



**United
Nations**

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

Sixtieth Session of the Commission for Social Development

Multi-stakeholder Forum on the priority theme

"Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda"

Thursday, 10 February 2022, 10:00 – 12:00

(Virtual Meeting)

Chair's Summary

The Commission for Social Development held a multi-stakeholder forum on the priority theme, ***"Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda"*** on 10 February 2022. **H.E. Ms. Maria del Carmen Squeff**, the Chair of the 60th session of the Commission, opened the forum. **Ms. Hanna Sarkkinen**, Minister for Social Affairs and Health of Finland delivered a keynote address, which was followed by the following panellists' presentations: **Ms. Sharan Burrow**, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation; **Ms. Esther Penunia**, Secretary-General of the Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development; **Mr. Ariel Guarco**, President of the International Cooperative Alliance; **Ms. Elsa Maria D'Silva**, President of Red Dot Foundation Global; and **Mr. Juan Carr**, Social Entrepreneur and Founder of Red Solidaria. The forum was moderated by **Ms. Rose Ngugi**, Executive Director of the Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis in Kenya.

Drivers of hunger and food insecurity

Poverty, conflicts, climate change and biodiversity loss are among the drivers of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition and should be addressed in a more holistic manner. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted efforts to achieve many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including ending poverty and hunger, resulting in a high risk of increasing intergenerational poverty in many countries. The recent increase in poverty and hunger are directly linked to the massive loss of jobs and income caused by the pandemic.

Agri-food systems need to be strengthened to ensure safe and nutritious food for all. The UN Food Systems Summit has created momentum for strengthening agri-food systems and has

provided a consensus among food value chain actors with the commitment by governments and stakeholders in achieving the SDGs.

Family farmers are engaged in elements of the food system, from production to waste management, and are therefore at the centre of any transformation towards sustainable agri-food systems. Globally, family farmers account for 90 per cent of all farms and produce 80 per cent of the world's food in value terms. Small scale family farmers of less than 2 ha comprise 84 per cent of family farmers, the majority of them in Asia and the Pacific region. Family farmers perform multi-dimensional roles in society, including being the custodians of biodiversity and managers of rural landscapes.

Family farmers suffer from: (a) lack of rights over natural resources, mainly land, fisheries and forests; (b) lack of access and control over technologies, finance, infrastructure, information and market resources that should enable them to cope and be resilient amidst climate change; and (c) insignificant involvement in decision-making processes. It is a system that results in poverty, hunger and malnutrition, biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, and limits the attraction of agricultural employment for youth.

Social justice, equality, and a new social contract

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequality and highlighted the glaring gaps in the system that promulgate this inequality. In particular, it has disproportionately impacted women and girls with regards to loss of jobs, lack of access to remote learning and health care, increased family and caregiving responsibilities, gender-based violence and human trafficking. For instance, due to the crisis, women are the majority of those who have left the workforce. To build a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable future, it is necessary to invest in women and systematically mainstream gender perspectives across all policies related to the 2030 Agenda. Tackling poverty and hunger and achieving food security are not possible without pursuing social justice and gender equality.

The world needs a new social contract based on the SDGs, which are vital to enable a human-centred recovery. SDG 8, with its targets on jobs, workers protection, decent work, inclusive growth, provides strong leverage for other goals and is, therefore, a key to social and economic security. According to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), 575 million new jobs need to be created by 2030. Similarly, job creation in sustainable agriculture will strengthen agri-food systems and mitigate hunger. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the transition to green and more sustainable farming practices can improve food supplies and lead to the creation of 200 million jobs by 2050. In addition to being inclusive, recovery needs to be rights-based. Decent work can only be ensured if governments enforce human and labour rights and mandate corporate accountability with due diligence. This means fulfilling the promise of the ILO Centenary Declaration with its labour protection floor including rights, maximum working hours, living minimum wages and health and safety at work.

