



联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Organisation des Nations
Unies pour l'alimentation
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

E

FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Thirty-sixth Session

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 8-11 March 2022

**Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security
(CFS)**

Queries on the content of this document may be addressed to:

APRC Secretariat

APRC@fao.org

FAO Director-General QU Dongyu,

Honourable Ministers,

Excellencies, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is my pleasure to address you all today.
2. I thank the Government and people of Bangladesh for hosting us in their capital city of Dhaka, with special thanks to the Honourable Minister Dr Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, our gracious host.
3. I would like to start by expressing my deep gratitude to the FAO Director-General Mr QU Dongyu for inviting me as Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) to attend this Regional Conference like he has done for the other Regional Conferences.
4. We especially appreciate the essential support FAO provides to CFS, including on the dissemination at regional and country levels of the policy tools negotiated and adopted by CFS Members and Participants.
5. In addition, FAO's hosting of the Committee's Secretariat, the CFS High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) coordination unit, and its significant financial, technical, and political support remain essential to our work.
6. Director-General, I take this opportunity to once again assure you of our commitment to working towards the goal we share with FAO and with the entire UN system, of a world free from hunger, malnutrition and poverty – hand in hand.
7. We continue pursuing our shared aspiration of making CFS's role better coordinated with and complementary to that of FAO as the UN's specialized agency for food and agriculture, together with the other Rome-based Agencies and the UN System, as a whole.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

8. We meet just over two years since the COVID-19 pandemic started. While it has devastated lives and worsened hunger and malnutrition, the fact that we are meeting here in person in Dhaka highlights the slow but steady progress we are making to deal with the pandemic.
9. Honourable Ministers, we commend the leadership that you and your countries have provided in dealing with COVID-19 and its impacts on your citizens, economies, healthcare and agrifood systems. I assure you, Excellencies, of our continued support and partnership.
10. Established in 1974, and reformed in 2009, CFS serves as the foremost inclusive intergovernmental UN platform that connects governments and different stakeholders to reach consensus on science-based food security and nutrition policy guidance to drive us all towards achieving the 2030 Agenda.
11. Today, 133 CFS Members use our platform along with civil society, the private sector, Indigenous Peoples and farmer organizations, philanthropic organizations, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), international financial institutions (IFIs), the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, and the United Nations Development System – notably, FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP), and UN Nutrition – to address complex food security and nutrition issues, achieved through sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems.
12. Since 2009, the CFS has produced Guidelines on Tenure; Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems; and policy recommendations on climate change, water, connecting smallholders to markets and much more. Last year, CFS Members adopted Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition and Policy Recommendations on Agro-ecological and other Innovative Approaches.
13. This body of work has relevance to your efforts to address hunger and malnutrition. Let me suggest some examples of how these CFS policy tools and resources can assist you in dealing with the priority issues you will be discussing here this week.

First, action to promote climate resilient agrifood systems in Asia and the Pacific region

14. Climate change is one of the most important ongoing and future challenges to improving food security and nutrition globally. This region is among the most exposed and vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change. Meanwhile, agriculture methods, in their current state, are an important driver of that same climate change.
15. In this regard, I call to your attention *CFS' Policy Recommendations on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches* endorsed in June 2021 to provide guidance to countries and stakeholders on the role of innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and the food systems required to foster food security and nutrition.
16. These policy recommendations are a useful tool in supporting the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity for food security and nutrition, including in the Pacific Islands, which is one of the topics you are looking at this week.

Second, scaling up inclusive innovation, science and digitalization to transform agrifood systems in Asia and the Pacific region is needed as never before

17. Unfortunately, despite decades of innovation, and years of exponential progress of different science based technological innovations including digital technologies applied to agriculture, our food systems face multiple, interconnected and complex challenges that require new thinking. While different forms of science innovation have had very positive impacts within some farms and businesses, they have clearly not worked for ALL people at scale, or for the overall benefit of the planet.
18. This is not due to unavailability of high-tech technologies; it is a problem of access and affordability by the vast majority of food producers –smallholders and family farmers. It is an issue of appropriate incentives, and regulatory and policy frameworks to enable scaling-up of technologies for positive and inclusive impact.
19. To bring together technology innovation, equality of access and scale, we need a broader innovation in the way we govern our food systems, locally, nationally and globally: what I like to refer to as ‘governance innovation.’
20. From its foundational grounding in the human right to food, CFS’s globally agreed guidelines, principles and policy frameworks promote governance innovation, including taking a multi-sectoral and inclusive approach - reflecting the unique multi-stakeholder structure at the heart of the Committee.

Third, identifying One Health priorities in Asia and the Pacific region

21. Given the profound impacts the COVID-19 pandemic is having on all facets of our agrifood systems, the CFS is building COVID-19 considerations into all of its policy convergence work. The CFS HLPE produced a timely and useful Issues Paper on the pandemic, updated to reflect changes since its outbreak. We will also make this topic a key part of our annual plenary in October, along with rising food costs and structural inequalities that put healthy diets out of reach of billions. A new approach to issues of Gender Equality and Youth engagement are both critical to effective policy response and are on the CFS agenda.

Conclusion and Call to Action

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

22. The CFS policy guidelines I highlighted are negotiated and agreed upon in an inclusive process that engages officials in capitals and representatives in Rome.
23. As such, these are your resources, your policy instruments to be adopted and utilized in the formulation of policies, strategies, legislation, regulatory frameworks and business models.
24. Director-General QU and I have discussed how CFS can better serve as an intergovernmental and inclusive platform, striving for more effective outreach and impact, with stronger links to the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and in close collaboration with its field network.

25. I am committed to this and look to you, our Members and partners, to continue utilizing our guidelines at national level and using our global platform to foster dialogue and achieve global consensus on complex, difficult issues, as well as showcase progress on your national pathways.
26. I warmly invite the countries in this region that are not yet members of CFS to join and become part of this family. It is easy, it is free, and it is meaningful.
27. In conclusion, allow me to once again thank FAO Director-General Mr QU Dongyu, the FAO Regional Office in Bangkok, Honourable Minister Dr Muhammad Abdur Razzaque of Bangladesh for hosting us, and you, Honourable Ministers, for your continued support to, and partnership with CFS.
28. Thank you, all.