

**Linking the achievement of SDG1 and SDG2 to build back better:
Poverty alleviation through sustainable agricultural development and rural revitalization**

28 April 2021
(12.30-13.45 Bangkok time / 13.30-14.45 Beijing time)

Side event of the 77th Commission Session

Successful eradication of extreme poverty is clearly linked to food systems because most poverty alleviation efforts in the region have targeted rural agricultural areas and communities involved in food systems at large. Effectively consolidating poverty alleviation achievements and rural revitalization will be the key to prevent people from falling back into poverty when facing shocks, and 'building back better' whilst tackling the targets set out for SDG1 and SDG2. Several domestic experiences and international cooperation initiatives provide solutions for countries in their struggle against poverty and in their efforts towards enhancing food security, thus helping determine a pathway towards more sustainable and resilient food systems and rural revitalization at the global level.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The World Bank has estimated that over 100 million people globally could fall back into extreme poverty because of the COVID-19 pandemic, with half of these in the Asia-Pacific region.¹ This statistic underscores the need to promote sustainable agricultural development and rural revitalization as a means to alleviate poverty, considering that people suffering from extreme poverty in Asia and the Pacific predominantly live in rural areas and are engaged in agricultural activities.² As highlighted in the United Nations Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19, small farmers, fishers, pastoralists, and rural workers and all those working in food production and supply chains (migrant agricultural workers, plantation workers, food vendors, subsistence farmers, etc.) are among the population most at risk to experience socio-economic marginalization. Consolidating poverty alleviation achievements and rural revitalization will be the way to prevent any scenarios where people slip back into poverty when facing shocks or crises.

The modernization and improvement of the agricultural sector and of food systems at large are fundamental for achieving and maintaining poverty eradication gains. In this context, sharing knowledge accumulated from the region's successful experiences in poverty alleviation can be key for 'building back better' whilst tackling the targets set out for SDG1 and SDG2. For instance, China has lifted nearly 800 million people out of extreme poverty over the past four decades as well as around nearly 100 million poor rural citizens in the past eight years.³ There are other notable examples too from more countries in the fight against poverty. Successful examples are not only limited to member States' domestic policies, but stem also from the promotion of international cooperation on poverty reduction with initiatives linked to food systems. Exchanging lessons learned from these experiences will not only benefit countries from the region in their struggle to get rid of poverty, but can also

1 <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/updated-estimates-impact-covid-19-global-poverty-looking-back-2020-and-outlook-2021>

2 ESCAP (2017), Note by the secretariat, Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and financing for Development (First Session), <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/E-ESCAP-CMPF1-2-E.pdf>.

3 <http://www.un.org.cn/info/6/1142.html>

contribute to their food security goals and help determine a pathway towards more sustainable and resilient food systems at the global level.

FORMAT AND OBJECTIVES

The event will be divided into two main parts: first a plenary where high-level speakers will introduce the lead topics of the event (i.e. poverty eradication accomplishments through rural revitalization; South-South and regional cooperation on poverty reduction through agricultural development; and building pathways towards resilient and robust food systems). Following that, a panel of stakeholders will intervene as discussants to provide their perspectives on the above issues in a dialogue format in order to participate in the global discourse on food systems that will culminate in the Summit convened by the United Nations Secretary-General in September 2021.

The deliberations will be held in English, with simultaneous translation provided if necessary. Selected participants will be invited to attend the event. The 'Stakeholder perspectives' session discussants will not deliver presentations but will be directly engaged by the facilitator with questions that they will briefly respond to.

The event will showcase experiences and exchange lessons learned from poverty alleviation domestic accomplishments as well as international cooperation initiatives, with a specific focus on sustainable agricultural and rural development, which could be upscaled and replicated in the region to build back better in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The event will further elaborate on how such experiences can contribute to the response to the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic to enable countries in the region to be better prepared for similar crises in the future. As most poverty alleviation efforts in the region have targeted rural agricultural areas and communities involved in food systems at large, the event will include deliberations that will outline inputs and recommendations to inform the upcoming Food Systems Summit.

ORGANIZERS

- Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to ESCAP
- International Poverty Reduction Center in China (IPRCC)

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

[12:30-13:45 BANGKOK TIME AND 13.30-14.45 BEIJING TIME | 28 APRIL 2021]

Opening remarks	
12:30-12:45 5 minutes each	Moderated by Ms. Li Xin, Deputy Director General, International Poverty Reduction Center in China (IPRCC) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H.E. Mr. Hong Tianyun Vice Administrator, China National Rural Revitalization Administration <i>China's poverty eradication achievements and rural revitalization</i>• H.E. Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP <i>Regional cooperation to 'build back better' through poverty reduction and sustainable agricultural development</i>• Mr. Ke Yousheng Permanent Representative of China to ESCAP <i>South-South cooperation and mutual learning on poverty reduction through agricultural development</i>
International Cooperation Perspectives	
12:45-13:00 5 minutes each	Moderated by Ms. Li Xin, Deputy Director General, International Poverty Reduction Center in China (IPRCC) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H.E. Mr. Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, Ambassador of Pakistan to Thailand and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to ESCAP <i>Poverty Alleviation and regional cooperation</i>• Mr. Siddharth Chatterjee, UN Resident Coordinator in China <i>Lessons from China-UN collaboration for building better and more resilient food systems</i>
Stakeholder perspectives	
13:00-13:35 5 minutes each	Moderated by Ms. Li Yutong, Head, ESCAP CSAM <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Jeong-bin Im Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Seoul National University <i>Republic of Korea's policy experiences for alleviating rural poverty in the process of economic development</i>• Mr. Tan Weiping Deputy Director General, IPRCC

	<p><i>China's international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region for poverty reduction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Esther Penunia Secretary General, Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development and the member of Advisory Committee for the 2021 Food Systems Summit <i>Building and empowering organizations of women, men and young family farmers at local and regional level</i> • Ms. Xiang Huangmei Vice President, Alibaba Group <i>Innovative supply chains and e-solutions for rural poverty reduction and improved food systems</i> • Ms. Dares Kittiyopas Inspector-General, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, and President, Thai Society of Agricultural Engineering, Thailand <i>Role of inclusive and sustainable agricultural mechanization in building back better from the pandemic</i> 	
Closing Session		
13:35-13:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Li Yutong, Head, ESCAP Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization <i>Summary of discussions</i> • Mr. Ke Yousheng, Permanent Representative of China to ESCAP <i>Closing remarks</i> 	