

APEC Ministers Responsible for Food Security Chair's Statement

1. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Ministers responsible for food security, met virtually on 26 August 2022 under the chairmanship of H.E. Dr. Chalermchai Sri-on, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Thailand to exchange views on policy issues related to the current food security crisis and compounding the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The APEC region must focus on resilient economic rebuilding and recovery.
2. APEC economies welcomed the participation of representatives from the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Secretariat.
3. Varying views were expressed on the prevailing situation. The meeting expressed its concern on the ongoing COVID-19, current economic challenges, major challenges threatening global and regional food security, including the impacts of economic slowdowns and downturns, climate change, urbanization, global population growth, poverty, the affordability of healthy and nutritious diets, the COVID-19 pandemic, emerging diseases, trade barriers, export restrictions, increasing input costs, including energy and fertilizer, social inequality, as well as other shocks and stresses to food systems. APEC economies also acknowledged that it is time for APEC to sustainably transform our agri-food systems in order to achieve the Roadmap 2030 and align with boarder efforts towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, Goal 2 ending (zero) hunger.
4. APEC economies encourage to empower smallholders, micro-small and medium size enterprises (MSMEs), women, youth, and other groups with untapped economic potential as indicated in the Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030 to ensure that agriculture is a viable livelihood that sustainably meets the demand for food and agricultural products.
5. Reiterating our goal of sufficient, safe, nutritious, accessible and affordable food for all, which will in turn support enhancing the economic recovery and ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth, the meeting strongly supported the need for meaningful actions and achieved consensus on the following:
6. Under the theme of APEC Thailand 2022: Open. Connect. Balance., and recognizing the three priorities—open to all opportunities, connected in all dimensions and balanced in all aspects—we recall the Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030 (Roadmap 2030) endorsed at the APEC Ministerial Meeting on Food Security in 2021, and note that it aligns with the theme of APEC Thailand 2022.
7. We endorse the implementation plan of the Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030 (Implementation Plan), developed in 2022, which is in line with the Putrajaya Vision 2040 and the Aotearoa Plan of Action, for the lasting food security, food safety and improved nutrition for all, as well as for the reduction of food loss and waste in the region by promoting agricultural and food trade, and working towards sustainable resource management in the agriculture sector. The Implementation Plan identifies specific actions or initiatives that APEC economies may choose to implement to deliver on the Roadmap 2030 in the areas of digitalization and innovation, productivity, inclusivity, sustainability, public-private partnerships and smart goals.

8. We acknowledge the work on food security related issues of APEC fora and sub-fora, including the Policy Partnership on Food Security (PPFS), the High Level Policy Dialogue on Agricultural Biotechnology (HLPDAB), the Agricultural Technical Cooperation Working Group (ATCWG), the Oceans and Fisheries Working Group (OFWG) and the Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC). We note the contribution of ABAC to food security and its related issues.
9. Recalling the Global Report on Food Crises 2022, the number of people reportedly facing acute food insecurity increased from 135 million in 2019 to 193 million in 2021 in the 53 economies most in need of assistance. We note that food insecurity has continued to increase in 2022. We also acknowledge that it is time for APEC to enhance concentration on the sustainable transformation of our agri-food systems in order to achieve the Roadmap 2030 goals and align with broader efforts towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
10. We acknowledge that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has impacted global food supply chains, livelihoods, income and food prices. It has caused labor shortages, delayed harvesting, suspended operation of processing plants, shifted consumer demand, created disruptions to food distribution systems and slowed trade and business activities. In addition, many urban populations have also been affected with reduced access to food.
11. Amid these challenges facing global and regional food security, we reaffirm that APEC economies will jointly pursue cooperation and partnerships to ensure active engagement in supporting food security, in the following areas of: supporting food safety and trade facilitation; improving livelihoods and well-being, especially for the most vulnerable, by achieving inclusive agro-economic growth; promoting productivity growth and sustainable use of natural resources and the environment; enhancing adoption of science, technology and innovation in the agri-food sector; and balancing the economic, social and environmental interests in realizing food security priorities.

