

INDIA

FAO Ministerial Meeting on International Food Prices

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Statement By :

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Mr. Chairman

Distinguished Ministers

Excellencies

Honorable Delegates and Observers

Ladies and Gentleman,

It gives me immense pleasure to join all the Member States in this meeting on International Food Prices. This initiative of FAO reiterates its commitment to contain Food Price Volatility and to achieve the ultimate goal of Global Food Security.

India supported the initiative of G-20 Forum to tackle food price volatility as contained in the declaration made by Agriculture Ministers made at the meeting held in Paris during June 2011. It called for an Action Plan on Food Price Volatility and Agriculture, to focus generally on agricultural production and productivity, market information and transparency, international policy coordination, reducing the effects of price volatility for the most vulnerable and financial regulation of agricultural financial markets.

India is supporting the initiatives launched by the G-20 forum especially Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and Rapid Response Forum (RRF). We have already taken necessary measures in this direction by appointing the nodal points for AMIS and RRF to make these mechanism fully operative. It is also encouraging to note that the AMIS and RRF mechanisms will have

appropriate linkage with CFS which is a welcome step and this is going to further strengthen the initiative of the G-20 countries.

The recent analysis of our domestic market data shows declining prices of food during August 2013 as compared to the corresponding period of previous year. The decline was mainly observed in cereals, oils / fats and sugar though there is a hike in the prices of milk and meats. The rate of inflation for milk and sugar was stable at lower level and it was declining for edible oils. My Government has taken several measures both administrative and fiscal to contain price rise of essential commodities which is showing promising results.

India has recently enacted the landmark "The National Food Security Act" which gives "Right to Food" to 67% of its population by ensuring them foodgrains at the most affordable prices, thereby protecting them against any price volatility.

India is always in the forefront to contribute to the food aid programmes internationally directly to the needy countries as well as through World Food Programme. We also supported the initiative of G-20 emergency humanitarian food reserve and its pilot programme. To address emergency food security needs at regional level, India has the major contribution to the Food Bank set up by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

India has removed restrictions on export of cereals especially rice and wheat in September, 2011. By this measure, during 2012-13 more than 10 million tons of rice and 5 million tons of wheat have been exported from India. This has helped many nations in meeting their requirements of food grains. However, we reserve the right to regulate such export when warranted to meet our domestic needs because India believes that domestic food security is our first and foremost priority.

By virtue of the fruitful deliberations in this august meeting, I am confident that sound mechanism will be evolved by improved data sharing and coordination at inter governmental level. Initiatives like AMIS and RRF are timely steps in that direction and I will appeal to all nations to participate actively in this mechanism.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, I wish for meaningful discussions and look forward to productive outcomes from this Ministerial Meeting on International Food Prices.
