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**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific****Seventy-seventh session**

Bangkok and online, 26–29 April 2021

Item 4 (f) of the provisional agenda\*

**Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission: Committee on Environment and Development****Report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization on its sixteenth session***Summary*

The Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization held its sixteenth session online on 4 December 2020. It noted the serious impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on agricultural production, post-harvest processing and sale of produce in the Asia-Pacific region, which have resulted in a loss of employment and reduction in farmers' income, especially for smallholders. It recognized the important role of sustainable agricultural mechanization in enabling recovery and building resilience.

The Council underscored the importance of promoting mechanization solutions to address smallholders' requirements and reduce post-harvest losses; enabling capacity-building for producers; promoting information and communications technology-enabled or smart farming as well as research on urban farming; facilitating post-harvest processing and value addition technologies, conservation agriculture, cold storage facilities and the establishment of testing centres; and supporting the creation of machinery service centres or service providers for smallholder farmers at the local level.

The Council expressed appreciation for the work carried out by the Centre in 2020, especially in view of the constraints posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It suggested that the Centre as a regional institution promote online knowledge exchange on sustainable agricultural mechanization in Asia and the Pacific through webinars and online training.

The Council expressed support for the Centre's work towards the harmonization of regional testing standards and recommended further expansion of that initiative. In that context, the Council recommended that the Centre continue to promote safety in mechanization for the benefit of member States. In addition, the Council expressed its support for the Centre's analytical work and publications, as well as its work towards generating relevant policy recommendations for member States.

The Council endorsed the Centre's work report and financial status report for 2020 and workplan for 2021.

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\* ESCAP/77/L.1.

## **I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention**

1. Given that the seventy-seventh session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will be held as a hybrid in-person and online meeting, which will make it difficult to conduct voting via secret ballot for the elections for the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization for the next three-year term (2021–2024), as provided for in rule 41 of the rules of procedure of the Commission, the Council recommends that the Commission consider extending, on an exceptional basis, the term of the current members of the Council by one year, and hold the next elections at the seventy-eighth session of the Commission in 2022.

2. The Council suggests that its seventeenth session be held alongside the 8th annual meeting of the Asian and Pacific Network for Testing of Agricultural Machinery scheduled tentatively for December 2021 in Malaysia, subject to confirmation in consultation with relevant local partners and keeping in view any restrictions imposed owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

## **II. Proceedings**

### **A. Discussion on the role of mechanization in addressing the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in the agricultural sector in the Asia-Pacific region**

(Agenda item 2)

3. A representative of the Centre presented a report outlining the wide-ranging impacts of the pandemic on the region's agricultural sector and the potential of sustainable agricultural mechanization in enabling recovery and resilience.

4. The Council noted the serious impacts of the pandemic on agricultural production, post-harvest processing and sale of produce in the region, which have resulted in a loss of employment and reduction in farmers' income, especially for smallholders. The Council recognized the important role of sustainable agricultural mechanization in enabling recovery and building resilience, and took note of various examples of support given by many member States in the region, such as providing access to relevant machinery for farmers, supporting online technical training, offering subsidies and leveraging resources through development partners.

5. The Council underscored the important role of promoting mechanization solutions to address smallholders' requirements and reduce post-harvest losses; enabling capacity-building for producers; promoting information and communications technology-enabled or smart farming as well as research on urban farming; facilitating post-harvest processing and value addition technologies, conservation agriculture, cold storage facilities and the establishment of testing centres; and supporting the creation of machinery service centres or service providers for smallholder farmers at the local level.

### **B. Report on the Centre's activities and financial status for 2020 and discussion of the proposed plan of work for 2021**

(Agenda items 3 and 4)

6. A representative of the Centre presented the report on the activities of the Centre and its financial status for 2020, and the proposed plan of work for 2021.

7. The Council expressed appreciation for the work carried out by the Centre during 2020, especially in view of the constraints posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. A representative of the Centre's host country, China, expressed his country's willingness to share its own knowledge and expertise and work closely with the Centre to support the Centre's programmes with a view to raising the level of sustainable agricultural mechanization in the region.

8. The Council suggested that the Centre as a regional institution promote online knowledge exchange on sustainable agricultural mechanization in Asia and the Pacific through webinars and online training. In addition, the Council expressed its support for the Centre's work towards the harmonization of regional testing standards and recommended further expansion of that initiative. In that context, the Council also recommended that the Centre continue to promote safety in mechanization for the benefit of member States.

9. The Council expressed its support for the Centre's analytical work and publications, as well as its work towards generating relevant policy recommendations for member States.

10. The Council endorsed the Centre's work report and financial status report for 2020 and workplan for 2021.

**C. Date of and venue for the seventeenth session of the Governing Council**

(Agenda item 5)

11. The Council suggested that its seventeenth session be held alongside the 8th annual meeting of the Asian and Pacific Network for Testing of Agricultural Machinery scheduled tentatively for December 2021 in Malaysia. That matter would be subject to confirmation in consultation with relevant local partners and keeping in view any restrictions imposed owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. An official request will be submitted by the Centre to Malaysia for that purpose.

**D. Other matters**

(Agenda item 6)

12. The Council was informed that the three-year term of the present members of the Council (2018–2021) would end at the seventy-seventh session of the Commission to be held from 27 to 29 April 2021. At that session, the Commission was scheduled to hold elections for the Council's next three-year term (2021–2024). However, owing to the situation arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the seventy-seventh session of the Commission would be held as a hybrid in-person and online meeting, which would make it difficult to conduct the voting via secret ballot as provided for in rule 41 of the rules of procedure of the Commission. In that context, the Council recommended that the Commission consider extending, on an exceptional basis, the term of the current members of the Council by one year and hold the next elections at the seventy-eighth session of the Commission in 2022.

**E. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council on its sixteenth session**

(Agenda item 7)

13. The Council adopted the present report on 25 December 2020.

### **III. Organization**

#### **A. Opening, duration and organization of the session**

14. The sixteenth session of the Council was held online on 4 December 2020.

15. The Chair invited the Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP to deliver remarks to the Council. In those remarks, the Deputy Executive Secretary noted the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on agriculture and food systems in the region and stressed the need to enable recovery and make food systems more resilient to shocks. He highlighted the vital role sustainable agricultural mechanization must play in meeting that need and underscored the importance of ensuring that vulnerable segments of the agricultural workforce had the access and capacities to leverage its benefits. He also noted the contribution the Centre was making to the United Nations Framework for the Immediate Socioeconomic Response to COVID-19, which underscored the need to build back better. In that context, he expressed his deep appreciation to the Centre's host country, China, for its valuable financial support for the Centre.

#### **B. Attendance**

16. The session was attended by representatives of all nine members of the Council: Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; India; Malaysia; Pakistan; Philippines; Thailand; and Viet Nam.

17. Representatives of Japan attended the session as observers.

#### **C. Election of officers**

18. The Council elected the following officers:

Chair: Ms. Thi Tam Dinh (Viet Nam)

Vice-Chair: Mr. Azman Bin Hamzah (Malaysia)

#### **D. Adoption of the agenda**

19. The Council adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:
  - (a) Opening statements;
  - (b) Election of officers;
  - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Discussion on the role of mechanization in addressing the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in the agricultural sector in the Asia-Pacific region.
3. Report on the Centre's activities and financial status for 2020.
4. Discussion of the proposed plan of work for 2021.
5. Date of and venue for the seventeenth session of the Governing Council.

6. Other matters.
7. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council on its sixteenth session.

## Annex I

### List of documents

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
<i>General series</i>		
	Work report for 2020 and plan of work for 2021 of the Centre	3 and 4
ESCAP/CSAM/GC/2020/1	Report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization on its sixteenth session	
<i>Limited series</i>		
ESCAP/CSAM/GC/2020/L.1	Annotated provisional agenda	1 (c)
<i>Information series</i>		
	The role of mechanization in addressing the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic in the agricultural sector	2

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## Annex II

### Financial statement of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization for the year ended 31 December 2020

(United States dollars)

*Income*

Contributions	1 610 000
Interest income	60 504
Gain on exchange	-

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<b>Total income</b>	<b>1 670 504</b>
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<i>Less: Expenditure</i>	(1 155 350)
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<b>Net income over expenditure</b>	<b>515 154</b>
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Fund balance as at 1 January 2020	4 125 966
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Fund transfer from/to grants	-
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<b>Fund balance as at 31 December 2020</b>	<b>4 641 120</b>
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**Annex III**

**Financial statement of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural  
Mechanization for the year ended 31 December 2020, by project component**  
(United States dollars)

	<i>Joint contributions: capacity development project</i>	<i>Asian and Pacific Network for Testing of Agricultural Machinery: cooperation project with Japan (phase II)</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Income</i>			
Contributions	1 610 000	-	1 610 000
Interest income	58 259	2 245	60 504
Gain on exchange	-	-	-
<b>Total income</b>	<b>1 668 259</b>	<b>2 245</b>	<b>1 670 504</b>
<i>Less: Expenditure</i>			
	(1 155 350)	-	(1 155 350)
<b>Net income over expenditure</b>	<b>512 909</b>	<b>2 245</b>	<b>515 154</b>
Fund balance as at 1 January 2020	3 977 929	148 037	4 125 966
Fund transfer from/to grants	-	-	-
<b>Fund balance as at 31 December 2020</b>	<b>4 490 838</b>	<b>150 282</b>	<b>4 641 120</b>



## Annex IV

**Cash contributions to the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural  
Mechanization for the institutional support account received for the  
year ended 31 December 2020**  
(United States dollars)

<i>Country/area</i>	<i>Year ended 31 December 2020</i>	<i>Year ended 31 December 2019</i>
Bangladesh	-	6 000
Cambodia	2 000	2 000
China	1 548 000	1 720 000
Fiji	-	-
India	30 000	15 000
Indonesia	-	60 000
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	-	-
Japan	-	-
Mongolia	-	-
Nepal	-	-
Pakistan	-	4 980
Papua New Guinea	-	-
Philippines	-	30 000
Republic of Korea	10 000	10 000
Sri Lanka	5 000	5 000
Thailand	15 000	15 000
Viet Nam	-	3 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 610 000</b>	<b>1 870 980</b>