



COMMUNIQUE: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

An event for experts, NGOs policy makers and civil society representatives
Tbilisi, June 15-16th 2016



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On June 15-16, 2016 Oxfam held an International Conference on Food Security and Nutrition in Tbilisi, Georgia within the framework of the 4-year EC funded Project, **Improving Regional Food Security in the South Caucasus through National Strategies and Smallholder Production**. The event brought together policy makers, civil society organisations, key stakeholders and international experts from the region and across Europe to discuss the current situation, challenges and best practices in food security and nutrition policy development that support local food production. European country representatives showcased international models on developing inclusive policies and programmes for small holder farmers. International and local experts presented comprehensive, gender sensitive approaches to developing healthy nutrition and food systems. The conference took on food systems approach and focused on four key areas that form crucial part of the system and pose as part of the main challenges to food security and nutrition around 4 panel discussions.



PANEL 1

Healthy Food Systems: innovations that support small-holder farming and local food production

Keynote speakers

- The Deputy ministers of Ministry of Agriculture in Georgia **Mr. Gocha Tsopurashvili**
- The Deputy minister of Ministry of Agriculture in Armenia **Mr. Armen Harutyunyan**

Panellists

- FAO regional representative **Mr. David Sedik**
- Senior Expert on Agricultural policies in Hungary **Mr. Laszlo Vajda**
- Oxfam Policy Advisor – Food and Climate Team **Mr. Robin Willoughby**

The level of food security in a country is strongly determined by the functioning of its food system. It encompasses the entire process of converting natural resources and human effort into food to sustain a human life. Public and private investments can make each of these steps more efficient in producing optimal outcomes such as improved nutrition.

Small-holders are at the heart of Georgian and Armenian Agriculture and some of the main challenges inhibiting the development of healthy food system is significant low productivity of small holders in the region. As a result, both countries are highly import dependent, have disproportionately high food prices and high risk of physical and economic inaccessibility of diversified and nutritious food. Therefore, investments targeted at increasing their productivity and access to markets is essential. The panel discussed in-depth various investments and innovations that support small-holder farming and increase local food production. access to markets is essential. The panel discussed in-depth various investments and innovations that support small-holder farming and increase local food production.

GEORGIA

The **Ministry of Agriculture in Georgia** is tackling current agriculture development challenges through seven main strategic directions as outlined in **the Agriculture Development Strategy 2015-2020** the seven strategic directions which includes **ensuring food security, with special emphasis on monitoring systems;**

- This strategy is also complemented by a range of programmes currently being implemented such as:
 - Plant Your Future targeting micro zones, with a focus on greenhouses;
 - Agriculture insurance pilot programme
- The **Food Security Working Group** under the Ministry of Agriculture produced 20 main recommendations in December 2015 to ensure that a favourable legal framework is in place.
 - Draft law on food security has been developed, The aim of which is to define the the main policy directions to ensure food and nutrition security in the country.

How can the State support small-holder producers?

- One of the main challenges that significantly inhibit rural and agriculture development is the amount of unregistered land which constitutes almost 80 per cent of the privatised arable agricultural land in the country. The land reforms and land registry system are yet to materialise by the Ministry of Economy.
- Improved access to finance for small producers is also a priority of the government along with protection of vulnerable groups, development of primary processing and public procurement of locally produced goods.
- The Deputy Minister of Agriculture in Georgia requested from the international community and donors to engage actively in knowledge sharing on the improvement of extension services

ARMENIA

- 340,000 small farms that had to undergo transition from State led interventions to private property agriculture and independent farms, going from foreign trade to free trade system. Armenia is moving towards industrial agriculture and trade diversification. More than 379,000 people work in agriculture which represents 35% of total employment, 77% the population who live in rural communities and 17% of the total GDP which stems from agriculture.
- The Deputy minister of Agriculture in Armenia stressed the necessity for combined efforts from various ministries as well as other governmental bodies. Armenia integrated food security concept into the Strategy for Sustainable Agriculture Development with the support of Oxfam.
- The government of Armenia recognises the ***direct impact of Climate change on food security***, which requires reconsidering certain policies and practices in this sector.

