

## **Principles for Achieving Food Security Through Sustainable Agri-food Systems in the APEC Region \***

1. Food insecurity is a global threat that must be addressed with urgency. We, as members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, concur that continuing to transition to more sustainable, reliable agri-food systems are critical to the long-term health and wellbeing of our populations and economies. The food security challenges we face are particularly complex given the need to produce sufficient food for a growing world population with a finite resource base. In addition, climate change and increasing environmental challenges and their associated stresses on food production necessitate swift action to establish more sustainable and resilient ways of meeting global demand for food. We believe that sustainable agricultural productivity growth—in particular, producing the same or more with fewer resources—is essential to meet the food security and nutrition needs of current and future generations, to conserve natural resources, and to support the long-term viability of agri-food systems.
2. We also recognize that progress needs to be made towards sustainable, inclusive, resilient, reliable agri-food systems. As such, progress should be based on decision-making and policies that are transparent and reflect internationally accepted agreements and standards. In addition, we recognize there is no one-size-fits all approach to agri-food systems transformation. For agri-food systems to be truly sustainable, progress should: support the inclusivity within, and livelihoods of, systems' stakeholders; ensure food security and nutrition; and enhance efforts to address climate change.
3. We believe that food security relies not only on an adequate food supply, but also on the availability, accessibility, and utilization of food. Stability in all these dimensions is needed for a functional agri-food system, and we recognize the vital role of trade in that regard. As such, we reaffirm the importance of the rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, fair, inclusive, equitable, and transparent multilateral trading system, with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core. Reliable global trade is an essential component to meet increasing global demand for food supplies, efficient use of natural resources, and economic opportunity.
4. Further, while we recognize that governments play a key role in enhancing food security, we also acknowledge the importance of the private sector as key stakeholders in the agri-food system, from food production, processing, and distribution to trade and investment. To this end, we endeavor to strengthen the public-private partnership, recognizing the private sector's valuable role throughout the food value chain.
5. To contribute to a shared understanding among APEC economies of their critical role in supporting food security and nutrition, this document sets out principles for regional cooperation and conversations about sustainable economic development, environmental commitments, and trade through the agri-food system lens. We encourage regional cooperation that is grounded in a shared vision of these principles as we improve the sustainability and resilience of our agri-food systems.

***Principle 1: Promote sustainable, resilient agri-food systems that support food security, environmental stewardship, maintain livelihoods, and result in social benefits for current and future generations.***

6. We aspire to ensure stewardship of the natural environment and value policies that increase the resilience of our agri-food systems through sustainable actions that address climate change, particularly in terms of climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. These policies should minimize negative impacts on our agri-food system, food security, biodiversity, and natural resources e.g., water and soil. We are committed to inclusive collaboration with diverse stakeholders across the supply chain, including small-scale producers in the agri-food and fisheries sectors, to developing tools and systems that promote investment in, and the uptake of, sustainable agricultural practices that address climate change. We acknowledge the importance of the sustainable use of existing agricultural resources in each economy in enhancing local, regional, and global agri-food systems.
7. We recognize that to be resilient and sustainable, agri-food systems must be productive and resource-efficient. It is critical to increase the sustainability of agri-food systems in a manner which enhances productivity. To this end, we note the need to scale-up responsible investment in agriculture to support the ongoing transition towards sustainable agri-food systems.
8. Understanding that social benefits should be accessible to all people and communities, we support agri-food systems that enhance human health, safety, and wellbeing for all. In this vein, we reiterate our support and recognition of the Putrajaya Vision 2040 and the APEC 2022 Leaders' Declaration which call for the adoption of inclusive approaches that improve the quality of life for all members of society and advance gender equality. We will also continue to promote economic inclusion and empowerment of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), women, and groups with untapped economic potential, such as Indigenous Peoples as appropriate, persons with disabilities, and those from remote and rural communities, while also promoting the role of youth as it is indicated in the Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030.
9. We support policies that allow all people to participate, lead, and thrive at all levels in and across agri-food systems fully and effectively. We support strengthening the leadership, knowledge, and participation of the aforesaid groups in agri-food systems. We endeavor to align our work with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

