

Statement delivered by
His Excellency Mohammed Hassan Katana
Minister for Agriculture of Syrian Arab Republic
on the occasion of the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference (1-7 July 2023)
3 July 2023

Your Excellencies,
ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honour to represent the Syrian Arab Republic in this 43rd Session of the Conference of the FAO and while wishing Mr Qu Dongyu all the best we aspire to draw together an action plan for the future. We add our voice to the Group 77 & China. At a time when the Member States and the FAO are endeavouring to achieve their objectives and to help the poor countries in creating strategies and programmes to improve the food systems and to reduce the number of the hungry in the world, we are witnessing many crises and wars that have negatively influenced our ambition to eliminate hunger. These threats are no longer feasible, it is essential to create peace and raise stability in the world.

Fighting terrorism is one of the most important elements in order to create peace. Syria was subjected to a terroristic war and to a series of different crises that have destroyed infrastructure and service posts and production industries. The terrorist attacks have been detrimental and they were followed by the COVID-19 pandemic and other many crises, the last of which was the earthquake on the 6th of February 2023. The international community has continued its siege and its unilateral illegal measures that have hindered the governmental efforts to help the Syrian people. The UN Organizations including the FAO that has work in Syria have helped us in facing these crises, although such help was limited.

The Ministry of Agriculture in Syria gives great importance to the Hand-in-Hand Initiative that was launched by the FAO and it is coordinating directly with the investment centre, with the aim of creating one product in one country that aims at raising the levels of value chains for olives and olive oils. We believe it is extremely important to support the urban food systems and the green cities initiatives that can actually constitute good framework for this and that can reduce loss and waste in foods.

This is why we insist on the importance of integrated projects that can improve value chains and face the consequences of climate change. The Ministry of Agriculture has set an agricultural strategy for 2021-2030. In line with local and regional changes this comprises 65 programmes.

We call upon all of you including the CM Institute and the Italian, German and Japanese Cooperation Agencies, we call upon all of you so as to help us in implementing this strategy and to provide technical, financial and expert aid. We also hope to be able to raise the financial contributions of the FAO and other organizations currently and after the Arab Summit in Jeddah in 2023 and with the participation of the President of Syria and the return of the Syrian Republic in its work for food security.

Thank you.