

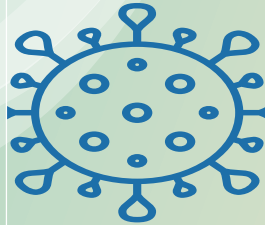


# Regional Overview of COVID-19 Impact and Building Back Better through Sustainable Mechanization

---

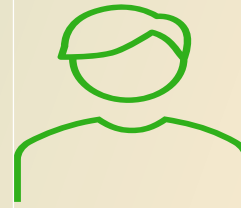
Mr. Anshuman VARMA  
Programme Officer & Deputy Head  
ESCAP-CSAM

# OUTLINE



**Impact of the  
pandemic on  
agriculture**

**Role of sustainable  
agricultural  
mechanization**

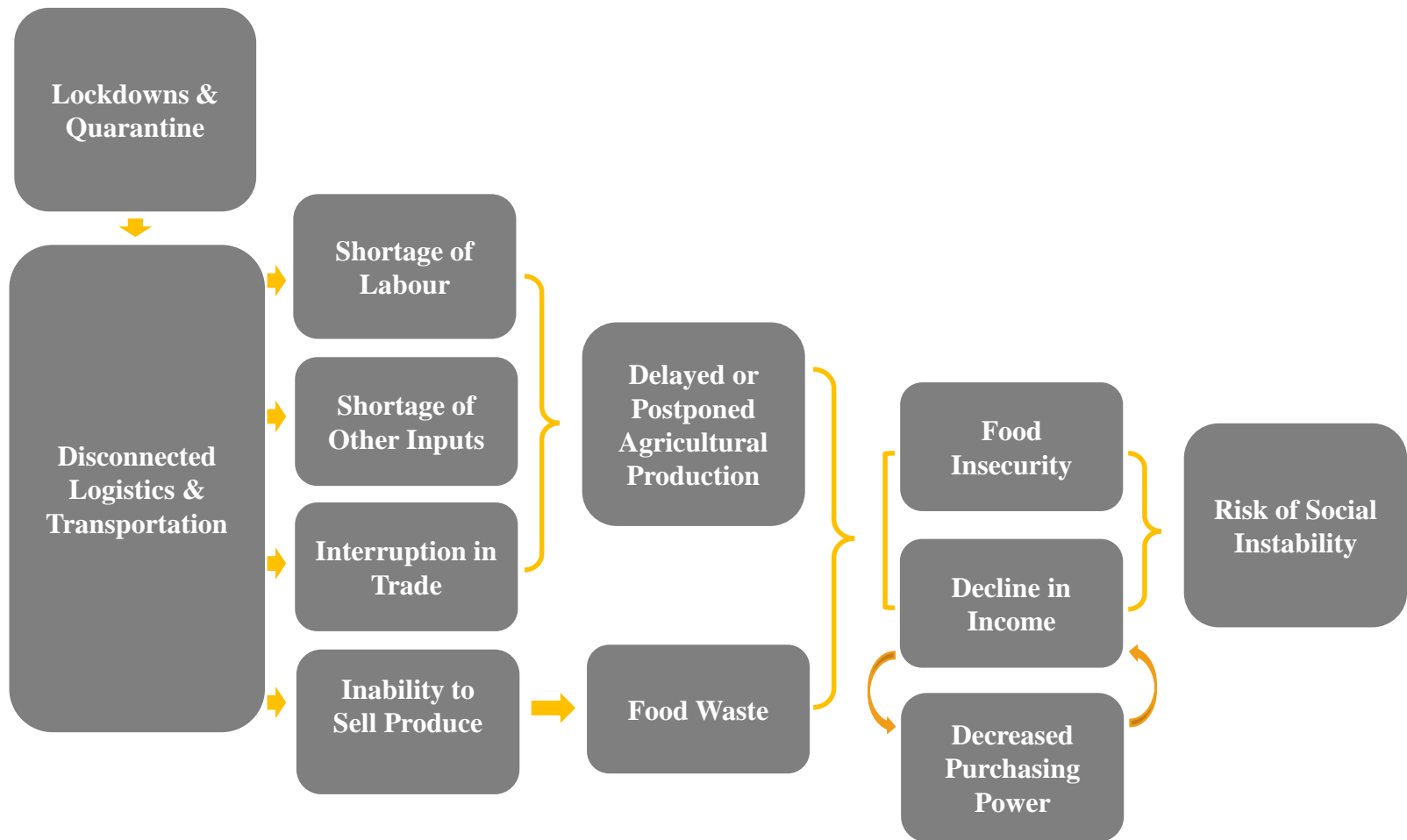


**Recommendations  
for the region**

# Covid-19 pandemic

- Brought unprecedented challenges in the agricultural sector in the Asia-Pacific region
- Threatens to stagnate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, reverse gains made in recent years
- Between 83 and 132 million people may be added to the ranks of the undernourished globally in 2020 due to the pandemic –
  - Serious concern for AP region which has majority of the world's undernourished

# Impact of the pandemic on agriculture







# Examples of positive government interventions

---

- Exempting farmers and stockbreeders from movement restrictions
- Facilitating transportation of agricultural produce
- Creating ‘green channels’ for smoother delivery of raw materials and produce, food imports
- Dedicated aid programmes for several industries including agriculture

# Role of sustainable agricultural mechanization in supporting recovery and building resilience

---



- **Improve operations for production**
  - Greater speed of operations
  - Increase yield and output
  - Reduce production costs
  - Increase cropping intensity
- **ICT-enabled (digital) technologies**

# Role of sustainable agricultural mechanization in supporting recovery and building resilience

---

- **Address shortage of manpower & support social distancing measures**
  - Eg. rice transplanters and combine harvesters, seed cleaners and graders, efficient sprayers
- **Improve efficiency of storage and processing including for perishables**
  - Reduce loss
  - Empower farmers to better decide time and price of sale
- **Promote conservation agriculture for enhancing resilience of smallholders**





# Role of sustainable agricultural mechanization in supporting recovery and building resilience

---



- **Mechanization solutions for livestock farms to prevent and control zoonotic diseases**
  - More reliable elimination of pathogens
  - Block transmission routes
  - Enhance biosafety
- **Retain returning migrant workers & youth in agriculture**
  - Reduce drudgery
  - Entrepreneurship and increased income





# Recommended priorities for region to ‘Build Back Better’ through sustainable mechanization

---

- **Address needs of vulnerable communities**
  - Smallholder farmers, migrant workers, women and elderly farmers, hilly and remote areas
  - Provide fiscal incentives, support service providers and custom hiring
- **Strengthen rural infrastructure**
  - Storage, preserving and processing, transportation and logistics, marketing

A group of men in a meeting, with one man in the foreground speaking into a microphone. The man is wearing a blue and white striped shirt and a grey jacket. He is holding a white microphone with an orange band. There are several water bottles on the table in front of him. The background shows other men in a meeting setting.

# Recommended priorities for region to ‘Build Back Better’ through sustainable mechanization

- **Promote smart mechanization technologies**
  - Big data and artificial intelligence
  - ‘Green’ technologies
- **Promote research and development**
  - Machinery for harvesting of ‘soft crops’
  - Growing off-season crops under controlled environments
  - Promoting safety



## **Recommended priorities for region to ‘Build Back Better’ through sustainable mechanization**

---

- **Encourage role of youth**
- **Deepen private sector engagement and agro-enterprise development**

**Thank you!**