

Country Statement by H.E. U Ohn Than, Deputy Minister for Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Myanmar at the 38th Session of FAO conference, Rome, Italy, 18th June, 2013 .

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

First of all, it is a great pleasure and honor for me, on behalf of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and on my own behalf, to deliver the country statement in this 38th session of FAO conference held with a theme of “Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition”.

I would like to take this opportunity to reflect the present status of Myanmar. Everybody may be aware that Myanmar is located at strategic area between the most populous countries in the world—China with 1.3 billion and India with 1.2 billion. Out of 60 million population of Myanmar, about two-third is depending on agriculture. Myanmar also has different agro-ecological regions such as delta area, coastal areas, hilly areas, mountainous areas and dry zone areas favourable for production of various crops, livestock and fishery.

Since the formation of new democratic government taking responsibility in 2011 April, step-by-step reform strategy in the areas of politics, economics and social are being carried out and priority has been placed on poverty reduction through socio economic development of people in rural areas based on agriculture.

Out of 8 Millennium Development Goals the first goal aims at eradicating hunger and extreme poverty. In this respect, Myanmar is striving to attain this MDG goal by reducing current poverty level of 26%, down to 16% by the year 2015.

In order to implement poverty reduction effectively, efforts are being carried out to increase the productivity in agriculture, livestock and fisheries sector, in order to contribute the Zero Hunger Programs being implemented by FAO.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kindly allow me to quote some of the points, from the Ministers' Communiqué of "Global Forum for Food and Agriculture" in Berlin on 19th January, 2013, where the challenges for food and nutritional security, and rural development are emphasized. The major issues, among others, are—"Right to Adequate Food", "Sustainable Investment in Agriculture in Developing Countries", "Negative Impacts of Global Warming, Desertification and Urbanization of Agricultural Land".

Since "Nutrition" itself covers in the sense of "Food Security", nutritional education, including awareness and knowledge sharing, are also needed for the purpose of healthy, safe and perfect diets among the people, especially in developing countries like Myanmar.

Moreover, I would also like to emphasize the need for technology support for pre- and post-harvest technology in agricultural sector where losses, about 40% of production, are wasted in the handling process of agricultural supply chain in developing countries. Those post-harvest losses are also the major challenge to overcome the global food security issues.

Another key option to achieve food security through increased productivity would also be the transformation from traditional to mechanized farming, including improved irrigation system, which also needs infrastructure investment for small scale farmers to become the large scale ones.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Myanmar is a food surplus country and potential to contribute regional food security, particularly rice production, and regional countries and FAO recommend that Myanmar will be able to get back to the leading position for rice export.

In this regard, I would honestly like to request all the distinguished guests from FAO member countries and development partners to achieve food security, the poverty reduction and zero hunger programs being implemented by all the nations in the world. In addition, I would also like to request your kind support for the development of Myanmar in terms of financial and technical assistances required for the rapid development, particularly for agricultural sector.

In conclusion, I believe that this conference will be able to bring about the welfare of the people, especially in developing countries, through good policy options, institutional arrangement and capacity building aiming at improved food security and nutrition, taking into consideration the global warming, climate change and natural disaster. And I would like to express my sincere gratitude for being able to contribute to this conference.

Thank you.