

[Checked against delivery]

Speech of Dr. Suroj Pokhrel

Secretary, Ministry of Agricultural Development

Government of Nepal

Excellences,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure and the honor to address in the 40th session of the FAO conference on the theme “The State of Food and Agriculture: Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security” representing the Ministry of Agricultural Development from Government of Nepal.

First of all, let me extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to FAO for the warm hospitality and support accorded to my delegation that has enabled our participation to discuss on the theme of the Conference. The climate change and its effects on agriculture production, food and nutrition security are intertwined and enduring issues in the developing countries, particularly in south Asian countries and more pronounced in Nepal. This Conference is more relevant to building resilience to climate change on agriculture and leading to improving food and nutrition security in those countries where agriculture is the major endowment for the economic development.

Indeed, climate change threatens agriculture and food security for the low-income small holder farmers are at risk. The man-induced changes in the environment have intensified the risk of climate-dependent crop production over the last decades. The trend and pattern of rainfall has been highly uncertain as the most of our crop land is rain fed and these changes are causing serious threat to the agro-ecosystem services and to food security.

This has been an emerging issue and challenges to be able to adapt and mitigate climate changes effects on agriculture. Nepal, as a least-developing agriculture based economy with smallholder farmers and adopted integrated farming practices, such agriculture system gives more advantage for improving food and nutrition security.

In order to achieve zero hunger goal, the government of Nepal have been implementing Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS 2015), Zero Hunger Challenge National Action Plan 2016 (2016-2025), Food and Nutrition Security Plan of Action (FNSPA) of Nepal-2014, and Multi-Sector Nutritional Plan 2012, as a result, the trend of malnutrition has been decreasing and the food and nutrition situation has been improving in the country.

In this prestigious Conference, I would like to focus on some major challenges on zero hunger goal:

1. Research and development in agriculture system;
2. Transformation of subsistence agriculture into commercialization and making it competitiveness;
3. Climate resilience to agriculture, ecosystem services, including plant pollination;
4. Enhance the economics of scale of smallholders;

5. Optimizing and efficiency in agriculture- inputs, outputs, and marketing;
6. Value chain management of major agricultural commodities;
7. Global partnership and commitment at all levels such as international, central governmental, local governmental, private sector, NGOs/INGOs, and civil societies.

I hope this Conference would be able to guide policies in climate change, food security and nutrition, rural development, and emphasize the need for international support to developing countries to design and implement integrated policies that address agriculture and climate change. In addition, the Conference would be milestone to address the Sustainable Development Goal especially SDG1, in achieving the targets of zero hunger by 2030.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my sincere thanks once again to FAO for this opportunity and accomplish my remarks with best wishes for the success of this Conference, which would be helpful to develop policy and impact pathways in the sector of agriculture and food security in relation to climate change in Nepal.

Thank you!