Programmes

- There are ongoing development programmes in terms of improving human capital: improving extension centres and vocational education.
- In order to ***improve agricultural extension services***, Armenia has established ***17 units across the country in cooperation with the private sector*** through business centres, giving the management to the most effective and flexible farmers within the community. With the aim to make this practice sustainable, these selected farmers do not enjoy any financial support from the State but rather it gives them an opportunity to sell their services. The financial assessment of the system will be carried out by the end of the year. Subsequently, the Government plans to subsidise other farms to access these services.
- ***School feeding programmes***, however, as it stands farmers participation is unclear due to certification requirements and tender participation.
- ***Yes We Can***, Programme targets climate, energy, soil and water, trade, government, people, history and brand identity and aims: to increase the availability, affordability, accessibility of food through fiscal and monetary policy, state programmes and institutional reforms.

The Deputy Minister of Agriculture addressed the fact that ***Armenia is under-financing agriculture***. Only 2% of the state budget is allocated to Agriculture. Whereas the minimum recommended threshold by WTO is 5% highlighting the need revisit fiscal policies.

How can the State invest in smallholder farming?

- Family producers play a central role in reducing poverty, increasing employment and contributing to food security at large. Large scale farms on the other hand increase land problems, environment and soil degradation. **Supporting small holders can lead to import substitution through an increase in local food production** and have a potential to solve problems of out-migration to urban areas. **Small holders need support through land tenure and public procurement.** The policies need to be accompanied by **appropriate budget allocations to ensure successful implementation and investment schemes should be long term in nature.**

Hungary

Hungary has been a member of the EU since 2004, following the change in 1990-91 to private agriculture. Mr. Vajda explained that the market transition demands change in expectations of the farmers to cope with market economy. They need to be able to learn, receive information, innovate and react to markets demands. In order to achieve this the Government interventions for small holder farmers should NOT be direct aid, for example with inputs, but rather with assistance in local market development, infrastructure, transport, clear land legislation, long term support programmes and training. Once the policies are in place and the enabling environment has triggered an increase in productivity, it becomes easier to engage the private sector and invest in processing, restaurant, hotels and so forth. Farmers organising themselves in cooperatives or cooperating in different legal forms such as producer organisations improves their chances of access to capital. Entrepreneurs can support the small holder farmers and integrate them in the value chains. Hungary created agricultural guarantee fund back in 1991 prior to the EU accession. It was partly financed by the EU, the Phare programme (an EU pre-accession programme for Poland and Hungary) the Ministry of Agriculture in Hungary and five commercial banks – the guarantee fund was a revolving fund and has proved to be very successful, it provided assistance to small holder farmers for their investments as a guarantee.

Access to information

Agriculture is one of the most dynamically changing sectors and now closely attributed to science and innovation. **Small holders need to access information to keep up with the changing market to enable them to make optimal use of resources and adopt innovative and cost efficient practices.** This requires significant amount of budget and the international experience shows positive outcomes in strengthening extension services such as China, India and the US who invested a lot of money in extension services.

Access to Finance

There is a gap in agricultural finance in the region as it is globally, what is called a missing middle: Large amount of money is available for larger scale of investments and some to micro financing but **financial support is required in the middle of the spectrum for small holder producers.** This can be addressed through cooperatives, land tenure that can be used as a collateral, Challenge Funds which provide grants to small businesses and impact investing, loans or equity provided by investors to small scale businesses, which can then be returned as part of the revolving fund as well as

Promotion of local products and rural life

It is important that the universities form agronomists, particularly in order to encourage the youth to engage in the sector. **The government should invest in popularising and promoting studies and courses in agronomy.**



