

Opening Remarks

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Distinguished Delegates and Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the Regional Forum on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization, jointly organized by the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM) of UNESCAP and China Agricultural Mechanization Association (CAMA), China Agricultural Machinery Distribution Association (CAMDA) and China Association of Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers (CAAMM).

I would like to thank the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Changlin Group for your support to the Forum. I also wish thank the Qingdao Municipality for hosting the Forum.

As you all might be aware, although we succeeded in reducing drastically the proportion of undernourished people in Asia and the Pacific, there are still 540 million undernourished people in our region. Sustained agricultural production and productivity gains are the most important and likely ways to

produce more and better food so as to meet the increasing and ever-changing food demand of this region. At the same time, agriculture is still the mainstay of most economies in the Asia-Pacific region and plays an important role in national economic development, poverty reduction and employment generation. Amid these challenges and that of climate change, sustainable agricultural mechanization can achieve the dual goals of increasing food productivity against the background of rapid population growth, reduction of rural labor as a result of urbanization and dwindling natural resources, and reducing the impact on the environment. Commercialization and use of safe, efficient and environmentally friendly agricultural machinery is an important component of agricultural mechanization.

CSAM, as a regional institution of UNESCAP, is mandated to promote sustainable agricultural mechanization in this region, thereby contributing to the achievement of production gains, improved rural livelihood and poverty alleviation. With its reviewed strategic directions for the future, CSAM is expected to play a more effective role as a regional forum, an information hub, a reference point of standards

and a center of capacity building in the field of agricultural mechanization, in close partnership with other international agencies, governments, research institutes, private sector and the farmers.

The launch next month in Bangkok during UNESCAP's Trade and Investment Week of the Asian and Pacific Network for Testing Agricultural Machinery (ANTAM) will be a milestone event for CSAM and the agricultural mechanization community in the region. It is a regional network aimed to promote regional trade of, and investment in, safe and quality agricultural machinery for the benefits of farmers and manufacturers through harmonization of testing standards and codes across the region. Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization Strategy (SAMS) is another initiative developed and implemented jointly by FAORAP and CSAM. SAMS will also prove to be a useful policy advisory tool for countries in this region to tailor their sustainable agricultural mechanization strategies and policies.

The Regional Forum on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Asia and the Pacific is a further step to gather key stakeholders including representatives from international organizations and key participants from countries of Asia and the Pacific to discuss and share knowledge on good practices on sustainable

agricultural mechanization and to formulate recommendations for strategies for improving food security and farmers' livelihoods in the region through fostering stronger public-private partnerships.

I am glad to see that more than 15 countries of the region are represented here today, both from the public and private sectors, a good mix for policy deliberation and for business development. It is therefore my expectation that the Forum will contribute to enhancing mutual understanding and trigger cooperation and business development opportunities for sustainable agricultural mechanization.

Last but certainly not the least, I wish to extend my appreciations to all the distinguished participants and resource persons for taking the time to participate in this Forum.

I wish all of you a pleasant and fruitful stay in Qingdao.

Thank you.