

Online Workshop on Climate Smart Mechanization for Sustainable Food Systems Transformation in Central Asia

14:00-16:00, 27th September 2021 (Beijing time)

Remarks by **Mr. Siddharth Chatterjee, UN Resident Coordinator in China**

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to speak at this event on 'climate-smart mechanization for sustainable food systems transformation in Central Asia', which comes at a most relevant time.

We are only weeks away from this year's climate conference in Glasgow and the climate crisis has been highlighted during the General Assembly a few days ago by the Secretary-General, who has been urging countries to vastly increase their ambition for climate action, and to ensure that at least half of climate finance goes toward bolstering adaptation and resilience¹, to support the people who are most affected by climate impacts. All countries and regions are affected, but it is the poorest and most vulnerable who are hardest hit, in both developed and developing countries.

Farmers and those working across the food value chain are among these most vulnerable groups. The agriculture sector in particular is at high risk from a combination of climate-related disasters and the socio-economic impact of climate change. Increased aridity, flooding, soil erosion and fluctuating temperatures not only affect food production and farmers' livelihoods but can also exacerbate transboundary issues on water management and induce so-called 'environmental migrations' which in turns affects the agricultural workforce.

Boosting efforts to protect food security, people and their livelihoods includes finding new solutions to build resilience, bearing in mind that investment in climate adaptation and resilience measures would bring a high return in avoided costs and other benefits. Leveraging new technologies and exploring new and context-specific uses for existing ones is a fundamental climate action to secure food production and protect the communities involved in our food systems.

In fact, last week we also saw the convening of the first Food Systems Summit following an 18-month process, during which countries and key players committed to new strategies for more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable food systems for everyone. Transforming our food systems while keeping alive the goal of the Paris Climate Agreement will be our major task in the years to come, if we want to avoid a climate catastrophe and meet the goals set in the 2030 Agenda.

This task will indeed be daunting unless countries work on it together with a true spirit of multilateralism, sharing their knowledge and developing new technologies and applications together, to face common challenges. Agricultural mechanization is a sector where many climate-smart applications have been developed, and as UN Resident Coordinator in China I am pleased to see that CSAM, the UNESCAP Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization, together with its Subregional Office for North and Central Asia, has taken the initiative to partner with the Yangling Agricultural High-Tech Industry Demonstration Zone and the World Food Programme China Office for this event, in order to add to the table the advances made by China in the application of climate-smart mechanization technologies for agricultural development.

¹ <https://unfccc.int/news/antonio-guterres-50-of-all-climate-finance-needed-for-adaptation>

Given China's variety of agro-ecological conditions, and its wealth of knowledge in the modernization of agriculture, I am sure that today's event will generate a vibrant exchange and bring on new ideas for all to benefit from. I wish you a fruitful discussion.