

Statement delivered by

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on the occasion of the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference (1-7 July 2023)**

3 July

Thank you Madam President.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

good afternoon to everyone. The Philippines thanks the food and agriculture organization for the Conference document *C 2023/2* on the State of Food and Agriculture integrated water resources management. We note the recommendations it puts forward to overcome the water challenges in agriculture in its promoting integrated water risk management for resilient agrifood systems to speed up rural economic development.

The Philippines indeed recognizes the importance of water in development and in this regard the need to manage efficiently the precious resource in an integrated manner, successfully address current and emerging complex challenges which include water availability innovations, water quality, and pollution and others. The Philippines perhaps and other countries in our horizon is currently experiencing an El Niño event that is expected to intensify towards the end of the year as informed by our weather office. As an initial response to this climate event the country is embarking cloud city operations to improve water levels irrigation and other water bounding dams, a reverse in ground water deposits especially in production areas critical watersheds and reservoirs.

Long term mitigating measures to respond to the numerous water issues are similarly being put in place by the country nonetheless. This includes rehabilitation, and modernization of irrigation facilities and dams, to enhance water efficiency, water efficient delivery, and reduce water wastage, construction of flood control facilities in sea wall in areas that easily get flooded, water impounding facilities in strategic areas to harvest excess water among others.

In the light of this intensifying climate change phenomenon the Philippines is now investing in climate resilient water infrastructures such as solar power irrigation systems, promoting domestic water and recycling schemes at house hold and community levels to promote water conservation and advocating nature based solutions like reforestation, expansion of areas, use of organic or bio fertilizer, as well as adaption of water saving and climate resilient agricultural practices in technologies such as adjustment of planting calendars, use of alternative wetting and drying better crop nutrient management.

To harmonize and efficiently implement water related measures of various Government offices in our country the President of the Philippines and the concurrent Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, His Excellency Ferdinand Marcos Jr., signed and accepted in order number 22 last April 27th 2023 creating the Water Resources Management Office within the department of environment and natural resources. The office will likewise act as regulatory body to safeguard this precious resource, manage its use efficiently and ensure its efficient availability for all economic sectors.

Furthermore, last May 26th 2023, the country signed the record of discussions with the Korea National Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to implement a capacity building project to ensure that we have the human resources, skilled and capable to properly execute integrated water resources management that would contribute to the achievement of more sustainable development.

By working together and supporting each other to achieve the needed integrated management and efficient use of water resources under the able guidance and leadership of the food and agriculture organization, is a major step towards achieving the shared objective of a resilient agrifood system. A resilient agrifood system can definitely facilitate a recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the animal disease outbreaks and other crisis which are still looming in our needs.

Finally, the achievement of a resilient agrifood system and successfully overcoming all this crisis will need all of us to meet the targets we committed to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In view of this I reiterate once again the Philippines 'unwavering offers support in the implementation of measures that will improve water resource management to achieve a prosperous food and agriculture and the goals of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. I call on our colleague Member countries to do the same. The time is ticking, we should act now and act fast.

Thank you and a pleasant day once again to everyone.