



Insights from the *2020* *Global Food Policy Report* for Central Asia

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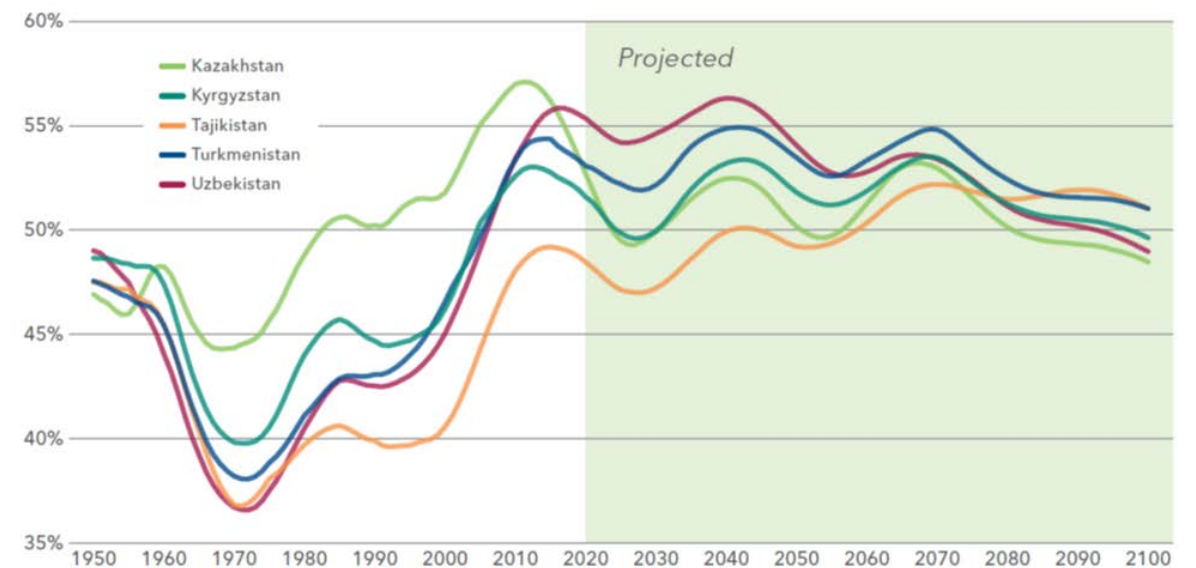
Outline

- Employment, poverty reduction, and inclusive food systems
- Labor migration and remittances
- Risks and challenges amidst of COVID-19 pandemic
- Policy options

Creating employment opportunities for youth & women is essential for inclusive food systems

- Share of working-age people in region has been increasing
 - Youth make up about 25-30% of population
- Unemployment among youth and women is significant
 - In Uzbekistan, 12.8% women and 15% youth are unemployed (2019)
 - In Kyrgyzstan's mountainous regions, 22% of youth and nearly 40% of young women are unemployed

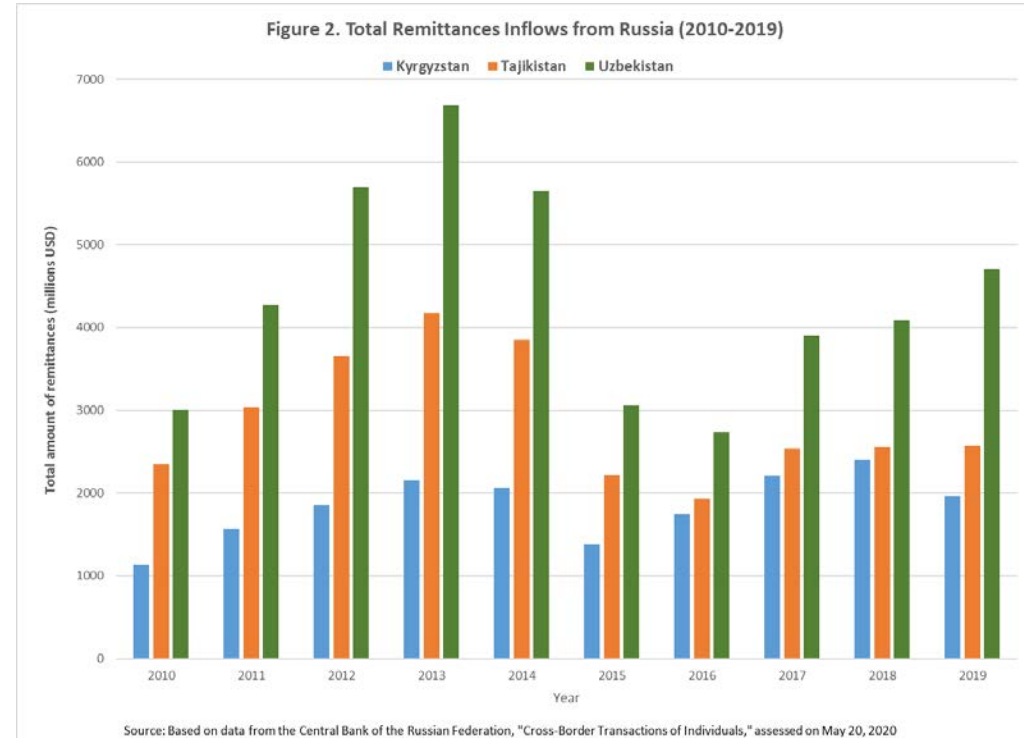
FIGURE 1 Working-age population (20-59 years old) in Central Asian countries, as share of total population



