

## **UN-States Food Systems Pre-Summit, 2021** **(Statement from Pakistan)**

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***Excellency UN Secretary General, Antonio Gutres;  
Global Leads on UNFSS-2021 Action Tracks,  
Representatives Member States including Academicians, Researchers, Businesses,  
Civil Society Organizations, Youth and Media,***

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

***Assalam-o-Allaikum and Good Morning to You All***

Today, I am extremely honored and privileged while recording Pakistan Statement for UNFSS-2021 pre-Summit event as Federal Minister/Secretary from Ministry of National Food Security and Research. Everyone on the globe begins his day with breakfast and ends up with the dinner by consuming food produced by billions of poor farmers living in numerous food production systems. With a population of around 225 million people, Pakistan is 5<sup>th</sup> most-populated nation on the planet with a growth rate of 1.8 percent. Catering national food and nutritional security is the constitutional responsibility of the state.

Pakistan's Food trade balance has been negating for the last many years and the state of food insecurity has led to nutritional insecurity causing malnutrition and nutritional deficiencies among children, adolescents and the mothers. The country spends billions of Dollars on the import of edible oils and pulses and now wheat has been added to this list from past two years.

On food production side, the country is facing a long list of challenges, water shortage, land quality degradation and vulnerability to climate related shocks and stresses are top of the list. There are ten major agro-ecologies in the country and each one has its region-specific production and marketing problems. Pakistan's agricultural R&D mainly revolve around five major crops (wheat, rice, cotton, sugarcane, and maize) in which cycles of over- and under-production is almost a regular phenomenon. The marketing and value chains could not be developed to support the production of other crops like pulses, fruits, vegetables, and medicinal herbs. Our rangelands spread over more than 45 million hectares provide grazing facilities to cattle, sheep, and goats and the livelihoods of many rural dwellers. The carrying capacity of these rangelands is also declining overtime due to low R&D investment and vulnerability of climate change, particularly the erratic rainfall patterns.

Pakistan attributes special importance to food and nutritional security. Our Ministry of National Food Security and Research is perhaps the first federal level ministry established in the name of food security. Prime Minister, Imran Khan attaches special importance to achieve sustainable food and nutritional security at all levels ranging from national to regional and household to individual level in the country. We clearly understand that without tackling food and nutritional insecurity, Pakistan will be unable to achieve the targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

Now, I would like to draw the attention towards a robust process followed by Pakistan to prepare for the participation in the Pre-Summit as a 1<sup>st</sup> step and eventually the Summit final event. My ministry initiated the preparation for UNFSS-2021 Summit with a high-level meeting convened in February-2021. The country teams of international organizations like FAO, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), IFAD and WFP were taken on board. In March 2021, an independent secretariat was established at Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) – the apex organization in Pakistan’s Agricultural Research Systems - under the able leadership of Chairman PARC. Pakistan UNFSS Secretariat decided to work on all the five action tracks and started consultations with the Global Leadership teams on each Action Track. On domestic front, high level experts were engaged and entrusted to desk reviews to come up with initial drafts of the evidence base working papers for all AT’s. It took more than two months to prepare the working papers on these Action Tracks covering the key identified challenges and a proposed “Game Changing Propositions” highlighting the policy and other supports required. An inclusive process of National and Sub-National (Provincial) Consultations commenced with the National Food System State Dialogue on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021. The provincial dialogues were organized in all four provinces and these dialogues were conducted by strictly observing Covid-19 Pandemic SOPs for all in-person participants and taking hundreds of provincial and international people on virtual (zoom) link. After completion of this process, a national level pre-summit meeting was convened on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

Dear Participants; Here I am privileged to inform the global community about the specific “Game Changing Solutions” conceived by Pakistan for all the five Action Tracks. Pakistan considers Action Track-1 as the most important for ensuring food and nutritional security in Pakistan. Under this Action Track, the proposed solutions are aimed at enhancing food availability at consumer affordable prices are: Crop & livestock productivity enhancement; Controlling post-harvest losses & food wastages; and, Kitchen gardening in both rural and urban areas (for enhancing fresh and nutritious food availability) and the food safety. Under Action Track-2, sustainable consumption patterns shall be established by: Popularizing dietary guidelines with traditional and new recipes; Consumer awareness campaigns on importance of taking nutritionally balanced food and adopting labeling best practices for the packed food items. For Action Track-3, to popularize nature-positive food production patterns, we are intended to care our natural resource base and food safety by: Promoting use of resource conservation technologies and cultivation of green-manure crops; Promoting use of bio-chemicals in production & protection and adopting

crop-livestock integrated farming systems; additionally, Promulgating organic regulations and certification procedures & laboratories for branding nature-cared organic products. Moving on to Action Track-4, advanced equitable livelihoods is based on capturing livelihood opportunities for youth and women folk through : Production system-based business oriented capacity building of rural dwellers; promoting small and medium enterprises (SME's) in post-harvest handling of farm output, primary level value addition and food preservation; and, exploring new marketing opportunities through new nutrition-labelled brands. Finally, Action Track-5, our plans for building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stresses are like: Investing on R&D for devising more practicable and cost-effective technologies; Building capacity at primary level value addition and preservation of farm outputs and infrastructure development (roads & transport) for early disposal of farm outputs.

The cross cutting game changers cover the policy support to be provided in due course for the areas of : Increasing agricultural R&D funding for improving productivity, resources and its re-allocation towards minor crops and past-ignored food production systems; Increasing gender mainstreaming, encouraging and capacitating adolescents/youth for playing an active role in reducing food insecurity, Strengthening governance and regulatory role of the government from production till consumption; Strengthening provincial and district level food regulatory authorities for ensuring safe food availability and controlling food wastages; Capacity building with international collaboration in all areas ranging from crop-livestock production technologies generation, its early transfer to farmers, successful tools and tips of operating SMEs and value chains on food production systems based approach; and early implementation of agricultural transformation plans and programs.

Last but not the least, I would like to extend my appreciation for the country & Global teams of development partners including FAO, GAIN, IFAD and WFP on extending their assistance to complete very extensive process in a very inclusive way. This collaboration enabled us to engage diverse range of expertise at national and provincial level and devising a set of game changing solutions for the “Transformation of Pakistan Food Systems”. I would like to mention that Prime Minister Imran Khan and my Team are committed towards achieving zero hunger and other SDGs for Pakistani population and very glad to join any global movement like “Coalition of Action for Zero Hunger” under this UN Food System Summit initiative that can facilitate the Government of Pakistan in achieving its targets on global goals.

Lastly, I wish a fruitful summit in September 2021.

**Thank You All**