

As delivered

**Address of the Hon. Duminda Dissanayake
Minister for Agriculture of the
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**

40th Session of the FAO Conference

3 - 8 July 2017

Mr. Chairman,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me at the outset convey the compliments of his Excellency the President of Sri Lanka and greetings from the peoples of Sri Lanka and my personal wishes to the Director General of FAO and your Excellencies.

As the Minister of Agriculture, I am very pleased to address the 40th Session of the FAO Conference and seize this opportunity to congratulate and thank FAO for organizing this session focusing on “Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security”, a theme which is very relevant to my country.

Indeed, at this very moment Sri Lankan Agriculture Sector and National Food Security are facing a serious challenge due to a continued drought over two seasons in the dry and intermediate zone, the major rice producing areas and an unprecedented serious flooding in the wet zone due to very heavy rains during a short period. The extreme weather during this year has shattered our food security status and affected the livelihood

of many thousand farmers beyond recovery without urgent Government support.

Sri Lanka being an island located in the Indian Ocean is subject to vagaries of weather due to its Global positioning and proximity to Bay of Bengal as well as the Bay of Gulf.

Sri Lanka has suffered unprecedented drought and floods due to the impact of Climate Change which has brought serious crop losses and death and displacement to many families and has been challenging the National food Security. The Government of Sri Lanka was able to implement Climate Change adaptation and mitigation measures minimizing the impact on Food Security and rural livelihood of Farmers.

While Government resorted to special importation of rice to stabilize national level food availability, it is very unprecedented that drought continued from one cropping season to the other, seriously impacting the livelihood of farmers due to shortage of water in the minor irrigation system, comprising nearly 14,000 minor tanks and many thousands of agro-wells creating very harsh conditions for living.

Government mobilized its drought preparedness plan with the support of FAO where the farmers were helped through FAO emergency response measures including distribution of seeds Micro-irrigation systems to restore and diversify the farmers' production during the dry season. Sri Lankan Government through a crop insurance scheme paid compensation to many thousands of farmers for partial and full crop losses in an effort to minimize the impact of drought on farmers' livelihood.

FAO assistance to assess the Food Security situation was a great help for the government to estimate the requirement of food and other measures to follow on the adaptation measures in mitigating the impact of drought. Ministry of Agriculture having reviewed the strategies implemented by the different of institutions under the Ministry in minimizing the impact of drought on food security and livelihood, has now prepared a sound drought or flood disaster management plan to mitigate impact of Climate Change on Agriculture in the future.

While continuing to improve on other agrarian, land and water Management systems including rehabilitation of degradable agricultural land with FAO assistance, we are looking forward to build a Climate resilient Agricultural production system through a conservation-oriented Management and investment plan.

I take this opportunity to extend my personal gratitude and appreciation of the Government of Sri Lanka for the Technical assistance provided by FAO in facing the challenges due to Climate Change and enhance my Government efforts to build a Climate resilient agriculture and food production system enabling us to achieve the sustainable development goals of 2030 agenda.

Chairman, let me finally express my personal appreciation to you, your representatives in Colombo who work very closely with my Ministry.

As delivered**G-15 Joint Statement****At the 40th Session of the FAO Conference****Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations****Rome- Italy, 3-8 July 2017**

The Director General,
Excellencies,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. Let me at the outset extend my sincere appreciation and that of the Group of Fifteen (G-15) to the Director General of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and his team for organizing this very important Conference and for the opportunity to make this joint Statement on behalf of the G-15.
2. The Group of Fifteen is a Group of Developing Countries representing Asia, Africa and Latin America established to promote and sustain fruitful South-South cooperation and policy cohesion on areas of mutual interest with a view of achieving economic progress, stability and sustainable development.
3. The Group appreciates the profound and commendable roles played by the UN Food and Agricultural Organization to address the issues of eradicating hunger and extreme poverty, food insecurity while building resilience and catalysing agriculture and rural development.
4. The G-15 views the 40th Session of the conference of the FAO as auspicious and timely, considering that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has now entered its implementation phase since its adoption in September 2015. The G-15 views the 2030 Agenda as a plan of action for the 'people, planet and prosperity' built on the three pillars of social, economic and environment of the SDGs. The Foreign Ministers of the Group of Fifteen have identified the 2030 Agenda as a key global process for the G-15 to be involved and contribute to its implementation as a niche Group of the Global South.

5. With the adverse impact of climate change on agriculture and people whose livelihood depend on agriculture, particularly small-scale farmers, there is a need to enhance research and empower institutions that will assist the most vulnerable segments of the world population and make them the focus of development and technology transfer.

6. The realisation of the 2030 global target to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition and extreme poverty demands multi-faceted approach in complementing economic growth and productive capacities; strengthening rural resilience through social protection and sustainable agricultural development. In this respect the G-15 is committed to enhancing capacities among its member countries through robust South-South cooperation initiatives and also seeks opportunities for collaboration with international organisations, including the FAO.

Thank you.