Ukraine, which has a systemic global impact in terms of the production, access, utilization, stability and sustainability of food. The war in Ukraine is not only resulting in the deaths and injury of thousands of people in Ukraine - it is also affecting hundreds of millions of people around the world who must now contend with higher food costs, reduced access to healthy diets, rising prices, and unavailability of energy and fertilizers. He stressed that in order to fight hunger, peace is needed to ensure that smallholders and family farmers around the world have access to inputs and seeds to guarantee the next harvest.

24. The pandemic has exposed some of the risks, fragilities, inequalities and strengths characterizing agriculture and food systems, and it has prompted the global community to rethink the ways food is produced, processed and consumed. CFS was reformed in 2009 to respond to these challenges. It stands ready to serve its mission as an open, inclusive, intergovernmental platform where governments meet with other stakeholders to coordinate policies and address long-term structural causes of hunger and malnutrition, including crises.

25. He stressed that CFS, as the global multilateral platform dedicated to food security and nutrition, is ready to assist in the concerted efforts of the international community through the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance. CFS plans to convene an intersessional high-level meeting in July 2022 so that its inclusive platform can coordinate global policy responses. The CFS chairperson welcomed all Members to make full use of the CFS intergovernmental platform.

J. Statement by the Spokesperson for the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Consultation

26. Ms Olena Borodina, spokesperson of the civil society organizations (CSOs), emphasized that rural territories and communities in Europe, Central Asia and around the world have been impacted by multiple crises, including climate change, health shocks and, recently, the war in Ukraine. She noted that these crises have reinforcing effects on each other. She said that this demonstrates the importance of strengthening local food systems and food sovereignty and reducing dependence on food imports.

27. She mentioned that small-scale family food producers have proven to be resilient throughout these crises. As a result, they deserve to become the priority for all governments and decision-makers at all levels in the region in emergency programmes and public food and agriculture policies and strategies.

28. She underlined the importance of prioritizing human rights, agroecology and the localization of food systems in the implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31 and stated that CSOs and Indigenous Peoples should be engaged throughout the entire process. She pointed to existing initiatives and tools to do this, such as the United Nations Decade on Family Farming; the United Nations

Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas; the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests; and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication.

II. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Matters

A. Implications on world food security and agriculture, including global food prices, arising from the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine

41. The Thirty-third Session of the ERC decided by vote¹ to adopt en bloc the proposals contained in document ERC/22/15. Accordingly, the Thirty-third Session of the ERC adopted the following decision:

42. The Regional Conference:

- a. Recalled and reaffirmed the decision adopted on 8 April 2022 by the FAO Council at its 169th (special) session (CL 169/REP, paragraph 11);
- b. Recalled also the resolution adopted on 27 March 2014 by the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/68/262);
- c. Recalled further the resolutions adopted on 2 and 24 March 2022 by the United Nations General Assembly at its 11th emergency special session (A/RES/ES-11/1), (A/RES/ES-11/2); the resolution adopted on 3 March by the IAEA Board of Governors (GOV/2022/17); the resolution adopted on 4 March 2022 by the UN Human Rights Council (A/HRC/49/L.1); the decisions adopted by the International Maritime Organization Council on 10 and 11 March 2022 (C/ES.35/WP.1); the decision adopted on 15 March 2022 by UNESCO Executive Board (7 X/EX/DR.2.1 Corr); the resolution adopted by the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation on 22 March 2022 (GB.344/INS/19);
- d. Recalled also the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2417 (2018) on food security in armed conflict; and considered that the targeting of civilians and civilian food supply and agricultural infrastructure by the Russian Federation as part of its aggression against Ukraine constitutes a violation of its obligations under international humanitarian law, as described in the aforementioned Resolution of the Security Council;
- e. Welcomed the UN Secretary-General's decision to establish a Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance (GCRG) in the UN Secretariat to coordinate the global response to the worldwide impacts of the crisis in Ukraine;
- f. Reaffirmed its commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters;
- g. Expressed its solidarity and support for Ukraine and its people, as well as its appreciation for neighboring countries and host communities for their generous support and volunteer efforts to reach out to those in need;
- h. Expressed its deepest concern at the threat made by the Russian authorities to limit supplies of agriculture products to the so-called "friendly" countries and stressed that these threats, if carried out, would amount to deliberately causing conflict-induced food insecurity and would further exacerbate food insecurity;
- i. Expressed grave concern at the devastating impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine on global food security as well as rising food, fertilizer and energy prices, in particular in Least

¹ Roll call vote with total votes cast: 43, majority required: 22, votes for: 40, votes against: 3, abstentions: 0. Appendix X: Roll call vote Results Sheet.

Developed Countries, as Ukraine and the region are one of the world's most important areas for grain and agricultural exports;

- j. Demanded that the Russian Federation immediately cease its unlawful activities to prevent further damage and destruction of agricultural assets and livelihoods; and to ensure the resumption of agricultural activities and trade, including shipments of food and agricultural commodities from and to Ukraine;
 - k. Recalled that the actions referred to above by the Russian Federation and Belarus have been characterized by the FAO Council as incompatible with the objectives and purposes of the Organization and therefore amounting to a violation of their obligations under the FAO Constitution, and considered that the Russian Federation and Belarus could not be regarded as Member Nations contributing towards the success of the Organization within the meaning of Rule XXII.3 b) of the General Rules of the Organization;
 - l. Requested the FAO to:
 - i. safeguard all the rights of Ukraine as a Member Nation of the FAO, including those deriving from legal instruments adopted pursuant to Article XIV of the FAO Constitution, within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters and exclusive economic zone adjacent thereto;
 - ii. submit for the next session of the FAO Council a report containing an overview of the work of the FAO and FAO-related bodies, including Article XIV bodies and other Regional Commissions, in and with Ukraine and countries most affected in the region;
 - iii. assess the damage to Ukrainian agriculture and agriculture and food sector in Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, as well as the reconstruction and rehabilitation costs of Ukrainian agriculture due to loss and damage resulting from the Russian aggression;
 - iv. prepare and implement, at the request of and in close cooperation with the Government of Ukraine, short-term, medium-term and long-term assistance plans to address the food security concerns in the country and rehabilitate its food production potential;
 - v. in addition, develop immediate, medium-term, and longer-term plans to address the food security impacts of Russian aggression against Ukraine, including emergency response, recovery assistance and resilience building in food systems, for countries most affected in the region, particularly in the Black sea region, Central Asia, the Caucasus and Western Balkans;
 - vi. contribute to strengthening global market transparency and coordination among Members, through initiatives such as the Agricultural Market Information System;
 - vii. report regularly to Members, including through FAO Governing bodies, on actions taken with respect to the above;
 - m. Decided to remain seized on this matter and to add this matter to the agenda of the next regular session of the European Regional Conference;
 - n. Decided, in accordance with Rule VI.5 of its Rules of procedure, that the present decision, together with the decision of the FAO Council adopted at its 169th (special) session, shall be communicated to all Members and brought to the attention of the general public under the form of a press release published in all FAO languages.
43. The Thirty-third Session of the ERC noted document ERC/22/14 prepared by the FAO Management and welcomed those recommendations which are consistent with the recommendations set out in the Report of the 169th Session of the FAO Council:
- a) keeping trade in food and fertilisers open, thus enabling the Russian Federation and Ukraine to meet domestic production and consumption needs, while also satisfying global demands; finding new and more diverse food supplies, so that countries that rely directly on food imports

from Ukraine and the Russian Federation may absorb the shocks from the war and remain resilient;

- b) providing support to vulnerable groups, such as those in line with the FAO Rapid Response Plan March-May 2022, including support for internally displaced people, refugees and those directly affected by the war;
- c) avoiding *ad hoc* policy reactions, by weighing up carefully measures put in place in countries affected by potential disruptions from the war against their potentially detrimental effect on international markets in the short-term and over the longer term;
- d) strengthening global market transparency and enabling dialogue and coordination among Members through initiatives such as the G-20's Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS);
- e) containing the spread of African swine fever.

44. The Thirty-third Session of the ERC expressed appreciation to FAO and its work in Ukraine and encouraged FAO to continue to enhance its work in this regard.

B. The road to transformative agrifood systems in Europe and Central Asia – Regional actions to implement the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31

45. The Thirty-third Session of the ERC discussed document ERC/22/2.

46. The Regional Conference recommended Members to:

- a) affirm the critical importance to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda of coordinated action and investment in technology, digital solutions, innovation, data and complements (governance, human capital and institutions) towards more sustainable agrifood systems;
- b) continue facilitating cooperation among multiple stakeholders, including policymakers, the private sector and civil society and across sectors to build upon the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) results and commit to supporting national, regional and local actions, including the implementation of national pathways;
- c) work together to address common regional agrifood systems issues through multilateral instruments and platforms, including the Committee on World Food Security (CFS);
- d) recognize the important role of the CFS and continue implementing the CFS guidelines and policy recommendations, including the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN), Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI) and policy recommendations related to food loss and waste and agroecology;
- e) continue collecting and sharing data and evidence to inform policy decisions and actions;
- f) measure the performance of agrifood systems by including targets and results for sustainability;
- g) strengthen resilience by investing in smallholders and family farms, short supply chains and local markets and updating agrifood systems to be better prepared, adaptable and autonomous;
- h) commit to focusing sustainable agrifood interventions to provide healthy diets for all, including a production shift to increased availability of plant-based foods, e.g. fresh fruits and vegetables, with due attention to facilitating the nutrition transition;
- i) work in a cross-sectoral way to improve the food environment for consumers, including in schools, and increase consumers' awareness of food and nutrition so that they can make informed choices to address all forms of malnutrition;

- j) promote sustainable agrifood systems through nature-based solutions and the greening of the sector, including through responsible investments, agroecology, bioeconomy and climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- k) share experiences on effective actions and best practices identified as critical to ensuring that agrifood systems developments contribute to an acceleration in the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and
- l) improve the social sustainability and inclusivity of agrifood systems through gender- and age-balanced approaches to empower women and youth as agents of change in order to ensure sustainable rural development and equitable agrifood livelihoods in line with the framework of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNFFF), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP), and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

47. The Regional Conference called upon FAO to:

- a) continue to support Members to effectively implement the food systems transformation agenda, including accelerators to fast-track progress and facilitate knowledge platforms, especially to promote innovative solutions in order to maximize prospects for sustainable agriculture development and achievement of the SDGs;
- b) support Members and agrifood systems actors through implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31 addressing the four regional priorities, including a focus on accelerators, cross-cutting themes (gender, youth and inclusion) and FAO corporate strategies and initiatives;
- c) support the follow-up to the UNFSS, including addressing common regional issues and supporting countries during the implementation of national pathways, in coordination with the United Nations Coordination Hub in Rome, and relevant regional mechanisms;
- d) continue to work with United Nations partners in the regional Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems and other multistakeholder partnerships, such as the One Planet Network Sustainable Food Systems Programme to support regional and country efforts;
- e) support work to increase understanding of true cost accounting of food and redefine the value of food as an important step towards creating more equitable food systems, taking account of the principles of the true value of food, recognized as a lever of change by the UNFSS; and
- f) continue to support countries to adopt and apply the One Health approach, including the fight against antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and zoonotic diseases through national action plans.

C. Sustainable food value chains for nutrition, a practical approach for transforming agrifood systems for healthy diets in Europe and Central Asia

48. The Regional Conference discussed document ERC/22/3.

49. The Regional Conference emphasized the need to:

- a) upscale the use of the nutrition-sensitive value chain approach to identify nutritional challenges and potential solutions and to consider the development and updating of sustainable national food-based dietary guidelines in this regard;
- b) support the development of voluntary tools, mechanisms or instruments that encourage the adoption of responsible business conduct that focuses on nutritional approaches, drawing from the relevant elements of the CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI), the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and

Nutrition (VGFSyN), agroecology and other CFS innovative approaches, from the OECD–FAO Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains, and from relevant private-sector initiatives such as the European Union Code of Conduct for Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices;

- c) build nutrition-sensitive value chain capacities among agricultural and other extension services to transform agrifood systems and fill gaps in understanding practical techniques for the storage, distribution, processing, packaging, retail and marketing of safe, nutrient-rich and diverse food;
- d) embed in ongoing food policy alignment efforts (including trade policy) a concept of “value” that moves beyond a purely economic focus to one that encompasses nutrition, health, social and environmental values; and
- e) raise the level of ambition for nutritional outcomes by targeting not only economically active groups but also the nutritional needs of vulnerable groups, including women and youth.

50. In supporting the implementation of the above recommendations, Members requested FAO to:

- a) assist countries in Europe and Central Asia in upscaling the use of the nutrition-sensitive value chain approach as part of the agrifood systems transformation and as an integral part of the four priorities of the region and the implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31;
- b) help countries to implement all relevant CFS products and recommendations in their specific contexts and promote CFS policy recommendations on agroecological and other innovative approaches and the development and updating of sustainable national food-based dietary guidelines as reference for guiding food policy;
- c) assist countries in developing the UNFSS national pathways through the United Nations Regional Coordinators and work on the summit follow-up through the coordination hub, in close collaboration with the Rome-based Agencies, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Health Organization;
- d) support the development and implementation of voluntary tools, mechanisms or instruments that encourage the adoption of responsible business conduct and enterprise risk-based due diligence, focusing on nutrition-sensitive approaches;
- e) provide technical assistance to existing extension and advisory services in countries of Europe and Central Asia for the delivery of nutrition-sensitive solutions in value chain development;
- f) promote the establishment of an international measurement standard for true pricing based on a scientific consensus process and in alignment with governments and stakeholders;
- g) facilitate collaboration, knowledge sharing and capacity development and promote investment in a nutrition-sensitive value chain approach; and
- h) identify and share best practices of nutrition-sensitive social protection measures that improve access to healthy diets, leaving no one behind.

III. Programme and Budget Matters

A. Regional results, priorities, the *four betters* and the Sustainable Development Goals

51. The Regional Conference discussed documents ERC/22/4 and ERC/22/5.

52. The Regional Conference:

- a) congratulated FAO's approach to adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic through the facilitation and development of new ways to contribute virtually to FAO meetings, technical discussions and consultations;
- b) noted FAO's new ways of working, modalities and initiatives introduced in 2020–21 to contribute to supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind;
- c) recognized the importance of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31 in providing direction for FAO's work and contributing to the achievement of SDGs in the region;
- d) noted that FAO will implement the Strategic Framework through 20 programme priority areas (PPAs), fully utilizing the four cross-cutting accelerators of technology, innovation, data and complements and embedding the cross-cutting themes of gender, youth and inclusion across FAO's work;
- e) noted that FAO fully aligned its country-level planning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) process, thus building on United Nations Development System repositioning efforts to collectively support country ownership and address national SDG priorities and gaps;
- f) called upon FAO to further improve the reporting process, including against targets set out in the UNSDCF and Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs), to allow Members to better understand the results and impacts of FAO's important work on food systems, communities, and women's and men's lives; and to also increase transparency by publishing more information on FAO websites;
- g) acknowledged the work of FAO in the region during 2020–21, as well as the achievements under the Regional Initiatives (RIs) and other main areas of work in responding to the priorities identified at the Thirty-second Session of the ERC;
- h) endorsed the three revised Regional Initiatives maintaining emphasis on poverty reduction, their alignment with the PPAs, and the priority areas of the region, which will guide FAO's actions in 2022–23 and beyond;
- i) noted the importance of strengthened partnerships, including with smallholder producers and food companies, procurers and consumers;
- j) called upon FAO to step up efforts to better promote gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in all activities across the region by generating sex-disaggregated data and by interweaving regional policies with the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition, which are being developed by CFS;
- k) called upon FAO to fully align with and integrate the Rural Youth Action Plan and embrace the policy recommendations for youth engagement developed by CFS;
- l) noted FAO's priority initiatives, such as the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI), and the importance of emerging corporate strategies of science and innovation and climate change, as well as their regional approaches and specificities;

- m) noted the importance of adopting innovative approaches and using modern science and technologies, including digital solutions, to face new situations and challenges;
- n) called upon FAO to pay due attention to the accessibility and affordability of digital technologies for small-scale farmers in order to avoid the digital divide;
- o) noted the destabilizing effect that the war in Ukraine has had across the globe and reaffirm the pivotal role that FAO plays in safeguarding food security in the region;
- p) noted that FAO, in coordination and collaboration with other United Nations entities and relevant bodies, especially the Rome-based Agencies and international financial institutions, will address within its mandate the consequences of the conflict in Ukraine on food security and agriculture in the region, as requested by the 169th Session of the FAO Council on 8 April 2022;
- q) encouraged FAO to adjust and adapt the delivery of the work programme to address emerging issues and changing contexts in the region, giving priority and providing resources for the recovery and building back better of countries affected by the conflict;
- r) reinforced the opportunities presented by the development of national pathways following the UNFSS. Collaboration across the United Nations system, in coherence with the United Nations Development System reform, and especially with civil society and the private sector, should also be further emphasized; and
- s) recalled that our region should remain at the forefront on the fight against antimicrobial resistance, mainstreaming biodiversity, and continuing to develop nature-based solutions.

B. Update on the development of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy

- 41. The Regional Conference discussed document ERC/22/6.
- 42. The Regional Conference:
 - a) welcomed the development of FAO's first-ever Science and Innovation Strategy as a key tool to contribute to the implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31 and its transparent and inclusive consultation process;
 - b) underlined that science and innovation underpin a wide range of approaches, technologies and practices that can contribute to transforming agrifood systems to nourish people, nurture the planet, advance equitable livelihoods and build resilient ecosystems;
 - c) welcomed the fact that the strategy will consider the knowledge, experiences and concerns of farmers, foresters, fishers and Indigenous Peoples; and
 - d) welcomed FAO's commitment to strengthening its leadership role on science and innovation for the transformation of agrifood systems and achieving the SDGs.
- 43. The Regional Conference recommended that:
 - a) the strategy should rely on a human-centred, ethical and responsible vision of science, data use, innovation and technology. Clear linkages with FAO's policies on data protection and intellectual property rights and private sector engagement should be established, providing safeguards;
 - b) the strategy should be participatory and demand-driven, leading to and building on stakeholder-driven innovations that are adaptable and responsive to local contexts and needs; and

- c) the strategy should aim for innovations to be accessible and affordable to small-scale and family farmers, women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups.

C. Update on the development of the New FAO Strategy on Climate Change

44. The Regional Conference discussed document ERC/22/7.

45. The Regional Conference:

- a) underlined the urgency of addressing climate change impacts as part of agrifood system transformation in order to increase resilience to climate change. It recognized that agrifood systems are fundamental components of climate action, as they are heavily affected by climate change and responsible for a significant part of total greenhouse gas emissions;
- b) welcomed the latest draft of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change, its alignment to the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31 and other international agreements, and welcomed the inclusive and consultative process;
- c) emphasized that agrifood systems can contribute to climate change mitigation and noted the opportunities across the region to adopt innovative solutions under this strategy. It further noted that implementing the strategy should be tailored to specific circumstances at national and local levels;
- d) recognized that fishery policy should be an important element in the FAO Strategy on Climate Change and that more attention should be given to the impacts of overfishing and promoting sustainable fishing practices;
- e) recalled the need to strengthen coordination with relevant mechanisms such as UN Declaration of Peasants and Other People Living in Rural Areas (UNDROP, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT), and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (VGSSF), in line with national contexts and capacities;
- f) recognized that farmers need to have access to new technologies in a manner that is effective and affordable.

46. Recommended FAO to:

- g) ensure that the FAO Strategy on Climate Change is ambitious in promoting a shift that will tackle the root causes of climate change impacts on the agrifood system in ways that addresses the vulnerability of countries and communities in the region;
- h) support learning and exchange among countries in the region and globally on applying innovations, technologies, and stronger engagement stakeholders in the agrifood system;
- i) encourage best practices on developing multistakeholder partnerships and facilitate access to climate finance, including innovative financing options, including by providing guidance to processes such as the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture;
- j) ensure that the specific needs of Members and agrifood system stakeholders from Europe and Central Asia are considered in the FAO Strategy on Climate Change and during implementation;
- k) ensure that the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change includes more emphasis on the role of the One Health approach and promoting a wide range of solutions, including nature-based solutions, agroecology and other innovative approaches, ecosystem-

based adaptation, social and governance innovations and technologies, in order to enhance the implementation of Members' climate commitments.

