



South-South Quarterly Newsletter

February 2024

"We must harness the full power and opportunities of South-South and Triangular Cooperation to better recognize and leverage the significance of the Global South."

Dennis Francis
President UN General Assembly
at the Third South Summit, Kampala, Uganda
22 January 2024

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WFP's Global Work on South-South Cooperation

The SSTC Unit Moved to the Multilateral and Programme Country Partnerships

The South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) Unit in HQ was shifted on 15 February from the Programme-Humanitarian and Development (PRO) Division to the Multilateral and Programme Country Partnerships (MPC) Division. The SSTC team would like to thank PRO management, David Kaatrud and Jean-Pierre Demargerie for their constant support and strong leadership for SSTC initiatives.

In the upcoming months, the Unit will identify the next steps and the way forward adapting to the new strategic focus under the leadership of Stanlake Samkange, Director of Multilateral and Programme Countries Partnership.

Keep updated on the latest news from the SSTC Unit via the [SSTC Yammer channel](#).

Guidance on SSTC for Social Protection Launched

In February 2024, the SSTC and Social Protection Units conducted a webinar to launch the [Guidance on South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Social Protection](#).

The webinar aimed to officially present the guidance and delve into discussions about how SSTC can support the implementation of the WFP Social Protection Strategy and contribute to achieving its objectives.

During the webinar, the HQ SSTC and Social Protection Units highlighted how the guidance reflects WFP's need to further mainstream SSTC in its corporate programme and partnership work.

This includes thematic areas such as shock-responsive social protection and emergency preparedness and response, where country demand for WFP-facilitated SSTC is growing.

Moreover, the webinar showcased how the guidance creates a more cohesive operating environment between SSTC and Social Protection.

It further explored SSTC's role in leveraging WFP operations to advance and tap into innovative solutions and reach the most vulnerable.

The IBSA-funded Project in the Republic of Congo Starts its Implementation Phase

In December, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAEP) of the Republic of Congo in partnership with WFP convened the inaugural session of the Steering Committee of the project "[Strengthening the Access of Family Farmers in the Republic of Congo to Local Markets Through South-South Cooperation](#)".

The project is funded by the India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (IBSA Fund) in the amount of almost USD 1 million.

It is expected to last two years and aims to strengthen the institutional capacity of MAEP to improve smallholder access to local markets.

It also looks to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education and Literacy (MEPPSA) of the Republic of Congo to implement a national home-grown school feeding programme.

The programme is thought to include an enhanced component of local food procurement from family farming.

Representatives from the Mozambique and India country offices (COs) presented their experience in implementing SSTC as a modality to strengthen national social protection programmes.

Mozambique CO illustrated the results from the study visit to the Dominican Republic to learn about their shock-responsive social protection programmes.

And India CO shared key insights about their role in supporting the host government to engage in SSTC as a provider country of social protection solutions.

Please see more details [here](#) and the recording [here](#).



During the Steering Committee meeting, the members were briefed on the governance and operational structure of the project, culminating in the approval of the project work plan and budget for the first year.

The meeting was attended by representatives of MEPPSA, the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), The National Fund for Educational Development (FNDE) of Brazil, the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Family Agriculture of Brazil.

The Ambassador of Brazil in Brazzaville, representatives of the Embassies of India and South Africa in Brazzaville and WFP representatives from HQ also attended the event. Please see more details [here](#).



WFP's Global Work on South-South Cooperation

Enhancing Regional Engagement in the Implementation of the SSTC Policy Update

In December 2023 and January 2024, the SSTC Unit in collaboration with the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBP) and the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa (RBJ) conducted regional webinars.

The webinars aimed to roll out the [2023 SSTC Policy update](#) approved by the Executive Board in June 2023.

These webinars titled "Update on WFP Engagement in SSTC - Insights from policy and practice to inform regional action on SSTC" aimed at enhancing regional engagement in the implementation of the policy.

The webinars form part of a roadmap for regional policy implementation agreed upon during an [SSTC retreat](#) held with regional bureaux (RBx) and Centres of Excellence (CoEs) in October 2023.

PRO-CoE-CO Directors Dialogue 2023

In December, following the first meeting held last March, the Directors of PRO and CoEs in Brazil, China and Cote d'Ivoire met along with the COs of India, Egypt and Kenya.

These COs were chosen as they have been increasingly expanding their SSTC engagement as provider countries.

The meeting aimed to:

- Update CoE Directors about the progress on key corporate processes in SSTC;
- Discuss the contribution of CoEs and COs in provider countries to the SSTC policy implementation at global and regional levels and identify shared priorities for collaboration in 2024;
- Discuss the increasing engagement of India, Egypt and Kenya COs to support their respective host governments as SSTC providers.

2nd Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Agriculture

In November, the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) and the Hainan Province co-hosted the 2nd Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Agriculture held in China.

The forum provided a platform for high-level dialogue under the theme of "Food Security for Africa—A New Chapter for China-Africa Agricultural Cooperation."

It aimed to discuss means of assisting African countries to realize agricultural modernization towards independent and sustainable development.

Around 300 people including senior representatives from 38 African countries, African Union (AU), research institutes and the private sector attended the forum and its associated events.

The webinars focused on providing data-based insights into the current SSTC portfolio at the corporate and regional levels, while also learning from COs experiences with SSTC in RBP and RBJ.

The agenda also touched on the main strategic direction and operational implications of the SSTC Policy Update and its roll out in the region.

Moving forward, RBP and RBJ with support from the HQ SSTC Unit will continue supporting COs to identify opportunities to implement the SSTC initiative as part of a strategic approach.

To learn more about the SSTC work across Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), please see [this factsheet](#) and in the Southern Africa region, please see [this factsheet](#) or contact sstc.global@wfp.org.

Some key outcomes of the meeting are:

- The participants will consolidate their efforts to support the implementation of the SSTC Policy Update.
- The CoE and COs that play the role of knowledge hubs will define a framework for joint collaboration.
- The COs seek to enhance evidence generation and sharing of global best practices including through HQ's [South-South Match](#) knowledge platform.



During the event, the participants reflected on the China-Africa Cooperation achievements.

The forum outlined a comprehensive plan for the coming years, focusing on agricultural modernization in African nations. For more information on the Plan for China Supporting Africa's Agricultural Modernization, please see the [link](#).

Looking forward, WFP will follow up with MARA on the detailed Action Plan and strengthen African countries' capacities to become WFP partners and suppliers of locally-driven solutions.

To learn more about the WFP SSTC portfolio in Africa, see [this publication](#).

WFP's Global Work on South-South Cooperation

WFP's Work with the Rome-based Agencies (RBA)

RBA and the Brazilian Government to Develop a Joint SSTC Programme

In December, representatives of the Rome-based Agencies (RBA) – WFP, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Brazilian Government gathered in Rome for a Workshop to discuss a joint partnership on SSTC.

As a result of the workshop discussions, Brazil and the RBAs agreed on developing a joint SSTC global programme on school feeding and family farming.

The programme will include two country projects, one in Latin America and the Caribbean and one in Africa.

As a follow up, in February representatives of the Brazil Cooperation Agency (ABC) and the RBA's HQ SSTC Units met at IFAD HQ in Rome to establish a task force to guide the development of the Brazil-RBA joint SSTC Programme document.

The document is in line with Brazil's SSTC requirements, including the country selection criteria and governance structure.

The parties agreed on the taskforce's programme of work and the roadmap toward the programme's official launch in September 2024 at the margins of the 2024 RBA joint celebration of the UN SSTC Day to be hosted in Brazil.



Photo: FAO

WFP Strengthens Collaboration on SSTC with UNOSSC and RBA

In February, David Kaatrud, former PRO Director, met with Dima Al-Khatib, the Director of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), as well as FAO's and IFAD's SSTC Directors.

The directors aimed to discuss opportunities to deepen the longstanding collaboration among the four UN agencies on SSTC.

Ms. Al-Khatib provided an overview of UNOSSC's SSTC work, including:

- Organization of the UN High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation in May 2023;
- The release of the guidelines to integrate SSTC into country and regional level work of the UN Development System (UNDS);

- The UNOSSC-managed SSTC Trust Funds (the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation (UNFSSC), the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation (PGTF), the IBSA Fund and the UN-India SSTC fund); and
- Revamping the South-South Galaxy platform with new functionalities.

The RBA SSTC Directors provided a quick update about the SSTC engagement of their respective agencies and identified concrete opportunities to further strengthen UNOSSC/RBA collaboration on SSTC, including:

- Dissemination of the SSTC guidelines at country and regional levels;
- Integration of RBA and UNOSSC SSTC knowledge platforms and solution labs;
- Joint efforts to mobilize triangular partners such as Arab countries, European countries, and IFIs; and
- Leveraging SSTC engagement in fragile settings.

RBA SSTC Directors' Dialogue

In February, RBA SSTC Directors met at FAO HQ to discuss the 2024 SSTC joint initiatives.

Discussions were held on a revised joint roadmap for SSTC which aims to expand the RBA current SSTC partnership base and improve their approach to evidence-based knowledge promotion.

It further aims to enhance advocacy and communication on SSTC's added value and contribution to Zero Hunger.

