

## Asia-Pacific countries unite for an agri-food systems transformation to ensure food security

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The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has announced that around Forty countries from the Asia and Pacific region have agreed that transforming agrifood systems was imperative to providing food security for next-generation and beyond,

The summation was delivered at close of the 37th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC37). The conference was hosted by the Government of Sri Lanka. Forty countries of Asia and the Pacific attended the APRC, with the vast majority attending in-person, including some 20 government Ministers. It was the first time since 2018 that a large in-person gathering of the region's food and agriculture Ministers and other policymakers was convened by FAO, and is seen as emblematic of the attention needed to recover from the pandemic and disruptions caused to food production and distribution that has plagued many countries in the region ever since.

APRC – FAO's regional governing body acknowledged several important points for further action by FAO and other bodies. The forum noted that, "the main challenges facing the region relate to its ability to sustainably increase productivity and innovation, particularly in the face of resource limitations, climate change risks and the region's growing population as the medium- and long-term outlook highlights" and emphasized the importance of transparent, predictable, open and fair markets, underpinned by an effective multilateral trading system, for food security."

The report went on to recognize "the importance of digital innovations and blended finance, engaging the private sector in mobilizing resources for resilient, inclusive and sustainable agrifood systems transformation. It also highlighted the need to focus on specific issues including local food systems, low carbon, resilient and sustainable practices, and water issues;

strengthen efficient, inclusive and resilient value chains and markets; boost initiatives under the Paris Agreement; and develop global standards for biosecurity and food safety, important for agrifood systems, early warning systems and anticipatory action.

Further, the report highlighted the Asia-Pacific region's leadership in capture fisheries and aquaculture, contributing with over 70% of global production; the aquaculture sector is projected to grow by over 20% by 2030. It also acknowledged that when managed and developed sustainably, aquatic food systems, in both marine and freshwaters, including aquaculture and fisheries of the region, contributed significantly to improving food and nutrition security and livelihoods, specifically enhancing women's participation along the value chain.

In addition, FAO's Blue Transformation vision in the context of Asia and the Pacific region to increase the contribution of fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic foods value chains to provide a more significant proportion of nutritious food and resilient livelihoods in the region, while recognizing that Blue Transformation promotes sustainable aquaculture intensification, effective management of all fisheries and upgraded value chains to ensure the social, economic and environmental viability of aquatic food systems.