

FAO Director General honours India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi with FAO's prestigious Agricola Medal

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The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), QU Dongyu, today presented Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India with the FAO Agricola Medal, the Organization's highest award, in a ceremony held in the historic Plenary Hall at FAO's Rome headquarters.

Qu warmly congratulated the Prime Minister and said: "It is an honour to award the FAO Agricola Medal, the Organization's highest award, to His Excellency Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India, in recognition of his invaluable contribution and long commitment to the wellbeing of India, and all people. During his tenure, he has introduced landmark schemes to enhance agricultural productivity, bolstering food security and improving farmer's livelihoods. The Agricola Medal is an acknowledgement of his unwavering support to FAO's mandate in the fight against hunger and poverty, and the pursuit of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, as well as his efforts to prioritize agrifood systems and rural development on the international agenda, including during India's G20 Presidency."

The FAO Director-General lauded Prime Minister Modi's exceptional leadership and vision in advancing India's efforts to transform the country's agricultural landscape through farmer-centric, innovative, and path-breaking initiatives.

Qu praised India's food and agriculture initiatives rolled out under the Prime Minister's leadership for their scale and reach. The FAO Director-General particularly highlighted India's financial inclusion initiatives, the world's largest food-based social safety net covering 800 million people since the COVID pandemic, direct income support to more than 110 million farmers, national efforts to advance regenerative and natural farming, and the global efforts to promote nutrient rich millets including through the [International Year of Millets 2023](#) in partnership with FAO.

He expressed appreciation for Prime Minister Modi's visionary drive to position digital public infrastructure as a global public good during India's G-20 Presidency - a transformative step toward enabling access to digital technologies in developing countries for efficient service delivery and empowering communities. These sustained efforts, he noted, have contributed to India lifting millions out of poverty.

Thanking the FAO Director-General for the honour bestowed upon him, the Prime Minister said that he was deeply honoured to accept the award and termed it a recognition of the immense contributions and achievements of millions of hard-working smallholder farmers of India and the scientific and research community to national and global food security.

FAO-India cooperation

The Indian Prime Minister paid tribute to FAO for its seminal contributions to global agriculture and food security, commending its eight decades of efforts to end hunger and eradicate poverty worldwide.

Recalling with appreciation the enduring India-FAO partnership, he noted that the Organization has been a steadfast partner in India's journey towards becoming a self-reliant global agricultural powerhouse.

Prime Minister Modi noted that the India-FAO partnership has been mutually reinforcing, with India significantly contributing to FAO's mission.

In this regard, he highlighted the immense contributions of two eminent Indians to FAO - Binay Ranjan Sen, the first Director-General of FAO from a developing country, and Dr M. S. Swaminathan, the architect of India's Green Revolution, noting that their work has profoundly shaped FAO's efforts and influenced global food and agriculture discourse.

Prime Minister Modi also reaffirmed India's readiness to further deepen the already buoyant collaboration with FAO.

He expressed appreciation for the Director-General's dynamic leadership and efforts towards transforming FAO into a more efficient, agile and modern organization that aligns with its vision and goals. He lauded the initiatives undertaken by Qu in support of agrifood systems transformation, mobilizing voluntary contributions and the framework of the [Four Betters](#) - better production; better nutrition; better environment; and a better life, leaving no one behind.

The award ceremony was attended by several dignitaries including Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives of FAO member countries, senior leadership of FAO, representatives from other UN agencies in Rome including the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), and Indian nationals serving in the UN bodies.

The FAO Agricola Medal is conferred by the FAO Director-General on extraordinary leaders who demonstrated commitment and action in support of FAO's mandate to eradicate hunger, reduce poverty, and ensure food security and nutrition for all.