The three RBA SSTC Directors agreed on the need to strengthen collaboration with other UN Agencies, International and Financial Institutions (IFI), governments,

policy makers, experts, and practitioners to discuss challenges, share insights, and formulate strategies for innovative SSTC financing.

In addition, the RBA SSTC Directors discussed the progress on the RBA joint SSTC programme on Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) in Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal and the Philippines as well as Brazil's support to implement the programme in two pilot countries.

Finally, it was confirmed that this year's RBA joint celebration of the UN Day for South-South Cooperation will be hosted in Brazil, in collaboration with ABC.

Update from WFP's Network of Centres of Excellence

WFP China Centre of Excellence for Rural Transformation (WFP China CoE)

WFP China CoE and CERFAM Attended SARA 2023 in Côte d'Ivoire to Foster Agricultural Innovation and Partnerships Through SSTC

In October, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire hosted the sixth International Exhibition of Agriculture and Animal Resources (SARA) with participation from WFP China CoE and the Regional Centre of Excellence against Hunger and Malnutrition (CERFAM).

The event aimed to showcase local agricultural expertise and the diversity of products in the sector, including livestock, fishing, forestry and the agri-food industry in West Africa.

WFP China CoE and CERFAM took this opportunity to highlight project achievements of the [West-Africa Rice Value Chain Initiative](#) to promote partners' visibility.

In collaboration with technical partners, they introduced the mini steel silo, [an innovative storage solution](#) designed for smallholder farmers. This solution aims to reduce post-harvest losses and enhance food security in West Africa.

During the exhibition, a side event titled "Leveraging the Potential of Value Chains to Improve the Resilience of Food Systems" was organized by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire jointly with the CoEs.

The event explored strategies for enhancing value chains, their impact on dietary improvements and economic growth, and the significance of research in advancing the agricultural sector.

Looking ahead, WFP China CoE will continue dialogue with key partners such as the Africa Rice Centre and the National Agency for Rice Value Chain Development of Côte d'Ivoire focusing on knowledge exchange and sustainable cooperation.



Photo: WFP/ Chine CoE

Workshop on Climate-Smart Mechanization for Dryland Farming Management

In October, the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP-CSAM), the Administrative Committee of Yangling Agricultural High-Tech Industry Demonstration Zone, China (Yangling Administrative Committee) jointly with the WFP China CoE organized a workshop.

The workshop focused on Innovative Approaches and Practices of Climate-Smart Mechanization for Dryland Farming Management in China.

It covered the latest development and applications of mechanization-based digital technologies and water efficiency practices to reinforce climate resilience for North and Central Asian countries and other countries facing similar challenges.

13 participants from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, including ministries of agriculture and irrigation, universities, research institutes and the private sector attended the workshop.

Field visits to research institutes and smart agriculture demonstration parks provided delegates with practical insights into climate-smart technologies.

Additionally, a training session in Wuhan city and participation in the Wuhan Agricultural Machinery Expo expanded the delegates' understanding of China's agricultural machinery sector.

The workshop facilitated knowledge exchanges and laid the foundation for enhanced SSTC in climate-smart mechanization.

As next steps, WFP China CoE will expand the collaboration with WFP offices in North and Central Asia to further assess the demand for dryland farming solutions.

Additionally, the CoE will continue organizing relevant capacity building activities on climate-resilient agriculture.

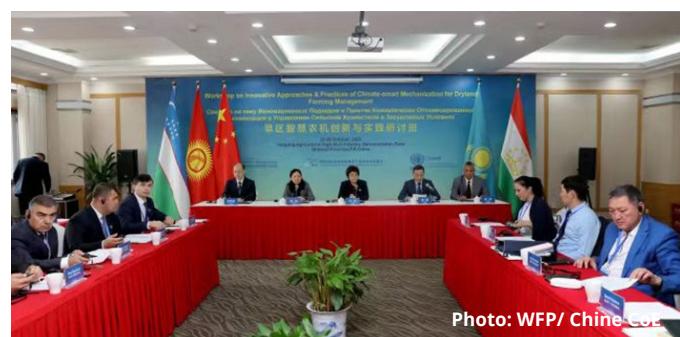


Photo: WFP/ Chine CoE

Update from WFP's Network of Centres of Excellence

WFP China Centre of Excellence for Rural Transformation (WFP China CoE)

Webinar on Solar Energy Applications for Agriculture Against Climate Change

In October, China's National Centre for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation (NCSC) jointly with the WFP China CoE held a webinar on Solar Energy Applications for Agriculture Against Climate Adaptation.

The event aimed to exchange experience and insight on leveraging solar energy for agricultural resilience in the face of the climate change.

49 participants from 25 developing countries attended the webinar.

