

**Statement delivered by  
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Agriculture Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and  
Irrigation of the Republic of Kenya  
on the occasion of the  
41<sup>st</sup> Session of the FAO Conference, Rome, Italy (22-29 June 2019)  
24 June 2019**

The Chairperson of the 41st FAO Conference,  
The Director General of FAO  
Excellences, Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you Chairman for giving me this opportunity on behalf of the Kenyan Government to add our voice into the important topic of State of Food and Agriculture: *Migration, Agriculture and Rural Development* in this 41<sup>st</sup> Session of the Food and Agriculture Organization Conference.

Once again and on behalf of the Republic of Kenya, I would like to express our warmest congratulations to the Director General Elect of FAO, Dr. Qu Dongyu. We reiterate the fact that the Kenyan Government will work with you and fully support your leadership.

Indeed, Kenya appreciates the transformative ideas that have been shared and look forward to the implementation of the same under your leadership. We also warmly appreciate Professor Graziano da Silva for achieving great results over the eight years he has been at the helm of this organization.

Chairman,

We are holding the 41<sup>st</sup> FAO Conference at a time when rising food and nutrition insecurity is a major concern globally. The situation has deteriorated more in the developing countries as per the report of the 2018 State of Food and Agriculture. We note that among other causes, the increasing conflicts and violence in several parts of the world, climate variability and exposure to more complex, frequent and intense climate extremes, has eroded the gains made in ending hunger and malnutrition.

Chairman,

the 2018 State of Food and Agriculture report also gives a clear nexus between Migration, Agriculture and Rural Development as an important phenomenon contributing to economic development. My delegation, therefore, notes that policies should maximize the contribution of rural migration to economic and social development. As a Government, we have deliberately focused on promoting employment opportunities in the agricultural value chains to address youth unemployment challenges by creating decent on- and off-farm employment opportunities in rural areas as a key in taming unnecessary migration of populations.

Chairman,

I am sure that our discussions throughout this Conference will be fruitful and will delve more deeply into these matters so that as countries we are better guided to provide needed help to the farming communities that face

challenges of rising food and nutrition insecurity, better manage conflicts, deal better with the negative impacts of rising food prices, and the threats of climate change and erratic weather.

Chairman,

The fight against poverty and hunger in Africa is becoming more challenging in view of the projected population of about 1.8 billion by the year 2050. This calls for us to continue to give priority to agriculture in our National Development Agenda and further intensify investment in this critical sector.

Chairman,

As with most African countries, agriculture is the leading sector of Kenya's economy and contributes 24 percent to the GDP. It provides employment to 80 percent of the population, and 50 percent to overall export earnings. It is a very important sector for food and nutrition security, job creation, economic development and improved livelihoods.

To ensure food and nutrition security for all Kenyans, the Government recently launched the Big 4 Agenda with 100 percent food and nutrition security being a priority pillar. This strategy has adopted a value chain approach by targeting the main food security staples and addressing not only their production deficits but also ensuring that Kenyan farmers earn sufficient incomes.

Further, the Government has developed a ten year Agriculture Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy aimed at sustained increase in incomes for small scale farmers, pastoralists and fisher folk; increase agriculture output and value addition; and boost food resilience in households.

The Government's agricultural policy is aimed at enhancing farm profitability and competitiveness through realizing the existing productivity potential of various enterprises while also creating an enabling environment for more investment along the value chain of various agricultural products.

Towards this Chairman, Kenya aspires to pursue and benefit from the core guiding principles of FAO especially enhanced access to production inputs to improve production and productivity, timely management of emerging pest and diseases, maintenance of soil, health and fertility, Climate Smart approaches to rural developments; promotion of greater attention to risk and resilience in order to manage the environment.

Chairman,

Kenya is increasingly expanding partnerships between public and private sectors in order to maximize returns on investment and optimize benefits of new investment across the country. The Government has strengthened the legal and regulatory framework to facilitate the PPPs and increase value chain activities

Indeed Chair,

The Government has put several strategies in place to target youth who form a high proportion of the population and enhance specific affirmative action on Government procurement to 24 percent so as to mainstream the productivity of youth run enterprises in economic development. These interventions targeting the youth will further curb high rural and urban migration.

As I conclude Chair, I would like to emphasize the importance of working together as Member Nations in order to effectively respond to the rising challenges of food insecurity, food commodity price volatility and threats of

climate change, and extreme natural disaster. We must continue to enhance our investment in agriculture and rural infrastructure, and at the same time protect our natural resources.

At this juncture, I convey my appreciation to FAO for the important work that it continues to do in Kenya, in implementing a number of food security and rural development programmes in different parts of the country. Indeed, these programmes are making a positive contribution to food security and overall agricultural development.

I thank you.