Concept Note

Online Regional Capacity Building Workshop for Latin America and the Caribbean on Juncao Technology [1]and its Support to Achieve Sustainable Agriculture and the SDGs

17 March 2022, 8:30 AM – 10:30 AM (China Standard Time)

▪ Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UNDESA ▪ China International Development Cooperation Agency ▪ Foreign Affairs Office of Fujian Provincial People's Government, China ▪ National Engineering Research Centre for Juncao Technology of the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (FAFU) of China

I. Purpose of the workshop

The Division for Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DSDG/UNDESA), in collaboration with China International Development Cooperation Agency, the Foreign Office of Fujian Provincial People's Government of China, and National Engineering Research Center for Juncao Technology of the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (FAFU) of China, is organizing an "Online Regional Capacity Building Workshop for Latin America and the Caribbean on Juncao Technology and its Support to Achieve Sustainable Agriculture and the SDGs" on 17 March 2022.

The capacity building workshop is convened in the context of UNDESA's mission to advise interested Governments on the ways and means of translating policy frameworks developed in UN conferences and summits into programmes at the regional level and, through technical assistance that helps build national and regional capacities as underscored by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. Sustainable Development Goal 17 seeks to revitalize global partnerships to support sustainable development through funding, capacity-building, peer learning and knowledge sharing, debt sustainability, trade facilitation, effective public–private partnerships and access to technologies. Capacity building activities are also aimed at strengthening and maintaining the capabilities of countries to design and implement strategies that minimize the negative impacts of current social, economic and environmental crises and emerging challenges. As a cross-cutting entry point, capacity building activities promote the integration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable

[1] Juncao technology has been developed by the National Engineering Research Centre for Juncao Technology of the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (FAFU) of China. The technology has a multi-faceted approach of cultivating mushroom and fungi for food and medicinal purposes while at the same time addressing soil erosion for maintaining the volume of arable land and also supporting livestock feed development.

Development Goals (SDGs) into national sustainable development planning frameworks, sharing lessons learned and good practices through workshops and related events.

The 2030 Agenda recognizes that capacity-building forms part of the means of implementation for the SDGs, without which none of the other Sustainable Development Goals could be realized. Each SDG contains targets relating to means of implementation, including capacity- building. Moreover, SDG 17, which covers means of implementation and the global partnership for sustainable development, contains target 17.9 which aims to "Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation".

To help support global efforts to promote appropriate agricultural technologies and practices that contribute to the achievement of food security and the eradication of poverty, the National Engineering Research Centre for Juncao Technology of the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (FAFU) of China developed Juncao technology (jun meaning fungi, cao meaning grass). This technology, which is being transferred to developing countries through South-South and Triangular cooperation and upon request, allows smallholder farmers in developing countries to grow several types of nutritious mushrooms from dried, chopped grasses without cutting down trees and damaging the environment. Such an environmental-friendly technology can help small-scale farmers and farming communities to develop a low-cost, commercial-scale mushroom cultivation industry that can provide sustainable livelihoods for thousands.

In addition, the technology can also be used for producing livestock feed, methane gas, and minimize soil erosion to combat desertification. In the long run, depending on local demand and the scale of production, it may also provide opportunities for exporting the mushrooms cultivated using the technology. In the long run, agribusiness entities, such as cooperatives and micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) that constitute a substantial part of the industry could be valuable conduits that integrate the Juncao products within value chains at the national and regional level.

In that regard, UN DESA is collaborating with the National Engineering Research Centre for Juncao Technology of the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (FAFU) of China, under the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund, on a project entitled "Enhancing capacity of developing countries to achieve sustainable agriculture through the transfer of Juncao technology for alleviating poverty and promoting productive employment". This project is linked to issues that are important to developing countries, including eradication of poverty, reduction of hunger, use of renewable energy, promotion of employment, protection of the environment and responsiveness to climate change.

II. Background

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is a region of great contrasts, where wealth and prosperity coexist with vulnerability and extreme poverty. Despite decades of progress, the region remains the second most unequal in the world, and countries in LAC exhibit higher income inequality than those in other regions at similar development levels. An estimated 123 million people live in rural areas, representing approximately 18.9% of the total regional population.[2] The region is also facing a critical situation in terms of food security. Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean rose by 79 percent between 2014 and 2020. According to the Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2021 produced by the Food and Agriculture Organization, hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean is at its highest point since the year 2000, after a 30 percent increase in the number of people suffering hunger from 2019 to 2020. In just one year, the number of people living with hunger increased by 13.8 million, reaching a total of 59.7 million people. This sharp increase is partly attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. Four out of every ten people in the region—267 million—experienced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2020, 60 million more than in 2019.This represents an increase of 9 percentage points and is the most pronounced rise compared to other world regions.[3] Furthermore, moderate or severe food insecurity affected 40.9 percent of the population, well above the world level of 30.4 percent.