Supporting food safety and trade facilitation

12. We recognize the importance of ensuring that food safety measures align with international standards as a component of food security. We also realize the significance of producing nutritious food and achieving more sustainable food systems. We support efforts to reduce food loss and waste. We encourage to promote market access for smallholder farmers as well as consumers' access to safe food, and enabling effective regulation of food safety in all sectors to strengthen and support food trade, food security and consumer confidence
13. We recognize the role of trade to ensure global food security. We support efforts to ensure the unimpeded global trade of food as well as the stability of the food supply chain. We also highlight the importance of a free, open, fair, transparent, predictable, rules-based, and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system, underpinned by WTO rules. In this regard, and agreed to at the Ministerial Declaration on the Emergency Response to Food Security from the twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference, we reaffirm the importance of not imposing export prohibitions or restrictions in a manner inconsistent with relevant WTO provisions.

Improving livelihoods and well-being

14. We recognize the importance of self-reliance in agriculture for smallholders—including artisanal fisheries and small-scale aquaculture—to produce food for household consumption as well as the promotion of rural development and prosperity for all our people. We promote transforming food systems to be more resilient to major food

insecurity drivers. Efforts towards empowerment, viable livelihoods and resiliency need to consider gender and climate adaptation and mitigation.

Promoting sustainability of natural resources and environment

15. We support approaches to sustainable and climate resilient agriculture based on local conditions, including through the use of innovative technologies and traditional practices that help reduce land degradation and soil erosion, prevent desertification, optimize water use, promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and recovery of both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems as well as enhance carbon sequestration and lower greenhouse gas emissions.
16. We recognize the essential role of fisheries and aquaculture in ensuring global food security and the importance of the development of local coastal communities to improve the sustainable use of the sector. We acknowledge APEC's Roadmap on Combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing to ensure the sustainability of fisheries resources and the continued viability of trade in fish and fishery products in the APEC region, as well as the importance of sharing fisheries information, best practices and fisheries technologies to promote good governance in respective economies.

Enhancing innovation and technology in the agri-food sector

17. We recognize the importance of agricultural biotechnology as a tool in accordance with each economy's policy and legislation to enable sustainable agricultural productivity growth essential for food security. We, therefore, encourage APEC economies to utilize risk-proportionate and science-based regulatory frameworks taking into account the economies' circumstances and priorities to evaluate and approve products of biotechnology, facilitate voluntary technology transfers on mutually agreed terms with appropriate protecting data privacy and intellectual property rights, and raise public awareness in biotechnology innovation.
18. We strongly support the introduction of science, technology and innovation, such as precision farm management, climate smart agriculture, and modern smart farming practices through the voluntary sharing, exchanging and transferring of knowledge and best practices, promoting innovation and application of digital technologies to enhance digital supply chain for agriculture production and marketing on mutually agreed terms with appropriate data privacy protection and intellectual property rights, to help increase productivity, reduce production costs, enhance traceability, improve supply chain data storage, reduce postharvest losses, and build information sharing capabilities. We encourage the promotion of public-private investment to facilitate the use of innovative technologies for the whole food value chain as well as in the introduction of these newly-developed technologies in particular to start-ups and MSMEs.
19. We recognize that both traditional and modern production tools, and emerging digital technologies, are needed to help farmers produce enough to feed a growing global population while reducing their environmental footprint and building climate resilience. Employing these techniques can accelerate the transition to more sustainable food systems through productivity growth that optimizes agricultural sustainability across social, economic, and environmental dimensions.

Balancing economy, social and environment

- 20 We encourage APEC economies to explore the approach of Bio-Circular-Green Economic Model (BCG), and other innovative approaches in supporting the post COVID-19 pandemic economic recovery. We acknowledge that there is a no "one-size-fits-all"

approach to sustainability, and the BCG Model is one of many comprehensive approaches towards inclusive, balanced and sustainable economic development that emphasizes the efficient use of natural resources. We also note the ongoing APEC efforts, including the development of a standalone statement for Leaders' consideration, to support the BCG Model as an approach for achieving inclusive, balanced and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, long-term resilient economic growth, and environmental and climate objectives.

The way forward

21. We foster the active engagement of public private partnerships in pursuing synergy and cooperation in contributing towards concrete actions to enhance food security in the APEC region. We instruct the PPFS to facilitate the individual and collective actions conducted by APEC members under the Implementation Plan of the Roadmap 2030, and to report its progress and complete a review of it in 2025.
22. We thank Thailand for hosting the virtual APEC Ministerial Meeting on Food Security and related meetings in 2022. We also look forward to the United States hosting APEC in 2023.