

Statement delivered by
His Excellency Manzour bin Hilal Alanazi
Vice-Minister for Environment, Water and Agriculture of Saudi Arabia
on the occasion of the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference (1-7 July 2023)

Thank you, Chairperson.

Excellencies,
ladies and gentlemen,
peace be with you.

It gives me pleasure to participate with you in this Conference to discuss an important issue in relation to the situation of the State of Food and Agriculture, in view of major challenges relating to water scarcity and the need for its integrated management. This is our main issue and we need to have an integrated management of these water resources, as well aligning it with the Sustainable Development Goals, so as to achieve the *four betters*; better production, better nutrition, better environment, and a better life.

The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia grants issues related to agrifood and related issues are great importance in its policies and strategies nationally. It believes that it is its duty, as a Member of the Organization, to work together with other institutions to promote research in these fields and the use of modern technologies. This requires, from all of us, to join our efforts in order to resolve the issues.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia adopted a number of strategies and initiatives, as well as programmes to promote development of sustainable agriculture as well as increasing the efficiency of the management of water resources and the preservation of water resources and the environment.

The Kingdom now contributes through the Agriculture Development Fund in terms of loans, to over 70 percent of the capital costs of agricultural projects. This increased from 500 million SAR in 2015 to 7 billion SAR in 2022, and this is expected to reach 2.23 billion this year. That is with an increase of 1 billion per year.

We also proceeded to a programme that is called the Rural Development Programme in order to contribute to food security in a more balanced development. We know that water resources are the most important resources for development, and even though the Kingdom is one of the countries that suffer most from water scarcity, we have achieved a development in agricultural investment and we achieved an increase of this part in gross domestic product to 72 billion SAR in 2021.

The Kingdom also adopts an integrated water resources management. This helped reduce agricultural consumption of water from 86 percent to less than 70 percent. It is now working on meeting the changes that are now occurring in the world. It has based its projects on technology so as to achieve efficiency in the use of natural resources.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia now commits to further contributing to the efforts and strategies that relate to the development of agriculture and food and water security. I would like to express our great appreciation to the Director-General of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and his assistance on the efforts that are meant to achieve food security and I would like to wish full success to this Conference so as we can achieve sustainability for all.

Thank you.