

**Statement delivered by**  
**The Honorable Jabulani Clement Mabuza**  
**Minister for Agriculture of the Kingdom of Eswatini**  
**on the occasion of the**  
**42nd Session of the FAO Conference (14-18 June 2021)**  
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*Thank you very much Chairperson and my colleagues,  
FAO Director-General,  
FAO staff members,  
Distinguished delegates,*

It is an honour and privilege for me to have the opportunity to address you at this 42nd Session of FAO Conference. Let me begin my address by extending warm greetings to you all on behalf of their Majesties, the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Eswatini.

Chairperson, the Kingdom of Eswatini recognises the good work that is being done by FAO in ensuring that we do not lose focus in the pursuit to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all without leaving anyone behind. This quest, dear colleagues, Honourable Heads of Delegations is without doubt not an easy task. It is even made worse by the many emerging challenges including the present situation of the COVID-19 Pandemic which has hit the world hard. May I, on that note, commend the decision to continue having this conference despite the pandemic utilising the virtual platform.

*Chairperson,*

The Kingdom of Eswatini would like to align itself with the theme of the Conference, which is “Agriculture Food Systems Transformation: From Strategy to Action”. To me this simply means it is time we implement all the strategies we have been developing over the years. It is not the strategies that will provide the required food but the results of executing these strategies. So in order to achieve our goal of zero hunger, no poverty, improved health and the wellbeing of our people, we have to accelerate the implementation of planned programmes.

*Chairperson,*

While we were still struggling to achieve food and nutrition security with our efforts being hampered by the climate change phenomenon the situation has since been made worse by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has caused a near complete shutdown of various programmes of national development including those on food and nutrition security.

*Chairperson,*

The Kingdom of Eswatini would like to congratulate FAO and development Partners for rendering development assistance to the different countries in the form of various projects and programmes of economic importance to the countries. Such projects and programmes include a number that are contributing remarkably to the food and nutrition security endeavour. Of particular importance to Eswatini is the use of climate smart agriculture approaches to increase smallholder farmer resilience to climate change. The various partners within and outside the United Nations umbrella are helping us build the capacity of our smallholder farmers to make meaningful contribution to the national

economic development and improved livelihoods of our people. Eswatini, through the technical assistance of FAO and the World Food Programme is involved in the provision of food commodities for a school feeding programme. We have recently embarked on the home grown school feeding programme and that has changed for the better the production approach and way of thinking of the smallholder farmers. The farmers received training to improve the yield and quality of their produce and also to develop the necessary skills in proper handling, storage and marketing of the farm produce. The resultant effect has been direct market access for the smallholder farmers, improved yield and quality, reduction in the cost of providing food commodities to the national school feeding programme and the gradual change from producing for family sustenance to production for the market through the market-led approach.

*Chairperson,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Another programme that Eswatini would like to attribute to the technical assistance and development cooperation with FAO and other development partners is in the development of resilience through climate smart agriculture approaches and technologies. Very recently the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Eswatini was taken on a conducted tour of an eco-friendly, climate smart agriculture project by a smallholder farmer in one of Eswatini's regions that is susceptible to drought. The farmer is growing various field crops and fruits for business using the climate smart agriculture approach and eco-friendly methods for sustainability. This visit to the model farmer was used as a means to provoke the interest of other farmers in a similar position to copy and eventually replicate the good work by the model farmer.

*Chairperson,*

Allow me to conclude by expressing my country's strong support to the vision to push for better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life through the transformation from strategy to action. The food systems approach is a way to go in the quest to reduce global hunger, malnutrition and put the world back on track in the fight to improve food and nutrition security for all.

Thank you.