

Asia-Pacific Rural Development and Food Security Forum 2022

22-24 March (Virtual)

Battling Climate Change and Transforming Agri-Food Systems



WELCOME ADDRESS

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Dear Colleagues and Guests,

Good afternoon, good morning, and good evening to all the participants. It is my honor to welcome all of you, and distinguished practitioners as resource speakers today.

As our moderator just said, the ongoing pandemic, increasing energy prices, persistent supply chain disruption, extreme weather, and also the ongoing invasion of Russia to Ukraine have driven the food prices to their all-time high in March. A global food crisis is now looming and we need to carefully watch the situation and take very quick actions to address its possible implications.

Learning the lessons from the 2008 food crisis, we need to maintain open flows of trade. We also need to work with our developing member countries to enhance social protection and safety nets, and together with our partners to provide working capital liquidity to small and medium enterprises.

But while we're taking immediate and urgent actions, we must also realize that climate change is still the single most important threat to the sustainability and resilience of food systems in Asia. So, it is very, very critical to introduce medium- and long-term measures to build the food systems' resilience to cope with climate change.

The Rural Development and Food Security Forum, organized through our One-ADB approach in collaboration with our partner organizations today, aims to share knowledge and to strengthen ADB's as well as our collective efforts with partners to respond to short-term price shocks and also address long-term climate change challenges.

Through these three-day sessions, we will discuss collective actions to create holistic climate-smart agriculture, build resilience to COVID-19 and political conflicts, use digital technology to link



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small farmers to big markets, improve nutrition and growth, and develop a green finance mechanism.

The Leaders' Roundtable discussion today, starting soon, will kick off the forum's working sessions and set the scene for the regional challenges in food security and the need for food system transformation for long-term sustainability and resilience.

So, thank you in advance to all speakers and panelists who will be sharing their expertise and insights from on-the-ground experiences. I believe the discussions and knowledge-sharing will eventually help our developing member countries address food price shocks, close the financing gap, help transform our food systems, and build food system resilience in the Asia and Pacific region.

Thank you.

