

Statement delivered by
Mr Efa Muleta Boru, Advisor to the Minister of Agriculture of the
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
on the occasion of the
42nd Session of the FAO Conference (14-18 June 2021)
15 June 2021

Thank you, Madame Chair,

Director-general Qu Dongyu,

Distinguished Delegates from all Member States of FAO countries,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to present to you the statement of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, on behalf of our Minister for Agriculture, His Excellency Omer Hussein, on this historical virtual 42nd Conference of FAO, which is taking place in the context of a world that is facing a pandemic and many other serious challenges to our globe.

As you all know, currently the numbers of food insecure people are rising in alarming rate due to multiple factors such as climate shocks, the COVID-19, conflicts and others. Recent predictions indicated that 174 million people will face food insecurity by this year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has furtherly worsened the global hunger and malnutrition, while laying bare the systemic inequalities that underpin current agri-food systems.

In order to overcome these difficulties and to meet these challenges effectively, it is time that the International Community must be able to find effective solutions that transform the agri-food systems. Although Africa has 60 percent of the worlds available arable land, the continent is still producing too little to feed its people and encompasses the largest humanitarian crisis.

We have the honour of sharing our thoughts with other nations on the issues that are most important to us, and to discuss the solutions that we propose. African agriculture is overwhelmed by low productivity, under-investment, poor rural infrastructure, soil degradation, poor implementation capacity and other related issues.

Moreover, the drivers for the rise of global hunger and malnutrition particularly in Africa are also caused by climate change posed shocks, conflicts and violences. The climate change and vulnerabilities are negatively affecting all dimensions of food security as well as reinforcing other underlying causes of malnutrition.

Madame Chair,

Your Excellency Director-General Qu Dongyu,

With these facts, the Government of Ethiopia is highly committed to Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG1 & SDG2 (end of hunger and poverty), and is taking holistic approaches, such as *Green Legacy Initiatives*, initiated by His Excellency the Prime Minister, Dr. Abiy Ahmed, targeting to plant 20 billion seedlings by 2024, the expansion of giant agro-industrial parks, agro-mechanisation, investment on innovation, research and development, and many others.

Therefore, while we are coming close to the global Food Systems Summit, we highlight the importance of establishing holistic and ground-breaking strategies that tackle the contemporary and future challenges.

Ethiopia appreciates the bold vision and the move of FAO with its Medium Term Plan and Strategic Framework to push for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life.

We also underline the important role of agri-food systems to address global hunger and malnutrition. Thus, our Government believes that innovative agri-food systems are the core tenet in either Africa or any other areas to address global hunger and malnutrition.

Most importantly, the FAO initiative such the Hand-in-Hand Initiative is important to support the most disadvantaged countries to integrate actions, and to achieve agri-food systems transformation.

With this fact, priority should be given to small-holder farmers in providing access to finance, agricultural inputs, mechanization, small-scale irrigation and allowing for diverse agricultural production; additionally, my Government also wishes to support the initiation for digital agricultural system development, initiated by FAO and its medium-term strategic plan.

Finally, we urge all partners and organizations to work on hand-in-hand initiatives to go from strategies to actions to bring agricultural and food transformation.

Thank you.