

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Speech of His Excellency,

Mr. Yerlan A. Baidalet

Director General of the Islamic Organization for Food Security

On

International Conference on

**SMART Technologies and Resilience for Sustainable Agriculture in
Africa**

Organized by

The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ICESCO

Wednesday 20 January 2021

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Excellency, Dr. Salim M. AlMalik, Director General ICESCO

Excellency, Mr. Mallam Zaneidou Amirou, Minister of Environment in Niger

**Excellency, Colonel Hassan Zeinabou BRAHIM, Minister Delegate in charge of
Decentralization in Niger**

Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants

Ladies and gentlemen

Assalamu alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh,

It is a great honor and privilege for me to address the international online conference on SMART Technologies and Resilience for Sustainable Agriculture in Africa.

The Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) is a specialized Institute of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), with its headquarters in Nur-Sultan, the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan, underscores with appreciation the cooperation with the fraternity of OIC Institutions to face the challenges of Agriculture and Food Security in Member Countries. IOFS is delighted to emphasize the need to strengthen cooperation and declares its readiness to participate and contribute for events that cover the using of Innovative Agriculture Approaches to pave the way for promoting strong and resilient food systems in OIC member states and tackling the various challenges confronting lives and livelihood of our teeming populations.

Smart agriculture is precisely one of the main pillars of food security strategic plan that have been stated in OIC Science, Technology, and Innovation agenda for 2026. IOFS took these innovative strategies into precedence consideration and are included in its 2021 Action plan.

Africa have a wonderful opportunity that 60% of its land are arable lands that can not only feed the 1.3 Billion people in Africa, but it could also feed the world. In contrast, Africa depend on importing food and spend more than 35 billion US\$ annually of its need of Food in particular Wheat and Rice. That number is anticipated to raise up to 110 Billion US\$ by 2050. Science, Technology, and Innovation is the pivotal approach to boost agriculture productivity, mitigate climate change, produce plant varieties that tolerate drought and resistant to diseases. Farmer extensions in remote areas need to be improved and modernized with the use of digitalized systems. These measures would strengthen the fragile food systems and improve the livelihood of the people in the continent.

Excellencies

In December 2020 16 Strategic Programs of IOFS have been approved by the 3rd General Assembly in Ankara. All of them directly related to our African member states.

At IOFS, we believe that the food we need should be nutritional, safe, Halal and enough for everybody via the modality **Gene to Fork** as a complete ecosystem to achieve this aspirational goal.

It cannot be achieved without the development of strategic commodities of Wheat, Rice, Cassava and Palm Oil among other strategic commodities. We have carefully planned to establish key Centers of excellence to cover most of OIC geographic regions, including North, Western and Eastern Africa. The Centers of Excellence would utilize the latest digital technologies to guarantee its superior performance and sustainability.

Today the international conference will discuss the biodiversity as important approach to achieve resilient food system. At IOFS we are believing that harnessing technology and innovation to enhance Food Security in OIC Member States through agricultural biodiversity is an important approach. IOFS is examining the possibility of deliberating upon a regional mechanism for protection, conservation, exchange of views, human and institutional capacity development with regards to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in OIC Member States. International workshop in July 2020 has arranged jointly by government of UAE and IOFS Secretariat has reviewed and approved the Framework of Action on Plant and Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PAGRFA) as a practical step in coordinating intra-OIC action in the field of promoting food security through agricultural biodiversity.

Excellencies,

While borders are closed and our travels are restricted, locust has been moving transboundary without any restrictions. At the beginning of 2020, an unprecedented locust outbreak threatened eight countries in the East African region besides Pakistan and Iran in Asia. The estimated loss of crops and livestock was put at US\$15 billion. IOFS program will use the Artificial Intelligent and Remote Sensing to develop interactive platform for predicting, alarming, and controlling the Locust.

In the spirit of including the much-needed engine of our private sectors in food security, IOFS has given tremendous special attention to an amazing flagship project of International IFPA which is a private-sector engaging arm that is dedicated for all our Member States. The International IFPA is a global platform for future interaction between entrepreneurs and all stakeholders in the entire ecosystem as not only does it relate to trade, but it accommodates other issues of business such as technology and information sharing among members, capability studies, increased market access as well as transport and logistics among others. Today, IOFS will present in more detail International IFPA in the session 3.

Excellencies

In the end, it goes without saying and reiterate that IOFS eternally convey its readiness to participate and contribute to such high value events. In this regard we welcome all our collaboration on our today's conference topics to achieve sustainable and resilient Food Security in whole OIC region.

May Allah help us achieve all our good goals with health, security, prosperity, and development for all our dear Member States.

Wishing you all fruitful conference and all the success.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh