

Asia-Pacific Rural Development and Food Security Forum 2022

22–24 March (Virtual)

Battling Climate Change and Transforming Agri-Food Systems



World Vegetable Center

OPENING REMARKS

Technical Session 2: Pathways to Sustainable and Inclusive Food Systems

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Introduction

Dear Colleagues and Guests,

Good afternoon, good morning and good evening to all the participants. Welcome to ADB's Rural Development and Food Security Forum, Technical Session 2 on Pathways to sustainable and inclusive food systems.

It is my honor to welcome all of you, and distinguished practitioners from our partner institutions as resource speakers today. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), Agoro Carbon Alliance of Yara International, the Government of Viet Nam, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development of the United Nations (IFAD) for their great partnership and contribution to this important dialogue. I hope that this event will lead to even closer collaboration among us to realize inclusive and sustainable food system transformations in Asia and the Pacific.

Outline of the issue

As we all are aware, food systems in Asia and the Pacific are highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, and climate change adaptation is a fundamental requirement for food system transformations to ensure sustainable food and nutrition security. A recent study's finding underscores the grave impact of climate change: it estimates that global farming productivity has been suppressed by 21 % because of climate change. This is equivalent to losing roughly seven years of agriculture sector growth that has been instrumental in feeding the global population since the 1960s. This trend will worsen in the coming decades and our agriculture and food system will be exposed to more loss if we cannot successfully reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). Without effective interventions, scientists predict that adverse climate change



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effects will hit vulnerable populations the hardest, and in coping with climate change risks women particularly face special circumstances and higher risks than their male counterparts.

Agricultural food system can be part of solution for climate change. If we don't address food system-driven climate emission, we simply cannot make our 1.5 C target. Current agriculture and food system is generating about 24% of the global total GHG emissions. Hence, a drastic transformation of agriculture and food system to meet the future demand and ensure food and nutrition security is required. We need to invest in climate-smart agriculture, enhance the resilience of food system, and improve the resource efficiency of agricultural production. For this purpose, we should engage millions of smallholder farmers, some of whom face increasing demographic challenges of rural-urban migration, feminization of agriculture and aging of farming rural communities. With the co-existence of triple crises in some of our DMCs—hunger, micronutrient deficiency, and obesity, we need to scale up our investments and also strengthen the DMCs' capacity.

ADB's actions

Having recognized such complex nature and scale of a multifaceted challenge of climate-food-water-energy nexus, ADB takes a strategic approach in formulating integrated solutions and partnerships under Strategy 2030 and stepped up its climate investment ambition. ADB aims to provide a cumulative \$100 billion in climate finance between 2019 and 2030 and to mainstream climate change mitigation and adaptation for at least 75 percent of committed sovereign and non-sovereign operations by 2030. ADB has committed to align all investments with the Paris Agreement in coming years as well.

As part of our upcoming climate action plan, climate-smart agriculture will be promoted as a key priority of our operations across the entire agriculture and food value chains. In this process, we will also adopt nature-based solutions where appropriate.

Closing

An encouraging fact to note is that an increasing number of our partner institutions are investing in climate-smart agriculture and nature-based solutions to address this critical challenge in the region. Sustainable rice platforms and low carbon rice initiatives are fine examples of such



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efforts, and we are looking forward to learning from the various experiences of our partners and discussing critical next steps in addressing the remaining challenges in the region.

I hope this session will facilitate effective sharing of valuable knowledge and experience and initiate important dialogue on equitable policy and business practice towards sustainable and innovative food system development among policymakers, subject experts, and wider stakeholders across the region. I would like to thank again all the participants for joining us and I wish you the best for the fruitful discussion today.



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