

Philippine Statement
Agenda item 11: Prioritization of Country and Regional Needs
35th FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific
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- The Philippines extends its heartfelt gratitude to the Government and people of Bhutan for hosting and for flexibly organizing this regional conference with FAO, amidst the current volatile global situation.
- Smallholders and family farmers deserve the focus in our discussions, as they produce over 80% of the world's food in value terms¹ and play a vital role in achieving food security and improving nutrition.
- The country's "New Thinking for Agriculture" strategy envisions a "food secure Philippines with prosperous farmers and fisherfolk," and aims to double their incomes. Its mission is to collectively empower these sectors, along with concerned actors, to increase agricultural productivity and profitability, taking into account sustainability and resilience.
- Levelling up the country's agriculture sector is being realized through eight paradigms, namely, modernization, industrialization, export promotion, clustering and consolidation of small-scale farmers and fisherfolk, infrastructure development, higher budget and investment, legislative support, and roadmap development.
- These same elements are embedded in the country's "Plant, Plant, Plant" program to reinforce food security, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing the importance of a robust agricultural sector in the country's economic growth, President Rodrigo Duterte strongly supports such programs aimed at providing adequate, accessible and affordable food for every Filipino.
- We encourage FAO to maintain collaboration with regional groups such as ASEAN in developing approaches that are more effectively implemented on a regional scale, in areas such as policy coherence, agricultural research and statistics, control of transboundary pests and diseases, and promoting innovative digital technologies. Continuous coordination with regional banks and institutions would also broaden the base for possible financing of efforts to achieve the SDG goals.
- We note that FAO's Hand-in-Hand Initiative will support evidence-based, country-led and country-owned actions in the region to accelerate agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development for the eradication of poverty, hunger and all forms of malnutrition.

¹ FAO, 2014. The State of Food and Agriculture: Innovation in Family Farming, FAO, Rome

- Finally, we are grateful to FAO and IFAD for leading the implementation of the UN Decade of Family Farming (UNDIFF) 2019-2028, and to all partners and stakeholders actively advocating for family farmers' welfare and interests and their critical role in achieving the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you.