

**Statement delivered by**  
**The Honourable Arzu Rana Deuba, Minister for Foreign Affairs**  
**on the occasion of the 44th Session of the FAO Conference (28 June-4 July 2025)**  
**30 June 2025**

It is an honour to join you all in this important dialogue on the state of food and agriculture. I congratulate you, Chairperson, and the Bureau on your election. I assure you of my delegation's full support. I commend Director-General Dr. Qu for his visionary leadership. The State of Food and Agriculture report and the Medium-Term Plan for 2026-2029 provide a solid ground for our discussions, considerations and appropriate actions for our future.

We are also honoured to have been witnesses to the celebration of all the treaties that were done today and also I would like to congratulate the winners of the awards that were given out today. The focus on the Four Betters and the 20 programme priority areas is timely. This year we mark the 80th anniversary of FAO, a milestone that reflects eight decades of global leadership in combating hunger and building resilient food systems.

We honour FAO's enduring legacy. Despite decades of global efforts, myriads of challenges persist. But like our very wise Director-General said, *“Our ancestors had many more challenges to face but they overcame that, and we are now in a better position.”*

Pandemics, climate change, economic instability and geopolitical tensions have reversed gains attained towards Sustainable Development Goals, but I am sure with all the planning we are doing in sessions such as this, we will be able to overcome that. Hunger and malnourishment still affect millions, jeopardizing our joint global goal of Zero Hunger by 2030. In Least Developed Countries (LDC), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like Nepal, food insecurity is compounded by limited access to technology, rising debt and trade disruptions.

The benefits of modern science and technology including AI remain unevenly distributed. In this context, the Four Betters Strategic Framework: better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life, offers a hopeful and holistic response. It encompasses innovation, climate resilience, nutrition sensitive farming and inclusive rural development focused on equity and livelihoods.

Chairperson, agriculture is the backbone of Nepal's economy. It contributes 23 percent to GDP and supports two thirds of our population. Agriculture is of course key to our food security, better nutrition, poverty reduction, rural livelihoods and even peace.

Despite financial and technological constraints, Nepal is committed to transforming its agrifood system that is productive, competitive, inclusive and climate resilient. It is reflected in a range of our national policies and programmes, right from our constitution which guarantees every citizen right to food, freedom from hunger and a clean and healthy environment. It also mandates sustainable resource management and lays a strong legal foundation for climate-smart and sustainable agriculture and food system.

The 16th National Development Plan of Nepal and the Agricultural Development Strategy which we are currently implementing, also align with the Four Betters Framework. Nepal's policies focus on climate resilient farming, nutrition, strengthening of value chains, commercialization and agri-entrepreneurship among others. We are also promoting early warning system, market access and digital connectivity to boost rural resilience.

Inclusion is key in all our strategies. Therefore, we are empowering women, youth and small holders through better access to credit, land and extension services. In January of this year, we launched Nepal's first Four Betters model village in Kavri, with FAO's support.

This initiative integrates traditional agricultural practices with modern innovative techniques to enhance the quality of life for local communities. Though our policies and programmes have improved the state of food security and agriculture, a lot still remains to be done, especially in our fragile mountain ecosystem which is now being increasingly negatively impacted by climate change. As a Himalayan nation, Nepal is on the front lines of climate impacts such as glacial retreat, erratic rainfall and ecosystem degradation.

This has threatened our fragile highlands and livelihoods of the people. The promotion of sustainable and resilient mountain agriculture is thus critical not just for our livelihoods but for biodiversity of the whole planet, food security and ecological balance of planet earth. To highlight this, we convened the Sagarmatha Sambad which was the first edition of a dialogue, a biennial dialogue forum this May.

This inaugural global dialogue called for global solidarity, climate justice and shared responsibility especially for mountain communities which are often left behind. The urgency of climate change must be fully recognized and matched by international commitment in all areas especially in agriculture and food security. Nepal therefore calls for targeted and grant-based access to international climate finance specifically for mountain regions which are often overlooked in global adaptation efforts.

Mountain agriculture must be formally recognized as a priority in the global climate and food security agendas. Chairperson, transforming agro-food systems demand integrated efforts, coordinated investment and inclusive partnership. Nepal envisions strong public-private community collaboration driven by innovation, digitization and global connectivity.

Nepal really appreciates FAO's technical support and seeks deeper cooperation for accessing finances for scaling up its successful innovative agricultural practices with focus on the Four Betters. Nepal seeks collaboration for scaling up access of farmers to early warning systems. We seek FAO's support to increased collaboration for sustainable mountain farming in the face of increased climate risk.

Nepal would also appreciate shared knowledge on the best practices for augmented involvement and leadership of women and young farmers. We call for stronger South-South and North-South cooperation to share knowledge, resources and innovations among mountain countries facing similar threats.

Chairperson, Nepal stands ready to contribute and collaborate. Today we build a food secure, climate resilient and inclusive future. I thank you for your attention.