

Concept Note (draft)

Regional Meeting of Chairs of the Committees on Food and Agriculture of National Parliaments of the ECA region.

Simultaneous translation into ENG, ALB and RUS will be provided.

Dates – 22-23 October 2024

Location – Tirana, Albania

Background

Agrifood systems touch every aspect of human existence and are intricately connected to human and animal health, land, water, climate, biodiversity, and the economy. The multiple crises affecting the European and Central Asia Region, along with global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental pollution, significantly impact agrifood systems transformation. A stock-taking exercise of the agrifood systems in the region shows that the systems are failing at multiple levels. Achieving the food security, nutrition and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 requires a coordinated set of actions on a number of fronts: coherent policies and programmes, an increase of finance and investments in line with national priorities and requirements and greater collaboration across different sectors and stakeholders.

Rationale

To address challenges and facilitate agrifood systems transformation and promote a holistic approach to agri-food systems transformation a multi-stakeholder engagement is required comprising of governments, UN agencies, civil society and the private sector. While the executive institutions of governments have a key role to play in facilitating the implementation, parliamentarians, through their institutions and networks, are strategically positioned to ensure that a sustainable transformation of agrifood system is a priority in national political agendas. This includes supporting policy adoption, establishing appropriate legislative and regulatory frameworks, raising awareness, promoting dialogue between relevant stakeholders, allocating resources for the implementation of policies and programmes, and fostering policy coordination and coherence across sectors and agencies. Parliaments and parliamentarians are challenged to contribute more effectively to the governance of food systems, including to enhance the food and environmental security, the regulation of the different stakeholders, institutions and processes involved along the food supply chain, and the promotion of equitable access to healthy and sustainable diets.

As a follow-up to the [Second Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition](#) held in Chile in June 2023, where the first ever Global Parliamentary Pact against Hunger and Malnutrition^[OBI] was adopted, and REU preparatory meeting of 5 Chairs of ^[OBI]Georgia, Ukraine in October 2023, increasing networking of the Parliamentarians in the ^[OBI]will be a key in supporting the transformation of the agrifood systems and creating an enabling environment for a holistic and cross-sectoral approach^[OBI]. It will be key to structure a substantial and coherent contribution of parliamentarians from the region in the Third Global Parliamentary Summit, to take place in Africa in 2026 (country yet to be defined).

Objectives of the Meeting

- **Exchange of views** and knowledge on the status of the agri-food systems and the role of the Parliament and more specifically the role of the Agrarian Committees in addressing and responding to crises and challenges affecting or able to drive food systems transformation, to include innovative approaches and responses to enhance sustainability and;
- **Facilitate linkages** amongst Parliamentarians/ Parliamentary bodies and FAO REU (regional and national level) through first-ever region wide exchange and networking;

- **Share** information on good practices regarding parliamentary initiatives, legal frameworks, oversight, budget work, etc in selected countries;
- Develop a set of actionable recommendations for parliamentary action and legislative measures to support agrifood systems transformation in the region.

Audience

The meeting will involve MPs (Members of Parliament) from across the region, Chairs of Agrarian Committees, and other relevant units from the Parliaments, representatives of the European Parliament, FAO HQ representatives (PSU parliamentary unit), FAO Liaison Office in Brussels, and other prominent experts and stakeholders, such as representatives of international organizations, think tanks, etc.

Modality and duration

2 days physical meeting in Tirana, Albania. Media coverage will be arranged with potential live participation of national and foreign journalists. Press releases and news stories will be arranged shortly before the meeting. Interviews with selected MPs may be arranged upon their agreement.

The meeting will combine plenary and panel discussions, and other forms of engagement, including thematic meetings and discussions. Panel discussions will engage MPs from different countries to gain perspectives of experiences from different contexts and secure various approaches to issues being discussed. A field trip, showcasing cutting-edge agribusiness models and opportunities for B2B initiatives, will be organized for the participants of the Summit.

Discussion Topics

1. Overview of challenges and opportunities for parliamentary actions for agrifood system transformation;
2. Legislative measures to address specific existing issues, relating to food and nutrition security;
3. The role of parliaments, parliamentary networks and parliamentarians in the uptake and implementation of sustainable agrifood systems initiatives;
4. Collaborating with other relevant stakeholders, such as civil society, private sector and the international community for a greater impact, inclusivity and better results;
5. Creating an enabling legal environment for responsible investment in agrifood systems- share good practices and experiences;

Expected Outcomes

1. Strengthened network and communication channels among parliamentarians.
2. Enhanced understanding of parliamentary entry points to transform agrifood system, including good legislative practices in the region.
3. Development of a follow-up Action Plan/Declaration to maintain momentum, deepen the engagement of parliamentarians in agrifood systems transformation and prepare for the contribution of European parliamentarians at the next Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition.