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APAC civil society organizations and private sector convene to foster regionâ??s agrifood systems

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Civil society organizations (CSO) from Asia and the Pacific are preparing for participation in a major multilateral conference aimed at charting a course for the regionâ??s food security and agrifood systems transformation.

The CSO participation inÂ FAOâ??s 37thÂ Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the PacificÂ (APRC37) will aim to add a collective voice among civil society organizations during their contributions to discussions at the Conference â?? a biennial governing body session of some 46 FAO Member Nations from across the region. The CSOâ??s finalized their positions, in advance of APRC37, during a virtual consultation this week.

In parallel to the CSO meetings, an online consultation amongst private sector entities is ongoing. Representatives from the private sector will also have an opportunity to provide contributions to the FAOâ??s regional governing body session.

Organized by the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, the #APRC37 will convene, in-person, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, the Host Country, 19-22 February 2024, with high-level representation of government ministers and leaders from across the vast region. The purpose is to review proposals and decide upon a course of action to transform the regionâ??s agrifood systems, making them more fit-for-purpose and to ensure food security for billions of the regionâ??s inhabitants. The FAO Director-General Dr QU Dongyu will also travel from FAO headquarters in Rome to participate in the high-level Ministerial Session.

Collective front-line wisdom an asset for the FAO Asia-Pacific conference

The CSO consultation process in the Asia-Pacific region, and opportunity for CSOs to make interventions at FAOâ??s Regional Conferences, has evolved since 2010, with broad-based support from the regionâ??s civil society communities and FAO. Following on from that success, the innovative private sector consultations were also considered very successful during the last APRCs.

â??From the experience gained together, I am convinced that with taking due consideration of the views of various stakeholders, such as civil society and private sector, FAOâ??s Members and their policymakers may better define the actions they need to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, particularly those related to ending hunger and poverty,â?• said Jong-Jin Kim, FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, during his opening remarks to the CSO meeting.

The regional CSO meeting, supported by FAO and organized virtually by host CSOs in Sri Lanka, was attended by 100 participants from across the Asia-Pacific region, representing various constituencies including small-scale producers, fishers, pastoralists, indigenous peoples and landless organizations, rural and agricultural workers, women and youth organisations and NGOs.