Discussions centred on intelligent photovoltaic air conditioning systems for grain warehouses, green carbon-free solar drying technologies for agricultural products, and solar-driven water-saving irrigation equipment.

These technologies offer cost-effective and sustainable alternatives to traditional energy-intensive practices, contributing to climate change mitigation efforts.

Training on Post-Harvest Loss Reduction for Smallholder Grain Storage

In November, the WFP China CoE organized an online training on Post-harvest Loss Reduction for Smallholder Grain Storage.

This initiative aimed to combat the significant post-harvest losses experienced by smallholder farmers in developing countries, where inadequate storage practices result in up to 40% loss of harvest.

The training introduced technologies, equipment and solutions to support post-harvest loss reduction for smallholder grain storage, providing the opportunity for participants to learn about China's experience and practice in this field.

The webinar underscored the importance of fostering innovation and facilitating the transfer of knowledge on effective solar energy applications.

It emphasized the role of SSTC in promoting exchanges that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

As a next step, China CoE will continue sharing solar energy technologies and applications and providing a platform to support further collaboration in this field.



The 2023 International Forum on Sci-Tech Empowering Rural Transformation

In November, the China Internet Information Centre (CIIC), FAO and IFAD China offices, ESCAP-CSAM and WFP China CoE, co-hosted the 2nd International Forum on Sci-Tech Empowering Rural Transformation.

The forum was attended by over 100 representatives from government agencies, embassies, international organizations, research institutes, private sector, and farmer representatives.

The event aimed to showcase the increasing involvement of youths in China's rural vitalisation and inspire the development and transformation of rural areas around the world.

By implementing innovative storage techniques and equipment, China has significantly reduced losses, particularly stemming from rodent infestation.

Quality management and pest control for smallholder grain storage were also introduced in the training.

A total of 72 participants from 27 developing countries attended the training.

The training underscored the significance of collaboration and knowledge-sharing to address post-harvest loss challenges globally.

Moving forward, WFP China CoE will share knowledge at the technical level in the field of post-harvest loss management, providing systematic support for smallholders to reduce post-harvest loss.

WFP China CoE and partner agencies released the thematic report Sci-Tech Empowering Rural Transformation: 2023 Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

It highlighted new technologies and the latest practices in empowering agricultural value chain development. These aim to draw lessons from China's youth practices in leveraging science and technology to empower rural development and promote the exchange of experience among developing countries through SSTC.

The first report on Digital Tech Empowering Rural Transformation was released in November 2022. In 2024, the third report will focus on women's empowerment in rural transformation.

Update from WFP's Network of Centres of Excellence

WFP Centre of Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil (WFP Brazil CoE)

Namibia Participates in Virtual Study Visit on Brazilian School Feeding Systems

In November, representatives of the Namibian Ministry of Education, Arts of Culture: Department Finance and Administration, participated in a "[Virtual Study Visit](#)" with Brazil.

The Namibian Government is committed to improving its national school meals programme and adopted a home-grown school meals model in 2021 with support from WFP.

The online methodology was created by the Brazil CoE in partnership with ABC and FNDE to conduct online exchanges between Brazil and other countries of the Global South.

It covers the messages communicated in an on-site visit to Brazil, supporting the dissemination of key elements to its successful PNAE.

Beyond Cotton Project Promotes Community Seed House Training Through SSTC between Brazil and Tanzania

In November, Brazil shared experience with Tanzania with support from the WFP Brazil CoE, as a part of the [Beyond Cotton project](#).

The Beyond Cotton project is a joint initiative of WFP Brazil CoE and ABC, with the support of the Brazilian Cotton Institute.

Its objective is to support smallholder cotton farmers and public institutions in African countries in linking cotton by-products and intercropped crops (e.g., corn, sorghum and beans) to safe markets, including school feeding programmes.

The technical team comprised WFP Brazil CoE, professors from the Federal University of Campina Grande and the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI) of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The technical team conducted knowledge sharing exercises with family farmers in three communities in Tanzania aiming to create Community Seed Houses.

Community Seed Houses represent a widely adopted social technology innovation in Brazil, developed as a component of the public policy to address the challenges of drought and climate change mitigation in regions prone to droughts.

This initiative works as a strategic seed reserve for upcoming planting seasons, enabling farmers to access a quantity of seeds with the commitment to replenish the stock by returning double or more the following year.

The Community Seed House also serves as a space for collective learning among its members, facilitating the development of management and organizational skills.

During the online sessions, the Namibian representatives engaged in discussions with the president of FNDE, representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, the Embassy of Brazil in Namibia and Brazil CoE.

The participants presented their countries' school meals systems and highlighted SSTC exchanges as an effective means to fight hunger among schoolchildren.

