Launch of High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) Report

Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition

03 July 2019

Bukar Tijani
Assistant Director-General
Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department
FAO

Welcome address

Good afternoon to all,

Dear CFS Chairperson, Dear Ambassador Mario Arvelo,
Dear HLPE Chairperson, Dr Patrick Caron,
Members of the podium,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentleman, dear friends and colleagues,

On behalf of FAO Director-General, Mr José Graziano da Silva, I would like to welcome you all for participating in today’s event, to present the findings of the 14th report of the CFS’s HLPE on “Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition”.

I would like to congratulate the HLPE for this essential contribution to evidence-based decision making.
The global agricultural and food systems are currently not meeting the world’s expectations for sustainability. Agroecological and other innovative approaches are increasingly explored to play a greater role in contributing to achieve global food security and nutrition. FAO has developed important tools, such as the Agroecology Knowledge Hub, to support the implementation of these innovative approaches at national and global levels, and to ultimately achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As you may recall, between 2014 and April 2018, FAO organized two international symposia on “scaling up agroecology” to achieve food security and nutrition and regional consultations. In November 2018, FAO convened the International Symposium on Agricultural Innovation for Family Farmers, which was followed by the Digital Agriculture Transformation Seminar in June this year. Last Sunday in Cuba, FAO Director-General, Mr José Graziano da Silva reiterated the importance of local development to promote healthy eating.

Agroecology has sometimes been depicted as a social response associated strictly to traditional and indigenous knowledge, but we should bear in mind that it is entailing modern science and, in essence, is an agricultural innovation per se.

Innovation in agriculture cuts across all dimensions of the production cycle and along the entire value chains – of crop, forestry, fishery or livestock production to the management of inputs to market access. It is the central driving force which will transform food systems, lift family farmers out of poverty, create wealth and health and help the world to achieve food security, sustainable agriculture and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
The 14th report of the CFS’s High Level Panel of Experts is indeed very timely. Its recommendations present a compelling argument for the contribution of agroecological and other innovative approaches to the four dimensions of Food Security and Nutrition: i availability, ii access, iii utilization and iv sustainability. It assesses future challenges and diverging perspectives on how to achieve this fundamental transformation of food systems and the need to support the diversity of these transitions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Following these recommendations could positively impact on food security and nutrition considerably, especially for rural communities, in particular, for women and youth. I would also like to express our hope that the report will not only raise awareness on the linkages between agroecological and innovative approaches to sustainable agriculture and food security and nutrition, but will also lead us towards more integrated approaches and actions in policy making and in implementation. We have the recommendations, we have to foster an enabling environment and we need to take steps to effectively implement them.

On behalf of FAO Director-General, Mr José Graziano da Silva, I look forward to our fruitful discussions on this occasion, which will be a source of inspiration for our future towards sustainable agriculture.

I wish you a fruitful and stimulating event.

Thank you for listening.