

Checked as delivered

Statement by His Excellency Armen Harutyunyan, Deputy Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Armenia

Excellency Chairman,

Dear Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor to address the distinguished audience today and the privilege to deliver statement on developments in agriculture in Armenia.

Access to adequate and nutritional food is among the key determinants of quality of life, and therefore, government of Armenia is firmly committed to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including but not limited to improving nutrition, ending poverty and ensuring food security and sustainable development.

To achieve these goals, and to address other challenges and issues in the sector, we have adopted a multi-dimensional approach on development, ensuring that it is sustainable and inclusive. It focuses on four strategic areas,

- Investing in human capital,
- Upgrading rural infrastructure,
- Improving institutions and regulations,
- Facilitating access to finance.

We believe that among the challenges to address food security, is limited access of farmers to knowledge and technologies. In this context, we have restructured public advisory system, but also supported formation of private service centers in all regions of Armenia. In 3 years only, 18 centers were established. Owned by farmers, they provide wide range of services, and also earning income enough to cover operational costs and earn profit.

To address one of the most essential challenge, weather risks and natural disasters, we have adopted triple level risk reduction and moderation approach, implying introduction of a better and more efficient physical protection measures, designing insurance schemes as well as providing capacity development trainings to farmers.

To ensure better and more efficient use of natural resources and to moderate the effects of climate change, Armenia is investing in better water management systems, which entails upgrade of infrastructure, and introduction of water saving technologies at farms, and in aquaculture sector. With the support of FAO, we are introducing new recirculation technology at fish farms for example, which would minimize the use of water, but also increase productivity.

In the perspective of better and sustainable food production, Armenia prioritized development of organic agriculture. Our current project supports farmers to transform from conventional to bio production, which has become a source of additional profit for small and medium farmers.

My fellow colleagues,

In conclusion, I would like to articulate on transformations in the global economy, and impact it may have on agricultural sector.

We live in interconnected, interdependent and dynamically changing world, in an era of rapid technological development and growing rate of creative destruction, which has been shaping traditional way we live, communicate, travel and do business. In agriculture, introduction of several innovations and technologies, make production systems more efficient and productive, but also poses threat to very survival of small and family farms.

Taking into consideration that agriculture providing livelihoods for 40 per cent of today's global population, means that urgent attention needs to be paid to this issue. Probably the most alarming would be further replacement of several jobs and activities with automated operations and others innovations. Small farmers in this context is the most vulnerable groups.

Therefore, we need to have firm commitment to address opportunities and challenges, and ensuring that billions of people living in rural area do benefit from global developments, and not endangered because of them. And it is our task to better address needs of small farmers, defining their role in the twenty first century and ensuring that people all around the world can earn their decent living and raise their children in peace and prosperity.

Thank you for your attention,