



Opening remarks

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Meeting:	National Workshop Fostering Integration of the Dried Fruits Value Chain of Uzbekistan into Regional and Global Value Chains Online – via Zoom (with simultaneous interpretation)
Date:	4 February 2021
Time:	10:00 – Geneva time

Excellencies, Distinguished Panellists, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- I would like to welcome you all to this workshop that is organised under the UNCTAD project: “*Integrating Landlocked Commodity Dependent Developing Countries into Regional and Global Value Chains*”. The project is funded by “the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund, of the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund.
- This project has been implemented in four land-locked commodity-dependent economies, which are Ethiopia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, and Mongolia in addition to Uzbekistan.
- The project aims to help these countries develop their strategies for better integrating into regional and global value chains.
- A different country selected a different value chain. For Uzbekistan, it is dried fruits. For Ethiopia, it is roasted coffee, for Lao PDR it is maize, and for Mongolia it is meat.
- In the workshop today, we will present you a study titled “Uzbek Dried Fruit Exports: Prospects, Problems and Potential”.

- The study carried out the following three tasks:
- **The first task** was to conduct an overseas market analysis of Uzbek dried fruits. Among dried fruits, a special focus was given to dried grapes, prunes, and dried apricots, which together constituted 91 per cent of Uzbekistan's dried fruit exports in 2019 that collected USD 145 million. Dried grapes alone received massive USD 100 million.
- **The second task** was to conduct a field survey in five fruit-producing provinces in Uzbekistan, namely Andijan, Fergana, Namangan, Samarkand, and Tashkent.
 - The survey, which was organised in April and May 2020, collected data from 103 fruit producers and 48 fruit buyers to study the relationship between quality of dried fruit and value chain characteristics.
- **The third task** was to discuss the increasing importance for exporters of dried fruits of complying to mandatory as well as commercial quality standards that apply in different overseas markets.
- There are several key takeaways from the study.
- **One takeaway** is about the country's need to diversify its markets.
 - Exports of dried fruits have been growing fast in recent years, increasing by 47% between 2017 and 2019. But the exports remain largely concentrated in a few markets, notably the Russian Federation, China, and transit countries like Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.
 - Exports to markets like the European Union and Japan, which can receive higher prices, and exports to high-growth markets like India, have been lagging.

- **Another takeaway** is the need to improve technical and institutional capacity for quality management along the whole dried fruit value chain.
 - For example, 81 per cent of surveyed farmers do not have any form of quality certification. None of the surveyed farmers had organic certification which is now increasingly demanded in high-price markets. High-price markets also require high quality standards, including commercial standards such as Good Agricultural Practice or GAP, or sustainability standards such as Fair Trade.
 - In terms of drying techniques which is important for quality, direct sun drying was used by a significant number of farmers. Cold storage is also very rare.
- The workshop today will address these issues in more detail. It will also discuss several possible directions for policy intervention to tackle these issues.
- I hope that the discussion today will contribute to the ongoing policy efforts of the Government of Uzbekistan to foster successful integration of Uzbek dried fruits into regional and global value chains.
- I would also like to reiterate that this workshop is part of the diverse support activities of the United Nations in Uzbekistan, which are coordinated by our colleagues of the Resident Coordinator's office, who are with us today.
- Towards the completion of this project, UNCTAD will continue to collaborate closely with the authorities of the Republic of Uzbekistan, with the UN Resident Coordinator's office, and with other developing partners such as the World Bank, and FAO who have ongoing research, policy dialogue and technical assistance projects in the country.
- I would like to conclude by thanking all of you who are present today to participate in this workshop.

- I wish you a constructive discussion.

Thank you very much.

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