

**Statement by H.E. Bekir PAKDEMIRLI Minister of Agriculture and
Forestry of the Republic of TURKEY**
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Excellency Director General Mr. Qu Dong-Yu,

Honorable Ministers,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to address this honourable audience on the occasion of the 42nd Session of the FAO Conference.

At the very outset, please allow me to express my appreciation for the excellent work and contribution of FAO to the efforts in the way to achieve sustainable agricultural development and food security.

Distinguished participants,

We have experienced extraordinary times caused by Covid 19 pandemic that shocked the world and all sectors and people. Actually, we are still feeling its negative effects. It is a global problem that has caused economic, social and psychological problems for millions of people. It has restricted our freedom, changed our lives and our perceptions.

While we are in lock down for a long time, some sectors have to continue to operate. We express our gratitude to health professionals at first and then workers of certain sectors such as food and agriculture who are the secret heroes for us to access food.

Covid-19 has shown the importance of food, agriculture and rural life. Today, almost 80 percent of vulnerable people lives in rural areas and these people mainly depends on agriculture for livelihood.

According to latest figures, unfortunately, almost 9 percent of the world population goes to bed hungry everyday, 2 billion people are unable to access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food. As a result of the pandemic, additional 132 million people face the risk of chronic hunger.

Studies show that in order to meet the food needs of the growing world population, we need to increase food production by 60% until 2050.

Distinguished participants,

Unsustainable development models not only degrade natural environment but also threaten ecosystems and biodiversity which are crucial for all living creatures.

We should keep in mind that our resources are limited and if we do not take the necessary steps to protect them.

Additionally, changes in diet and increasing demand for food of animal origin put growing burden on all natural resources, including valuable farmlands.

From the perspective of achieving Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, along with the undernutrition, obesity is also an important problem that should be addressed. In this

sense we need to take action to address nutrition concerns, emphasizing the importance of a balanced diet in particular for women and children.

We should make more investments on sustainable agriculture, forestry and rural development to achieve the goal of “zero hunger” by 2030. For this aim we strongly support the new vision of the FAO for *“better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life”* in the way for sustainable food systems.

Protection of biodiversity, promotion of environmental friendly practices, sustainable use of natural resources, balanced diet, transformation of institutions, reduction of food loss and waste and digitalization are key elements to this end. These elements would help efforts for combatting undernutrition, as well as overcoming overweight and obesity problems.

Esteemed guests,

As Turkey, we are keen to increase agricultural productivity with the use of new technologies including digitalization and innovation. We have launched the Digital Agriculture Market which is called DITAP that will cover the entire food supply chain. This platform includes a wide range of members from small farmers to big players in retail sector and provides our farmers a number of new opportunities to strengthen their marketing capabilities. The system also allows contracting farming.

Honorable participants,

I would like to briefly touch upon the new initiative under the FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme on Food and Agriculture. Within this frame, Regional Cooperation Centre for Sustainable Food Systems (BSEC-CSFS) has been established in Ankara. This Center will enhance the sustainability of the whole food value chain from farm to fork among Black Sea Economic Cooperation member states.

During Turkey’s G20 presidency in 2015, the issue of food loss and waste has been raised as a global problem. Since then, all and every effort has been performed to raise awareness.

Within this context, Turkey has adopted a strategy in order to prevent food losses and waste both at national and international level.

Moreover, under the scope of FAO-Turkey Partnership Program, we have initiated a regional project on reducing food loss and waste in Turkey and Central Asia. The project also covers a national campaign called “Save Your Food” which will be implemented in the beneficiary countries. We aim to reduce food loss and waste, raise public awareness both nationally and internationally and disseminate good practices at regional level.

Thanks to FAO-Turkey partnership programmes on food and forestry, we have the chance to carry out projects in different parts of the world from Central Asia to Africa and exchange technical knowledge and know-how.

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to reiterate that collaboration and sharing experiences among all partners is key for ensuring the sustainability and resilience of global food supply chains during and after the pandemic.

Thank you.