

**Statement delivered on behalf of  
The Honourable Owusu Afriyie Akoto  
Minister for Food and Agriculture of the Republic of Ghana**

**by**

**Her Excellency Eudora Hilda Quartey Koranteng  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ghana to FAO**

**on the occasion of the**

**42nd Session of the FAO Conference (14-18 June 2021)**

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*FAO Director General,*

*Members of the Governing Council,*

*Colleague Ministers,*

*Distinguished Participants,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I extend warm greetings from the President and people of the Republic of Ghana. It is a personal delight and honour for me to participate in the 42nd FAO Conference, which has brought together my colleagues from other countries, development partners, experts and other stakeholders in Agriculture.

The theme for this year's Conference, "Food Systems Transformation: From Strategy to Action", given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy, speaks directly to the challenges caused by the pandemic. It also reflects the mood of the international community, especially countries like Ghana where the pandemic has constituted a major setback to our momentum of transforming agriculture, and is in effect a call to action.

The opportunity presented by this august platform to review sector performance, deliberate, share ideas, experiences and lessons from other countries inspires great hope. We are grateful to the FAO for contributing to the global effort at transforming agriculture over the years.

Ghana's experience in the process of transforming Agriculture has practical insight and has reinforced the need for greater investment in the sector, especially to guarantee food security at all times. In recognition of this, from inception, my government's development agenda has centred on revamping the agricultural sector to drive sustainable growth and structural transformation of Ghana's economy.

Practical commitment to this agenda, has found expression in massive investment in various sectors of agriculture, that is to say: food crops, tree crops, livestock, mechanisation and agricultural infrastructure development.

The vehicle for delivering investment in these strategic areas has been the government's flagship programme, Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ). The massive investment in these areas have paid off significantly. The manifestations include: increased productivity, with the doubling and tripling of staples such as maize, rice and soybeans, increase in the participation of farmers in the PFJ programme and enhanced modernisation of the agricultural sector.

Since 2017, when the government introduced the PFJ programme, Ghana has experienced food surpluses that have triggered exports mainly of staples such as maize and rice to neighbouring countries. The PFJ intervention has also contributed to significantly increase farmer incomes and employment.

In the quest to build a resilient food system, the Government of Ghana has also invested in the construction of 80 (1000) metric tons capacity warehouses, to promote food storage and the building of strategic reserves. The warehouses will help curb the recurring annual problem of post-harvest losses and guarantee farmer incomes, through greater accessibility to markets. Farmers have also received a major boost through the establishment of mechanisation service centres and the importation of hand-held equipment for use by small-holder farmers. This will help reduce the drudgery in farming. Government has also arranged to import milling machines to motivate rice farmers as part of the government agenda to achieve self-sufficiency in the production of rice by 2025. Through the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the Government of Ghana is also investing in the livestock sector. The provision of improved breeds to farmers and investment in infrastructure is expected to increase productivity and promote the competitiveness of the sector.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

These interventions have firmly put Ghana on the path of transforming its agriculture, in spite of multiple and complex challenges, particularly the vulnerabilities of the country's food system, which were exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Policy makers now appreciate even more the need for greater investments and positive action in Ghana's food systems.

Government's response has been to roll out a 174 million dollar major intervention known as the COVID-19 Alleviation and Revitalization of Enterprises Support Programme (C.A.R.E.S). This intervention is to provide strategic support to agriculture and other priority sectors, to maximise returns to the economy from agriculture. Ultimately, it is expected to motivate private sector investment for the needed partnership with the government to build a robust and resilient food system.

To conclude, Ladies and Gentlemen, the forum presents an opportunity, in anticipation of the successful outcomes of the forthcoming Food Systems Summit, for global action to impact agriculture positively, to build the needed food systems and guarantee global food security at all times.

Thank you for your attention.