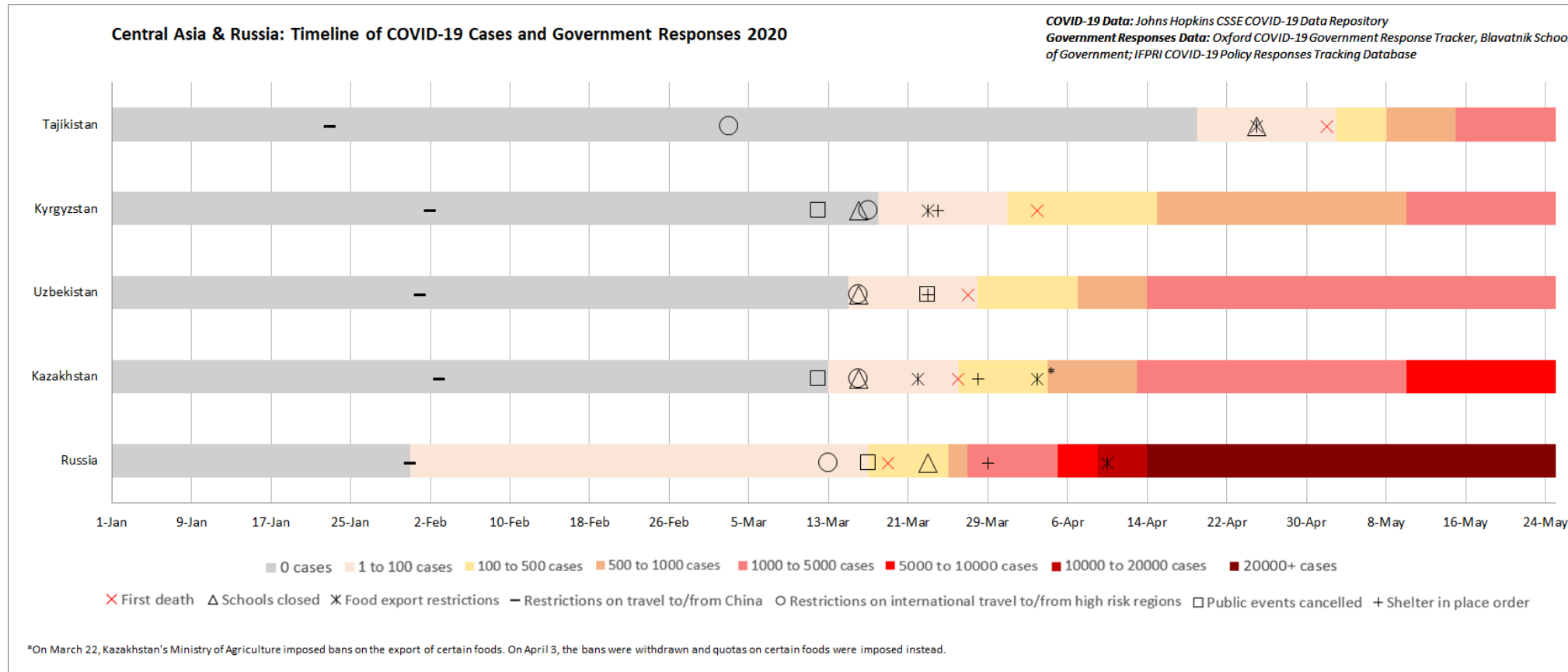
Source: Based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, "World Population Prospects, 2019," accessed January 2, 2020, <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/>.

Migration and remittances play important roles in improving inclusiveness of food systems

- Remittances contribute to economic stability, increased incomes, poverty reduction & food security
- Labor migration has two notable impacts on inclusiveness of CA's food systems
 - Labor remittances improve household welfare and food access
 - Labor migration from CA tends to be predominantly male and rural, leading to “feminization” of agricultural labor



Timeline of COVID-19 and government responses in Central Asia and Russia



What are the risks and challenges for Central Asia?

- Uncertainties about the size, severity and duration of pandemic and related economic downturn
- External vulnerabilities related to health and economic conditions in main trading partners (Russia and China)
- Three key sources of income will drain: remittances, commodity exports, and tourism
- Reduction in demand for region's agri-food exports, disruptions in value chains and domestic food price hikes
- Significant fiscal pressures, inevitable increase in poverty and need for increased social protection
- Vulnerability to commodity price fluctuations, depreciation of national currencies and weak external positions in some countries

So...What are the policy options?

- Short-term
 - Managing pandemic and health risks
 - Improved social protection for vulnerable households and poor
 - Support for agricultural producers and small & medium enterprises, but most countries in the region have limited resources for such support
 - Support from international financial institutions and donors will be crucial
- Medium-term
 - Promoting agricultural diversification and nutrition-sensitive value chains
 - Investment in rural infrastructure and “connectivity”
 - Encouraging institutional, policy and technological innovations
 - Strengthening analytical and policy research capacity
- Need for better data, applied policy research and evidence-based decision making

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