

APEC 2023 Food Security Ministerial Chair Statement

All APEC ministers responsible for agriculture agreed to all paragraphs except for paragraphs 9 and 10.

1. We, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Ministers responsible for Food Security, met in Seattle, Washington, the United States of America on August 3, 2023. The meeting was chaired by United States Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack to exchange views on policy issues related to the current food security crisis, including the compounding effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising costs, and climate change resulting in the disruption of production and supply chains, and the benefits of engaging with the private sector to address them. APEC economies welcomed the participation of representatives from the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC).
2. We reiterate our commitment to realize the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040, including through the implementation of the Aotearoa Plan of Action, to ensure lasting food security, food safety, and improved nutrition for all as well as reducing food loss and waste in the region by promoting agricultural and food trade, sustainability, innovation, and by promoting resilient and low-emission agriculture. We also reiterate our endorsement of the Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030 and its Implementation Plan, which echo the Putrajaya and Aotearoa goals.
3. We recall our APEC 2022 Leaders' Declaration, which reflected our pledge to expedite and intensify our work to promote agricultural development, including in rural areas, and to promote long-term food security by ensuring our agricultural and food systems are more resilient, productive, innovative, and sustainable, strengthening global food supply chains, and reducing food loss and waste. As set out in the 2022 Bangkok Goals on Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economy, our ability to address the heightened economic and environmental challenges and disruptions facing the region depends on pursuing a whole-of-society approach with concrete actions, including by following through on our sustainability commitments in the Putrajaya Vision and the Aotearoa Plan of Action. Further in line with the BCG, we encourage the strengthening of public-private partnership in expanding digitalization and promoting innovation within the APEC agri-food systems, while protecting data privacy and intellectual property rights.
4. Taking inspiration from the APEC 2023 theme of "Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Future for All," and the priorities of building a more interconnected, innovative, and inclusive APEC region, we underscore the role APEC must play in advancing sustainable and inclusive economic growth and trade, including by advancing gender equality and the economic empowerment and inclusion of groups indicated in the Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030. Through the agriculture sub-theme of "Together Achieving Sustainable, Equitable, and Resilient Agri-food Systems," we emphasize the relationship between open, undistorted agri-food systems, climate change, and food security and nutrition. We underscore the importance of sustainable productivity growth along its economic, social, and environmental dimensions to be addressed in a balanced way and in line with economies circumstances.
5. We understand the importance of science and transparency in the development of policies and regulations and concur that they are applicable in regional conversations about sustainable development of agri-food systems, environmental and climate commitments, and trade. We also recognize that international trade is essential to achieve food security and that the maintenance of food supply chains is integral in ensuring food accessibility and affordability. We are

committed to promoting the rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, fair, inclusive, equitable, and transparent multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core, to promote sustainable and inclusive growth, enhance market predictability and minimize market distortions, and increase business confidence for the purposes of regional food security and nutrition. We remain committed to the dedicated WTO work program on food security, as outlined in the Ministerial Declaration on the Emergency Response to Food Insecurity at the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference.

6. We reiterate that smallholder, micro-, small-, and medium-size enterprises (MSMEs), women, youth, Indigenous Peoples as appropriate, people living with a disability, people from remote and rural communities, and groups with untapped economic potential, as stated in the Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030 and the Aotearoa Plan of Action, are key to advancing inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agri-food systems. We are committed to the full and equal participation and leadership of these groups, as well as the promotion of rural development, livelihoods, and wellbeing for all. We note the importance of elevating the knowledge of these groups as they can contribute to the achievement of sustainable agri-food systems. Together, we aspire to ensure stewardship of the natural environment and increase the resilience of our agri-food systems through sustainable actions that address climate change challenges, particularly in terms of climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.
7. We emphasize that increasing agricultural productivity and promoting sustainable agricultural practices based on local conditions are crucial to ensuring food security and aligning our work with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We will support the use of sustainable agricultural practices that are context-specific and promote the efficient and appropriate use of agricultural inputs and resources (such as soil, water, and fertilizers), in a way that is environmentally non-degrading, technically appropriate, economically viable, and socially acceptable. We encourage investment and international exchanges in research, technology, innovation, knowledge, and management practices that increase agricultural productivity while delivering positive environmental outcomes, including maintaining and improving biodiversity.
8. We welcome the 2023 Policy Partnership on Food Security deliverables, which include a series of informative field guides on the range of subjects presented during the U.S. host year and the Principles for Achieving Food Security Through Sustainable Agri-food Systems in the APEC Region. We also note the collaborative work on food security, food safety, food loss and waste reduction, trade, and climate change from the meetings of the Agricultural Technical Cooperation Working Group, the High-Level Policy Dialogue on Agricultural Biotechnology, the Ocean and Fisheries Working Group, and Food Safety Cooperation Forum and that any solution must be collaborative, inclusive, and holistic of all sub fora mentioned above.
9. We remain concerned about the global food security situation recalling that the root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition are poverty, growing inequality, inequity, and lack of access to resources and income-earning opportunities. The prolonged effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to impact global food supply chains, livelihoods, food prices, causing labor shortages and slowing trade and business activities, as well as worsening inequalities. Nearly all APEC ministers also noted the impact of ongoing conflicts. Climate change increases the challenges for stakeholders across the supply chain, including small-scale producers in the agri-food and fisheries sectors, leading to unpredictable yields. These shocks have further contributed not just to historically high costs, but also price volatility and supply disruptions for food and fertilizers, which further disadvantage persons/groups in vulnerable situations, especially those in

developing economies. Nearly all APEC ministers expressed deep regret for the decision of the Russian Federation to unilaterally withdraw from the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI) and call on the Russian Federation to reverse its decision, return to negotiations, and extend and fully implement the initiative immediately, stressing the importance of allowing grains to continue to reach those most in need. APEC economies will continue to provide technical assistance and enhance our capacity for inclusive agricultural development and food security.

10. As our Leaders highlighted last November, we have also witnessed the war in Ukraine further adversely impact the global economy. There was a discussion on the issue. We reiterated our positions as expressed in other fora, including the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly, which, in Resolution No. ES-11/1 dated 2 March 2022, as adopted by majority vote (141 votes for, 5 against, 35 abstentions, 12 absent) deplores in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and demands its complete and unconditional withdrawal from the territory of Ukraine. Most members strongly condemned the war in Ukraine and stressed it is causing immense human suffering and exacerbating existing fragilities in the global economy – constraining growth, increasing inflation, disrupting supply chains, heightening energy, and food insecurity, and elevating financial stability risks. There were other views and different assessments of the situation and sanctions. Recognizing that APEC is not the forum to resolve security issues, we acknowledge that security issues can have significant consequences for the global economy.^[1]
11. We reiterate the importance of APEC’s continued engagement with other relevant international and regional organizations including the United Nations, its specialized agencies, and the WTO. We appreciate ABAC’s continued leadership as Vice Chair and engagement in PPFS and underscore the importance of public and private sector collaboration in addressing current and future challenges. We recognize that meaningful engagement with the private sector is vital to the success of the PPFS and commit to redouble our efforts in this regard as soon as possible.
12. We thank the United States for hosting APEC in 2023. We also look forward to Peru hosting APEC in 2024.

^[1] Paragraph 10 of this document, taken from the APEC Bangkok Leaders’ Declaration from November 19, 2022, was agreed to by all member economies except the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation.