



# FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific

## Thirty-second Session

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 10–14 March 2014

### STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE 31ST SESSION OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

*Mr Chairperson,  
Mr Director-General,  
Mr Independent Chairperson of the Council,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

On behalf of the Government of Viet Nam, it is an honour and a pleasure for me to be here today to address the thirty-second session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC) in this beautiful city of Ulaanbaatar.

As you know, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam had the honour of hosting the thirty-first APRC in Hanoi two years ago (12–16 March 2012). The Regional Conference was attended by delegates from 39 Member Countries and 7 observers from non-member nations. The session was chaired by the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development of my country.

As you are aware, there has been a change in the role of the Regional Conferences in FAO's governance and the thirtieth APRC was the very first Regional Conference for this region to become part of FAO's Governing Bodies under the actions for reform that were approved by the thirty-sixth session of the FAO Conference in 2009 (18-23 November 2009). The thirty-first APRC was therefore just the second Regional Conference to be held under FAO's reformed governance structure.

The 31<sup>st</sup> APRC considered important issues such as state of food and agriculture in the region; sustainable intensification and diversification of crops towards food and nutrition security; policies to address food price volatility etc. The Regional Conference was also informed about the Outcomes of the 37<sup>th</sup> Session of the World Food Security (CFS).

Furthermore, the Regional Conference took note of the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13 and Areas of Priority Actions for the region for the following Biennium 2014-15; Issues relating to Decentralization besides Prioritization of Country and Regional Needs. The Conference reviewed the

Report on FAO Activities in Asia and the Pacific Region in the Biennium 2010-11 and Actions Taken on the Main Recommendations of the 30<sup>th</sup> APRC.

The 31<sup>st</sup> APRC requested FAO to assist member countries in developing, strengthening and enhancing programmes and activities related to agricultural research and extension; governance and regulation of the livestock sector; climate change mitigation and adaptation, and support in establishing cost-effective safety nets for the most vulnerable. It also acknowledged the importance of post-harvest loss reduction and urged member countries to implement policy reforms that facilitate the ease of doing business; and requested FAO to provide assistance in value chain development and post-harvest loss reduction.

I would like to highlight that the thirty-first APRC emphasized region-specific needs related to increasing agricultural production and productivity (including of rice, as the main staple of the region), promoting agricultural knowledge sharing and technology transfer, making small-scale farmers more competitive, harmonizing policies for food security and bioenergy development, managing transboundary pests and diseases, and facilitating efficient markets for food.

FAO's reformed governance structure envisages the Chair of the Regional Conference reporting about its outcomes to FAO's governing bodies at the global level and maintaining chairmanship until the next Regional Conference.

The Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, concurrently Chairperson of the thirty-first APRC, presented the Summary of the Main Recommendations for the attention of the FAO Council during its hundred and forty-fourth session in Rome (11–15 June 2012). Likewise, the Minister and the thirty-first APRC Chairperson had the honour to present the Summary of the Main Recommendations for the attention of the thirty-eighth session of the FAO Conference in Rome last June (15-22 June 2013).

The FAO Conference endorsed the *Report of the Thirty-first Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific* and the Conference Secretariat distributed the final report of the Conference to all Member Countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Amongst the matters requiring the attention of the Council, the Conference reconfirmed the relevance of the Regional Priority Framework for Asia and the Pacific and the focus of the FAO's work in the region. It reiterated the need for FAO to allocate an increased share of financial resources to the Asia and Pacific region commensurate with the magnitude of the challenges of achieving food security for the nearly two-thirds of the world's hungry who live in the region.

Actions taken by FAO on the recommendations contained in the report were presented in the Senior Officers Meeting, so I need not repeat them here. It is heartening to note the progress that has already been made. I would, however, like to point out that the Senior Officers thoroughly discussed a number of technical and policy issues highly relevant to this region and provided guidance to the Secretariat on the priorities for activities in the next biennium.

I thank you for your kind attention and express my full confidence that this Regional Conference will meet with its objectives and provide sound policy guidance to FAO.