

Webinar on Impact of Covid-19 on Agriculture in the Asia-Pacific and Role of Mechanization

Thursday, 18 June 2020
(11.00 – 12.00 hrs Beijing time)

I. Background

People suffering from extreme poverty in Asia and the Pacific predominantly live in rural areas and are engaged in agricultural activities. In this backdrop, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the agricultural sector has brought unprecedented challenges. The pandemic threatens to not only stagnate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals including Goal 1 (No Poverty) and Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), but indeed has the potential to reverse the gains made in recent years, thus jeopardizing the global community's shared promise to *'leave no one behind'*. There is a pressing need to better assess the unfolding impact of the pandemic on agriculture in the Asia-Pacific region – with particular reference to resource-poor smallholder farmers who are amongst *'those furthest behind'* - and to identify measures to mitigate its negative impacts keeping in view the intricate linkages of the sector with food and nutrition security, livelihoods, and social and environmental sustainability.

Sustainable agricultural mechanization can play a key role in enabling recovery and building long-term resilience of the farming community. Mechanization can improve input use efficiency, productivity and incomes in agriculture, benefiting both food security and livelihoods, while empowering farmers to better cope with future shocks. Hence an analysis of the impact of Covid-19 on the agricultural sector and assessment of measures to address it must accord due attention to the role of sustainable agricultural mechanization and how it can help to *'build back better'*.

II. Areas for discussion

- How has the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the agricultural sector in Asia and the Pacific?
- How can we build long-term resilience to future crisis through sustainable mechanization?

III. Target audience

Decision-makers, researchers and practitioners from government agencies and departments, universities and research institutions, civil society organizations and private enterprises working in the area of sustainable agricultural mechanization in particular, and sustainable agricultural and rural development in general, in the Asia-Pacific region.

IV. Format

The webinar will be broadcast live on YouTube.

V. Programme

Time	Item
11.00 – 11.05	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Welcome remarks:</i> Dr. Yutong Li, Head, Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) (Moderator)• <i>Remarks:</i> Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCAP
11:05 - 11:25	Impact of Covid-19 on the agricultural sector in Asia and the Pacific: Country perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Sulochana Lasantha Noel Wickremesooriya, President of Agriculture Machinery Manufacturers and Suppliers Association, Sri Lanka• Ms. Dares Kittiyopas, Inspector-General, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, and President, Thai Society of Agricultural Engineering, Thailand
11:25-11:45	Building resilience to future crisis through sustainable mechanization <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Information and Communication Technology (ICT)-enabled mechanization:</i> Dr. Jehoon Sung, Team Leader, National Institute of Agricultural Science, Rural Development Administration, Republic of Korea• <i>Post-harvest mechanization:</i> Mr. Cao Guangqiao, Deputy Director General, Nanjing Research Institute for Agricultural Mechanization, P.R. China
11:45-12:00	Q&A
12.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Concluding remarks:</i> Dr. Yutong Li, Head, CSAM, ESCAP

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