The region's agricultural sector and agri-food systems make important contributions to economic growth, trade, job creation, raising incomes, reducing poverty, safeguarding food and nutrition security, and preserving ecosystem services. However, millions of farmers and livestock keepers throughout the region struggle to overcome the impacts of myriad crises, including the ongoing effects of climate change and a devastating global health crisis that was caused by the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The region has also not been spurred from the global economic slowdown, rising inflation, unprecedented weather shocks, and a crippling migrant crisis. Thus, innovative technologies are needed for the sector to play an even more important role in supporting the region's recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, and the promotion of shared prosperity.

In its recent resolutions on 'Agriculture development, food security and nutrition'[4] and 'Agricultural Technology for Sustainable Development'[5], the General Assembly expressed concern that the current pace and scope of implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 2,

[2] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL?end=2020&locations=ZJ&start=1960&view=chart

[3] https://www.fao.org/americas/publicaciones-audio-video/panorama/2021/en/

[4] A/RES/75/235

[5] A/RES/74/215

is unlikely to promote the transformational change needed and that its targets will not be achieved in many parts of the world, and called for additional efforts to support the transformational change that is needed.

Further, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation and its outcome document[6] , and General Assembly resolution 75/235 recognize "the important role that South-South and triangular cooperation play in fostering partnerships among developing countries that lead to the end of poverty and hunger and to the achievement of food security and improved nutrition, as well as the promotion of sustainable agriculture." The General Assembly also "…encourages the international community to enhance international cooperation and to devote resources to developing rural and urban areas and sustainable agriculture and fisheries and to supporting smallholder farmers, especially women farmers, herders and fishers in developing countries, particularly in the least developed countries."[7]

These challenges are complex and multidimensional, requiring innovative, home-grown, sustainable, replicable, and scalable solutions. Some of these solutions are also provided through South-South and Triangular cooperation as exemplified by the Juncao technology that was developed by Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University and is being implemented in over 100 developing countries.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, Brazil is one country that has adopted the Juncao technology after some of its researchers received training on edible and medicinal mushrooms using the Juncao technique in Fujian Province, China, in 1995. So far, 53 training sessions have been organized in Brazil, benefiting more than 2,000 participants. In 2014, 9 specialists from Dominican Republic, Cuba, Guyana, and Colombia also underwent intensive training on Juncao technology while Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Panama, Jamaica, Mexico, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago have expressed great interest learning more about the Juncao technology.

III. Objectives and Methodology

This regional workshop provides an opportunity to equip policymakers, experts, and smallholder farmers in Latin America and the Caribbean to learn more about the benefits of Juncao technology as well as enhance the capacities of these groups with the requisite know-how to transfer Juncao technology in their respective countries, adapting it to their specific circumstances. Hence, the workshop aims to enhance knowledge and strengthen national

[6] A/RES/73/291

[7] A/RES/75/230

capacities of participating countries to improve their policies and programmes supporting sustainable agriculture and protecting the environment through the transfer of Juncao technology. In the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the workshop will highlight the benefits of South-South and Triangular Cooperation as a means of enhancing access to science, technology, and innovation, knowledge sharing as well as capacity building and to effectively contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Participants

The participants will include policymakers, agriculture, food and nutrition experts, entrepreneurs, smallholder farmers, local communities from Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as members of United Nations Country Teams, China International Development Cooperation Agency, Foreign Affairs Office of Fujian Provincial People's Government of China, experts from the National Engineering Research Centre for Juncao Technology of the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (FAFU) of China.

Expected Outcome

At the conclusion of the Capacity Building Workshop, it is anticipated that the participants will:

- Have acquired a better understanding of the requirements for successful implementation of Juncao technology and its utility to support the realization of sustainable agriculture and the implementation of the SDGs.
- Be able to participate in ongoing and planned international, regional and national initiatives to advance the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.
- Be able to forge networks and be part of a community of practice to support one another in reaching the implementation of Juncao technology and sustainable agriculture.

Language

English, Spanish, and Chinese.

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