D. Synthesis of FAO Evaluations 2020-2021 in Europe and Central Asia Region

47. The Regional Conference discussed document ERC/22/8.
48. The Regional Conference:
 - a) noted the contents of the OED report;
 - b) encouraged the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia to draw on the key lessons learned and to pursue actions in response to the emerging issues, constraints and gaps identified in the report;
49. The Regional Conference called upon the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia to:
 - a) improve mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment in all activities in the region;
 - b) increase the focus on the voice of youth as well as the need for more policies that promote the inclusion of rural populations in keeping with the agenda of leaving no one behind;
 - c) introduce a level of flexibility in FAO theories of change so as to be able to quickly respond in times of changing local, national and regional contexts that could impact the ability to produce and supply safe and healthy food in the region and better contribute to food security and nutrition outcomes;
 - d) strengthen its monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes to deliver sustainable and lasting impact on the ground. Evaluations should also serve to review and adjust ongoing interventions and feed into the design of new ones.

IV. Other Matters

A. Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2022-2025 of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC)²

50. The Regional Conference reviewed document ERC/22/9 and endorsed the “Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2022–2025 of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC).”

B. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 42nd Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)³

51. The Regional Conference reviewed the Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 42nd Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) and endorsed the report and recommendations from the 42nd Session of the ECA.

C. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the Joint Session of the 41st European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 79th UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI)⁴

52. The Regional Conference reviewed the Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the Joint Session of the 41st European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 79th UNECE Committee on Forest and the Forest Industry.

53. The Regional Conference:

- a. Endorsed the report and recommendations from the Joint Session of the 41st European Forestry Commission (EFC) and the 79th UNECE Committee on Forest and the Forest Industry.

D. Report on the work of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC)⁵

54. The Regional Conference reviewed the Report on the work of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC).

55. The Regional Conference:

- a) Called upon Members to nominate and support their official focal points to EIFAAC, as the only pan-European commission on inland fisheries and aquaculture, and to encourage other countries and non-governmental organizations in the region to participate in EIFAAC sessions as observers.
- b) Encouraged Members to join EIFAAC projects of regional interest.

E. Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 7th Session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish)⁵

56. The Regional Conference reviewed the Report from the Outcome of the Debate of the 7th Session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish).

56. The Regional Conference:

- a) encouraged relevant Members of ERC from Central Asia and the Caucasus to announce their intention to join the Commission; and

² Considered by written correspondence procedure

³ Considered by written correspondence procedure

⁴ Considered by written correspondence procedure

⁵ Considered by written correspondence procedure

- b) promoted the celebration of International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) 2022 and propose regional and national artisanal fisheries and aquaculture (AFA)-oriented policies and strategies to optimize the role of AFA.

F. Date and Place of the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe

G. Any Other Matters

57. The Regional Conference took note of the Report from the outcome of the debate of the 44th Session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM).

58. The Regional Conference took note of the Information paper on FAO support to rural youth in Europe and Central Asia. The conference acknowledged the special role of youth in the revitalization of rural areas and food systems transformation, inclusive green economy, generational renewal of smallholder and family farms and other priorities in agriculture and rural areas, and welcome the inclusion of youth as a crosscutting theme of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31. The conference called for further efforts both from FAO and Members to support youth and create an enabling environment for youth engagement in the policy and decision-making processes.

Adoption of the Report of the Regional Conference

Review and Endorsement of the Report of the Regional Conference for Europe

Closure of the Regional Conference

V. APPENDICES

33rd SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE, 10-13 May 2022

VOTE RESULT SHEET

Proposal: en bloc adoption of proposal contained in document EC/22/15

11 May 2022, 15:20

RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS/ РЕЗУЛЬТАТЫ

**Roll Call Vote/Vote par appel nominal/Votación Nominal/ Поименное
голосование**

Number of votes cast/ Nombre de suffrages exprimés/ Número de votos emitidos/ Количество поданных голосов	43
Majority required/ Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida/ Требуемое большинство	22
Votes for/ Votes pour/ Votos en favour/ Голоса за	40
Votes against/ Votes contre/ Votos en contra/ Голоса против	3
Abstentions/ Abstenciones/ Воздержавшиеся	0

Votes for: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom
Votes pour:
Votos en favor:
Голоса за:

Votes against: Belarus, Russian Federation, Tajikistan
Votes contre:
Votos en contra:
Голоса против:

Abstentions:
Abstenciones:
Воздержавшиеся:

No reply: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
Aucune réponse:
Ninguna respuesta:
Без ответа:

ADOPTED/ADOPTÉE/ACEPTADA/ПРИНЯТО

**Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électorale/ El oficial de elecciones/ Сотрудник,
ответственный за проведение голосования**

