



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

IFAD
Investing in rural people

WFP
World Food
Programme



**United
Nations**

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

in collaboration with:



Permanent Mission of the
People's Republic of China
to the United Nations



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FAO, IFAD, WFP, DESA, in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of China to the UN and the Delegation of the European Union to the UN, invite you to the side-event in the context of the UN General Assembly special session in response to COVID-19

Transforming agrifood systems and fostering inclusive rural development in the context of COVID-19 to end rural poverty

2 December 2020, 1pm – 3pm (EST)

Virtual event - register [here](#)

OVERVIEW

As the General Assembly holds a special session in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the side-event “Transforming agrifood systems and fostering inclusive rural development in the context of COVID-19 to end rural poverty” will analyze the economic, social and environmental potential of an inclusive process of agrifood system transformation for the eradication of rural poverty and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Looking towards the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, the discussion will highlight the holistic nature of the 2030 Agenda, and the strong interlinkages between the Sustainable Development Goals, their targets and the entire 2030 Agenda.

BACKGROUND

While significant global progress has been made in poverty reduction over the last few decades, an estimated 689 million people lived in extreme poverty as of 2017. About 80 percent of the world’s extreme poor reside in rural areas and most rely, at least in part, on agriculture and natural resource-based livelihoods, often having to cope with limited access to often degraded resources. The incidence of extreme poverty in rural areas is three times higher than in urban areas.

The COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated this situation, exacerbating inequalities and negatively impacting the lives and well-being of the rural poor, in particular of women, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities and youth, while disrupting agrifood systems and increasing food loss and waste. It is estimated that an additional 88 to 115 million people will be pushed into poverty by COVID-19 in 2020.

Globally, food systems are the main source of livelihoods for nearly 4.5 billion people, two-thirds of which are informal in nature and one-third of which are at risk because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The rural poor are affected in at least three ways. First, many of them are engaged in the agrifood systems as smallholder producers, family farmers, fishers, foresters, pastoralists, agricultural wage workers, and workers and operators of micro, small and medium enterprises along food value chains. Second, more than 80 percent of the self-employed in rural areas and more than 90 percent of workers in the agricultural sector are informal. And, third, rural poor face not only inequalities in terms of access to decent jobs but also, among others, to adequate health care, education, sanitation, basic infrastructure, social protection, financing digital connectivity, technology and innovation.

Efforts to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit offer unique opportunities to identify, agree and promote action, and will make our food systems more sustainable, resilient and inclusive, directly contributing to the eradication of rural poverty.

MAIN QUESTIONS

- What do we mean by transformative and what does agrifood system transformation imply in terms of the livelihoods of rural people?
- How are the rural poor affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and how can we build back better, with more sustainable, resilient and inclusive agrifood systems?
- How can innovative agricultural policies and practices contribute to transforming agrifood systems?

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DRAFT PROGRAMME

2 December 2020, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm (EST) | Virtual event | Register [here](#)

1:00 pm - OPENING SEGMENT

- **H.E. Ambassador Zhang Jun**, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations
- **H.E. Ambassador Olof Skoog**, Head of the European Union Delegation to the United Nations
- **H.E. Volkan Bozkir**, President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
- **H.E. Munir Akram**, President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations

The event will be moderated by Mr. Maximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist, FAO

1:20 pm - VIEWS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

- **UN Food Systems Summit: Inclusivity and youth**
Ms. Mai Thin Yu Mon, UN Global Indigenous Youth Caucus, Vice-Chair of Food Systems Summit Action Track 4 - Advance equitable livelihoods
- **Building resilience, sustainability and viability in family farming**
Ms. Laura Lorenzo, World Rural Forum, Vice-Chair of the UN Decade of Family Farming International Steering Committee
- **Innovation, agriculture and rural poverty**
Ms. Karen Macours, Professor, Paris School of Economics, Researcher, French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment, Chair of the CGIAR Standing Panel on Impact Assessment
- **Agroecological approaches as one pathway to contribute to food system transformation**
Mr. Patrick Caron, Vice President of the University of Montpellier, France, member of the Scientific Group of the Food Systems Summit

1:50 pm - VIEWS FROM THE UNITED NATIONS

- **Transforming agrifood systems to achieve the 2030 Agenda in the context of COVID-19**
Mr. QU Dongyu, Director-General, FAO
- **Rural poverty and the 2030 Agenda**
Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General, DESA
- **Investing in the livelihoods of the rural poor for more inclusive agri-food systems**
Mr. Gilbert F. Houngbo, President, IFAD
- **Tackling rural poverty and building resilience in emergency situations in the context of COVID-19**
Mr. David Kaatrud, Director of Programme, Humanitarian and Development, WFP

2:25 pm - Q&A SESSION AND INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Member States, UN System and other participants wishing to take the floor are invited to pose questions to the speakers and are requested to keep interventions within a limit of two minutes to allow for a greater number of views and voices to be heard. Participants that, time allowing, would like to take the floor are requested to indicate their intention when they register online to the event [here](#) or by e-mail writing to FAOLON-Director@un.org