

# Third APEC Ministerial Meeting on Food Security

## Beijing Declaration on APEC Food Security

Beijing China, 19th September 2014

### Preamble

1. We, the APEC Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Food, met in Beijing, China, on 19th September 2014, at the invitation of Mr. Han Changfu, Minister of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China and Mr. Ren Zhengxiao, Administrator of the State Administration of Grain of the People's Republic of China.
2. We welcome the participation in the meeting of representatives from the Secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) and the APEC Secretariat.
3. Food security is of primary importance to the Asia-Pacific region because it is home to a large proportion of the world's hungry people. Hence, reducing food insecurity in the region can reduce global food insecurity. According to the latest estimates by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 842 million people in the world—one eighth of the world's population—suffered from chronic hunger in 2011–2013, not able to have enough food and sufficient access to food for an active and healthy life. The vast majority of the world's hungry people (827 million) live in developing countries, mainly countries in South Asia, East Asia and Sub Saharan Africa. Being home to 65.6%<sup>1</sup> of the global hungry population, Asia has the largest number of hungry people across all regions: 552 million or 13.5% of its total population; if the food security of the Asia-Pacific region is undermined, it will have a significant impact on global food security. APEC has both economies that are highly dependent on international markets for food supply and economies that are major food exporters. Therefore, it is imperative to build stronger cooperation among APEC member economies to support food security, which will play an important role in promoting regional and global food security.
4. We recognize the importance of post-2015 UN development agenda to fight against hunger and poverty with shared responsibility and sustainable development. The APEC region has great

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<sup>1</sup> FAO (2013): The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2013

potential to improve its food security through concerted cooperation among its member economies; all actions taken should be consistent with international commitments. We fully support the *Xiamen Declaration* of the APEC Ocean-Related Ministers to focus on the role of oceans in food security. APEC economies have given high priority to the issue of agriculture and food and built a solid foundation for agricultural exchange and cooperation under various multilateral and bilateral frameworks: APEC established the Agricultural Technical Cooperation Expert Group (ATCEG) in 1996 and officially renamed it as the Agricultural Technical Cooperation Working Group (ATCWG) in 2000, which has enhanced information and experience sharing among economies; APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF) was established in 2007 and its Partnership Training Institute Network (PTIN) was established in 2008 to encourage regulatory cooperation and dialogue on food safety and deliver food safety capacity building to improve food safety in the region; the Oceans and Fisheries Working Group (OFWG) was established in 2011 following a decision to merge the former Marine Resource Conservation and Fisheries working groups (in operation since 1990 and 1991 respectively); the Policy Partnership on Food Security (PPFS) was established in 2011 for strengthening public-private cooperation to achieve food security goals in the region; and the High Level Policy Dialogue on Agricultural Biotechnology (HLPDAB) was established to progress cooperation on biotechnology. Ministers of APEC economies responsible for agriculture and food met in Niigata, Japan, in 2010, issuing the Niigata Declaration, and two years later, in Kazan, Russia issuing the Kazan Declaration, both of which contributed to regional food security. APEC economies are not only diverse in geography, climate, population, arable land, water resources, food production, crop mix, and biodiversity but also differ in economic development, agricultural science and technology, and food consumption habits. Therefore, we should strengthen cooperation in order to share knowledge, promote best practices and sustainable use of biodiversity, and seek common ground to build an open, inclusive, mutually-beneficial and all-win partnership for the long-term food security of the Asia-Pacific region, thereby contributing to global food security.

**I. Boost agricultural productivity and food production and availability based on sustainable development, innovation, science and technology and an enabling economic environment**

5. Currently, the world including the Asia-Pacific region is facing ever increasing challenges, including financial crisis, population growth, decreasing availability of arable land, competing demands for resources and the impacts of climate change. The progress in agricultural science and technology and economic development is the cornerstone of our efforts to further promote sustainable agricultural and food production to improve food security in the region. We recognize the importance of non-distorting and stable agricultural and economy-wide policy settings that encourage agricultural productivity growth and economic development more broadly. Biodiversity on land and in aquatic ecosystems has an important role to play in ensuring food availability. Appropriate policies and production techniques to promote the sustainable development of the food sector and encourage a variety of healthy and nutritious food sources should be applied.

### **Facilitating agricultural production-oriented technical research and innovation**

6. Given that some APEC economies lack advanced technology, we support development of agricultural policies that encourage investment in food production, research and development; enhance capacity building activities for researchers particularly in developing member economies; and facilitate innovation to accelerate the development of new technologies, new varieties and new methods for grain and livestock production and aquaculture.

