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37th Session of FAO regional conference for Asia Pacific officially opens

How to transform agrifood systems and act as a global agent of change is the key focus

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How to transform agrifood systems and act as a global agent of change is the key focus

How to harness the potential of a dynamic region in transforming how our food is produced and distributed globally, while also tackling its all-too-persistent problems of hunger and poverty - these are the crucial challenges that ministers from across Asia and the Pacific will be discussing in a four-day meeting here this week, organised by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

“We need to think innovatively, be action-oriented and results-targeted to make the changes needed to accelerate national and global pathways towards achieving more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient, and more sustainable agrifood systems,” QU Dongyu, FAO Director-General said in an opening statement at the 37th Ministerial Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific today. “We are following the approach: Recovery from the pandemic and broken facilities; Reform of our systems and management to be fit for purpose and mandate; Rebuild FAO’s network and comprehensive capacity; and a Renaissance of FAO for a better future” the Director-General further pledged.

At an inauguration ceremony for the conference, featuring colourful ethnic Sri Lankan songs and dance, Sri Lanka’s President Ranil Wickremesinghe outlined the crucial role of the agricultural sector as a vehicle to help Sri Lanka continue to emerge from its economic crisis. On looking at the economy, he said he had considered, “Where were the low-hanging fruits, where could we get our results, the first was agriculture,” concluding that agriculture, followed by tourism, were the priority sectors. For his part, the FAO Director-General paid tribute to Sri Lanka’s commitment to transforming its agrifood systems.

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