

Statement
by
Ambassador Dato' Ku Jaafar Ku Shaari
D-8 Secretary General,
at the High-Level Expert Meeting of
the Sixth Agricultural Ministerial Meeting on Food Security

Sustainable agro-industry development and smallholder farmer integration in the global value chains: Key issues for D-8 Member States

Virtually held on 15 December 2020

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to be in the opening session of this very important meeting, *the High-Level Experts' Meeting of the 6th Agricultural Ministerial Meeting on Food Security*. On behalf of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, I would like to warmly welcome you all to this important gathering albeit virtually. I trust this meeting will provide us with a unique platform to reaffirm and further strengthen agricultural cooperation among the D-8 Member States.

I want to start by expressing our immense gratitude and appreciation to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for graciously hosting this event after almost six years of lull on this important sectoral track of cooperation. We are also grateful to Pakistan for availing us of a state of art facility for the conduct of research and development in agriculture and food security located in Faisalabad.

In the same vein, we are immensely grateful to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) for generously supporting this first ever thematic meeting on D-8 cooperation on Agriculture and Food Security. It is gratifying that our esteemed Organization is now working closely with such reputable international institutions that are doctrinally committed to advancing our development agenda on agriculture and food security.

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates

As you may recall, at the 5th D-8 Agricultural Ministerial Meeting on Food Security on 1-3 December 2014 in Istanbul, we reiterated our commitment towards food security, giving high priority to the international, regional and national plans, policies and strategies, particularly with regards to increasing food supplies, advancing sustainable agriculture-led growth, keeping food price affordable, sharing common food reserves and enhancing income of small farmers, fishermen and rural populations.

As a thematic high-level expert meeting, this event will delve on Sustainable Agro-Industry Development and Small Holder Farmer Integration in the Global Value Chains: Key Issues for D-8 Member-States. This theme was carefully chosen in order to give clear focus to our endeavour and enable our farming communities to reap the benefits of their production through enhanced marketability.

*Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,*

It is in this light that heuristic presentations of glittering success stories in other climes will be made so that our members can replicate such successes and get integrated into national and global value chains. Additionally, skills, talents, markets and technologies for agro-business and agro-industries development will be exhaustively discussed so that participants can tap from the expertise of the resource persons and the rewarding experiences of other small holder farmers elsewhere.

I also want to urge the distinguished participants to pay rapt attention to the engaging discussions on innovative policies, financing risks and management mechanisms as well as public-private partnership approaches as these are central issues in agro-industry development and effective integration of small holder farmers into global value chains.

*Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,*

To conclude my remarks, I would like to reiterate that our common goals and utmost desire is to ensure that D-8 Member States produce a set of practical strategies towards promoting sustainable agricultural growth and raising the productivity of agricultural holdings through the creation of an enabling environment and favourable climate that encourages increased public and private investment in agriculture and agro-based industry.

Let me also plead with you to, as a matter of priority, organize another meeting at the earliest possible time in order to review progress and also rub minds on other matters that are of importance to us. We should not allow another lull to occur henceforth. There is no gainsaying that constant interactions are vital to our success on this as well as other frameworks of cooperation.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and glorious outcomes.

I thank you for your attention.