The Namibian representatives sought to learn the legal structure of school meals systems in Brazil, details of local management of resources and ways PNAE includes indigenous and quilombola populations in its programmes.

Additionally, it serves as a platform for preserving not only seeds but also rich cultural heritage associated with seed conservation.

In Tanzania, as a result of the knowledge exchange, local farmers have initiated the establishment of a seed bank and are currently harvesting their crops and selecting the seeds that will make up the seed bank.

This will ensure the availability of high-quality seeds in sufficient quantities for essential planting and replanting activities.

Looking forward, the seed bank's board of directors will be elected to ensure the internal organization, reception, proper storage, standardized identification and characteristics of each type of seed.

The board will also be responsible for keeping notes and controlling the quantity of seeds removed and returned, which will ensure that the bank always has healthy, viable seeds in adequate quantities for everyone.



Photo: WFP Brazil CoE

Update from WFP's Network of Centres of Excellence

WFP Centre of Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil (WFP Brazil CoE)

Togo and Brazil Celebrate 10 Years of Partnership

In November, representatives from the Governments of Brazil and Togo, along with WFP offices in both countries, convened virtually to celebrate nearly 10 years of partnership in school meals and plan the next steps for future cooperation.

The delegation included Togo's Minister of Grassroots Development, the Brazilian ambassador to the country and the deputy director of ABC.

During the meeting, the participants reflected on the progress achieved in recent years and identified challenges encountered during the scale-up phase.

In recent years, with support from Brazil and WFP Brazil CoE, the WFP Togo CO has been collaborating with the Togolese Government to strengthen the school feeding programme.

Angola Visits Brazil to Learn about Monitoring Mechanisms for School Feeding Programmes

In December, the Ministry of Education of Angola participated in technical activities and field visits held in Brasília and Goiânia.

Throughout the visit, the delegation actively engaged with representatives from the Ministries of Social Development, Foreign Affairs and Education, Federal Public Defenders Office, Comptroller General and the Federal Court of Auditors of Brazil.

The primary focus of the visit was to gain insights from Brazil's robust monitoring, evaluation, and accountability mechanisms within the National School Feeding Programme (PNAE) framework.

Particularly, the delegation actively sought to understand Brazil's successful integration of purchasing mechanisms for family farming, a crucial component of sustainable school feeding programmes.

This collaboration has resulted in the development of an integrated model, based on local production.

In 2024, the two countries are planning a technical mission to deepen knowledge exchanges between the two countries in specific areas related to HGSF.

Togo aims to increase the supply of school meals by 35% by 2025, reaching 300,000 beneficiaries.

In the new phase, Togo seeks solutions to challenges such as resource mobilization to expand the programme, structuring operational and financial aspects of HGSF, and enhancing training, monitoring and logistics mechanisms.

The visit provided technical presentations offering multifaceted perspectives on the multisectoral implementation of the PNAE.

The visit is also a part of the partnership activities planned between Brazil CoE, FNDE and ABC.

This learning exchange will be useful for the Angolan government to improve aspects of their school feeding programme, specifically in monitoring and evaluation and multisectoral implementation.

This partnership will continue with the redesign of parts of the Angolan national school feeding programme as the Angolan Ministry of Education defines the areas of intervention.



Photo: WFP/Ana Mascarenhas

Update from WFP's Network of Centres of Excellence

WFP Regional Centre of Excellence Based in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire (CERFAM)

CERFAM Conducted an Evaluation Mission to Enhance the Rice Value Chain in Côte d'Ivoire

In December, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Côte d'Ivoire in partnership with CERFAM and WFP Côte d'Ivoire CO conducted an evaluation mission to enhance the rice value chain in the northern region of Côte d'Ivoire.

The mission, part of the rice value chain development project in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, was spearheaded by CERFAM and supported by WFP China CoE, alongside the WFP COs Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The mission aimed to capture best practices and challenges faced in rice cultivation, reflecting on SSTC's potential to catalyze agricultural development.

Participants conducted a comprehensive post-harvest assessment at key rice production sites engaging directly with local women's producer groups and stakeholders, including the National Agency for Rural Development Support.

Despite challenges such as climate change impacts and mechanization gaps, the project yielded significant results - an increase in rice production to 51.07 tons across 20.42 hectares with an average yield of 2.5 tons per hectare.

This is a significant achievement compared with 32.494 tons produced in 2022 on an area of 23 hectares, with a yield of 1.412 per hectare.

Looking forward, the project aims to further strengthen the SSTC framework through:

- Introducing innovative agricultural equipment to communities;
- Launching a steel mini-silo manufacturing unit in Côte d'Ivoire to mitigate post-harvest losses;
- Hosting workshops in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea to disseminate knowledge and lessons learned;
- Conducting a study visit to China to explore advanced agricultural technologies and practices.