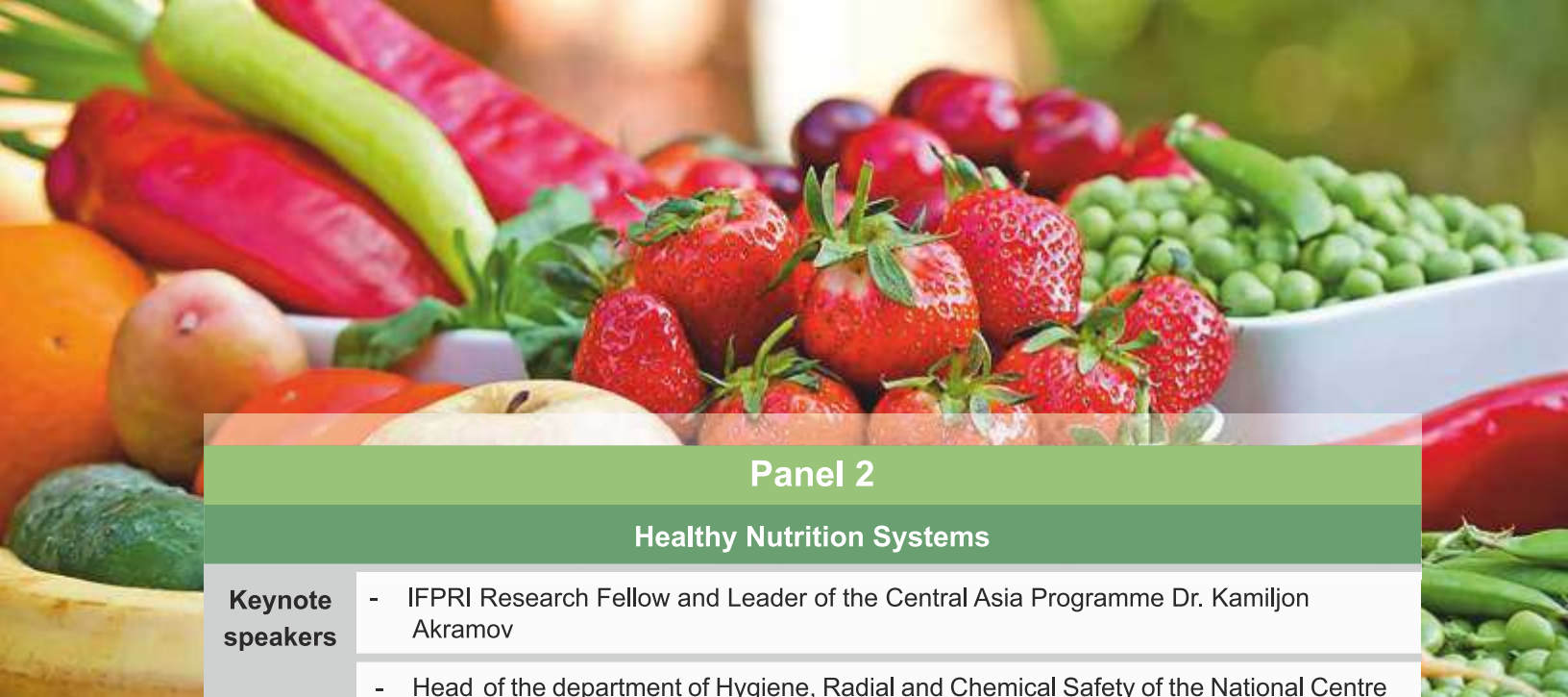
How can the State promote local food production?

The Hungarian example shows change in attitude towards agriculture and rural life over the past 20 years, which is also partly attributed to EU accession with a strong emphasis on social inclusion. Important trends like rural tourism and rural activities are emerging. *Many regional civil society organisations have been established with local producer markets in the municipalities, weekend fairs and festivals.* Increasingly more people in the urban society are interested in agriculture and rural life.

Media has an important role to play in promotion of rural life and agriculture. ***The Media can strengthen the image of agriculture and the rural life by*** continuously promote events in the rural areas

It is important to see local production issues in the current context of globalisation and market liberalisation, which puts considerable pressure on Georgia and Armenia.

According to Mr. Vajda, both countries need to *launch strong promotion of the local products.* It is important that the *government and all relevant stakeholders promote local production through local gastronomy, tourism and traditional culinary practices.* Public procurement schemes can play a critical role *supporting small holders.* For example, the *Brazilian food procurement programme directly sources small holders to the state, local schools are mandated to source 30% of their food locally, which has reached around 200,000 small holder farmers.*



Panel 2

Healthy Nutrition Systems

Keynote speakers	- IFPRI Research Fellow and Leader of the Central Asia Programme Dr. Kamiljon Akramov
Panellists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Head of the department of Hygiene, Radial and Chemical Safety of the National Centre for Disease Control and Prevention of the MoH of Armenia Mr. Hovsep Hovhannisyan - Nutrition Expert (MD – PHD) Ms. Tamar Manjavidze - Chief Specialist of the National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC) of Georgia Mr. Robizon Tsiklauri - UNICEF Representative in Georgia Mr. Sascha Graumann


Public expenditures in agriculture and food sectors are necessary for food and nutrition security in order to increase production, productivity, affordability, access, and consumption of healthy foods. Policies include government tools that will attract private sector investment and result in a **healthy food system**. The government policies have a significant role in influencing how agriculture and food systems contribute to healthy diet and improved nutrition. They can catalyse support from the private sector to make positive contributions and guide consumers to make appropriate choices.

Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture

Strengthening local food production is an important approach for improved nutrition. FAO advocates agriculture production as a good candidate for nutrition programming as it provides the raw material for food system. ***Production diversification can enrich the diet of the producer and raise their income.*** ***Women's empowerment is also critical to the development of a healthy food systems***, as stressed by the FAO regional representative Mr. David Sedik. Women make the majority of nutrition-related decisions for the family, especially for young children. When women control income in the Houshold, it is more frequently used on food and healthcare for family members. Anything that can increase women's decision making power (i.e. employment) can positively impact on nutrition.

The UNICEF Conceptual Framework for Malnutrition breaks down the causes of malnutrition into three discrete causal categories:

- **Immediate causes**- inadequate dietary intake and disease are the most proximate drivers of malnutrition. Interventions that address these immediate determinants are called *nutrition-specific interventions*.
- **Underlying causes** -(a) *household food insecurity (availability, access, stability, utilization)*, (b) *inadequate sanitation and health services*, and situations where (c) *children and babies* are not receiving adequate care and food. Interventions that address underlying causes of malnutrition are called: *nutrition-sensitive interventions*.
- **Basic causes** - related to poverty, inequality, conflict and other broad socio-economic conditions which compromise welfare. In some cases, nutrition sensitive interventions may also address these more basic causes.



How can the State develop Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture?

Promotion of nutrition sensitive agriculture at a country level can be done through: rural development programmes (small scale programmes), value chain programmes which integrate small scale producers into specific value chains, school food and nutrition programmes sourcing from local producers, and biofortification. Capacity development is crucial to improving knowledge of diversified agricultural production for nutrition improvement.

Malnutrition is multi-dimensional and requires multi-sectoral interventions, targeting immediate determinants of under nutrition. Nutrition sensitive agriculture through diversified agriculture can result in improved home consumption with more diverse food available for the households. The research has documented the positive correlation between agricultural diversity and nutrition diversity.

GEORGIA

- The [National Strategy on Healthy Nutrition](#) *coordinates the work* of different agencies. It is currently under review and ***will be adopted shortly. It is a multi-sectoral strategy which incorporates food security and food safety*** Awareness raising of the population and aims to improve the quality of food available at schools, the diet of pre-school age children. It proposes to set up a monitoring and oversight system, develop the appropriate policy framework and the establishment of national database of food composition in order to fill in the gaps of necessary missing products and serve the need for the dietary diversification.
- The [National Nutrition Research of Georgia](#) showed that overcoming nutrition challenges in Georgia requires ***multi-sectoral approach and inter-ministerial cooperation***. Globally 65% causes of death are due to non-communicable diseases with one of the main root causes being malnutrition which is of particularly big concern for children and pregnant women. Nutrition research commissioned by Oxfam identified problems with physical and economic access to nutritious and diversified food, particularly for socially vulnerable segments of population. ***Increasing local productivity with the support of the Government can improve nutrition.***
- The findings of the report of Oxfam's research on [Food Security and Nutrition Challenges in the High Mountains of Georgia](#) showed that the food security and nutrition level in the highlands of Georgia is lower compared with the country average and requires targeted interventions.
- The Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia set up a ***multi sectoral working group*** comprised of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of regional infrastructure and NGOs, mandated to develop a plan and strategy to supply healthy and safe food to schools and pre-schools entity. The first draft document prepared describes how the problems can be resolved and the role of each agency. The Ministry of Health has also elaborated and approved ***guidelines for healthy food in schools*** with menus and recommendations. It is advisory in nature, not compulsory, and can be used to introduce healthy food in schools evidence for the need of food fortification and allow for the implementation of the law.



- In 2007, the Ministry of Health published **regulations on flour fortification** which were then approved in 2014 based on international recommendations. These state that fortification may be done for food that is broadly used like flour, but first clinical research needs to prove that there is deficiency before Georgia can proceed. Since wheat flour is very widely consumed in the region fortification of flour can have considerable positive consequences by adding folic acid and iron. There is an ongoing research regarding iodine and folic acid deficiency among children and women of reproductive age in regions such as Samegrelo. The results will be available by the end of the year which will provide evidence for the need of food fortification and allow for the implementation of the law.

What are short term interventions that can improve nutrition?

