

Statement delivered by
His Excellency Saud bin Hamoud bin Ahmed Al-Habsi
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources of the Sultanate of Oman
on the occasion of the
42nd Session of the FAO Conference (14-18 June 2021)
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Thank you, in the name of God, all Merciful, all Compassionate

Your Excellency Qu Dongyu, Director-General of FAO,

Your Excellencies Ministers, Heads of Delegations,

Your Excellencies heads of NGOs and governmental organizations, donor funds, representatives of the civil society,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Peace be upon you and God's blessings.

It is my honour to address this esteemed assembly of decision-makers, representatives of countries and scientists as a representative of the Sultanate of Oman. It is also my pleasure to take part in this important event where we explore and exchange ideas about the state of food and agriculture in the world and transformation of cultural food systems, from strategy to action.

Agriculture is extremely important and it requires collaboration of all efforts of all countries of the world together in order to reach practical and successful solutions to the most important issues pertaining to food and agriculture in the world and to find the necessary means to guarantee the provision of food to the people of the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The documents of this Conference included several ideas and very good visions that we look positively upon in the Sultanate of Oman and we feel that addressing them and taking them into consideration will contribute to solving several problems pertaining to agriculture and food production and nutrition in different countries of the world.

The vision of FAO in focussing on food and agricultural systems that include the four betters – better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life – and the translation of this vision in practice into reality by transforming food and agricultural systems, from strategy to action, will certainly contribute positively to resolving and limiting problems connected to food production and nutrition in different countries of the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Sultanate of Oman over the past few years has worked hard to develop its agriculture and food systems, to improve the methods and chains of production and develop them, as well as the production and provision of food, which had a very good impact on improving the living conditions of the Omani people. The Sultanate has also adopted a comprehensive methodology for food security that includes several objectives to improve the food security system in the Sultanate by focussing on basic principles:

the demand for food, the quality and safety of food, local production of food and securing imports from abroad in addition to economic sustainability.

In accordance with the vision of Oman 2040, the Ministry has aligned its strategy for sustainable agriculture and rural development 2040; the strategy for the development of the fishing sector for 2040; and its investment plans that aim at increasing food production, creating job opportunities for its citizens, supporting rural societies, consolidating the food and water security systems, and contributing to enhancing economic returns.

Within this framework the contribution to the gross domestic product of animal and fish production was 59 percent in 2020 of the total available for consumption compared to 36 percent in 2011. This is extremely good. Despite the increase in the population, of course, we have a marked improvement in consumption patterns, according to the annual report of the World Food Security Indicator 2020, which looks at standards such as food availability, accessibility to food, stable provision of food and food quality and safety, the Sultanate is second at the Arab level and 34th at world level for this indicator.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The numbers in the documents of this Conference that reflect the food situation in the world are extremely worrying. The numbers speak of 690 million people who suffer from undernourishment and another 132 million who suffer from malnutrition. This situation requires that all countries in the world continue to collaborate in various areas relating to food production and improvement in its methods, starting from agriculture and harvest up to nutrition and reduction of food waste.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the Director-General, His Excellency Dr Qu Dongyu, for developing a forward-looking vision within the FAO Strategic Framework for 2020-2031 concerning support for transformation into more efficient and effective agricultural and food systems, which could be sustainable in order to reach better production and nutrition, environment and life. It is also in line with the vision of Oman 2040, which focuses on the best use and the most balanced use of land and natural resources, and the protection of a sustainable environment to achieve food, water and energy security.

Looking forward to enhancing the partnership between the Sultanate of Oman and FAO to reinforce food security.

Thank you very much.