

CEO's Statement (19 Jun: FAO Plenary)

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1 Mr. Chairperson, Your Excellencies, Mr. Director-General, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is Singapore's honour to be here today to participate in this plenary session to discuss the the state of food and agriculture in the world. Once again, the Republic of Singapore thanks all member nations for supporting and welcoming us into the FAO family.

2 FAO's reports on the State of Food and Agriculture have provided valuable insights on the challenges on food security and the possible ways to address these challenges. Noteworthy is the need to focus on food systems to address undernutrition. Indeed an appropriate food system will determine the type of food available and acceptable for good nutrition.

3 Singapore is not spared from the challenges to food security. Singapore notes that resource constraint is reported as one of the key challenges and that there is a need to increase sustainable agriculture productivity.

4 Resource constraint is something that Singapore is very familiar with. As a small country with only 700 sq km, Singapore has very little land available for agricultural production. However, we believe that local production of some key food items is an important supplementary strategy for our food security. But we will have to ensure the productivity of our farms in a sustainable manner. We do this through research and development (R&D) and the adoption of appropriate technology.

5 For instance, Singapore's molecular research to aid in the selective breeding of sea bass allows for faster growing fish, leading to higher production and food availability.

6 Another example is Singapore's first vertical farm for tropical vegetables. It adopts a new technology that can potentially yield 5 times more leafy vegetables than that of a conventional soil-based farm. It is also low in energy consumption as it is a water-driven system.

7 Secondly, Singapore supports the need to look at the broader food system and not just at the production end to ensure food security. Reducing post-harvest losses, recycling of food to create new food products and alternative animal feeds as well as reducing food wastage along the supply chain are also important in availing food and these are strategies which Singapore is looking into.

8 Equally important is that the food must be safe to eat and does not pose risks to the consumers. For instance, excessive use of antibiotics could lead to the emergence of resistant bacteria in farm animals, and a source of infection for humans. Intensive farming practices can facilitate the spread of diseases. Hence, we must establish and adapt food safety and animal health management programmes appropriately to maintain effective control.

9 Lastly, it is important for the world to continue to have a functioning, free and open market, so that food is moved from where it is produced to where it is needed, thus benefitting farmers, food processors and consumers.

10 Your Excellencies, ladies and gentleman, the issues we discussed in this plenary transcend national boundaries. We must seek to forge win-win partnerships, share and work closely with one another to achieve our common goal of ensuring food security and nutrition. And Singapore will do its part to contribute to achieving this goal.

11 Thank you.

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