

G20 Extraordinary Agriculture Ministers Meeting

Ministerial Statement on COVID-19

Virtual Meeting – April 21, 2020



We, the G20 Agriculture Ministers, are deeply saddened by the devastating human losses and suffering caused by the spread of COVID-19. We commit to cooperating closely and taking concrete actions to safeguard global food security and nutrition.

We reaffirm the importance of working to ensure the continued flow of food, products, and inputs essential for agricultural and food production across borders in line with our Leaders' Statement on COVID-19 of March 26, 2020. We acknowledge the challenges of minimizing the risk of COVID-19 while keeping food supply chains functioning. We will continue to work to ensure the health, safety, welfare, and mobility of workers in agriculture and throughout the food supply chain.

We will guard against any unjustified restrictive measures that could lead to excessive food price volatility in international markets and threaten the food security and nutrition of large proportions of the world population, especially the most vulnerable living in environments of low food security. We agree that emergency measures in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic must be targeted, proportionate, transparent, and temporary, and that they do not create unnecessary barriers to trade or disruption to global food supply chains, and are consistent with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules. We recognise the importance of transparency and commend the Trade and Investment Ministers' commitment to notify the WTO of any trade-related measures taken, including those related to agriculture and essential foodstuffs. We reaffirm our agreement not to impose export restrictions or extraordinary taxes on food and agricultural products purchased for non-commercial humanitarian purposes by the World Food Programme (WFP) and other humanitarian agencies.

We emphasize the work of the G20 Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and take note of AMIS' assessment that at present global food supplies are adequate and food markets remain well balanced. As members, we commit and call on other members to continue providing timely and reliable information on global food market fundamentals to help markets, countries, and consumers make informed choices. Where appropriate, we will coordinate policy responses, supported by the AMIS Global Food Market Information Group and the AMIS Rapid Response Forum. We call for continued support for AMIS, including through voluntary financial contributions.

We will work together to help ensure that sufficient, safe, affordable, and nutritious food continues to be available and accessible to all people, including the poorest, the most vulnerable, and displaced people in a timely, safe, and organized manner, consistent with national requirements. Acknowledging the critical role of the private sector in food systems, we call for enhanced cooperation between the public and private sectors to help mobilize rapid and innovative responses to impacts of this pandemic on the agriculture and food sectors.

Under the current challenging circumstances, we stress the importance of avoiding food losses and waste caused by disruptions throughout food supply chains, which could exacerbate food insecurity and nutrition risks and economic loss. We stress the need to strengthen the sustainability and resilience of food systems globally, including to future shocks from disease and pest outbreaks, and to the global challenges that drive these shocks. In line with the One Health approach, we call for strengthened mechanisms for monitoring, early warning, preparedness, prevention, detection, response, and control of zoonotic diseases, and developing science-based international guidelines on stricter safety and hygienic measures for zoonosis control.

We deeply thank farmers and workers, and small, medium and large scale agri-food businesses for their continuous efforts to ensure our food supply. We will intensify our efforts, in line with WTO rules and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to support them to sustain their activities and livelihoods during the crisis and to assist their recovery afterwards. Our efforts will support rural communities, especially small-scale farmers and family farms, to be more economically prosperous, resilient and sustainable, and to have improved food security and nutrition, giving special attention to the needs of developing and low-income countries.

We will continue our cooperation with relevant international organizations and within their mandates work to: reinforce international cooperation; identify additional actions to alleviate the impacts of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition; share best practices and lessons learned, such as addressing barriers to supply chains; promote evidence and science-based information and combat misinformation; provide capacity building and technical assistance; and promote research, responsible investments, innovations and reforms that will improve the sustainability and resilience of agriculture and food systems. This work could build on the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO's) evolving response to COVID-19, the International Fund for Agricultural Development's (IFAD's) evolving efforts to support a strong recovery from the effects of COVID-19, policy monitoring and analysis by the OECD, and other relevant initiatives, such as the preparation for the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit.

We will continue our close cooperation and as necessary update our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and our broader G20 agriculture and food agenda. We stand ready to reconvene as required.