CERFAM is preparing to disseminate the mission's findings highlighting the rice value chain project alignment with the broader objectives.

It supports achieving food security and empowering smallholder farmers in the region, showcasing the transformative potential of SSTC.



Photo: WFP/CERFAM

Regional Outlook: Latin America and the Caribbean

Strengthening Shock-Responsive Social Protection Through Mozambique - Dominican Republic Collaboration

In November, Mozambique visited the Dominican Republic for an intra-regional SSTC exchange facilitated by WFP, marking a milestone collaboration for the respective COs and national counterparts.

The Mozambican delegation was comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Action (MGCAS), the National Institute of Social Action (INAS-IP) and the National Institute of Disaster Management (INGD).

In the Dominican Republic, key institutions such as the Single System of Beneficiaries (SIUBEN), the Supérata Social Protection Programme, the Administrator of Social Subsidies (ADESS) and the National Emergency Commission participated.

As both countries share high exposure to extreme climate hazards, the exchange focused on sharing experiences on shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) and anticipatory action (AA), including policies, system architectures and programme features.



Photo: WFP / Luca Ventura

China Shares Expertise in E-Commerce Via SSTC Webinars with Bolivia

In December, WFP Bolivia CO, in collaboration with MARA, conducted a series of webinar training sessions to support indigenous Guaraní handicraft women workers in the communities of the Guaraní indigenous territory in Bolivia, affected by COVID-19.

The initiative, part of the SSTC Pilot Project, aimed to enhance the productive capacity and market access of Guaraní artisans, generating sustainable income and improving food security.

The initiative included two training sessions held during field visits.

An expert in e-commerce and rural e-commerce from the Administration and Management Institute (AMI) of MARA facilitated the sessions, providing insights into China's e-commerce developmental experience.

The training focused on enhancing the management and operational skills of handicraft women workers in rural e-commerce, leveraging digital platforms to expand market reach.

Mozambique recognized the importance of strengthening inter-institutional coordination, data sharing arrangements and system interoperability between social protection and disaster risk management actors.

This can support timely and effective disaster response.

They also expressed interest in learning about climate vulnerability indexes used in the Dominican Republic for beneficiary selection in SRSP programmes.

Moving forward, Mozambique plans to develop a joint workplan with key actions, organize a workshop to build on the experience and disseminate a case study.

Meanwhile, the Dominican Republic authorities and WFP aim to secure funding for a potential visit to Mozambique to further exchange insights on drought-related AA.



Photo: WFP / Bolivia CO

Regional Outlook: Africa and Middle East

Senegal and Mauritania Enhance Social Protection Systems Through a Learning Exchange

In November 2023, Senegal's National Social Protection and National Solidarity General Delegation (Délégation Générale de la Protection Sociale et à la Solidarité Nationale) in collaboration with WFP Mauritania CO organized a learning exchange with Mauritania.

Representatives of the Ministries of Economy and Sustainable Development, Social Affairs, Child and Family, the Food Security Commission, Taazour and the Ministry of Finance of Mauritania joined the exchange.

They sought to learn about Senegal's experience in social protection namely, coordination and governance, responsiveness to shocks and productive measures.

The exchange identified innovative practices benefiting both countries, including:

- Best practices in coordination and governance of social protection focusing on the collaboration between ministries working on social protection and resilience;
- Decentralized coordination within the social protection systems;

- Implementation details of Equality of Opportunity Cards (Cartes d'Egalité de Chance) issued to beneficiaries of the flagship social protection programme (Regular Takavoul) to enhance the effective management of Temwine (subsidized commodity) shops;
- Social cash transfers to support Income Generating Activities (IGAs) and bolster the productive capacities of communities. This includes initiatives such as providing inputs and agricultural materials targeted to agropastoral areas.

The exchange informed the revision of Mauritania's National Social Protection Strategy and its associated programmes.

Lessons learned will help further refine the coordination of the current NSPS and support the development of a multi-sectoral approach to resilience in Mauritania.

Senegal also gained details of Mauritania's experience in strategy development and implementation.

The two countries anticipate future exchanges to further strengthen this fruitful collaboration.

Training Initiative in the Democratic Republic of Congo to Empower Smallholder Farmers and Women Groups

In December, the Ministries of Agriculture and Education of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the national network of rural women associations (RENAFER) with WFP's support, organized a training session for smallholder farmers' organizations and women groups in Ignye village.

The primary objective was to enhance the technical, financial and market capacities of these groups to improve production, agricultural yields, income and overall living conditions.

