

INTERVENTION BY MR LIM KOK THAI

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REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE AT THE 36TH SESSION OF THE FAO
REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ASIA & THE PACIFIC, 10 MAR 2022**

Agenda Item 11: Prioritization of country and regional needs

Mr Chairperson

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

1 Let me begin by thanking Bangladesh and FAO for making arrangements to facilitate our exchange of views.

2 The interplay of global driving forces such as population growth, climate change, rising urbanization, disease outbreaks and resource scarcity, is heightening food security challenges.

We have also heard from the special event earlier the importance of innovation, science, and digitalization. Indeed, innovation and multi-stakeholder collaboration are key to

transforming food systems to address our region's challenges and realise the goal of having safe food for all.

Safe food for all

3 Given these global trends, we need productive and sustainable food systems, and food safety remains a key component. To this end, it is important to continue to place emphasis on adopting a One Health approach. This includes taking a One Health approach when we address emerging trends such as the rise of novel foods and combating challenges such as antimicrobial resistance.

4 FAO has taken the lead to embark on a review on food safety and regulatory implications of new food sources and food production systems. We encourage FAO to continue giving greater emphasis to these emerging issues by, for example, developing knowledge products on them including policy papers. Capability building and sharing of best practices for food safety should also continue to be FAO's key areas of focus.

Ensuring sustainable food systems

5 Another area that FAO can strengthen its focus on is urban food solutions. As the world's urban population grows, countries will face the challenge of feeding our urban populations efficiently and sustainably. At the same time, climate change threatens traditional agriculture.

6 Given increasing rural-urban migration, one innovative way to strengthen a country's food system is to develop urban food solutions to augment their traditional agricultural sector. These urban food solutions can rely on high tech indoor closed systems, making them highly productive and climate resilient. Urban food solutions can also be useful as they grow food where people live and can provide good employment opportunities. To encourage this, FAO can similarly consider coming up with policy guidance to help governments to take advantage of this approach.

Food supply chain connectivity

7 In addition, we recognise the importance of food trade and minimizing food supply chain disruptions. Beyond the current point-to-point mode of food transport, we see value in exploring innovative ways to increase connectivity between countries, such as augmenting the current point-to-point mode of transport for food with other modalities such as transshipping through trusted third countries. Moving from a just-in-time supply chain model to a just-in-case model through setting up regional distribution centres in trusted third countries can help to increase overall supply chain resilience. In this connection, there may be merit for FAO and bodies to consider studying this further.

Conclusion

8 Given the challenges that face us all, it is important for us to work together towards innovative solutions for sustainable, and resilient food systems. Thank you.

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