- Iron supplementation programme for pregnant women – introduced by the Government.
- Micronutrient supplementation for children of 6 to 24 months – the Government has announced this type of support for the children of most vulnerable segments of population. This programme has a potential to be expanded to wider public.
- Promotion of exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of the child's age.
- Flour fortification – which was echoed in the NCDC national strategy adoption.

ARMENIA

The [Nutritional Diversification Study of Armenia](#) showed that nutrition today continues to be a considerable challenge. Low income level of the population, conditioned with social-economic hardship, as well as the nutrition culture and education level, play a prominent role in malnutrition among the population of Armenia. More importantly, the improvement of nutrition in Armenia requires active engagement of all stakeholders, including national authorities and civil society in coordination with nutrition policy development and implementation processes, thus promoting effective application accountability and monitoring mechanisms. For the implementation of national policies, systematic measures need to be taken for poverty reduction, as well as increasing knowledge and awareness of the population on healthy nutrition, with a particular focus on women's nutrition.

The Healthy Lifestyle Strategy adopted by the Government in 2014 aims to develop and enforce legislative and structural mechanisms promoting healthy lifestyle and decreasing the mortality rate from non-communicable diseases. Key priorities of the strategy are:

- o Implementing targeted national policy to improve healthy lifestyle habits,
- o Increase awareness of the population on unhealthy lifestyle and its consequences,
- o Ensure proper coordination with other Government structures, such as education, science, sport, youth and territorial development,
- o Ensure the strategy implementation at national, provincial and community levels involving also local and international organizations.



Key approaches/directions of the strategy are:

- Establishment of the management system for the implementation of the strategy,
- Development of policies and improving the legislation targeting healthy lifestyle and reducing unhealthy nutrition,
- Promoting inter-ministerial cooperation,
- Promoting healthy lifestyle at schools through improved services,
- Development and enforcement of a monitoring system through ensuring cooperation with local and international organizations.

Hidden hunger persists due to the lack of nutritious diet, and requires awareness raising and education in schools. The Ministry of Health officially approved the guidelines for feeding children under 2, based on these guidelines a behavioural protocol, part of which recommends awareness raising about nutritious diet. However, the fact that there hasn't been progress can be attributed to the guidelines being unsuccessfully disseminated. The Government should support the process of awareness raising and information dissemination regarding nutrition.

- The medical health system in Armenia is putting less emphasis on public education in particular the paediatricians. Within the World Vision, UNICEF and USAID funded project, over 100 parental resource centres were established within the polyclinics, with a focus on the importance of nutrition. Paediatricians across the country have been trained in nutrition and guidelines have been developed for the parents, doctors and nurses with regards to nutrition.
- Unhealthy nutrition is highly conditioned with the socio-economic state of the population however the educational level on healthy nutrition is not less important. Huge emphasis should be put on long term awareness raising and campaign should be undertaken to change nutritional behaviour of all layers of the population.
- Resources and capacities of existing local and international organizations should be utilised to ensure proper monitoring and assessment of the impact of nutrition policies, as well as participatory process of the policy shaping and implementation.
- Nutrition is not only about healthcare. Implementation of proper nutrition policies requires system of cooperation and coordination at both Government (inter-ministerial) and civil society levels.

Panel 3

Effective policy implementation and monitoring systems

Keynote speakers

- University of National and World Economy **Prof. Nedka Ivanova**

Panellists

- Executive Director, ISET policy institute **Mr. Eric Livny**
- Director of the Centre for Social Policy and former Director of the Government of Serbia Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit **Mr. Zarko Sunderic**
- Board member of the Mother and Child Health Alliance of Armenia **Ms. Naira Gharakhanyan**

Food Security is an inter-sectoral issue covering at least three policy areas – agricultural policy, social policy and health policy. A **food security monitoring system** is necessary in order to monitor and analyse trends of availability, stability, access and utilization of food. Oxfam's research on [Assessing the Food Security Data Relevance and Collection Mechanisms in the South Caucasus](#) provided a set of recommendations for each country with regard to data collection and measurement methodology, coordination and collaboration between stakeholders and their capacity and role in the FS network. Using the available data, we can identify and track risks and opportunities at the national and household levels, which can help the Government with timely information for decision making. Food security monitoring allows for assessment of the impact of food security measures/actions on stakeholders and beneficiaries. The report produced by Ms. Nedka Ivanova, FAO consultant, lays down the minimum data requirements for all four pillars of food security.

