



# ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

**TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES**

**REMARKS AT THE FORUM**

**ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

**6 July 2017**

Dr. Patrick HO,

Mr. LAN Huasheng,

Distinguished Speakers and Participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to address this distinguished audience on the occasion of the first Forum on Sustainable Agricultural Development.

In April of this year I convened, as part of the special focus of my Presidency, a meeting on agriculture and agro industries development in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. This is because agriculture is an area that is close to my heart. Furthermore, I am convinced of the critical role of sustainable agriculture in moving forward the global sustainable development agenda.

United Nations Member States recognized the critical role of agriculture in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by dedicating a specific sustainable development goal (SDG2) to “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture”.



# ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

## TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

The 2030 Agenda resolves that no one will be left behind.

Sustainable agriculture is essential to that vision.

We need sustainable agriculture to realize a world free of hunger and starvation.

We need sustainable agriculture to ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.

Distinguished participants,

Achieving that universal access, however, requires a number of urgent actions.

By 2030, we must double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers.

We must provide women and small-holder farmers with secure and equal access to land, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.

We must ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that among other things,

- increase productivity and production,
- help maintain ecosystems,



**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**  
17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD

[facebook.com/UNECOSOC](https://www.facebook.com/UNECOSOC)

[twitter.com/UNECOSOC](https://twitter.com/UNECOSOC)

[youtube.com/UNECOSOC](https://www.youtube.com/UNECOSOC)



# ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

## TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

- strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and,
- progressively improve land and soil quality.

We must maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants as well as farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species.

These actions are encapsulated in the relevant SDG2 targets.

Coming from Africa, I must highlight the daunting challenges facing farmers in Africa,

Food production in sub-Saharan Africa needs to increase by 60 percent over the coming decade to feed a growing population.

However, in pursuing increased productivity, African farmers are faced with daunting challenges such as the impacts of climate change, with many regions experiencing drought and desertification.

They also continue to face challenges in securing much needed access to markets.

However, despite these and other challenges, African nations have taken a number of measures to address their food security challenges.



# ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

## TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

The Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) is one such measure which has inspired 42 African governments to increase public spending on agriculture.

Agriculture today accounts for over 30% of GDP in Africa and it is the sector that offers the greatest potential for poverty reduction and job creation.

Growth generated by agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa is estimated to be 11 times more effective in reducing poverty than GDP growth in other sectors.

Africa's food and beverage markets are expected to top \$1 trillion in value by 2030.

But on its own, Africa will not be able to achieve SDG 2 and its targets.

We need your solidarity and partnership.

First, African farmers need access to new technology in order to boost efficiency and output in the agricultural sector. This will also go a long way in addressing the demand for higher-yielding, more resilient food crops that deliver better yields and more harvests.

Second, African farmers need more infrastructure services, including electricity, roads, irrigation, connectivity and access to regional and global markets.

Third, African farmers need to have means of production, including access to credit, and productive farm inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, and farming tools.



**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**  
17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD

[facebook.com/UNECOSOC](https://www.facebook.com/UNECOSOC)

[twitter.com/UNECOSOC](https://twitter.com/UNECOSOC)

[youtube.com/UNECOSOC](https://www.youtube.com/UNECOSOC)



# ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

## TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

And they need more extension services to enhance their knowledge and in turn the productivity of their farms.

That is why we hope that China, the US and other development partners can join hands and support Africa and other developing regions.

We can make decisive progress only if we act together.

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

Achieving the new, shared vision of the Sustainable Development Goals will require profound transformations in the way we pursue economic growth, social development and the environment protection for the future.

We need a sustainable agriculture that can adapt and transform itself in response to the sustainability requirements.

And we all have a part to play in achieving our vision.

Governments need to exercise leadership to provide an enabling environment.

Businesses will have to adapt their operating principles to support sustainable development.

Civil society organizations must work to bring about a wider public understanding of sustainable development and to help shift individual behaviors.

Science and academia will have to provide timely evidence on progress, challenges and opportunities.



**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**  
17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD

[facebook.com/UNECOSOC](https://www.facebook.com/UNECOSOC)

[twitter.com/UNECOSOC](https://twitter.com/UNECOSOC)

[youtube.com/UNECOSOC](https://www.youtube.com/UNECOSOC)



# ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

## TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

The United Nations High Level Political Forum offers the global platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, and provides space for the sharing of experiences and lesson-learning.

Your discussions here will be a timely input to the HLPF which will among other goals, review the implementation of goal 2 in a few days' time.

I wish you a productive Forum.

Thank you.



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**  
17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD

[facebook.com/UNECOSOC](https://www.facebook.com/UNECOSOC)

[twitter.com/UNECOSOC](https://twitter.com/UNECOSOC)

[youtube.com/UNECOSOC](https://www.youtube.com/UNECOSOC)