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UNECE

Transforming agrifood systems for the health of people and the planet: The role of parliaments

Wednesday, 26 June 2024
10:00–11:30 CEST (Geneva time)

Organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Multiple and compounding crises, from the growing impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, commodity price shocks, food insecurity, rising economic distress and conflicts are posing a serious threat to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Climate change, food security and poverty reduction are strictly intertwined. The effects of climate change are increasing severely global food insecurity, hunger and poverty, and the most vulnerable layers of the population – including communities that produce food like, for example, farmers, fisherfolk, people who depend on forests and pastoralists – are the most impacted.

According to the 2023 report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#) (SOFI), 735 million people faced hunger in 2022, with food insecurity strongly being caused by the climate crisis. In 2021, the United Nations Secretary-General launched “[Our Common Agenda](#)” – an agenda of action designed to accelerate the implementation of existing global agreements, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). The Common Agenda clearly identifies the transformation of food systems as a key element in the protection of the natural environment and, more broadly, as an important contribution to delivering across all the SDGs.

Yet agrifood systems¹ are responsible for a third of the global greenhouse emissions and so contribute to worsening the negative impacts on the climate. Transforming agrifood systems could end this vicious cycle. If transformed in a more effective, inclusive, resilient and sustainable manner, they can help address issues like hunger, poverty, climate change and biodiversity loss. The *UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action*, endorsed by nearly 160 countries at the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28), calls for the maximization of climate and environmental benefits of agriculture and food systems while reducing its harmful

¹ According to the FAO, agrifood systems comprise the entire range of actors and interlinked activities that add value in agricultural production and related off-farm activities such as food storage, aggregation, post-harvest handling, transportation, processing, distribution, marketing, disposal and consumption. A sustainable agrifood system is one that delivers food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases for the generation of food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised.

impacts. It also recognizes the fundamental nature of agriculture and food systems for the lives and livelihoods of billions of people and for shared prosperity.

There is an urgent need to enhance efforts to transform agrifood systems and leverage them to attain the SDGs. Parliamentarians are strategically positioned to ensure that this can happen thanks to their functions of lawmaking, budgeting, oversight and representation of constituency interests.

Parliamentarians can adopt and revise legislation to effectively support the implementation of SDG targets – for example, on poverty (SDG 1), food security (SDG 2), good health (SDG 3), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), climate action (SDG 13). They can promote the enhancement of public investments into the agricultural sector, especially in rural areas, and also influence private financing, by creating the preconditions for agribusiness investments. Furthermore, members of parliament can check if SDG implementation is right on track, by overseeing a government's actions, requesting information from relevant ministries as well as public feedback from constituents. Multiple are the actions through which parliaments and their members can help advance the SDGs and climate action in a coherent, comprehensive and inclusive manner.

Jointly organized by the IPU, the ECE and ESCAP, the webinar will provide an inclusive space where parliamentarians from the concerned regions will meet virtually with experts and their peers to discuss ways in which they can support the transformation of agrifood systems in light of climate change. To catalyze collective knowledge and action, parliamentarians will be encouraged to share information on the practices utilized in their parliaments to address the aforementioned issues with due regard for specific contexts, priorities and specificities.

The webinar is part of a series of events organized yearly by the IPU, the ECE and ESCAP to support follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level.

Date

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Participation

The webinar is open to parliaments in the ECE and ESCAP Member States: Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Cambodia, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.

Language

The working languages will be English, French and Russian.

Webinar platform

The event will be hosted on Zoom.

Registration

All interested parliamentarians and parliamentary staff can register **by 21 June 2024** at the following link: <https://forms.office.com/e/uksdspPz60>.