

Statement
by
Dr. Seyed Ali Mohammad Mousavi D-8 Secretary General at
the 5th Agricultural Ministerial Meeting on Food Security
3 December 2014, Istanbul - Turkey

His Excellency,
Mr. Mehmet Mehdi EKER,
Honorable Minister of Food, Agriculture and Livestock of Republic of Turkey

His Excellency,
Mr. Vasip Sahin,
Governor of Istanbul

Honorable Ministers,
Honorable Heads of Delegations,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, I would like to welcome you all to **the 5th Agricultural Ministerial Meeting on Food Security**. It is my great honor to be with you at the opening of this important Meeting.

To begin with, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to government of the Republic of Turkey, especially to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock of Turkey, for this well-prepared Meeting providing us with a very comfortable venue in the beautiful city of Istanbul. I would also like to express my appreciation to all delegates for their presence and for their contribution during Working Group Meetings and the Senior Official Meeting.

Distinguished Delegates,

Agricultural sector has shown remarkable resilience with strong supply response to high prices and with continuing demands in developed and developing countries. In the last four years, a degree of normalcy has returned to many markets with production closer to historical levels and demand recovering.

On average contribution of all D-8 member countries' agricultural sector to the GDP growth is around 20% in the end of 2013. However, despite that the role of agricultural sector in ensuring food security is very crucial, it is expected that D-8 agricultural activity would achieve at least 25% annualized pace. This also indicates a quite significant level of contribution by the agricultural sector to the total GDP. Needless to say that agricultural sector plays a significant role in the D-8 Member States and is one of the sectors that generate employment and income, drivers of innovation and growth.

Furthermore, Increasing smallholder farmers' capability and productivity can help meet household food security as well as the projected increase in food demand - up to 60% by 2050 and thereby resolve one of the necessary conditions for food security, which is food availability. This means that food availability in agricultural sector one of the largest contributors to the GDP, in particular in livelihood of the population living in rural areas.

Distinguished Delegates,

Congruent with response of developed countries in this situation, the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, as an intergovernmental organization of eight developing countries, has responded with the convention of four Ministerial Meetings. As outlined in the respective Ministers' Declarations, these meetings were reaffirming the commitment to give priorities in:

- maintaining food availability and affordability,
- advancing sustainable agricultural-led growth,
- increasing food supplies,
- sharing food reserves in the larger producing countries; and
- Strengthening the income of small farmers, fishermen and rural communities.

At our last Ministerial Meeting on Food Security, exactly one year ago in Abuja-Nigeria, the Heads of Delegations from each Member State adopted the "Abuja Initiative" as a pragmatic approach to underscore the needs of strengthening and energizing collective efforts in order to achieve self-reliance and self-sufficiency at the D-8 national level in food production, particularly the enhancement of five key initiatives, namely seed bank, fertilizer, animal feed, marine affairs & fisheries as well as standard on trade.

In that meeting, D-8 also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with African-Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO). It is expected that the MoU would pave the way for collaboration and to achieve the expansion of D-8 agricultural cooperation. In this regard, I would like to extend my appreciation to H.E. Eng Wassfi Hassan El Sreihin, Secretary General of AARDO, who is presence among us here in this meeting, for building such mutual interest in the field of agriculture and food security with our organization.

In addition, the working groups and task forces have made some progress in all strategic issues of

respective five key initiatives. I am also believe that the involvement of Public-private partnerships (PPPs) in our Working Groups activities is vital for progress in agriculture and the pursuit of sustainable food security for the D-8 countries. They engage complementary strengths to achieve more than individual efforts. However, their potential in addressing agricultural supply challenges and food security remains largely untapped.

Distinguished Delegates,

I believe that this is the high time for us to focus in agricultural projects in very concrete terms in order to sustain agricultural growth among the member countries. In my address to the Senior Official Meeting (SOM) at very first day of this meeting, I have already expressed my hope that the Working Groups could come up with tangible feasibility studies, viable actionplans and **concrete projects** in order to put into action of any decision and recommendation. In today's meeting, I do really hope that the major product of our meeting, namely "*Istanbul Initiatives*", will provide coherent policies to strengthen our cooperation through effective collaboration between public and private stakeholders, agricultural investment and food transformation systems among D-8 countries.

I am confident that through our constructive cooperation, we will succeed in reaping the fruits of our endeavors in the near future. Once again, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you and through you, thank the government of Turkey for hosting this important meeting and for their hospitality and I wish you all success in your endeavors and deliberations.

Thank you very much for your attention.