During the training, participant learned about:

- Modern agricultural techniques aimed at increasing yields and reducing post-harvest losses;
- The cassava value chain and the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion (SHEP) approaches focusing on food processing to supply school canteens;
- Culinary recipes using cassava harvests from community fields for school canteens, and strengthened their capacities in life skills, hygiene and culinary art through demonstrations and tasting sessions.

Officials from the Ministry of Agriculture presented the modules on agricultural themes, and RENAFER trained women on culinary recipes and techniques.

Approximately 50 people participated in the trainings held on cassava-based cooking, life skills, hygiene and sanitation.

The trainings were held in Ignye primary school and will benefit 230 school children.

Moving forward, the DRC's Government looks to share this initiative with Benin as a part of the planned SSTC mission and in the framework of the [2023 SSTC Innovation Challenge](#) phase II.

The mission looks to exchange experiences and document best practices on cassava processing and cassava-based recipes linked to school feeding.

Benin was chosen for this exchange as it has been developing a school feeding programme based on cassava with strong community involvement and the support of the Ministries of Education, Agriculture and local NGOs.



Photo: WFP/ Charly Kasereka

Regional Outlook: Africa and Middle East

Niger Seeks to Optimize its Social Registry Based on Mauritania's Experience

From January 29 to February 3, Niger organized a learning exchange with Mauritania, supported and joined by the World Bank (WB) and WFP.

Three representatives of Niger's Dispositif National de Prévention et Gestion des Crises Alimentaires (DNPGCA) participated in the exchange aimed at gaining insights to the social registry in Mauritania.

During the visit, participants engaged in exchanges on the social registry's operational and institutional framework and coordination mechanisms.

Training Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

In November, Rwanda's Ministry of Emergency Management (MINEMA) and WFP Rwanda CO conducted a three-day training workshop on DRR and management with support from WFP China CoE.

The workshop aimed to improve Rwandan officers' ability to respond to emergencies and mitigate the impact of disasters.

29 Rwandan Government representatives, Chinese Government representatives and WFP staff joined the event.

During the workshop, experts from China's Ministry of Emergency Management, and the National Centre for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation joined online.

They shared China's experience on integrated monitoring and early warning systems for natural disasters and climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Regional Technical Consultation on Urban Preparedness in Southern Africa

In November, RBJ organized a Regional Technical Consultation on Urban Preparedness in Southern Africa.

The consultation aimed to discuss the results and lessons learned of Phase I of WFP's Regional Urban Preparedness Project and identify potential objectives for phase II of the project.

20 representatives including Southern Africa Development Community Secretariat, UN-Habitat, World Vision International NGO, CiMA Foundation and national and local level member states, participated in the event.

The project "[Fostering Community Resilience through Preparedness Activities in Southern Africa](#)" is funded by the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO).

It was implemented by WFP from August 2021 to February 2024 in Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, and focused its activities in urban areas.

Practical simulations of registry utilization and visits to registry facilities enriched the learning experience.

This initiative fostered cross-border knowledge exchange, allowing Niger to gain firsthand insights into social registries good practices in the region.

Looking ahead, the participants will reflect on the visit to identify key takeaways applicable to the Nigerien context with the aim to refine and optimize social registry systems in Niger based on Mauritania's experience.

The training workshop provided MINEMA officials with technical expertise to enhance Rwanda's climate resilience and disaster management capabilities.

Moving forward, WFP China CoE will further strengthen knowledge exchanges on DRR and climate change resilience.



Photo: WFP/ Rwanda CO

Among the key takeaways, SSTC was identified as a valuable means to document lessons learned and facilitate peer learning among countries in the region.

This will support country capacity strengthening at central and local levels as well as promote regional integration and political buy-in.

The project's next phase will include an SSTC component to cater for this demand put forward from the workshop participants.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) represented by the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Unit was identified as a key partner to facilitate intra-regional peer learning at policy and technical levels.

Leveraging its technical expertise, deep field presence and experience in facilitating SSTC initiatives, WFP will play a key role in supporting national actors as well as regional stakeholders, such as SADC in further improving and harmonising vulnerability concepts and methodologies.

Regional Outlook: Asia and the Pacific

India and Ghana Strengthen Capacities for Effective Disaster Management

In November, Ghanaian Government agencies and Civil Society Organizations and led by the Deputy Minister of Communications and Digitalization participated in a knowledge exchange with India hosted by WFP India CO.

The visit aimed to facilitate the knowledge exchange between the two countries and to strengthen national capacities on disaster management and optimize operational technology and efficiencies.

Partnering with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) of India, the WFP India CO coordinated engagement with numerous government entities.

These included NDMA, Central Water Commission, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation (CWC), Indian Metrological Organisation, Ministry of Earth Sciences (IMD) and Indian Institute of Technology-New Delhi (IIT-DELHI).