Partnerships, social dialogue and universal social protection

Achieving the SDGs, in particular eradicating poverty, hunger and malnutrition as well as an inclusive and resilient recovery, requires strong partnerships and multistakeholder collaboration. The strength of the cooperative movement is an avenue to address some of the societal challenges, such as widening inequalities. For example, cooperatives work with both the government and the private sector (commercial actors) to provide affordable healthy diets to people and social enterprises try hard to make the voices of vulnerable groups and those left behind heard. To leave no one behind in recovery efforts, Governments, the private sector, and civil society must work together for inclusive and effective policy responses. Trade unions, through social dialogue, have been working together with employers' organisations and governments to cushion the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on people's lives, jobs, and incomes.

Moreover, governments must prioritize universal social protection systems in line with ILO standards. The international community needs to (a) work together towards a Global Social Protection Fund to assist the poorest countries, and (b) build sustainable systems towards real progress on SDG 1 and SDG 2. It should also work with the United Nations to implement the UN Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection, as well as the Global Alliance for Care, co-convened by the Government of Mexico and UN Women.

Solutions for an inclusive and resilient recovery

Finland, which ranks very high on food security, stresses the importance of a systems approach: (a) collaboration and coordination between nations at the global level, and (b) consultations and consensus-building among various sectors, involving all actors of the food chain at the national level, to help to guide the consumers towards better, healthier and more sustainable diets. **Finland's** initiatives include: the Round Table on Food, a forum for open and constructive dialogue between the key actors in the food system to create a vision for a sustainable food system in 2030; the National Nutrition Council, an expert body appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, to monitor the nutrition and health of Finnish people and improve their status; and national school meals, pioneered by Finland, offering free warm lunch to all schoolchildren for more than 70 years. Since 2021, **Finland** and **France** have been collaborating with the World Food Programme to build a coalition of stakeholders to support governments to restore and boost access to the school feeding programme worldwide.

Through multi-stakeholder processes and national committees on family farming, the **Philippines** formulated a National Action Plan on Family Farming, which prioritizes policies and programmes in such areas as agrarian reform and rural development. Asian Farmers Association (AFA), an alliance of national family farmers organizations (with 13 million individual members engaged in crops, livestock, forestry, fishery and aquaculture, herding, and pastoralism) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), in September 2020, entered into a \$2 million 18-month grant agreement called "Assuring Resiliency of Family Farmers amidst COVID-19 Project (ARISE). ARISE is a farmers organization demand-driven revolving fund, engaged in value chains (e.g., organic fertilizers, vegetables, rice, spices, coffee, mushroom, native chicken, tomatoes, beans, coconut, abaca, cashew) with private buyers. The Global Agricultural Food Security Programme (GAFSP) embarked on piloting the Missing Middle Initiative to directly finance qualified producer organizations. One such project is being implemented in **Bangladesh** since 2018, involving one apex organization with 55 farmer groups

and 9092 members. Through this project, farmer's organizations were able to implement 14 value chain activities in crops, fisheries, livestock and agroforestry, facilitate access to financing in public rural banks, as well as establish virtual call centres to address production and marketing needs during the pandemic.

During COVID-19, **Argentina** implemented the Emergency Family Income (IFE) for the informal workers, the Essential Workers Programme for households with basic needs, strengthened the production sector, and covered child allowance and food cards. To help women and families cope with the negative impacts of the pandemic, the Red Dot Foundation based in India implemented projects related to ending violence against women and girls, making digital payments and distributing food to families, providing medical relief, training rural women to be entrepreneurs in the tourism and hospitality industry for instance. Those projects made the Foundation realize that: (a) there is a digital divide that needs to be addressed; (b) there is an urgent need to invest in coalitions (made of civil society, government and private sector actors) which can reach a large number of people in the shortest possible time; (c) women's entrepreneurship should be encouraged and invested in; (d) a percentage of GDP should be set aside as acknowledgement for the unpaid care work done by women; and (e) there is a need to invest in comprehensive programmes and infrastructure to prevent and end gender-based violence.

In addition to the examples mentioned above, **Portugal** has put forward a national strategy for fighting poverty (2021-2030), a multidimensional integrated framework for action in close connection with the European Pillar of Social Rights as well as the 2030 Agenda, that represents political and social consensus to reduce poverty and social exclusion among children, young people, and their families. **China** highlighted efforts towards poverty reduction including a poverty relief system, comprising project-based, sector-specific and society-wide efforts and a poverty relief programme covering industries, science and technology, education, culture, health and consumption and digital infrastructure through e-commerce.