

## **T20 Statement on Measures for a Sustainable and Stable Global Food Market**

The global COVID-19 crisis has the potential to pose acute threats to food security. Many people have lost their livelihoods, which threatens the access of vulnerable people to the food they need. Other threats arise from disruptions in agricultural input markets and the production, marketing, and distribution of food.

The T20 reiterates the belief that to avoid major food crises, governments should focus on income support to protect food access for the most vulnerable, enact social distancing in innovative ways to avoid supply chain disruptions, and facilitate 'green lanes' to prevent disruptions to the food trade and ensure the unrestricted movement of all food-sector workers.

The T20 recognizes that the COVID-19 crisis underlines the importance of the global food system's resilience and sustainability. The T20 also acknowledges that the COVID-19 crisis has not lessened the need to address existing systemic vulnerabilities. In this regard, the unprecedented measures taken to confront COVID-19 show that the international community could take the necessary measures to transform water, energy and food systems into sustainable, resource-efficient systems, and achieve global food security while addressing climate change.

Promoting improved, sustainable technology and innovation is a critical step. The T20 calls for the G20 to step up its coordinated efforts to achieve the following:

- Increase financial support and policy incentives for agri-food system research at national, regional, and international levels. This research should be relevant to developing countries, including focusing on innovations in bio-fertilizers, biological pest control and climate-resilient seed development.
- Promote an inclusive approach to technology adoption, reflecting the diversity of local, regional and global market forces, and minimizing factors that support non-tariff trade barriers.
- Promote enhanced regulatory capabilities that balance societal benefits against the potential risks of bio-innovation technologies.



The T20 acknowledges that these efforts could be enhanced by the further development of individual G20 country strategies for growing their bioeconomies. It would be desirable if the G20 could prepare a document of non-binding best practices for bioeconomy policymaking.

The T20 recognizes the need to consider the nexus between water, energy, and food systems when promoting technology, innovation and the application of bioeconomy principles. The nexus approach has already been adopted by some countries in the Middle East and North Africa region. The T20 recommends that the G20 establishes a collaborative network for capacity development and best practices for the effective and widespread adoption of integrated Water-Energy-Food (WEF) approaches. The G20 could request the Agricultural Chief Scientists of G20 countries (MACS-G20) to coordinate a white paper on best practices in applied WEF-nexus policy approaches. The paper could also provide a cost-benefit analysis of deploying sustainable practices in agricultural production. The latter could consider the trade-offs among water use, soil quality recovery, competing resource energy use and food security.

Some of the governmental responses to COVID-19 have included restrictions on international trade in food products. Such measures tend to be counterproductive as they can destabilize the international market prices of food and undermine global food security. The G20 agriculture ministers have already called to resist such trade restrictions, with the global health risk impacting food demand and supply.

Beyond COVID-19, the G20 should reiterate the importance of open trade for global food security. In this regard, the G20 should lead the World Trade Organization and the United Nations (UN) (within the UN Water Convention framework) in addressing the link between international trade, sustainable food production and water use.

