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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**  
**Regional Forum on Accelerating Food Systems Transformation in the Arab Region**  
Amman, Jordan, 30-31 October 2024

## INFORMATION NOTE

### 1. BACKGROUND

The Jordanian Ministry of Agriculture and the Jordanian Food Security Council, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Bank, and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), is hosting the Regional Forum on Accelerating Food Systems Transformation in the Arab Region, to be held in Amman, Jordan, from 30 to 31 October 2024.

In recent years, Arab countries have undertaken significant efforts to reform their food systems. However, ongoing economic and financial crises, violent conflicts, social unrest, and climatic shocks pose persistent threats to food security. Addressing these challenges requires improving governance, leveraging means of implementation, such as finance, technology, and data, and fostering collaborative efforts to accelerate progress and enhance resilience in food systems. This forum will convene national focal points and key stakeholders to explore available opportunities for accelerating transformation and enhancing collaboration.

This event builds upon the outcomes of previous regional and global processes, serving as a continuation of momentum and providing a comprehensive stocktake. These include COP28, the Second Regional Forum for Food Systems National Conveners organized by ESCWA, and the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub in March 2024, the FAO's 37th session of the Regional Ministerial Conference for the Near East and North Africa held in Amman in March 2024, as well as the Regional Workshop on Food Security Risk Management in MENA, organized by the World Bank in May 2024. Key areas of action identified in those meetings include: (i) taking a human rights-based and people-centered approach to food security and nutrition; (ii) fostering further regional cooperation, integration, and solidarity; (iii) improving governance and legislation for food systems transformation; (iv) harnessing science and data to guide food systems national strategies; (v) promoting food sovereignty; (vi) fostering partnerships with the private sector; and (vii) improving financing mechanisms.

Building upon these outcomes, this regional forum aims to conduct a critical analysis of the current state of food systems in the Arab region and provide guidance on how good governance, means of implementation, and collaboration can accelerate transformation. The insights and conclusions from this forum will also help prepare the region for upcoming global processes, including the Food Systems Summit+4 in 2025.

### 2. OBJECTIVES

The regional forum aims to establish a platform for discussing opportunities to enhance Arab food systems transformation through good governance, means of implementation, and regional collaboration. These discussions will serve as preparation for the Food Systems Summit+4, taking place in 2025 in Rome.

Specifically, the forum will address:

- Assessing recent data on food security and nutrition and the state of food systems in the Arab region. The assessment will also indicate the impact of recent developments and events to gain a comprehensive understanding of strengths and emerging challenges;
- Exploring strategies to fortify food systems amidst multiple crises-economic, financial, climatic, political, and conflict-related challenges;
- Improving governance frameworks, policies, accountability, and enabling environments for food systems, with particular emphasis on fragile and conflict-affected countries.
- Harnessing means of implementation, specifically financing, technology, and data, to accelerate the transformation of food systems;
- Sharing national and regional experiences and lessons learned in food systems transformation and promoting collaboration as a pivotal strategy for expediting progress.

Moreover, the regional forum will feature the launch or dissemination of relevant reports that analyze the current state of national and Arab food systems or tackle topics related to governance and means of implementation, offering valuable insights and actionable recommendations.

### 3. THEMATIC AREAS

Starting with an in-depth analysis of Arab food systems, the recent data on food security and nutrition and assessing the state in the Arab region, the forum will evaluate their current status against the backdrop of interconnected economic, political, and environmental crises in the region. The agenda will then turn to discussions on essential governance frameworks and enabling environments, along with exploring means of implementation, such as finance, technology, and data necessary for achieving food systems transformation. Regional collaboration will be a central theme, cutting across these discussions, with a focus on identifying specific strategies and opportunities for regional or bilateral cooperation across the three key means of implementation.

The forum will be structured as follows:

**Theme 1:** The status of food security, nutrition, and food systems in the Arab region.

**Theme 2:** Food systems transformation amid a poly-crisis.

**Theme 3:** Governance for resilient and sustainable food systems

**Theme 4:** Strengthening regional collaboration and advancing implementation strategies for sustainable food systems

- **4.1** Finance;
- **4.2** Technology and Innovation;
- **4.3** Data.

### 4. PARTICIPANTS AND REGISTRATION

This regional forum brings together concerned ministers, food systems convenors, high-level government officials and food security experts, practitioners, academics, development banks and partners, private sector, and civil society members involved in Food Systems Transformation from the Arab region, as well as regional and international organizations.

We are committed to fostering a balanced and inclusive dialogue by actively encouraging participation of women, youth, people with disabilities, and minorities.

Designated officials, interested participants and regional partners are kindly invited to submit their completed [registration form](#) to the ESCWA secretariat by the deadline indicated in the invitation letter.

## 5. PARTNERSHIPS

The Regional Forum is organized by Jordanian Ministry of Agriculture, the Jordanian Food Security Council, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Bank, and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD).

Collaborating entities include International Water Management Institute (IWMI), and the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub.

Support for the Forum is provided by the Swedish Government through its support for climate-related projects and initiatives serving Arab States.

## 6. ORGANIZATION AND LOGISTICS

### *Date and Venue*

The forum will be held on 30-31 October 2024, in Amman, Jordan. Further details about the venue will be provided later.

The forum will be streamed live on Zoom and YouTube. Registered participants will receive the links before the event.

### *Language of the forum*

The forum will be conducted in Arabic and English. Interpretation between both languages will be provided for participants.

### *Accommodation and transportation*

Further details will be shared regarding the venue with sponsored participants at a later stage.

### *Entry visas*

Participants are responsible for securing their own visas for travel to Jordan, as may be necessary.

## 7. CORRESPONDENCE

Kindly contact the following focal points should you have any queries related to the forum:

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