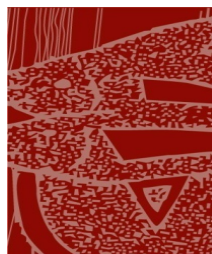




MINISTÉRIO DA
AGRICULTURA
E PESCAS



GABINETE DO
MINISTRO

SPEECH OF H.E. MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES TIMOR-LESTE AT THE 35TH ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE (APRC)

Excellencies,

Mr. Chairperson, Minister of Agriculture of Royal Government of Bhutan
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's my privilege to be part of this 35th Asia and the Pacific Regional Conference of FAO Member Countries and on behalf of the Government of Timor-Leste, I would like to congratulate the government of Bhutan and FAO Regional for having successfully convened the APRC first ever done virtually.

The Covid-19 pandemic has disturbed and changed the normal life of people in all countries around the world and consequently has changed the way of organising the 35th APRC.

Distinguish Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of Timor-Leste has received along the years significant support from FAO which I can not mention one by one. One of the most remarkable contribution of FAO to Timor-Leste was the preparation and implementation of the first ever Timor-Leste's Agricultural Census in 2019 self-finance by the government with full Technical Assistance from FAO.

Considering the recent surveys carried out in Timor-Leste indicated that food security has deteriorated in many parts of the country following COVID-19 pandemic prevention measures imposed by the Government since the first quarter of the year and low rainfall.

The Government of Timor-Leste's response measures include cash transfers to all House Holds (HHs) during the lock down period and has recently endorsed a COVID-19 Economic Recovery Strategy where higher priority is placed on boosting local agriculture production which to be stimulated through a food basket programme covering the entire population of the country.

All issues discussed throughout the conference are pertinent to Timor-Leste. However, as a small Island of developing country, the Government of Timor-Leste recognises the increasing impacts of climate change on agriculture and fisheries sector and the importance to adopt best practices to mitigate and

adapt to changes. Timor-Leste acknowledges the importance of resilience building across the agriculture sub sectors in this changing environment and the importance of good data and information to support development of the sector.

Thus, we would like to invite FAO to further improve and scale up its support to Timor-Leste in building resilience across the sub sectors. Water scarcity and aging farmers are major bottlenecks for farming activities to scale out, thus FAO support is sought to identify and promote appropriate technologies and means to remove these barriers.

Before closing, I hope to congratulate FAO for the major decision taken to strengthen capacity at the decentralized office and look forward to seeing Timor-Leste country office to benefit from this office. We would like to welcome FAO to consider a FAO Representative to be based in the country as we believe this will elevate FAO's participation in high level negotiations.

Lastly, I thank FAO Management Team and the Royal Government of Bhutan for having successfully organized and made this event happened, so we can share our experiences and I express my congratulation to the government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh of its readiness to host the next 36th session of APRC conference.

Thank you all.