

Cooperatives: Promoting inclusive rural-urban linkages for sustainable food systems

COPAC side event to the Committee on World Food Security, 43rd Session

Friday 21 October 2016, 13.00-14.30

Iran Room

FAO Headquarters

Rome, Italy

The side event will highlight the contributions and experiences of cooperatives in supporting inclusive rural-urban linkages for sustainable food systems and explore how cooperatives can have greater impact.

Agriculture and food systems are evolving in a context of accelerated urbanisation and increased strains on natural resources. While urban food insecurity and malnutrition grow, the majority of the world's poor still live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. Meeting rural and urban demand for food will require dramatic changes in the food production and consumption patterns, while building resilience to climate change. Transitioning towards more sustainable food systems would require strengthened linkages between rural and urban areas, involving the inclusion of small food producers. Cooperatives have a dedicated role to play on both the producer and consumer sides. Combining economic and social goals, cooperatives can boost food production, increase their members' incomes, generate employment opportunities, help mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, and provide affordable opportunities to poor rural and urban consumers, including women and youth. However, the diversity of cooperatives, their capacity to innovate, and their intrinsic flexibility can often be overlooked, despite cooperatives being critical actors for sustainable food systems.

PROGRAMME

12.30 Refreshments

13.00 **Welcoming remarks**

Rural-urban linkages and collective action in the context of global sustainable food systems

Ms Marcela Villarreal, Director, OPC, FAO

13.05 **Panel and interactive discussion**

How cooperatives support smallholders' inclusion in sustainable food systems through rural-urban linkages

Moderator: Mr Jamie Morrison, Strategic Programme Leader of FAO Strategic Objective 4 "Enable more inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems"

Panellists:

- Mr Shigeshi Onishi, Executive Director, of the Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives (JA-Zenchu)
- Mr Paulo Gouveia, Chief Policy Advisor, Copa-Cogeca
- Mr Walteri Katajamäki, Cooperatives Unit, Enterprises Department, International Labour Organization
- Ms Judith Hitchman, President, The International Network for Community Supported Agriculture (URGENCI)

Interactive moderated discussion

14.25

Conclusions and way forward

Ms Maya Takagi, Deputy Strategic Programme Leader of FAO Strategic Objective 3
“Reduce rural poverty”

Conveners: The Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC) is a multi-stakeholder partnership of global public and private institutions that champions and supports people-centred and self-sustaining cooperative enterprises as leaders in sustainable development. Current members are the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) and the World Farmers’ Organisation (WFO).



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