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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Thirty-sixth Session

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 8-11 March 2022

**Statement on the Third Joint FAO and Pacific Community (SPC) Ministers
for Agriculture and Forestry Meeting**

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

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Your Excellency, Dr Qu Dongyu,
Dr Muhammad Abdur Razzaque,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,
Representatives from Civil Society and the Private Sector,
Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is an honour for me to present a brief statement, on behalf of my fellow Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry.
2. As alluded to in previous meetings, the Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting is an important forum for our region. It is the principal decision-making body for Agriculture and Forestry sectors in the Pacific, with the aim to provide strong governance, leadership, and strategic direction regarding national, regional and global commitments on agriculture and forestry matters, particularly those which impact on the Pacific region.
3. The Pacific Ministers are due to meet in September 2022 for the 3rd Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting, and Fiji is honoured to host and chair the event this year.
4. The meeting was postponed from 2021 due to the pandemic and we are excited to see it come to fruition in 2022.
5. This postponement means that in lieu of an outcome statement from the meeting, I will provide, on behalf of my counterparts in the Pacific, a brief update on the planning and focus for the upcoming Ministers Meeting.
6. As part of the planning process towards the development and defining of the Ministers Meeting agenda, a Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services meeting was held in August 2021, supported by FAO and the Pacific Community (SPC).
7. From this meeting a number of priority areas were requested for discussion and consideration during our Ministers Meeting this year.
8. I am pleased to inform the meeting that a Member led and owned regional ‘Pacific Agriculture and Forestry Strategy’ was proposed for the region and will be a point of discussion in our next meeting. The development process of the strategy will be led by the SPC, supported by FAO.
9. It is our hope that this proposed Strategy will provide a clear, shared vision for agriculture and forestry in the region, allowing for enhanced coordination amongst partners in the region.
10. In addition, a proposal and concept note for a process to develop a Regional Research Agenda for the Pacific will also be tabled for our discussion.
11. Ladies and gentlemen, as COVID-19 continues its brutal rampage across the globe and now breaching borders across the Pacific, food security is a core concern for all governments in our region.
12. Agrifood system transformation will be at the fore of our discussions in September with most of our Pacific countries now finalizing food systems pathways that require urgent resources for implementation.
13. Multi-sectoral coordination platforms are currently being explored by many of our countries, and we hope that FAO can continue providing technical support towards the pathway implementation, especially with the Food Systems Coordination Hub housed by FAO in collaboration with the other Rome-based Agencies and relevant UN agencies.
14. The concerns brought about by the pandemic further compound existing challenges, including those related to the impacts of climate change on our Small Island Developing States.

15. In this regard, the impacts of climate change on the agriculture and forestry sectors and the need to develop innovative solutions to address these challenges will be key areas of discussion in September.

16. These, distinguished delegates, are some of the issues which will be discussed in our upcoming meeting, and it is our hope that a report from our discussions in September will be ready in time for our next APRC meeting for your information and consideration.

17. Thank you for the opportunity to speak of our Pacific priorities in relation to our regional Ministerial Forum.

18. We hope that as we share the priorities from the Pacific, we can learn from each other and share our knowledge on specific issues.

19. Thank you.