

TONGA TO BE ASSISTED IN AGRI-FOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION AND SMALL ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT STATES (SIDS) DEVELOPMENT LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

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The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has committed to further support the Tonga Government's efforts in advancing agriculture sector and food systems. The strengthened areas of cooperation will include global environment facility to mitigate climate changes, enhancing domestic food production to ensure food security, food and nutrition security development to establish better health food system, rural development to enhance livelihoods leaving no one behind.

This was a first courtesy visit of the FAO Sub-Regional Coordinator for the Pacific, HE Ms Xiangjun Yao presented her credential to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Honourable Fekitamoelea Útoikamanu at Nuku'alofa.

On behalf of the Prime Minister, Hon. Huákavameiliku, Hon. 'Utoikamanu congratulated HE Ms Yao and wished her well as she assumes her new role at FAO Sub-Regional Office, which supports Tonga and Pacific, through overseeing the implementation of programmes on the food security, agriculture and rural development.

She thanked FAO for its contribution towards Tonga's Agriculture Sector Development Agenda, to establish a diversified, economically and environmentally sustainable agriculture economy, including the trade and marketing of domestic agriculture products and recovery assistances during the continuous great challenges climate changes, natural disasters and war in Europe.

The discussions touched on increasing partnership opportunities in these areas: (1) Sustainable management of Fisheries and Agro-Forests; (2) resilient crop and livestock production (3) Greener value chain development (4) Digital agriculture and innovation, (5) Support for an Agri-food system transformation that provides healthy, affordable diets for all in a sustainable manner in a context where global crises coexist (climate change impacts, post-pandemic and increasing food and energy prices due to the war in Ukraine).

In response, FAO Sub-Regional Coordinator for Pacific, HE Ms. Xiangjun Yao reaffirmed FAO's support to the Tonga Government through the mobilisation of technical and financial resources; assistance for development of innovation across the Agri-food system, amongst other areas of cooperation.

She highlighted FAO's support in building resilience in agriculture through technical support to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests leading food security response to crises, training, promoting agro-forestry and crop diversification under various TCP and Emergency Projects. These assistances contribute significantly for the Food System Transformation Pathway and Small Islands Development States (SIDS) Plan.

FAO initiatives also includes collaboration with the Ministry of Fisheries to strengthen resilience of Tonga's fisheries sector and designing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for disaster preparedness, response and recovery in line with National Emergency Management Office – NEMO Policies.

FAO also works with the line ministries in providing technical support to ensure the needs of vulnerable groups such as women and youth in agriculture and fisheries are met.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations with the goal of achieving food security for all and to ensure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives. With 195 members - 194 countries and the European Union, FAO works in over 130 countries worldwide. The FAO Sub-regional Office for the Pacific Islands was established in 1996 in Samoa to coordinate the work of FAO in the Pacific region.