



Application of Satellite Technology to Support Inclusive Implementation of the SDGs

**Side Event at the Commission on Science and Technology for Development's 26th Session
28 March 2023, 13.20 – 14.35 Geneva Time
Geneva and online**

Concept notes

Background

Crop monitoring with earth observation on a massive scale are neither easy nor inexpensive exercises. However, both hold immense potential for better food security planning and progress toward Sustainable Development Goals. Yet, many developing countries do not have access to the required tools due to technology deficits or associated costs.

At the 23rd annual meeting of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), the United Nations focal point for science, technology and innovation for development, the Chinese Academy of Sciences announced the CropWatch Innovative Cooperation Programme, a South-South cooperation project to help bridge this technology gap. This capacity-building initiative, implemented by Aerospace Information Research Institute (AIR/CAS) in partnership with UNCTAD and funded by the Alliance of International Science Organizations (ANSO), began implementation at the beginning of 2021.

Developing countries are offered technical assistance to access the AIR's earth observation-based system for crop monitoring and early food security warning. It will help developing countries monitor their crops on their own in real- and near-time, provide an infrastructure platform to synthesize those data to allow better food security planning, and enable customization to meet the specific needs of countries and regions.

The ICP-Cropwatch programme responds to the call in ECOSOC Resolution 2020/13 on "Science, technology and innovation for development" for increased South-South cooperation through technical assistance, capacity-building, and technology transfer. It also strengthens the ECOSOC recommendation after reviewing its subsidiary bodies, including the CSTD, to continue aligning their work with the 2030 Agenda, particularly Goal 2: Zero Hunger.

Under this background, UNCTAD, ANSO, and AIR-CAS is organizing a side-event to showcase the Cropwatch-ICP programme during the 26th annual session of CSTD and identify potential countries that may be interested in participating in this programme.

Objective

In line with the CSTD's aim of promoting experience sharing and policy dialogue about emerging technologies as enablers of the 2030 Agenda, this side event will present the CropWatch programme to CSTD member states to demonstrate the potential of satellite technology in the agricultural domain and for the achievement of SDG 2. This session will provide detailed information about the experiences and best practices from the CropWatch program for developing countries seeking to access satellite technology for crop monitoring and food security purposes.

It will also discuss the takeaways for multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnerships, especially in relation to technology transfer, South-South cooperation, and capacity-building.

Format of the session

The panel will begin with opening remarks by senior official from UNCTAD and ANSO, followed by introduction of the CropWatch Innovative Cooperation Programme and its progress. Then experts from developing countries that benefitted from the programme will share their experiences in using the Cropwarch (3-5 minutes). After this, the moderator will initiate an interactive discussion among the participants.

Light lunch and coffee will be provided for the participants, prior to the side event.

Programme

Moderator: Mr. Angel Gonzalez-Sanz, Head, Technology, Innovation and Knowledge Development Branch, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD

13:20 – 13:24 **Opening remarks**

- Ms. Shamika Sirimanne, Head, the CSTD Secretariat / Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD
- Professor Jinghua Cao, Executive Director, Alliance of International Science Organizations.

13:24 – 13:40 **CropWatch: what it is and how the programme is going?**

- Prof. Bingfang Wu, Professor, Aerospace Information Research Institute, Chinese Academy of Sciences
- Prof. Hongwei Zeng, Associate Professor, Aerospace Information Research Institute, Chinese Academy of Science

13:40 – 14:15 **Country case experience**

- Ms. Rakiya Baba Maaji, Assistant Director, National Space Research and Development Agency, Nigeria
- Mr. Djamel Mansour, Engineer, Algerian Space Agency, Algeria
- Ms. Reham Khozam, Engineer, Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, Syria
- Ms. Arty Gungoosingh Bunwaree, Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute, Mauritius
- Ms. Jatuporn Nontasiri, Statistician Senior Professional, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Thailand
- Dr. Jose Bofana, Researcher, Catholic University of Mozambique, Mozambique
- Dr. Abdelrazek Elnashar, Lecturer, University of Cairo, Egypt

14:15 – 14:30 **Questions and answers**

14:30 – 14:35 **Closing remarks by Moderator**