

**Statement at the 36th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for
Asia and the Pacific (APRC 36)**

**By Dr. Ma Youxiang, Vice Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs,
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Item 11: Prioritization of Country and Regional Needs

10 March 2022

Honorable Chairperson of the Conference,

Honorable Independent Chairperson of the Council,

Honorable Director-General Qu Dongyu,

Distinguished Ministers and Delegates:

Good afternoon! Constrained by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the world is experiencing uneven economic recovery. Meanwhile, many regions are affected by frequent and severe natural disasters. Under such circumstances, global hunger and poverty have become increasingly pressing issues. FAO under the leadership of Director General Dr. Qu Dongyu has effectively addressed multiple risks and challenges. It has implemented the innovative Hand-in-Hand Initiative made unremitting efforts to build new partnerships and endorsed the strategic framework to promote better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life. Such efforts have resulted in sustained progress in strengthening the resilience of global food and agricultural governance which China deeply admires.

The Chinese Government has prioritized agricultural and rural development with a strong focus on food production. It is firmly committed to ensuring food security and the supply of major agricultural products and preventing people from sinking back into poverty in large numbers. Vigorously pursuing the Rural Revitalization Strategy, China has devoted great energy to promoting agricultural and rural modernization, enhancing overall agricultural production capacity and implementing better rural development initiatives in a bid to promote the extensive upgrading of agricultural industries, the all-round progress of rural areas and well-rounded development of farmers.

The Asia-Pacific Region as the most populous region in the world gathers countries with different resource endowments at different development stages. The region must overcome significant challenges to achieve Zero Hunger. As over 375 million people are facing hunger under the impact of Covid-19, To this end, I would like to make three proposals:

First, we need to prioritize agricultural development and strive to eradicate poverty and ensure food security. The Global Development Initiative put forward by Chinese President Xi Jinping identifies poverty reduction and food security as two key areas of cooperation which is perfectly in line with the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. China hopes that all countries will actively respond to the Initiative and prioritize agriculture and rural areas in funding, resource allocation, provision of basic public services and human capital development, thus accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Second, we need to pursue green development to enhance the sustainability of agriculture and rural areas. We should support FAO's global strategies on climate change, science and innovation to advance green agricultural development and food systems transformation, step up the development of green and low-carbon ways of production and life and pursue a path of sustainable growth that is resource-conserving and environmentally friendly. Such efforts will enable us to foster harmony between man and Nature and achieve greener agricultural development.

Third, we need to enhance overall agricultural production capacity through strengthened regional cooperation. Efforts should be intensified to increase information sharing, facilitate agricultural business cooperation and trade and conduct result-oriented cooperation on household farming, animal and plant disease control, soil health, agricultural heritage conservation and trade in services. In this way, we can jointly contribute to regional food security. To conclude, I wish this Conference a resounding success.

Thank you.