### **Enabling agriculture to be more adaptive to climate change and resilient to disasters**

7. Climate change threatens agricultural productivity because of the impacts of increasing temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, sea level rise, and frequency and changing patterns of extreme weather events, among other things. These impacts are already being felt in some food-producing areas. Consequently, there is an increasingly urgent need to adapt agricultural systems to climate change and help agricultural communities become more resilient to droughts and floods, especially for smallholders. We recognize the importance of enhancing the assessment of the impacts of climate change and natural disasters; establishing monitoring and early warning systems for climate change; supporting science and technology innovation initiatives that can address climate change; and attaching importance to disaster mitigation projects in agriculture. Governments should play a bigger role in policy development, information sharing, capacity building, disaster risk management and emergency management; they should also make efforts to increase investment in environmentally sound farmland irrigation and drainage infrastructure, disastrous weather monitoring and early warning systems, and facilitate the development of agricultural insurance and risk management tools, especially for small-scale producers who are usually impacted the most and have the least resources for recovery. Governments should support research and development on seeds that are more adaptive to climate change and resilient to disasters and apply agricultural innovation to reduce the adverse effects of climate change.

### **Promoting sound development of agricultural biotechnology**

8. Research, development and application of agricultural biotechnology has played an important role in sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and ensuring food security. We recognize the importance of continuing to support agricultural biotechnology; supporting the development, improvement and adoption of relevant laws and regulations; encouraging research institutions to carry out research and development in agricultural biotechnology; enhancing the research in safety and reliability of biotechnology; developing risk-based control mechanisms and remedial measures against human health, environmental and other risks.

### **Facilitating adoption, utilization, extension and transfer of agricultural technologies**

9. Effective adoption, utilization, extension and transfer of new agricultural technologies contribute to improving agricultural productivity. We recognize the need to better facilitate the adoption, utilization, extension and transfer of agricultural technologies on mutually agreed terms by developing supporting policies and measures. Efforts could especially be made to promote science and law and evidence-based approval of new agricultural technologies as well as risk and benefit communication of agricultural technologies. We recognize that we should also better engage markets in the process of agricultural technology utilization and extension, and allow markets to play their important role in technology transfer with appropriate Intellectual Property Rights protection. Efforts could be made to enhance capacity building for rural labor, especially smallholders, in the application of such technologies. APEC economies will strive to promote the exchange of experiences and public policies that allow the efficient adoption, utilization, extension and transfer of agricultural technologies on mutually agreed terms, which can help to reduce the gap between agricultural research and the need of enhancing agricultural productivity and food production.

**Accelerating transformation and upgrading of the agricultural industry and promoting sustainable agricultural development**

10. We should focus on promoting the sustainable intensification of agricultural production. We recognize that we should actively prevent desertification and attach importance to soil and water conservation, water resources allocation, and land rehabilitation. We recognize the need to develop common understanding on sustainable land use and agricultural practices, taking into account agricultural and climate conditions and soil potential. We should focus the international community's attention on the fact that healthy soils and sustainable land use are prerequisites for human welfare and economic prosperity, thereby playing an integral role for sustainable development. Meanwhile, we should also fully support the principle advocated by FAO: to support smallholders in their farming activities and assist rural cooperatives in boosting smallholder production so as to reduce rural poverty and hunger. In addition, we welcome the work of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on supporting the development of smallholders in their farming activities. While recognizing the critical contribution of all farmers to increased productivity and global food security, we share the view that it is necessary to recognize the crucial role of smallholder farmers and the need to strengthen farmers' cooperation in order to ensure their voices are heard.

11. We therefore should strengthen the technical and skill training for rural labor, especially smallholders, to raise agricultural productivity and farmers' income; adapt agricultural research and development in a way that helps improve output and economic benefits while paying attention to quality and the environment. Avoiding negative externalities, and enhancing overall competitiveness of the agricultural industry through the global development of the food value chain, we will work to strengthen our efforts in improving agricultural productivity to promote sustainable agricultural development.

## **II. Improve post-harvest management<sup>2</sup> to reduce food loss**

### **Improving management of food supply chain**

12. The establishment of stable and reliable supply chains in APEC economies will contribute to giving consumers timely and convenient access to safe food and contribute to trade facilitation in the region. We recognize the need to support the establishment and improvement of safe food supply chains, strengthen infrastructure development, improve development and application of storing, processing and cold chain technologies, and enhance management of food and food product labels. To enhance the status and role of agricultural producers, fishing communities and small businesses in the food supply chain, we encourage the establishment of communities of interests on food production and processing between farmers, fisherfolk and businesses, where farmers and fisherfolk become direct beneficiaries of food trade and value-added processing through developing global food value chains.

