



## Cambodia Country Statement by

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- *Excellency Lyonpo Yeshe Penjor, Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Forests of Bhutan*
- *Excellency QU Dongyu. Director-General of FAO*
- *Excellency Jong Jin Kim, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative of FAO,*
- *Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, members of the conference*

On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), I would like to sincerely thank FAO for our excellent partnership and the support to Cambodia and the MAFF. It is a good time to draw our attention to the Decade of Action, which calls for accelerating sustainable solutions, for improved results delivery and to address the global crisis of COVID-19, to address climate change, food insecurity, and demand shocks, and to remove the disruptions of food supply-and-demand chains. We all know too well what we have to achieve but ***we need our spirit of solidary, commitment, and unity to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).***

In Cambodia, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and FAO have been working closely together in the agriculture sector, and the current ***Country Programming Framework, 2019-2023*** reflects our joint effort to increase farmer households' incomes and creating prosperity and welfare for the Cambodian people through new areas of work and approaches which could transform the 'farming systems from 'extensive' to 'intensive', in a sustainable manner, to better integrate the value chains, to enhance agricultural productivity and diversification to meet local and international market demands.

- ***Excellency Chairman***
- ***All members of the conference***

Allow me to describe our challenges we have faced and the solutions we have adopted in the agriculture sector and for food security in our country.

Agriculture is recognized as a backbone of our country economic development. Agriculture has contributed 20.8 percent to the national GDP in 2019. Cambodia's poverty decreased from 53 percent in 2004 to 13.5 percent in 2014 and is now expected to be below 10 percent. More than 60 percent of poverty alleviation from 2007-2011 resulted from positive developments in agriculture.

However, we are still confronting critical issues ahead. The labor force has been leaving the agriculture sector to find new opportunities, notably in urban areas. The decline in agricultural labor emphasizes the need to mechanize agricultural, to find solutions to water and irrigation issues and to improve infrastructure to ensure an increase in production and productivity. Access to market also remains a major issue for smallholder farmers. There is a crucial need for creating a better business environment for farmers, for example, through mutually beneficial contract farming and better market information services, in addition to agricultural market facilitation.

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- ***All members of the conference***

Although we are facing these challenges, the Royal Government of Cambodia has been striving for positive changes in agriculture and food security for our people and nation.

Cambodia has already aligned national agricultural policies and strategies toward the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

The RGC ***long-term vision is to transform Cambodia in order to become an upper middle-income country by 2030, and a high-income country by 2050.*** To achieve this vision, the MAFF has established six important strategic objectives as stated ***in the Agricultural Development Policy 2021-2030 and its Actionable Agricultural Strategic Master Plan 2030.***

1. The first is to enhance the competitiveness of the agricultural value chains. The Ministry, in close cooperation with FAO and Development Partners (DPs) will focus on productivity enhancement and profit generation in the value chains of rice, seasonal crops, rubber and other agro-industrial crops, fisheries, and livestock.
2. In the next 10 years, we will also strengthen the supporting infrastructures and increase trade facilitation efforts in agriculture. To meet this aim, we concentrate on irrigation systems, rural farm roads, electricity price reduction for enterprises and agricultural communities, the promotion of e-agriculture and use of digital platforms in production and trade facilitation.
3. We will also promote sustainable land, forestry and fisheries resources management. In this sense, the Ministry will pay more attention to the sustainable management of land resources, forestry and wildlife resources, as well as fisheries resources, in environmentally and socioeconomically sound ways.
4. Institutional and human capacity development are central for achievement of our strategic objectives. We believe that only with a transparent regulatory framework, our farmers and agribusinesses can flourish the benefits of our economy and our people.

5. In addition, we are now faced with the challenges and disruptions that the COVID-19 crisis brought to our country, to the region and to the world. While countries have been hit differently, we can only jointly solve the hardships together for our people, particularly our smallholder farmers and the agribusinesses. Well targeted emergency relief has to go hand-in-hand with coherent support to keep the vital agriculture trade flowing. This crisis has emphasized the need for regional and international cooperation to strengthen our agriculture and food systems.
6. Last but not least, partnership, coordination and active participations from all concerned ministries, institutions, technical entities, and DPs are invaluable to achieve the vision and goals. The Ministry has been committed to partnerships with a smooth cooperation, using the existing government-DPs coordination structure and approaches.

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Once again, I am very positive about the Conference. I'd like to thank FAO for the excellent partnership and collaboration with MAFF. To further strengthen this partnership and cooperation between the Ministry and FAO, the Royal Government of Cambodia through the Ministry has allocated a location for the FAO Representation, with the office construction to start soon. Additionally, I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Chairman and the conference that Cambodia is willing to host the next APRC meetings if there should be any chance in the future.

Finally, I hope this conference will enhance more commitment, stronger international cooperation and we will be united more than ever to fight the COVID-19, hunger, climate change and poverty.

**Thank you very much for your attention!**