

OPENING REMARKS BY MINISTER LE MINH HOAN

At the Pre-Summit of the UN Food Systems Summit

From 26 – 28 July, 2021

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

We are in the first year of the decade of action to realize the Sustainable Development Goals. The Covid-19 pandemic has been causing critical consequences for health, economy and social security on a global scale. Food supply chains have been disrupted; and living conditions of people, especially the poor and vulnerable in both urban and rural areas... are facing difficulties and challenges.

Moreover, the resources for agricultural production are scarcer and negative impacts of climate change are more severe. These are all big challenges to the food security and nutrition for 7.9 million people of the world.

In this context, the agriculture sector continues to be a fundamental sector, which serves as the foundation for socio-economic development. Therefore, Viet Nam welcomes and highly appreciates the call of the United Nations Secretary General for the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021.

Ladies and gentlemen!

The Government of Viet Nam recognizes the need of close collaboration among nations and stakeholders to generate comprehensive transformation of global food systems by 2030 for the achievement of SDGs.

On behalf of the Government, I would like to share some key areas that Viet Nam expects to enhance the cooperation with relevant stakeholders:

Firstly, facilitate the linkages of innovation networks both at the national and global levels. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is working with the World Economic Forum to promote the Food Systems Initiative; joining in “the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate” initiative proposed by the United States and the United Arab Emirates; participating the “Joint Statement on Sustainable Agricultural Production and Food Systems” initiated by Japan and some ASEAN countries in the Monsoon Region. Viet Nam wishes to become a Food Innovation Hub in the ASEAN region. At the same time, Viet Nam is cooperating with domestic and international partners for green economic transformation and low carbon food systems.

Secondly, promote digital transformation and develop the digital agriculture by encouraging firms and farmers to apply digital technology to their production processes and agricultural service provision. The digital transformation will go hand in hand with the green transformation along the institutional innovation process in order to develop food systems, which integrate multiple values, including economic, cultural, social, landscape and environmental elements.

Thirdly, formulate and update the national food balance sheet as the basis for production and distribution; at the same time, intensify education and awareness raising to shape healthy and nutritional balanced eating habits for all in order to shift to healthy, green and responsible consumption patterns as well as reducing food loss and food waste.

Fourthly, support development of equitable and sustainable agri-food value chain by promoting grassroots farmer organization development and diversified public-private partnerships to incentivize private investments for responsible, transparent and sustainable agricultural value chains, which is the key for enhancing coherence and equal benefits among actors in agri-food value chains; Scale up and replicate initiatives of farmer organizations and small and medium enterprises at grassroots level in establishing and strengthening coherence, ensuring transparent and equitable value distribution among agri-food value chain actors, enhancing benefits and health of consumers, reducing carbon emission, and applying 4.0 technologies, etc. in order to optimize the integration of multiple values, including economic, cultural, social, landscape and environmental elements in agricultural products.

Viet Nam is characterized by small-scale farming, there are numerous good practices initiated by and started from farmers, which are very inspiring as they incentivize collaborative action for food systems transformation toward equitable, resilient and sustainable. A few successful models to name including “*Cây xoài nhà tôi*” (My Mango tree), “*Ruộng nhà mình*” (My farm) – which are so called – “Our Garden” Initiatives. These are innovative models in which farmers, consumers and other actors co-create co-ownership, co-responsibility and take joint actions for shared values in all economic, social and environmental dimensions. These models can be scaled up, replicated and generalized to apply in different contexts. It can serve as building blocks for equitable, sustainable and resilient food systems. Viet Nam is willing to share “Our Garden” Initiative to the United Nations and other partners. On this occasion, I would like to call for cooperation and assistance from the international community to scale up the “Our Garden” Initiative.

Last, but not least, enhance the collaboration and information sharing in sustainable management of natural and water resources, including trans-boundary water resources, marine resources and South-South cooperation.

We are really in need of “**Joint Actions**” for long-term solutions to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, to build climate smart and sustainable food systems in the “new normal” context, and by that way contributing to all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Thank you very much!

Remarks by Minister
In video clip at the second national dialogue

“The Government of Viet Nam recognize the need of close collaboration among nations and actors in the food systems to create deep and wide changes in the entire systems. This will help us perform better in poverty reduction, food and nutrition security in rural areas, remote areas, ethnic minority and vulnerable groups, especially women and children. It is also an opportunity to connect and develop our key agricultural value chains in a transparent, responsible and sustainable manner.”