

Five actions for G7 to drive progress to sustainable agrifood systems

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With hunger levels rising and domestic food prices inflation soaring in much of the world, collective actions are necessary to meet immediate and longer-term global food security objectives, QU Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), said at the G7 Ministers of Agriculture Meeting.

“We need to work together in an efficient, effective and coherent manner to address the challenges, and identify the solutions needed for concrete actions leading to tangible results on the ground,” he said.

Qu pointed to five key actions in need of implementation regarding the roles of markets, assistance, agrifood systems, the private sector and science and innovation.

Firstly, trade continues to be key for global food security, and all nations must commit to well-functioning markets and market transparency, he said. Qu pointed to the value offered by the G20 Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), hosted by FAO, and thanked Japan for its recent contribution of additional resources to AMIS to help it expand its work on fertilisers, vegetable oils and food trade logistics. It is also essential for G7 countries to continue supporting AMIS, so it can be sustainable and become stronger over time.

Secondly, the Director-General emphasised that vulnerable countries need support to meet their food and fertiliser needs. This is why FAO designed the Food Import Financing Facility (FIFF).

“G7 members should support a more flexible arrangement and less conditionality needs to be developed so that a meaningful mechanism is in place that can truly benefit all countries in need,” he said.

Thirdly, Qu stressed that 'the right investments are needed now, urgently,' to transform global agrifood systems and make them more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient and more sustainable. G7 countries need to double their efforts in order to achieve the Elmau commitment, he said. This will require prioritising a mix of least-cost measures with large hunger and malnutrition reduction and a lower trade-off to our environment. He pointed to FAO's efforts to provide public goods by improving the availability of soil maps, extension and advisory services and advocating for more research and improved infrastructure in rural areas.

In addition, the private sector must be engaged in this transformation, and so far remains under-engaged and under-utilised, the Director-General said. He praised Japan's efforts to support increased private sector initiatives to facilitate the participation of smallholder farmers in sustainable value chains and invited all countries to support FAO's Hand-in-Hand Initiative, which seeks to engage the private sector to scale up interventions and investments in the most vulnerable countries and regions to eradicate poverty, hunger and malnutrition, and to reduce inequalities.