

**Statement delivered by  
His Excellency Defu Guang  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of China  
on the occasion of the  
43rd Session of the FAO Conference (1-7 July 2023)  
4 July 2023**

Thank you Madam President. China would like to congratulate you. We believe that with you chairing the Conference we will surely move all Agenda Items forward smoothly and effectively.

Ministers,

Heads of Delegations and colleagues,

The Conference has chosen water resources management for the Four Betters as its theme. The Conference aims to step up efforts for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. China commends and supports this theme.

China lacks in water resources. Fresh water per capita is less than one third of the global average level. Water resources in China are distributed highly unevenly across regions. Drought and the lack of water have been a long term threat to China's domestic production. The Chinese Government values greatly water conservation in agriculture and China works constantly to better manage water resources. China promotes good practices in this area. In the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan water conservation in agriculture has made significant progress with increases posing efficiency and effectiveness of water use.

I would like to highlight the following measures. First, improving water management for sustainable agriculture, reducing water consumption. In 1997, 492 cubic metres of water were used to irrigate one moor of land. In 2021, that number is 355. By the end of 2022, over 400 million moors of farmland apply high efficiency irrigation methods using less water and putting water to better use.

Secondly, China pushes forward dry land farming, fully leveraging water resources. Dry land farming has a long history in China. The Shexian Dryland Stone Terraced System in Hebei province is designated by FAO as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System. In practical terms agri-planting structure is adjusted and optimized according to precipitation. We also carry out trainings for water conservation techniques and establish irrigation guidelines for major agri-plants.

Thirdly, China increases efficiency of water use in agriculture and actively developing irrigation technologies. We apply different techniques in an integrated manner for higher efficiency. The total area of irrigated farm land increased from 240 million moors in 1949 to over 1 billion moors in 2021.

Although the irrigated area makes only half of the farmland in China 75 percent of food and over 90 percent of cash crops are produced on them. Water is the foundation for agri-production. China will continue to optimize water management and explore advanced irrigation techniques.

China faces three dilemmas protecting the bottom line for food security in a face of the lack of water, conserving water in agriculture with weak farmland infrastructure, using water for agri-production whilst safeguarding the environment. We will safeguard food supply.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Excellencies,

As the biggest developing country and a responsible major country China will step up its own effort and fulfil its international obligations. China will broadly support and continue to support FAO in its work

and participate pragmatically in global agrifood governance. China will cooperate with FAO and its Members in a pragmatic and effective manner. The world is facing multiple challenges; the lack of water, natural disasters, climate change, and the list is long. We call upon the FAO and its Members to take real actions.

This Conference serves as a key opportunity to improve water management thus turning a new page in global food security and rural development. China is willing to shoulder international responsibilities in accordance with its own capacities and development stage, through South-South Cooperation and Tripartite Cooperation, Hand-in-Hand Initiative and the GIAHS, China will deepen its cooperation with FAO and its Members to safeguard global food security, to achieve a world with zero hunger and zero poverty, and to contribute to the community of shared future for human kind.

Thank you very much.