

Ministerial Statement by H.E.Mr. Kim Hyeon-soo
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
of the Republic of Korea

at the United Nations Food Systems Pre-Summit (26~28 July)

Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,
I am

Amid the ongoing climate crisis, the COVID pandemic has made us rethink our ways of living.

In particular, we have recognized that progress in all the 17 UN sustainable development goals relies on the food systems transformation from production to consumption. We need the transformation to address the current crisis.

Since 2017 with the launch of the new administration, the Korean government has been devising “National Food Plan to ensure the sustainability of agriculture and aquaculture”. Discussions have been held among multiple stakeholders including producers, consumers and academia.

This year, Korea had Food Systems Summit Dialogues at the national level. Participants showed great interest and shared ideas to transform food systems.

I believe that our path forward is clear.

It is essential to transform into healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems.

To this end, Korea is considering three priorities.

First, the resilience of food systems.

Climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic put pressure on the food supply chain.

For the most commonly eaten staples in Korea, a system for stable supply is necessary. Also, more locally grown food should be produced and consumed. International cooperation to address the food crisis is required as well.

Second, sustainable production and consumption.

Korea supports sustainable food systems with less use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and more organic farming.

Precision farming needs to be promoted, and efforts should be made to replace fossil fuels by renewable energy. Korea plans to reduce food loss and waste from farm to fork.

Third, a safe and healthy diet.

Korea helps the vulnerable members of society eat a healthy diet by providing supplemental food and nutrition, thereby increasing social inclusiveness.

Public education and food safety management must be promoted.

In this regard, the Korean government is devising the “National Food Plan” and “The 2050 Plan for Carbon Neutral Agriculture.”

Now, I would like to suggest several areas of cooperation for systems transformation in cooperation with the UN and the international community.

First, free and transparent trade.

Amid the pandemic situation, Korea would like to emphasize that emergency measures related to each country's trade of agricultural products should be consistent with WTO rules.

Second, local production for local consumption.

Korea would like to share its policy experience of promoting local food consumption and resilience of local farming, including by-friendly school meal programs.

Third, transformation of energy use in rural communities. Korea is ready to share its experience of promoting renewable energy use in agricultural production, processing and distribution facilities.

Finally, smart farming.

The spread of smart agriculture and aquaculture is the key to optimal use of inputs and energy. Therefore, we need to develop and share smart technologies through international cooperation.

As the traditional food systems have been formed over a long period of time, this transformation may not be easy.

That's why it is important to make continuous efforts together with the international community.

I look forward to making huge progress in food systems transformation at this PreSummit. Korea will join the effort to create meaningful outcomes at the September Summit.

Thank you.