### **Enhancing the management of food safety and of food quality**

13. Food security is achieved when all people have a sufficient supply of safe and nutritious food. Food safety strengthens and complements food security. We recognize the need to strengthen the management of food safety through alignment with internationally accepted standards; the development and refinement of risk based requirements; and the establishment and improvement of early warning, traceability and recall systems. Food safety has a direct bearing on the nutrition and health of human beings and we share the importance of harmonization between economy's food standards and international food standards as elaborated in the framework of the Codex Alimentarius (Codex), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and initiatives of the FAO, WHO and WTO sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) Agreements. We welcome the Action Plan to Enhance Connectivity of APEC Food Standards and Safety Assurance developed by PPFS in 2014 and we also note the efforts of the APEC FSCF and welcome its work with relevant APEC fora to promote food safety.

14. Food quality is an important food production and manufacturing requirement, and can also be an important component of food security, i.e. the acceptability to consumers of the processing and ingredient characteristics of food related to dietary, nutritional or medical requirements. We support the strengthening of the private sector's responsibility and capability to assure food quality through production, manufacture and distribution consistent with accepted international standards, such as those of the International Standards Organization (ISO) and specialized WTO technical barriers to trade (TBT).

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<sup>2</sup> The post-harvest stage includes food purchase, storage, processing, transportation, sales, distribution, consumption and other steps.

### **Reducing post-harvest loss and waste in food**

15. According to FAO reports, one third of the food for human consumption is discarded or lost every year, which is a waste of the natural resources used for its production. If one quarter of the food lost or wasted around the world could be saved, it would be an amount sufficient to feed the 842 million undernourished people in the world. In developed economies, food waste often happens at retailing and consumption, while in developing economies it often takes place in production and processing, with the greatest impact on smallholders. We encourage all economies to enhance the management of food along the value chain; deepen cooperation in development of approaches to reduce post-harvest loss; promote food saving by raising consumers' awareness so that food loss and waste can be reduced in the whole process from farm to table. We welcome the APEC Reduce Food Loss and Waste Action Plan developed by PPFS in 2014 for improving food security in the region, which helps to meet the Millennium Development Goals 2015 of eradicating poverty and hunger. We recognize the importance of implementing the APEC Multi-Year Project on Strengthening Public-Private Partnership to Reduce Food Loss in the Supply Chain and welcome the development of a methodology for data collection, establishment of baseline data, toolkits and best practices to reduce post-harvest loss. All economies should promote the development and exchange of technologies on reducing food loss.

### **III. Strengthen regional cooperation to promote food security**

#### **Strengthening research and development cooperation to promote sustainable agricultural development**

16. Faced with the pressure from climate change and resource constraints, we determine to continue giving the ATCWG a leading role as a coordinating group and further strengthen cooperation, press ahead with the research, development and application of new technologies to increase agricultural productivity. In this regard, we reiterate our support for enhanced coordination and interaction among local research institutes and innovation centers, in particular through the Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR). In response to climate change, we will work together to strengthen information sharing and exchange, and jointly conduct research into new eco-friendly technologies, planting patterns and prevention and control of diseases and pests. We appreciate the collaborative work of the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases (GRA) and reiterate the importance for APEC economies to enhance their engagement with the initiative. We note that the issue of internationally coordinated research and innovation to achieve a global transformative productivity lift was discussed by both G-20 and APEC representatives (who attended at the invitation of the Australian G20 presidency ) during the June 19-20, 2014 Meeting of Agricultural Chief Scientists, in Brisbane, Australia.

#### **Strengthening cooperation in seed development**

17. APEC economies are equipped with a great diversity of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. At the same time, seed technology and capacity to develop new crops vary among APEC economies. Therefore, there is potential to enhance regional cooperation in plant breeding for the development of new and improved plant varieties for food security. We share a common understanding about the importance of enhancing information exchange and cooperation on plant breeding, and the need to improve cooperation on research into publicly-beneficial and key technological areas of seed development, to create close cooperation partnerships among the seed industry, universities and research institutes, to deepen scientific and information sharing with the seed industry through personnel training and improved cooperation, and to share the seed industry's experiences in research and technological innovation.

#### **Strengthening prevention and control of trans-boundary animal and plant diseases**

18. We encourage working together to enhance regional animal and plant disease management including Invasive Alien Species to prevent and/or control the impacts across economies and promote agricultural production and food security. We determine to strengthen communication and cooperation on the South East Asia and China Foot and Mouth Disease (SEACFMD) Campaign and other multilateral and bilateral prevention and control mechanisms of animal and plant diseases. We welcome the work of IPPC and the Asia Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC) on minimizing trans-boundary movements of plant diseases. We promote adherence to IPPC and OIE standards. Further, we determine to enhance surveillance and early warning information exchange as well as personnel training on trans-boundary animal and plant diseases; strengthen information exchange and cooperation on food safety of imports and exports as well as improve policy coordination, information sharing and cooperation. Where trans-boundary diseases exist which also threaten public health or environmental health, APEC economies will promote multidisciplinary "one health" coordination of surveillance, preparedness, detection and control activities to combat those animal diseases.

