

**3RD REGIONAL FORUM ON AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION IN ASIA
AND THE PACIFIC,
11TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL AND 11TH SESSION OF THE
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF CSAM and
3RD ASEAN CONFERENCE ON AGRICULTURAL AND BIOYSTEMS
ENGINEERING**

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Executive Director, Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries

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Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great pleasure and privilege to deliver this keynote message on behalf of Ms. Kadiresan Kundhavi, Assistant Director General and FAO Regional Representative for the Asia Pacific Region, to this third Regional Forum on Agricultural Mechanization in Asia and the Pacific. I wish to thank Mr. Zhao Bing for the kind invitation to deliver remarks on this occasion.

A shift from traditional labor-intensive production and post-harvest operations to mechanized labor-saving technologies is taking place across Asian agriculture. This is in response to rising labor scarcity and cost, greying farmer populations, the increasing feminization of agriculture, and the development of modern value chains.

Mechanization is increasingly used in this region across the entire value chain – from land preparation, seeding, harvesting, to post-harvest handling and processing operations. Indeed, mechanization has been shown to tremendously increase efficiency, improve quality and reduce post-harvest losses in a number of food value chains that integrate small holders in this region.

During the *High Level Multi-stakeholder Consultation on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization* convened by FAO in June, 2014, participants identified capacity development and knowledge sharing on mechanization as key priorities for the region. They noted that curricula of higher education and training institutions in the field of sustainable agricultural mechanization are somewhat static, with limited capacity to support growth in usage of mechanized equipment.

Trained human resources are instrumental to the success of the uptake and use of sustainable mechanization. Training must take place at all levels and involve a broad range of stakeholders including Ministries of Agriculture, Trade and Industries as well as farmer organizations, agri-food supply chain stakeholders and those working in the agricultural machinery and implement supply chains.

It is also important that the scope of the curricula of higher education and training institutions is broadened in line with changing trends in the use of

mechanization in the region, and in conformance with sustainability principles. Linkages should also be made between the mechanization supply side – i.e. suppliers of mechanization - the user base of the machinery, who are mainly small producers and value chain stakeholders and those involved in the maintenance and repair of machinery. Targeted training programs, including vocational training, short courses and/or evening courses designed to build the capacity of stakeholders involved in mechanization supply chains (sales, repair and maintenance, etc.) are also important.

The benefits of sustainable mechanization will not be fully harnessed by smallholders, unless effective linkages are created with extension systems. Extension systems must, therefore be upgraded in order to promote the appropriate selection and proper use of mechanization.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Clearly quite a lot needs to be done, and the involvement of different actors and stakeholders is required to properly address human resource capacities in sustainable mechanization. I note your very interesting and tight agenda, and would like to wish you a successful outcome to your deliberations.

I look forward to learning of the outcomes of this meeting in due course.

Thank you.