

Cambodia Country Statement by

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Ministerial Level Session (10-11 March 2022) of the 36th FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC)

- ***Excellency Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, Honorable Minister of Agriculture of the People's Republic of Bangladesh***
- ***Excellency QU Dongyu, Director-General of FAO***
- ***Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen***

On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), I would like to express my sincere thank to Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for excellent arrangement of this event. I also would like to sincerely thank FAO for excellent partnership and the support to Cambodia and the MAFF. It is a good time to jointly address the global crisis of COVID-19, climate change, food insecurity, and to remove the disruptions of food supply-and-demand chains.

- ***Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen***

Agriculture is recognized as a backbone of our country economic development, contributing to around 24 percent to the national GDP in 2021. It is key to vulnerability and poverty reduction for majority of our rural population.

Allow me to have a few words about the challenges confronting agriculture sector and the solutions and priorities we have adopted and identified.

Our farmers have limited access to quality seed, technologies, financial support, while the cost of agriculture inputs keep increasing, mainly due to the COVID-19.

The agro-processing infrastructure and local capacity is still underdeveloped. We are also facing growing crises including, climate change, extreme weather events, environmental degradation, and more importantly the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has been affecting the economy and the livelihoods of millions of vulnerable population.

Amid COVID-19, agriculture sector in Cambodia remains strong. However, we are still confronting critical issues ahead. The labor force has been leaving the agriculture sector to find new opportunities, notably in urban areas. The decline in agricultural labor emphasizes the need to mechanize agriculture.

- ***Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen***

To meet these challenges, the Royal Government of Cambodia has launched **the COVID-19 Recovery Plan, 2021-2023** for implementation and meet the expectation of economic growth of 3% in 2021 and 5.6% in 2022. Those response and recovery actions include:

1. Enhancing the competitiveness of the agricultural value chains by working closely with FAO and Development Partners (DPs) to boost productivity and profit generation in the value chains of rice, seasonal crops, rubber and other agro-industrial crops, fisheries, and livestock.
2. Promoting more investment in agricultural infrastructures such as irrigation systems, electricity price reduction, and processing facility, and increasing domestic trade through mutually beneficial contract farming and better market information services, and export facilitation efforts.
3. Promoting digitalization and innovation across agri-food systems, which are key to archiving better production system for economic growth and better nutrition for all, while protecting environment, creating more jobs and better livelihoods for our people. Investment in technological innovations and foster adoption of technologies are key. We need to strengthen institutional and technical capacity in geo-spatial technologies, production and dissemination of climate information/advisory services for agriculture, promoting climate-smart agriculture and water saving technologies.
4. Strengthening capacity for measurement, analyse and reporting of greenhouse gas emission from agriculture, forestry, and fisheries and other land use sectors will allow the country to contribute a reduction of their emissions through changes in management practices that can simultaneously improve productivity, reduce hunger and increase the resilience of production systems in the years to come.

We are now faced with the challenges and disruptions that the COVID-19 crisis brought to our country, to the region and to the world. While countries have been hit differently, we can only jointly solve the hardships together for our people, particularly our smallholder farmers and the agribusinesses. Well targeted emergency relief has to go hand-in-hand with coherent support to keep the vital agriculture trade flowing. This crisis has emphasized the need for regional and international cooperation to strengthen our agriculture and food systems.

- ***Excellency Chairman***
- ***Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen***

Once again, I am very positive about the Conference with the excellent partnership and collaboration with FAO and all member countries in the region. I hope this conference will enhance more commitment, stronger international cooperation and we will be united more than ever to fight the COVID-19, hunger, climate change and poverty.

Thank you very much for your attention!