***Principle 2: Promote policies that are responsive to the inherent uniqueness of circumstances to which they are applied to advance sustainability and resilience in differing agri-food systems.***

10. We recognize there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach and therefore acknowledge the diversity of circumstances that exist between and within APEC economies. These circumstances necessitate the innovation and development of a wide range of context-appropriate measures to achieve sustainable, resilient agri-food systems. Sustainability and resilience measures should focus on meeting objectively verifiable outcomes, not prescriptive approaches, and the application of measures in one economy should not impinge on another economy's approach to sustainability or ability to trade. Within the wide scope of measures, innovative technologies, and approaches, we recognize among others: climate smart agriculture, agricultural biotechnology, digital agriculture, precision farming, nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches, and applications of traditional knowledge and local wisdom, as appropriate.

11. Further, we recognize that reliable, timely and transparent data, access to and usage of digital technologies on voluntary and mutually agreed terms, and a global digital infrastructure, along with protection of data privacy and intellectual property rights, are essential components in the transition towards sustainable, resilient agri-food systems.

***Principle 3: Promote the transition of APEC agri-food systems towards sustainability and resilience through policy and regulatory decision-making that reflect applicable international agreements and accepted standards.***

12. 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.
13. As we endeavor to meet food security and nutrition needs of the APEC region through sustainable agri-food systems, we recognize the importance of science and risk assessment in line with applicable international agreements, such as the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) and the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement), and internationally accepted standards, in our policy and regulatory decision-making.
14. Given the wide range of policies and regulations employed to support the ongoing transition towards more sustainable agri-food systems, we encourage transparency and sharing of scientific approaches. We highlight the importance of openness and voluntary knowledge sharing to improve understanding and cooperation, promote context-specific best practices and substantiated claims of sustainability.
15. We plan to work to promote regional capacity to make decisions based on scientific assessments and ensure implementation of practices that address the three pillars of sustainability (environmental, social, and economic). In this vein, we are committed to continue sharing research, lessons learned, context-specific best practices, tools and resources that support regional development of sustainable agri-food systems in a manner that is protective of privacy and proprietary information.

***Principle 4: Promote the role of the multilateral trading system and transparent, predictable, open, and fair markets in regional and global food security.***

16. We are committed to the rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, fair, inclusive, equitable, and transparent multilateral trading system, with the WTO at its core, which recognizes the importance of measures that promote international trade of food, animal, and plant products.
17. We underscore that policies and regulations intended to improve sustainability and resilience of agri-food systems should meet intended objectives, be consistent with international obligations, and minimize market distortions. These measures should not be unnecessarily complex or impose undue compliance costs. We encourage members of APEC to ensure that measures taken to combat climate change should neither constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination nor act as non-tariff barrier to trade.
18. We are committed to avoiding unjustified export restrictions, in accordance with GATT Article XI: 2 (a) and provisions stipulated in Article 12 of the WTO Agreement on

Agriculture and recall our commitment to avoiding unjustified export restrictions that prevent or restrict global agri-food trade. We underscore the need to reduce excessive international agri-food market volatility and tackle the uncertainty of commodity prices which are proven to be detrimental to global food security and have negative impacts on agri-food systems stakeholders' wellbeing. In this context, we particularly emphasize the importance of enhancing transparency in food and input markets, including by sharing data and strengthening international agricultural reporting systems.

19. Within our capacities, we will work with economies to identify and support the technical assistance and capacity building they need to effectively engage in and benefit from access to international agri-food markets. We will take appropriate actions to enhance voluntary knowledge-sharing on mutually agreed terms between economies and collaborate within the APEC system, including through the implementation of the Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030.

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\* This principles are voluntary and non-binding