

# Media Update

15 July 2020

## FAO

PRESS RELEASE

### Regional Consultative Technical Meeting on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic impacts on agriculture and food security

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations today convened a virtual meeting to discuss resilience building to multiple shocks and addressing COVID-19 in fragile contexts. The virtual dialogue, which brought together over 300 participants from 29 countries, was held as part of a series of Virtual Regional Consultative Technical Meetings (RCTM) to discuss the response to the COVID-19 pandemic impacts on agriculture and food security in the Near East and North African Region.

Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research, Government of Pakistan presented Pakistan's perspective on building resilience to crises. *"In order to mitigate the negative impacts of COVID-19 on Pakistan's economy, the Government of Pakistan has announced economic relief and stimulus package of PKR 1.24 trillion as part of its immediate response to COVID-19, which will also contribute to agriculture sector and agriculture value chains through its linkages with other sectors,"* said Syed Fakhar Imam, Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research, Government of Pakistan while delivering the keynote speech. *"Measures taken by the Government are expected to protect and enhance agriculture and value chains with attention on building resilience to future shocks in a country prone to natural hazards. The Government of Pakistan is thankful to FAO for its continued support and collaboration on strengthening the agriculture sector and improving food security in Pakistan,"* he further added.

*"FAO has a long-standing partnership with the Government of Pakistan, and continues to play its role in helping communities of Pakistan find food systems-based solutions to cope with disasters. FAO is also working together*

*with the Ministry of National Food Security & Research to introduce a range of initiatives to strengthen resilience to shocks,”* said Minà Dowlatchahi, FAO Representative in Pakistan.

Mr. Aamer Irshad, Assistant FAO Representative for Programme highlighted that, *“regional platforms provided by FAO such as the Regional Consultative Technical Meetings allow countries and regions to benefit from each other experience sharing to improve their response to compounded shocks and resilience building,”*

In recent years, a sequence of disasters have imposed harsh consequences on agriculture, food security and the livelihoods of millions of vulnerable rural communities, farmers and pastoralists, in Pakistan. The dual threat of COVID-19 and the current locust upsurge has further intensified the existing food and nutrition insecurity.

Early assessment and action to support the food system and vulnerable livelihoods of Pakistan is necessary to avoid the deep impacts of COVID-19 on food security, livelihoods, markets and the economy within the country. FAO is working closely with the Ministry of National Food Security and Research to support the Government of Pakistan in coping with the series of challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and the current locust upsurge.

**For media enquiries please contact Mehr Hassan, FAO Pakistan at [mehr.hassan@fao.org](mailto:mehr.hassan@fao.org)**

\*\*\*