

As delivered

Asia Regional and Philippine Country Statement

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE:
CLIMATE CHANGE, AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

(Agenda Item 9)

40th Session of the Food and Agriculture Organization Conference
July 3 - 8, 2017, FAO Headquarters, Rome Italy

By Emmanuel F. Piñol
Secretary of Agriculture, Republic of the Philippines

Director General Jose Graziano da Silva, Mr. Vice Chairperson, Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I will deliver messages on behalf of the Asia Regional Group and my country, the Philippines, which I represent.

(Asia Regional Statement)

The Asia Region expresses deep concern over the impact of Climate Change on Agriculture and Food Security. It is felt in the Asia Region where snow cover in major mountain ranges is melting, where there is an increased frequency of long dry spells and El Niño and the alarming coastal flooding in many islands.

As indicated in the State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) Report, the greatest vulnerabilities are in South and Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa where millions could suffer from hunger by 2050.

There is a need to focus on the vulnerable sectors which include Smallholders, Small Farm Families, Pastoralists, Fisher Folks, Women, Youth and Indigenous People.

The Asia Regional Group is thus making the following statements:

- 1 We heed the call in the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement to address the challenges of Climate Change and pursue the goals of eradicating hunger and poverty, and improving nutrition. We concur with the SOFA Report on the need to take immediate action to make agriculture sustainable, more productive and Climate Change resilient;
- 2 We recognize the UNFCCC as the primary inter-governmental forum in negotiating the global response to Climate Change, therefore actions should be consistent with the objectives, agreements and mechanisms established by the UNFCCC. Since the Paris Agreement has been adopted under this Convention, it is imperative that commitments on food and agriculture, specifically financial resources, be fulfilled by the Parties to the Agreement;

- 3 We support the call for the strengthening of Regional and International Cooperation to address Climate Change through South-South and Triangular Cooperation. With the restructuring of FAO to better manage such cooperation mechanism, we urge greater focus on the advocacy and sharing of experiences and expertise in Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security.
- 4 We present as an example of international cooperation the 5-Year ASEAN-UN Action Plan on the Environment and Climate Change (2016-2020) which aims to strengthen the capability of governments, private sectors and communities to adapt to Climate Change and foster risk reduction and resilience by accessing innovative mechanisms and include Climate Change concerns into national policies.
- 5 We are happy to note that several Asian countries have already made headways in integrating into their public investments priorities initiatives to address Climate Change. This is in keeping with a UNDP Review in 2015 which recommended the adoption of a comprehensive fiscal framework to ensure the mainstreaming of Climate Change interventions in public expenditure.
- 6 We encourage the realisation of the commitment made by the Developed Countries to mobilise USD100-Billion financing every year by 2020 and the transfer of Climate-friendly Agricultural Technology to support developing countries in addressing Climate Change concerns.

In conclusion, the Asia Group supports the suggested actions by the Conference contained in the reference document of Agenda Item No. 9.

(Philippine Country Statement)

I will now deliver a statement on behalf of my country, the Philippines.

Climate Change is real and to those who claim that it is a farce, I ask them to live in the farm for them to see and feel the proofs. When rains do not fall during the times they are expected affecting the farmer's planting season; when the fruit trees do not bloom with flowers during the season they are supposed to and when typhoons come more frequently and more destructively, these are proofs of Climate Change.

The manifestations of Climate Change are unpredictable and greatly disruptive to food production.

As one of the countries in the world severely affected by Climate Change, we have learned our painful lessons and with our modest resources, our government has made adjustments.

We have designed a Climate Change resilient agriculture programme which closely monitors risks and hazards for the farmers and fisher folks through the National Color Coded Agriculture Map.

We are now designing the Food depots or food storage facilities which could withstand typhoons to be established in vulnerable areas to ensure that there would be enough food for marooned communities.

A universal crop insurance coverage, solar powered irrigation technology, tree crop farming to prevent the loss of water sources, an easy access financing and the repopulation of the country's lakes, rivers and creeks with indigenous fish and non-invasive fish basins are among the interventions readied to address Climate Change.

It is in this light that the Philippines calls for greater cooperation in technology transfer and sharing between advanced countries and those with great potentials for food production.

Finally, to remind everyone that the mission to feed world must be shared by all nations, I would like to share with you this story.

In the village where I grew up, we shared with our neighbours whatever food we had in excess with the understanding that it would later be repaid, maybe in another form.

If a family does not have rice for the next meal, the neighbours share the rice and nobody in the village ever goes hungry.

I am sharing this story with you because of the reality that today, while other countries are producing food or could produce a commodity in excess of their requirements, there are nations whose people are hungry.

I am urging this body to please consider this Filipino tradition as a way to make sure that in the global village that we live in nobody would go hungry.

The idea of a World Food Bank, which I suggest should be managed by FAO, is being presented for the consideration of the members of this body.

Any country which has an excess production of a commodity could make a deposit to the World Food Bank which in turn could be loaned out to nations who are suffering from food shortages.

The World Food Bank would not only ensure that commodities produced in excess by a country would not go to waste thus ensuring that the farmer will make money from his endeavour, it will also greatly contribute to FAO's vision of Zero Hunger.

Please allow me to repeat my statement at the opening of this Conference: Feeding the people of the world should be a shared mission of all nations, for after all we belong to one big global community.

Thank you and may God bless us all.