

Statement delivered by
His Excellency Mohammad Ali Nikbakht, Minister for Agriculture Jihad
on the occasion of the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference (1-7 July 2023)

3 July 2023

Thank you Madam Chair. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, honourable delegates, I am honoured to present this statement on behalf of our newly appointed Minister of Agriculture. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran to express my appreciation to all those involved in organizing the 43rd FAO Conference with its focus on managing water resources for better production, better nutrition, better environment, better life, with the aim of achieving the 2030 SDGs.

Today we are witnessing an unprecedented strain on water resources worldwide. Climate change, biodiversity loss, land use changes, urbanization, expansion and numerous other factors have disrupted natural water cycles and intensified competition for water resources.

Simultaneously, the global population is rapidly increasing and projections indicate that if current trends and practices persist, there will be a 40 percent shortfall between projected demand and available water supply by 2030.

According to available statistics, by 2050 half of the world's grain production and nearly half of the global GDP may face the risk of water insecurity. The scarcity of water at global and regional levels underscores the necessity for enhanced collaboration among all nations. Water is not only a human right but also a right for plants, animals, micro-organisms, and the environment from a biodiversity standpoint. Preserving water resources is undeniably crucial for future generations.

Ladies and gentlemen, today the world needs to embrace illustrative and rejuvenating model of development. We must immediately halt the destruction of water and other essential resources, adopting an integrated approach to water resources management coupled with improving water security can ensure sustainable food security for all.

This approach necessitates the involvement of women and men from all economic sectors, respecting the culture, social and economic diversity.

Excellencies, to address the challenges associated with limited water resources due to population growth and climate change, we must seek innovative nature-based solutions. SDG 6 underscores the need for universal access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation by 2030. The report emphasizes that global water demand is increasing and will continue to rise in the next two decades due to population growth, economic development and shifting consumption patterns.

Ensuring access to water, food and energy is a significant concern for the expanding global population, including many countries like Iran. In Iran, several measures have been taken to enhance water efficiency in the agricultural sector, such as deploying new technologies, reforming irrigation systems and implementing water allocation management. In line with these efforts we have also undertaken initiatives to renovate and consolidate agricultural lands.

Madam Chair, in the Islamic Republic of Iran our foremost priority is the completion and implementation of a sustainable value chain and a knowledge based food system. Iran stands ready to collaborate with all countries, particularly those in the region within the framework of FAO, to enhance water efficiency in agriculture and natural resource management and to find ways to preserve water for future generations. Once again, I express my gratitude to the Director-General, the President and the colleagues for hosting this meeting, and I wish a better life for all.

Thank you