
The Statement of
H. E. Dr. Kazem Khavazi
the Honorable Minister of Agriculture Jihad
of
the Islamic Republic of Iran

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to express my gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Bhutan for the proper hosting of this virtual meeting. I also express my gratitude to the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). I am so pleased to join the Thirty-fifth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific

Excellencies,

Major global trends, especially climate change, have affected our agricultural and rural activities and made them vulnerable. Among the consequences of climate change and related risks that have engulfed us in recent years, we can refer to soil erosion, desertification, forest and pasture fires, floods, and influx of invasive pests (Desert Locust).

Iran has followed adaptive strategies such as changing the cultivating season, changing cultivars, using new technologies, transferring cultivation from outdoor to indoor, limiting the cultivation of some crops such as rice in some geographical areas, increasing the volume of annually stored water through watershed management operations, soil erosion control, and also increase of forage production. However, tackling these problems requires the use of international and regional scientific capacities. I hope this meeting will take the necessary steps in this direction.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

FAO can play an important role in reducing poverty and increasing food security in member countries. In today's world, the role and potential of international cooperation in preventing climate and social crises cannot be ignored. The FAO member states have fulfilled an important share of their international responsibility in the form of multilateral cooperation. Existence of specialized centers in the organization is an important proof of this claim. Climate change, drought, soil erosion, price fluctuations, wars, hegemonic policies, and covid-19 have fueled insecurity and intensified underdevelopment in parts of the world. By relying on common views, FAO can help thwart expansionist policies and develop people's livelihood.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In its growth and development process, the agricultural sector needs profound changes in the use of production inputs. Initiatives such as using modern and low-cost technologies, taking into account the problem of rural employment, replacing the elderly, illiterate and risk-aversion labor force with skilled one, integrating agricultural production and trade, managing the devastating effects of climate change, preventing mass migration of villagers, and controlling poverty in rural areas are all affected by two key factors: **management** and **investment**. To make all agricultural activities economic, we are required to enhance the productivity in the agriculture sector. The agriculture sector has historically suffered from backwardness in the use of capital. In order to exploit investment capacities in the agriculture sector of the Asia-Pacific region, two approaches inside and outside the region should be highlighted. The source of a large volume of foreign investment flows in the world is related to Asia-Pacific. Therefore, paying special attention to investment in the agriculture sector of the countries in this region can meet a large part of the capital needs of this sector. It seems that through a comprehensive joint planning, the countries of the Asia-Pacific region can provide the necessary bases for attracting foreign capital to their agricultural sector.

Dear colleagues,

Nowadays, farmers are faced with many challenges: challenges on the way to more and better production with fewer resources; producing affordable commodities while creating fewer environmental problems; climate change; and emerging markets are all parts of the challenges of agriculture sector. Digital technologies can help solve these challenges. They can help farmers produce more food and analyze climate patterns and biodiversity. Through digital technologies, we can use sensors to identify the pests. These technologies can be used as soil and plant surveillance tools. We can use digital technologies to enjoy proper management, to reduce the need for pesticides and harmful chemicals, and to make use of the Internet of Things (IOT) to connect all parts of the value chain to each other. New technologies make it possible to track food from the farm to the table. Farmers and managers in the agricultural sector can produce more customized and specific food products based on the growing needs of customers. Satellite systems are designed to increase production efficiency. Monitoring and analysis of agricultural data by sensor systems can be used in irrigation management for crops that consume a lot of water. By using these types of technologies, sustainable agriculture is to be achieved.

Excellencies,

It is my hope that we will be able to respond together to issues that we have in common and achieve our universal objectives. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to organizers of this great

virtual conference.
Thank you for your attention.

Kazem Khavazi
Minister of Agriculture Jihad
Islamic Republic of Iran