

Video message of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand
The Ministerial Roundtable on Zero Hunger at the 34th Session of FAO Regional Conference
for Asia and the Pacific

Good morning.

I am very pleased to speak at this august Ministerial Roundtable on Zero Hunger at the 34th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific.

I would like to thank the FAO Director-General for inviting me to speak on this occasion. Unfortunately, due to previously agreed commitments, I am not able to join you in person.

As FAO's Special Ambassador for Zero Hunger on Asia and the Pacific, I would like to raise a few issues that I feel are central to us jointly achieving SDG2 – the Sustainable Development Goal of eradicating hunger and malnutrition in all forms.

It is our duty to take up this challenge and work together to find solutions. Our joint effort has been fruitful in some regions, yet there are regions where hunger and malnutrition are still posing great threat to people's livelihood. At the same time, we need to be mindful of the growing rate of overweight and obesity in our regions. Economic development and poor knowledge on nutrition have, in some cases, led to an increase in unhealthy food diets that include too much salt, sugar and fats. This coupled with inadequate physical activity has resulted in a doubling of the growth-rate of overweight people in just two decades. The situation has also caused serious illnesses such as diabetes and kidney disease.

FAO's signature programme, the Zero Hunger Challenge, has provided Thailand, as well as other countries in the region, the impetus for improving access to food and providing better nutrition. We need to ensure the availability of diverse and balanced diets through sustainable production as well as educate people on nutrition.

From my own experience, striving to produce and provide diverse, balanced and healthy food to those in need is highly complex endeavor. We need to have good knowledge and know how to manage other resources such as soil, water and climate. In short, the whole environment, natural and cultural, has to be taken into consideration in order to produce agricultural products.

In some places we might find situation unsuitable to produce food such as poor soil, contaminated water and unfavorable climate. To solve this problems we need experts in different fields as well as to educate people on good practice in agriculture and farming.

Over-reliance on few crops means we are not spending enough time and resources producing other more nutritious food such as milk, eggs, legumes, fruits, and vegetables. We must strive to diversify agriculture to create dietary diversity to ensure healthy diets and address malnutrition in all its forms.

We therefore are facing with the great task. I am confident that in this gathering knowledge and know how on the various ways and means to eliminate hunger and improve nutrition will be shared and this will be of immense value to this gathering of Ministries and policymakers.

I reiterate my strong support to your collaboration effort to achieve the goal of Zero Hunger. Working as one we can ensure a hunger free and healthy future for Asia and the Pacific.

I wish you, and the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, every success.