

# Global Coverage and Growing Impact of the FAO OCOP Initiative—Summary of the World Food Forum High-Level Event on Implementation of the FAO OCOP Initiative

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**Abstract:** On October 15, 2025, FAO held World Food Forum High-Level Event on the Implementation of the OCOP (One Country One Priority Product) Initiative at its headquarters in Rome, as part of FAO's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Experts and leaders from across the world shared insights during the event. The objectives and agenda of the high-level event were listed at the summary article. The event was moderated by Dr. Xia for the technical session and Dr. Beth Bechdol for the ministerial segment. Dr. Qu, Director-General of FAO, His Majesty King Letsie III, King of Lesotho delivered the opening remarks. Dr. Yurdi Yasmi Director of the Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP), Deputy Executive Secretary of the OCOP Secretariat made the report of implementation of OCOP Initiative worldwide. The representatives from science, education, market and trade, and famers demonstrated the implementation and ministers and member state representatives from Albania, Algeria, Bangladesh and Mexico provided the progress of the national OCOP initiatives. Mr. Hafiz Muminjanov, Technical Adviser, NSP, OCOP Global Coordinator of the OCOP Secretariat, FAO and Beth Bechdol summarized the high-level event.

**Keywords:** High-Level Event; OCOP; FAO 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary; World Food Forum; global coverage

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## 1 Introduction

On October 15, 2025, FAO held World Food Forum High-Level Event on the Implementation of the OCOP (One Country One Priority Product) Initiative at its headquarters in Rome, as part of FAO's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Experts and leaders from across the world shared insights during the event<sup>[1-4]</sup>.

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**Figure 1** Backboard of the World Food Forum High-Level Event on Implementation of the OCOP (One Country One Priority Product) Initiative

## 2 Objectives and Agenda

### 2.1 Objectives

This high-level event is a milestone for the implementation of OCOP Initiative, with the key objectives on the THREE HOW:

First, get a better understanding of the OCOP's rationale on HOW to address the unprecedented challenges faced in global food and agriculture—MORE demands with LESS supply, by producing MORE with LESS.

Second, get a better recognition of the OCOP's core value on HOW to contribute to the Four Betters (Better Production, Better Nutrition, a Better Environment, and a Better Life).

Third, get a better support to the OCOP's scaling-up worldwide by mobilizing all technical, financial and human resources available through the synergies and integration.

The Technical Session is designed to take stock of the progress we have made globally and, more importantly, to hear directly from our partners who are putting OCOP's vision into action.

The Ministerial Segment will show that the OCOP is more than a technical effort—it is a national led and national owned initiative, how government plays special role will be demonstrated at the Ministerial segment, and how government connects producers with farmers, researchers, the private sector, development partners and policy with practice.

### 2.2 Agenda

The agenda of the high-level event<sup>[5]</sup> is listed at the Table 1.

### 2.3 Messages from the Opening Remarks and High-Level Statement

FAO Director-General QU Dongyu delivered Opening remarks at the event<sup>[6]</sup> (Figure 2). Director-General QU Dongyu, who launched the OCOP Initiative in 2021 stressed the power of collective action and partnerships to accelerate the transformation of global agrifood systems. “The strength of the OCOP Initiative lies in partnerships and collaborations. Governments lead, farmers implement, the private sector brings innovation, academia shares expertise, and development partners offer support”, he said, “Through collective efforts, we can deliver real change—especially for small-scale farmers and rural communities—while advancing the transformation of global agrifood systems”.

**Table 1** Agenda of World Food Forum High-Level Event on the Implementation of OCOP Initiative

Item	Presenter
<b>Technical Session</b>	
Moderator: Xia Jingyuan, Adviser to the FAO Director-General, Executive Secretary of the OCOP Secretariat, FAO	
Progress on OCOP Implementation Worldwide	Yurdi Yasmi, Director of the Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP); Deputy Executive Secretary of the OCOP Secretariat, FAO
Stakeholders' Perspectives on the Implementation of OCOP Initiative (Insights, Engagement, Lessons-learned and Suggestions)	
Perspective of research and academia	Liu Chuang, Chief Scientist, Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research (IGSNRR, CAS); Vice-Chair of OCOP Regional Organization Group in Asia and the Pacific
Perspective of education and extension	Pathmanathan Umaharan, Professor and Director, Cocoa Research Centre of the University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago (Recorded video presentation)
Perspective of marketing and trade	Nguyen Minh Tien, Director of Viet Nam Trade Promotion Centre for Agriculture, Vietnam
Perspective of farmers	Khaled El-Haggan, Date Palm Farm Manager, Egypt
Discussion	All panelists
Summary of the Session	Hafiz Muminjanov, Technical Adviser, NSP; OCOP Global Coordinator of the OCOP Secretariat, FAO
<b>Ministerial Segment</b>	
Moderator: Ms. Beth Bechdol, Deputy Director-General, FAO	
Opening Remarks	Qu Dongyu, Director-General, FAO
High-level Statement	His Majesty King Letsie III, King of Lesotho
Video on OCOP initiative	
Keynote Addresses on Progress, Achievements, Impact and Perspectives of the Implementation of the OCOP Initiative in Countries	
Albania	His Excellency Andis Salla, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development (Recorded video address)
Algeria	His Excellency Yacine El-Mahdi Oualid, Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries
Bangladesh	His Excellency Lt. Gen. Md. Jahangir Alam Chowdhury (Retd.), the Advisor, Ministry of Agriculture
Mexico	Rubén Irvin Rojas Valdés, General Coordinator of Information, Intelligence and Evaluation of the Secretariat of Agriculture
Concluding Remarks	Beth Bechdol, Deputy Director-General, FAO

His Majesty King Letsie III of the Kingdom of Lesotho and FAO Special Goodwill Ambassador for Nutrition stated: special agricultural products, when strategically supported, can drive rural transformation<sup>[7]</sup>. They offer agronomic and cultural advantages and help build resilient, sustainable food systems (Figure 3).

## 2.4 Messages from the Technical Session and Ministerial Segment

The high-level event was consisted of 2 sessions, technical session and ministerial session. Dr. XIA Jingyuan, Special Adviser to the FAO Director-General, and Executive Secretary of the OCOP Secretariat, moderated the technical session (Figure 4), Beth Bechdol, FAO Deputy Director-General, moderated the ministerial session (Figure 5).

In the technical session, Yurdi Yasmi, Director of FAO's Plant Production and Protection Division and Deputy Executive Secretary of the OCOP Secretariat reported the progress of OCOP Initiative worldwide<sup>[8]</sup>. And then, Professor LIU Chuang, Vice-Chair of OCOP Regional Organizing Group for Asia and the Pacific, and Professor at IGSNRR, CAS<sup>[9]</sup>, Pathmanathan Umaharan, Director of the Cocoa Research Centre at the University of the



**Figure 2** Dr. QU Dongyu, FAO Director-General, delivered his speech at the high-level event ©FAO/Giulio Napolitano



**Figure 3** His Majesty King Letsie III of the Kingdom of Lesotho and FAO Special Goodwill Ambassador for Nutrition delivered his speech at the high-level event ©FAO/Giulio Napolitano



**Figure 4** Dr. XIA Jingyuan, Adviser to the FAO Director-General, Executive Secretary of the OCOP Secretariat, FAO moderated the technical session ©FAO/Giulio Napolitano



**Figure 5** Ms. Beth Bechdol, Deputy Director-General, FAO moderated the ministerial segment ©FAO/Giulio Napolitano

West Indies<sup>[10]</sup>, Nguyen Minh Tien, Director of Trade Promotion, Center for Agriculture, Viet Nam (AGRITRADE)<sup>[11]</sup>, and Khaled El-Haggan, date palm producer and Chair of Egypt's Date Palm Committee<sup>[12]</sup>, reported the progress from the stakeholders' perspectives on the implementation of OCOP Initiative (insights, engagement, lessons-learned and suggestions) based on science and innovation, education, trade and market and farmers separately (Figure 6).



**Figure 6** Panelists of the technical session of the high-level event ©FAO/Giulio Napolitano

In the ministerial segment, Andis Salla, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development of Albania<sup>[13]</sup>, Yacine El-Mahdi Oualid, Algeria's Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries<sup>[14]</sup>, Md. Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, the advisor, Ministry of Agriculture of Bangladesh<sup>[15]</sup>, Rubén Irvin Rojas Valdés, General Coordinator at the Secretariat of Agriculture of Mexico<sup>[16]</sup> participated the panel discussions (Figure 7).



**Figure 7** Panelists of the ministerial session of the high-level event ©FAO/Giulio Napolitano

### 3 Achievement and Way Forward

Hafiz Muminjanov, Technical Adviser and OCOP Global Coordinator at FAO summarized the technical session (Figure 8). He indicated that the researchers and academia emphasized the critical role of science, technology, and innovation in building sustainable and resilient value chains. Education and extension services stressed the importance of capacity development and knowledge transfer, particularly to farmers, youth, and women. Marketing and trade experts called for stronger market linkages, an enhanced competitiveness of specialty agricultural products. Farmers reminded us that OCOP must remain grounded in the realities of rural communities aiming to improve livelihoods and foster residents.

