

Closing Remarks at the High Level Training on
Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)

by Mr. Qu Sixi

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Dear Colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honor to attend the closing ceremony of this High Level Symposium on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), which is jointly organized by FAO and Chinese Ministry of Agriculture (MOA). On behalf of MOA, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate on all the colleagues for your completion of this GIAHS journey in China. In addition, I want to thank FAO&MOA colleagues, Chinese GIAHS local government and relevant professors, experts for your hard work to make this a highly success.

I hope you all really enjoy your visit to Xuanhua Vineyard system, Qingtian Rice-fish system and Xinhua Duotian agrosystem. As we all know, in many indigenous rural cultures, the earth itself is regarded as a mother who sustains us through

the bounty of the land. Our ancestors have learned to value and conserve those gifts. They have accumulated rich knowledge to harmonize human beings with nature, to teach us about how to live, how to work and how to cultivate in an environmentally sustainable manner that does not jeopardize future generations.

I know when arriving China two weeks ago, many of you probably would have no idea of what GIAHS is all about. A Chinese proverb says “Seeing is believing.” After your intensive engagement with GIAHS through lectures, group discussions, field visits and extra-curriculum activities, now I am confident that you have gained an exceptional understanding of GIAHS. I think you will all agree to join me in saying that this GIAHS initiative launched by FAO is an ideal model to achieve the health of ecosystems, conservation of biodiversity and genetic resources for food and agriculture, protection of indigenous culture, and more importantly, the realization of sustainable agriculture for our future generations.

Today, you received a diploma on GIAHS. You have full reasons to be proud of this significant testimonial. Meanwhile you should also be aware that a seed of cooperation for the future

development of GIAHS has been nurtured during this event. When you return home tomorrow, you will become a GIAHS ambassador in your own country. Please do not be hesitate to make full use of what you have learnt in China to explain for GIAHS, to advocate GIAHS and most importantly to facilitate your government to join GIAHS family.

Last week, the Third APEC Ministerial Meeting on Food Security was organized in Beijing, during which Beijing Declaration on APEC Food Security was issued with the consensus reached by all the participating economies including many of your nations. The Beijing Declaration on APEC Food Security, paragraph 19 states: "We agree that APEC should promote rural development policies that enhance the economic, social and cultural well-being of communities and support FAO' s work on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems. We recognize that we should promote the public understanding and awareness of agricultural heritage systems and share successful stories of management on agricultural heritage and typical models of rural development."

You see, GIAHS is truly up-scaling and spreading worldwide.

And China is committed to working more closely with FAO, other international partners and countries to mainstreaming GIAHS in the UN post-2015 sustainable development agenda. Above all, advancing GIAHS is not just a matter of political gesture. Nor is it something that the member states of FAO owe to indigenous rural communities in the name of implementing our policy declarations. In the end, we owe it to ourselves, to humankind, to respect the rights of our children and grandchildren. The right to the gifts of nature: the right to clean air, the right to safe water, the right to fertile land, and the right to more diversified food.

Following the wisdom and philosophy of GIAHS in the responsible stewardship of agriculture and natural resources, let us make joint efforts for better ecology and better production to gain a better life in the future.

Thank you!