**FAO strengthens agricultural resilience in Tajikistan through Integrated Pest Management training**

On 23 January 2025 the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concluded a three-day Integrated Pest Management (IPM) training under the “Strengthening Resilience of the Agriculture Sector” project. IPM is a critical strategy for promoting sustainable agriculture and enhancing the resilience of farming systems. Recognized worldwide as an effective strategy for maintaining healthy crops, IPM integrates a range of biological, cultural, mechanical, and chemical methods, prioritizing natural mechanisms to mitigate pest damage while safeguarding the environment and human health. In Tajikistan, where agriculture plays a vital role in the economy, the adoption of IPM practices is imperative for enhancing crop yields, reducing the reliance on harmful chemical pesticides, and ensuring long-term food security.

The training, held in the capital Dushanbe, consisted of a series of presentations covering a broad range of topics crucial to the implementation of IPM strategies. The topics included the key components and principles of IPM, international cases of successful IPM implementation, the IPM system approach, and methods for on-farm IPM implementation. Additionally, the discussions encompassed contemporary trends and advancements in pest management, the role of biocontrol in IPM, and crop-specific IPM practices for cotton, wheat, potatoes, and other major crops.

"By emphasizing eco-friendly strategies, such as biocontrol and crop rotation, IPM assists farmers in more effective pest management while safeguarding soil health and biodiversity. FAO, with the support of national institutions of Tajikistan, is advancing its efforts to implement IPM practices across key agricultural sectors. This will ensure that the country's agriculture remains both productive and sustainable in the face of evolving challenges," said Aghasi Harutyunyan, FAO Representative ad interim in Tajikistan.

Participants included professionals from the State Institution "Plant Protection and Chemicalization" under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Tajikistan and Tajik Agrarian University named after Shirinshoh Shotemur. They had a unique opportunity to deepen their understanding on integrated pest management and how it can be applied within the local agricultural context to achieve more sustainable and environmentally friendly pest control.

"I believe that sustainable agricultural practices are key to ensuring long-term resilience. Through the ‘Strengthening Resilience of the Agriculture Sector’ project, we are empowering farmers in Tajikistan with critical knowledge and skills. The IPM training not only helps reduce the reliance on harmful chemicals but also improves crop yields, enhances environmental health, and strengthens the livelihoods of rural communities," emphasized Zarinai Burkhvalishoh, ‘Strengthening Resilience of the Agriculture Sector’ project coordinator.

“The incorporation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies into local agricultural practices is imperative for cultivating resilient, productive, and sustainable agricultural systems in the future. Through the implementation of such educational initiatives, there is a significant potential for the enhancement of pest management practices, thereby contributing to the establishment of a prosperous agricultural landscape for Tajikistan,” stated Jozsef Kiss, the FAO’s consultant on IPM, who led the training.

Funded by the World Bank and implemented in collaboration with the State Institution “Agriculture Entrepreneurship Development” Project Management Unit, the “Strengthening Resilience of the Agriculture Sector” project plays a pivotal role in equipping Tajikistan’s agricultural community with innovative skills. In doing so, it contributes to the nation’s broader efforts to enhance food security and build climate resilience in the agricultural sector.