He said that since its launch in 2021 OCOP has engaged 95 member nations, prioritized 56 special agriculture products, and identified 18 demonstration countries across all regions. These efforts have yielded tangible results in sustainable value chain practices and increased awareness of OCOP's contribution to FAO's vision. Vision on Better Production, Better Nutrition, a Better Environment, a Better Life, leaving no one behind. We also noted the growing synergy between OCOP and other FAO flagship initiatives such as Hand in Hand, Thousand Digital Villages, Green Cities, as well as South-South and Triangular Cooperation Program to scale up successful models. Looking ahead, the next phase of OCOP require first of all deepening country level demonstration and scaling up efforts. We have to mobilize more resources and forge new partnerships. We enhance, we should enhance communication and knowledge sharing, and above all, we have to ensure that farmers and rural communities remain at the heart of the OCOP Initiative.

The high-level event has reaffirmed that OCOP is a collective journey by integrating science education, market development, and farmers-centered approaches, we are shaping agrifood systems that are more inclusive, resilient and sustainable. Let's carry forward this spirit of collaboration and shared purpose as we move into the ministerial session.

At the closure of the technical session, Dr. XIA Jingyuan highlighted the core value of the OCOP Initiative: produce MORE with LESS for the BETTERS. Here are five More (productivity, biodiversity, safety, profitability, and sustainability); four Less (biodiversity losses, agrichemical inputs, environment pollution, and corban emission); and four Betters (production, nutrition, environment, and life).

He added that the roadmap to realize the core is by optimizing all positive aspects of the agro-production



**Figure 8** Mr. Hafiz Muminjanov, Technical Adviser, NSP; OCOP Global Coordinator of the OCOP Secretariat, FAO summarized the technical session ©FAO/Giulio Napolitano

systems and minimizing all negative aspects of the agro-production systems so to maximize the integrated benefits of economy, social and environment.

He further pointed out the OCOP have experienced from global initiative to global action, to global programme, and toward global movement, representing the future direction of global food and agriculture.

In the closure of the ministerial segment, DDG Beth Bechdol extend her sincere appreciation to each one of participates for their active participation and valuable contributions to this important high-level event. Following is her closing remarks:

“I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to each one of you for your active participation and valuable contributions to this important high-level event. Your diverse experiences, particularly those at the country level, have demonstrated the strong momentum and immense potential of the OCOP Initiative. We now have a clear path forward for supporting all 95 countries, enhancing internal synergies, strengthening external collaboration, and mobilizing additional resources. This event has shown that the OCOP is more than a technical effort—it is a catalyst for meaningful change. It connects producers with markets, traditions with innovation, and policy with practice. Most importantly, the OCOP unites stakeholders—governments, farmers, researchers, the private sector, and development partners—around a shared vision built on trust, national ownership, and global collaboration.

I am proud to witness today that we stand together to transform our agrifood systems through the OCOP Initiative by producing MORE with LESS—for the BETTERS. While challenges remain—climate risks, market barriers, financing gaps—you have demonstrated practical, locally driven solutions and pragmatic actions that show the OCOP is not only scalable—but also adaptable, resilient, and inclusive. Allow me to emphasize once again—the global success of the OCOP greatly relies on our close partnership and collaboration at all levels.

Our next step is to focus on effective implementation and long-term impact. This means: investing in priority value chains, strengthening capacities, especially for youth, women, and smallholders, and enhancing partnerships and coordination at global, regional and national levels. FAO remains fully committed to supporting you—with technical guidance, capacity development, and platforms for shared learning and action.

Let us leave this event with renewed determination to turn ideas into action and ambition into results—product by product, community by community, and country by country. I encourage you to align the OCOP with broader national and global goals—such as climate resilience, nutrition-sensitive value chains, digital transformation, and rural revitalization. Together, we can build agrifood systems that are more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable—for today and for the future generations. We count on the strong support of all of you, esteemed members, partners and donors, to make this initiative a greater success.

Thank you once again for your engagement, leadership, and continued support. The OCOP Secretariat at FAO headquarters stands ready to support field-level implementation and help ensure the initiative achieves its objective. Let us move forward—together—for a better future.” See Figure 9 for the group photo of the conference.



**Figure 9** Group photo of the speakers and panelists from technical and ministerial sessions ©FAO/Giulio Napolitano

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