There are significant gaps in **national data collection and improvements** are needed in 3 main areas within household budget statistics:

- Consumption data unavailable on both national and regional level,
- Income statistics unavailable at regional level by decile groups and nutrition.
- Nutrition - subsistence minimum is available but due to a lack of data on consumption, it could not be used for monitoring the the food security of low income groups
 - o “Self-assessment” by the vulnerable groups and the application to the SEASA could resolve this gap.

Improvements are foreseen under the **National Strategy for Development of Statistics in Georgia**. However, it is unclear when it will take place. The report highlights the needs for prioritization and specific programmes for small farms and emphasizes the possibilities for on and off farm income generation, particularly the development of decentralized rural non-farm economy to support smallholders' access to alternative sources of income.

Food Insecurity Experience Scale of the FAO has proved to be the most efficient form of FSN monitoring in terms of utilising the data. This format is based on surveys and produces much better results in terms of the relevant stakeholders utilising the information. The Food Insecurity Experience Scale includes eight specific questions and indicators and the future plan is for the FAO to request GeoStat to carry out this monitoring scheme.



ARMENIA

- In 2015, the Ministry of Agriculture established a specific ***unit for the monitoring and evaluation analysis*** with 2 divisions: one for the ***data analysis*** and the other for ***monitoring and evaluation***. The Armenian Government recognised that there is too much focus on financial audit and that they do not look at the outcomes of the programme enough. The department is working together with the FAO and the EU and has adopted a log frame system looking at specific outputs i.e. critical success factors and key performance indicators.
- The Government is interested in the ***impact of the programmes*** implemented by the international development organisations. Currently, there is no mechanism that looks at how development programmes are reflected in macro-economic indicators of the country, such as gross agriculture production and yields which are all important in assessing tangible and measurable impact.
- The monitoring department is establishing a development cooperation framework with the FAO and will be setting up an ***electronic database system*** where every major international development organisation will be able to provide the essential information of their projects with specific measurable indicators. The organisations will be able to regularly access the data, make amendments on their projects and insert targets. The government plans to sign MoU with the organisations and it is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

GEORGIA

- The Policy and analytical department is responsible for the oversight of policy or strategy and action plan implementation. The action plan also contains assessment indicators and requires all the agencies for their activities to be measurable economically – economic impact measurement, systematic changes and analysis, - recommendations include that assessment be carried out before and after the implementation of the project.

Setting up monitoring systems

- ***Monitoring system should serve a clear purpose***, as it is very costly and should have clear utilisation points, this means determining what kind of information needs to be monitored and what decision-making purpose it will serve and be used as a supporting mechanism for policy design. This approach was echoed by numerous stakeholders such as WFP and ISET that separate monitoring system is not necessary or financially justified but rather more efforts need to be made to ***strengthen the existing system*** and ***increase Government's capacity***.
- ***Data driven policies*** – the gaps and challenges lie in the information distribution to the correct bodies/ministries and helping the government make sense of the data. The civil society engagement becomes crucial as they can make immediate reflections on policies.



What is the role of civil society in monitoring?

- **Engaging Civil Society in monitoring involves creating a platform of common understanding and interest. It is becoming a common practice to use *social monitoring systems in order to increase accountability of public services towards the citizens and beneficiaries*. Participatory monitoring is a critical process where the civil society can successfully engage and ensure feedback from beneficiaries.**
- The ***Armenian school feeding programme*** is a good opportunity for monitoring and intervening to improve nutrition. The aim is to assess the performance of the school cafeterias as well as nurses (UN World Food Programme). As a result of budget tracking an increase in budget allocations for child health programmes and the prioritisation of health promotion in the country was achieved.
- The ***Serbian government created monitoring systems with necessary indicators*** starting from surveys in order to determine the needs, subsequently relevant indicators were derived through cooperation with statisticians for designing a monitoring scheme. Finally, the government involved the civil society organisations which represented the interests and needs of various target groups of the population.
- The ***Government agencies are the main duty bearers for setting up and managing the monitoring system***. They need to also be capacitated to take on these
- Civil society engagement and alternative monitoring of policy implementation is an important tool for impact assessment. Oxfam in Armenia together with other stakeholders identified inefficiencies in implementation process and proposed a set of recommendations to redesign the implementation to increase the impact and benefits.
- Collecting data should be harmonised with the policy tools, and then analyzed by competent institutions with the capacity. In ***Hungary, there is an agricultural research institute with highly qualified experts***. In the case of a lack of financial resources, collaboration with other institutions can be used, such as agricultural universities, professors, teachers and PhD students who can have considerable input in the preparation process.

Panel 4

Empowering women in FSN: case studies and best practices

Keynote speaker	- Programme Analyst at UN Women, Ms. Ana Pashalishvili
Panellists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Executive Director of the Women's information Centre (WIC), Ms. Elene Rusetskaia - Chairperson of ProMedia Gender NGO, Ms. Tamara Hovnatanyan - Operations Manager of Bridge, Oxfam Legacy NGO, Ms. Nino Janashia

GEORGIA


[The Gender Assessment of Agriculture and Local Development Systems](#) of the UN Women reviewed policies, programmes and services related to agriculture and local development implemented by national and local governments as well as development partners. The main findings were that gender equality is not mainstreamed. There is a lack of coherence between the GE Law/NAP and policies on agriculture/ rural/economic development. Ministries also lack gender-sensitive outreach strategies and often do not collect *sex disaggregated data*.

There main recommendations were to *mainstream gender at the national and local levels, collect sex disaggregated data* and mainstream gender into policies and programmes of the ministries and support municipal gender advisors. There is also a need for/to:

- **Inter-sectorial institutional mechanism on GEWE** (Gender Equality and Women Empowerment) in the executive branch of the government.
- **Actively include women** in small land-owners' programme, extension services and agricultural education.
- **Promote agricultural development** through increased qualification of farmers, improved quality of and access to extension services, resources and cooperatives.
- **Promote women's roles in public life**, local development and agriculture as well as men's roles in unpaid care and household work.
- **Empower women (and men)** at the grassroots level through support to self-help groups and other initiatives aimed at skills-strengthening, access to services, resources and markets.
- **Institutionalize GRB** (Gender Responsive Budgeting) at the local level and support local group's knowledge and advocacy skills.

Food security policies should be elaborated with gender mainstreaming for all four pillars of Availability, Access, Utilization and Stability in order to ensure equal attention to diverse needs of men and women. Food security policies of the MoA must reflect the national and international obligations on gender equity adopted and ratified by the Parliament. In 2014, the CEDAW Committee made several recommendations to Georgia:

- the rural women have adequate access to social, health care and other basic services;
- and economic opportunities;
- also the equal opportunity to participate in political and public life, particularly related to agricultural sector.



As for ***national gender obligations***, the Law on Gender Equality of Georgia adopted in 2010 and the National Action Plan on Gender Equality are key legal documents. These are not effectively implemented due to:

- Lack of clear division of responsibilities. This hinders effective implementation of gender equality legislation;
- lack of resources allocated to the implementation of these policies.
- Lack of coordination and monitoring of gender equality policy implementation. The majority of the laws adopted by the Parliament of Georgia are not gender mainstreamed and therefore lacks gender sensitivity. The **Action Plan** emphasizes the support of women involved in agricultural production including improvement of their knowledge and skills and their involvement in agricultural businesses and cooperatives.

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- There is a need for the Government to raise public awareness with a special emphasis on ***gender equality in cooperatives***, since women only represent 25% of cooperative members. There are only 35 women's cooperatives with 192 members. Women's involvement in cooperatives is directly related to their economic and social empowerment.
- Differences are also observed in ***access to information and specific training*** in agriculture related activities, which is more problematic for women due to the double burden of household and agricultural tasks.

ARMENIA

- ProMedia Gender jointly with Oxfam initiated Food Female Hero Campaign in 2011 to improve the visibility of rural women and identify their issues and challenges. For that purpose a research was conducted to identify the role of women in food production.
- To make sure that challenges and issues of rural women are addressed they should be considered in appropriate Government programmes and policies.
- As a pilot ProMedia and Oxfam initiated gender mainstreaming of provincial social economic development plan in Tavush. The process was participatory with direct involvement of farmers and expert groups.
- Based on the pilot a policy paper on gender mainstreaming of provincial plans was developed by the Agricultural Alliance and submitted to the Government.
- To ensure replicability of the pilot Guidelines for Gender Analysis and Mainstreaming of Provincial Development plans was developed and approved by the Government which means they are mandatory for all provincial Governments when developing respective provincial plans.
- Promedia was involved in the Working Group established to develop the Strategy for Sustainable Agricultural Development to ensure gender mainstreaming of the Strategy.



