

**Statement delivered by  
H.E. Voitov Aziz Botirovich, Minister for Agriculture of Uzbekistan  
on occasion of the  
43rd Session of the FAO Conference (1-7 July 2023)  
3 July 2023**

Honorable Chair Madam Minister Bibeau,

Director-General Qu Dongyu,

Distinguished Delegates, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to join colleagues from all over the world in this first after Covid-19 pandemic meeting of the FAO Conference.

We congratulate FAO for promoting and integrating the issues of integrated water resources management into its core activities for the next biennium and beyond. Today's agenda is both urgent and touching every nation in the world.

Water use efficiency in the agri-food sector globally became the most critical element as we are facing the climate emergency, water scarcity, droughts, floods, pollution, and many other challenges.

Agriculture is central to those challenges because it is the largest sectoral water user.

The main question is what kind of innovations, incentives and investments are needed for integrated water resources management to adequately transform our agri-food systems.

The historic visit of President of Uzbekistan His Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev to FAO headquarters and discussions with FAO Director-General Dr Qu Dongyu last month clearly signified to what extent Uzbekistan attaches on the issues of agrifood systems.

In this context, I would like to share with you number of developments in addressing the water challenges in agriculture.

In recent years, in the history of New Uzbekistan, we have managed to carry out fundamental reforms in the agricultural sector.

We are consistently implementing our Agri-Food Development Strategy for 2020-2030 in line with the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN.

The key pillars of which remain diversification of crops, integration of science and innovation, digitalization, introduction of water-saving technologies, and creation of effective value chains.

In the last six years we increased the coverage of water saving technologies at the country from 10 percent to 30 percent.

In 2022, such technologies were introduced on a total area of more than four hundred fifty thousand (450,000) hectares, which made it possible to save more than 2 billion cubic meters of water.

We set a goal to at least double the income of farmers in the next five years, as well as ensure sustainable agricultural growth by the end of 2026.

The Government of Uzbekistan is pursuing this goal and ensuring the support to farmers through its policy, investment, tax incentives and subsidy programs.

Dear colleagues,

Our region has become a global climate hotspot, because of an ecological disaster caused by the drying up of the Aral Sea. The region is warming faster than the world average.

We need to be prepared, first and foremost, by utilizing our capabilities and internal resources, as well as relying on international cooperation, to mitigate its consequences for our country.

We call upon FAO to enhance partnerships and mobilize resources to implement initiatives on integrated water resources management as well as scaling up green agriculture, digital technologies, and innovative approaches.

Last, but not least, I would like to highlight that Uzbekistan is organizing the High-Level International Conference on Food Security in the historic city of Samarkand on 7-8 September.

We are going to share our experience, technologies, and successful projects in the sector in this important event, which will contribute to address the food security issues at the national, regional and global levels.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to invite all of you to visit Uzbekistan in September.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize our commitment and readiness to continue fruitful dialogue and interaction with all stakeholders in this direction.

Thank you for your attention.