#### **Protecting and developing significant agricultural heritage and boosting modern agricultural and rural development**

19. We agree that APEC should promote rural development policies that enhance the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of communities and support FAO's work on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems<sup>3</sup>. We recognize that we should promote the public understanding

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<sup>3</sup> In order to safeguard and support the world's agricultural system, in 2002 FAO started an initiative for the dynamic conservation of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS). The GIAHS are defined as "Remarkable land use systems and landscapes which are rich in globally significant biological diversity evolving from the co-adaption of a community with its environment and its needs and aspiration for sustainable development. Looking to safeguard the social, cultural, economic and environmental goods and services these provide to family farmers, smallholders, indigenous peoples and local communities, the initiative fosters an integrated approach combining sustainable agricultural and rural development.

and awareness of agricultural heritage systems and share successful stories of management on agricultural heritage and typical models of rural development. We should promote “family farming” to be in line with the FAO campaign on the International Year of Family Farming which supports household and small-scale farming, increasing role of young farmers and women in the agricultural sector, balancing agricultural biodiversity, stimulating community economics and enhancing social safety nets.

#### **Strengthening exchange and cooperation on management of food supply chains**

20. In order to increase agricultural productivity and to improve efficiency of food supply, we should focus on developing global food value chain and strengthening exchange and cooperation on technologies, management and models of food supply chains and cold chain technologies; enhancing the dissemination of food storage, processing and management technologies; and boosting coordination of standards, regulations and regional inter-connectivity to lower the costs of logistics and trade as well as loss and waste during storage, transportation and consumption to improve the effective supply of food. We recognize that we should strengthen collaboration and coordination among APEC economies, public and private sectors in charge of agriculture/food security, infrastructure and logistics for upgrading infrastructure such as cold chain to improve the management of the food supply chain.

#### **Enhancing policy coordination and cooperation on food security**

21. In order to enhance the policy coordination on food security and decrease the costs of conducting international trade of food, we recognize that we should strengthen exchange and cooperation on food production, distribution and consumption through utilizing existing structures such as the Asia-Pacific Information Platform on Food Security (APIP); and conduct exchanges on inspection methods of imports and exports of food consistent with Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems. We welcome the collaboration of the public and private sectors in developing food security policies through PPFS. We should continue to exchange information and work collaboratively on capacity building efforts. We note the coordinated efforts of the public and academic sectors in this area through FSCF PTIN and relevant APEC working groups. We also recognize the important role of women in promoting food security. We should strengthen our cooperative work with other stakeholders in the private sector, non-government and international organizations to achieve practical improvements for food security, especially through identification of and action to address barriers to women’s access to resources and economic participation.

#### **Liberalizing and facilitating agricultural trade and investment**

22. Given that farmers are the biggest investors in the agricultural sector (FAO, 2012), APEC economies are encouraged to formulate policies and measures to support green investment in

agriculture in order to improve sustainable agricultural productivity and resilience. We reaffirm the importance of liberalizing and facilitating agricultural trade and investment in the APEC region. We recognize the important role for public-private partnership in the field of investment. We take note of the ongoing consultations on the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems at the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). We are aware of the significant role of agricultural trade and investment in promoting global and regional food security. We call for open, WTO rule-based, fair and transparent agricultural trade and investment as well as trade facilitation based on internationally accepted standards to promote widespread accessibility of safe food in APEC economies. Recognizing that bans and other restrictions on the export of food may cause price volatility, especially for economies that rely on imports of staple products, we reaffirm the commitments against protectionism made by APEC leaders. We support the outcomes related to agriculture from the Ninth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference, held in December, 2013 in Bali, Indonesia. We recognize that we should address food security concerns in a manner that does not distort trade or adversely affect the food security of other economies.

#### **Strengthening internal exchange and cooperation among APEC economies**

23. We support APEC Food Security Roadmap towards 2020 (version 2014) and APEC Food Security Business Plan (2014-2020). In order to enhance the integrated functions of the agriculture and food working groups under the APEC framework, we emphasize strengthening exchanges and coordination among ATCWG, PPFS, the Committee on Trade and Investment, the FSCF and its PTIN, OFWG and HLPDAB to make new contribution to food security.