COUNTRY STATEMENT BY
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AT THE 7TH D-8 MINISTERIAL MEETING ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY (VIRTUAL)
13 JANUARY 2022

Theme: "Promotion of Climate Smart Agriculture
Key issues for D-8 Member States"

Honourable Heads of State and Government,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. First and foremost, allow me to extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of the People 's Republic of Bangladesh for hosting this virtual ministerial meeting. Malaysia would also like to laud the efforts of the D-8 Secretariat in organising this significant conference, as well as advancing the framework for promoting Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA).

2. Malaysia has identified five (5) key challenges in our agro-food sector for the next 10 years. These challenges include scarcity of natural resources, lack of productivity and innovative agriculture, demographic change and shifting nutrition trends, food loss and waste, as well as the adverse impact of climate change.

3. To address these challenges, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries Malaysia, has developed a new policy direction for the country through the National Agro-Food Policy 2021-2030 (NAP 2.0) and the National Food Security Policy Action Plan 2021-2025. With three key characteristics of sustainability, resilience, and technological advancement, the Malaysian agro-food industry aspires to be one that is robust and agile, not only to keep pace with global economic growth and the effects of globalisation, but also to mitigate the impact of climate change.

4. Among the strategies that have been identified toward supporting climate change agenda are as follows:

    a. Firstly, promoting the adoption of technology and automation including climate-smart agriculture approach by creating a conducive ecosystem for the industry;

b. Secondly, strengthening the data on food security to assess and monitor the level of food security including climate change impact on the agriculture sector; and

c. Thirdly, intensifying Research, Development, Commercialisation and Innovation of potential alternative agriculture practices for food production to adapt to the climate change.

5. The Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) has taken critical steps to address the effects of climate change, particularly on rice crops, through the development and use of flood and drought-tolerant rice varieties, as well as the development of rice seed varieties resistant to saline water. Malaysia will continue to work in close collaboration with international organisations particularly the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) through ASEAN RiceNet National Plan Implementation in Malaysia.

6. The devastating effect of climate change on the agriculture sector is extensive. In Malaysia, the recent floods that have impacted parts of the country also affected some 8,000 farmers, resulting in record losses for the agri-food industry of over USD21 million.

7. In addition, within a five-year period from 2017 to 2021, a total of nearly 41,000 hectares of paddy crops were destroyed due to floods in Malaysia, while over 9,000 hectares were damaged due to drought.

8. In view of this, Malaysia is in the process to introduce agricultural insurance to manage the financial impacts of climatic shocks and to support the growth of the agriculture sector. Malaysia remains committed towards ensuring supply-chain agility and resilience, which are critical for the agro-food industry to maintain smooth operations and remain competitive under distressed conditions.

9. To encourage modernisation, new financing mechanisms and incentive structures are in place to foster the adoption of 4IR technology. In this regard, a dedicated fund has been established by the Government to accelerate the adoption of 4IR in Malaysia’s agriculture sector. The fund provides opportunities for farmers, especially young agropreneurs to modernize their agricultural activities.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

10. Malaysia recognises that in order to address climate change, a comprehensive shift towards modernisation is required, and smart farming or precision agriculture is indeed the way forward.

11. Malaysia believes that climate-smart agriculture could contribute to the advancement of agricultural system transformation. The transformation towards adopting modern technologies in agriculture will ensure our food security in a changing climate.

12. With that being said, Malaysia looks forward to further regional cooperation and smart partnership of policymakers, scientists, the private sectors, as well as the farming community to implement the convergence of technological advancement, policymaking decisions and business experience.

Thank you.