During their visit, the delegation witnessed the implementation of India's disaster risk management systems and mechanisms, including data management, emergency operations networks, early warning systems and more.

This provided the delegation with insight on affordable and advanced knowledge and technological innovations developed by India.

Some of the key takeaways included the need to leverage technology, informed decision making, effective communication and collaboration among key stakeholders.

Following the visit, WFP Ghana CO presented a report to the Minister of Interior, emphasizing the importance of public awareness, technological readiness and communication strategies for effective disaster mitigation.

Currently, Ghana is exploring concrete collaborations with relevant agencies in India, including the possibility of signing a MoU with India to further enhance disaster management capacities.

See more details [here](#).

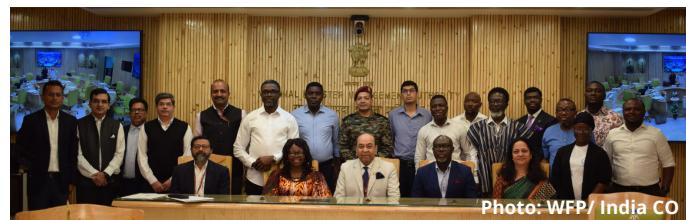


Photo: WFP/ India CO

Leveraging China's Experience to Reduce Maize Post-Harvest Losses in Sri Lanka

In December, Sri Lanka hosted a delegation from the Academy of National Food and Strategic Reserves Administration of China and Henan University of Technology with the support of the China CoE.

The visit, part of the [WFP-MARA SSTC Field Pilot Initiative in Sri Lanka](#) funded by MARA, aimed to provide training and technical support to help local smallholders reduce maize post-harvest losses.

The Sri Lanka project focuses on rice and maize value chains, to improve post-harvest management.

Under the project, Chinese experts provide technical support and training and share experience on China's successful rice and maize post-harvest management policies, strategies and technologies and social protection services targeting smallholders.

During the visit, the Chinese delegation provided a hybrid workshop including:

- Insights on China's experience and practice in maize post-harvest management and grain storage, including the development of state-owned grain depots, household grain storage and smart grain storage.
- Characteristics and hazards of aflatoxin flavus, preventive measures and control strategies, along with testing instruments for aflatoxin.
- Targeted solutions for post-harvest management and aflatoxin control in maize for Sri Lanka.

Over 30 representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Post Harvest Management, Farm Mechanization Research Centre (FMRC) participated in the training.

As well as Industrial Training Institute, National Engineering, Research and Development, Rice Research and Development Institute (RRDI), Field Crops Research and Development Institute and Industrial Technology Institute.

The training sessions enhanced local capacity in maize post-harvest management and aflatoxin control, marking a significant milestone in the development of the local maize value chain.

Participants expressed enthusiasm for further cooperation with China to implement these strategies improving local agricultural productivity and food security for smallholder farmers in Sri Lanka.



Photo: WFP/ Sri Lanka CO

Regional Outlook: Asia and the Pacific

Tajikistan and the Philippines Enhance Food Fortification Through a Knowledge Exchange

In December, Tajikistan organized a study tour to the Philippines, jointly with WFP, aimed at exchanging knowledge on successful food fortification models.

During the visit, the Tajikistan delegation engaged with key Philippine Government agencies to explore the integration of nutrition-sensitive activities in agriculture programmes and policies.

Discussions centred on the implementation of the rice fortification programme, addressing challenges and sharing good practices to enhance the supply and demand for iron-fortified rice.

The delegation also visited a government laboratory to gain insights into regulatory oversight on rice fortification implementation and quality control standards for fortified food products.

At the NutriDense facility, they learned about the processes and investments required for operating equipment for the extrusion and blending of fortified rice.

Discussions with an agricultural cooperative provided valuable insights into farming practices and government subsidies.

The knowledge exchange concluded with discussions on utilizing iron-fortified rice for school-based feeding programmes and the family food packs that the government distributes during emergencies.¹

Moving forward, the Tajikistan delegation aims to develop a roadmap to strengthen regulations for implementing the food fortification law and integrate fortification into Tajikistan's scaling-up nutrition programme.

WFP will continue collaborating with government partners in the Philippines to amend national guidelines and finalize a strategic plan for large-scale rice fortification.



Photo: WFP/Kristine Jane

¹ Each family food pack consists of 6 kg of rice, 4 cans of tuna, 4 cans of corned beef, 2 cans of sardines, 5 sachets of coffee, and 5 sachets of choco malt drink.

To submit an article to the SSTC global team for the next edition of the SSTC Quarterly Newsletter, please contact: sstc.global@wfp.org (MPC, SSTC Unit).

To view previous editions, [click here](#).

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