

APRC Pakistan Country Statement: Day- 3, agenda item – 11

Statement by Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Pakistan- Mr. Syed Fakhar Imam

The Honorable Director General of the FAO, the Honorable Prime Minister of Bhutan, Honorable Member and Ministers of Nation states of the Thirty-fifth Asia Pacific Regional Conference of FAO, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen

Pakistan with the population of Two hundred and twenty million has nearly nineteen percent of its GDP generated through the agriculture sector.

We are trying that, those people living below the poverty line in particular, sustain in these difficult times of COVID-19. We had locust attack recently, we also had adverse weather conditions at the time of harvest of wheat. We are short by One and half million tons this year. Therefore, we are going to import wheat, so that we have availability for those who require nutrition from wheat. We are hoping that the country will be able to meet all the challenges, whether it is of climate change, Locust or COVID-19.

Our agriculture growth rate was about 2.7-2.8 percent where it should have been about 3.5 percent, partially on account of COVID-19.

By and large, the agriculture sector has done better than other sectors of our economy. The government of Pakistan and the Prime Minister, Mr. Imran Khan, has been able to bring certain transformation and changes in policies. We are promoting our five major components/crops. We need to upgrade our research, our extension, our education systems of agriculture, whereby we can meet our objectives and targets of transforming through more investment in human resources through quality education, through better health facilities and when we generate more in our economic activities, prominent opportunities would rise up.

We would like to digitalize fair amount of our agro-technologies, so that we can map out the soil conditions, and we can bring about better quality. We need to upgrade our seed technology in particular, make our inputs of chemicals and others to carry out the best practices as carried out in the more advanced countries of the world.

Overall, our strategic objective would be to raise our productivity per hector and have surpluses rather than deficits as we have done this time with wheat. It can only happen when policies are framed, which will benefit and bring about the income for the farming community. Unfortunately, in the past, more thrust has been to promote the commercial, industrial sector at the cost of the agriculture sector. We want to bring a better balance between different sectors of the economy manufacturing agriculture and the service sectors.

Thankyou!