

Closing Speech at the 23rd APRACA General Assembly

Sept. 6, 2023

By Mr. Qian Wenhui, Chairman of ADBC

Distinguished Mr. Shaji K.V., Dr. Das Prasun Kumar,

Fellow committee members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

Good afternoon!

First of all, on behalf of ADBC, I would like to extend my congratulations on the success of the 23rd APRACA General Assembly, and my heartfelt thanks to my predecessor, Mr. Shaji K.V., for his outstanding contribution and achievements during his tenure as Chairman of APRACA. We must build on the good work of Mr. Shaji K.V. and carry forward the fine traditions and best practices. It is through this continuity that we will pursue development and improvement. My thanks also go to the APRACA Secretariat, who made great efforts to make the meeting a success. Thank you all for attending this event and sharing your valuable insights.

APRACA has long been committed to the sound development of agricultural and rural finance in the Asia-Pacific region, and plays an important role in promoting poverty reduction, food security and inclusive growth. At this regional forum, we had in-depth discussions on how green and climate finance empowers the sustainable development of

food and agricultural systems, and gained insightful thoughts on the mitigation of climate impact on regional food systems, alignment of green and climate finance with agri-food industries, and regional practice on application of green and climate finance instruments. In today' s EXCOM meeting and the General Assembly, we reviewed and adopted the minutes of the last EXCOM meeting, listened to the report presented by Dr. Das, elected a new set of EXCOM members, and made outlooks on APRACA's future development and work priorities in the coming two years. All agenda items were completed with full and fruitful success, and we are expected to bring the capacity building and sustainable development of APRACA to a new level.

This event marks our first offline gathering since the pandemic, and I am particularly honored to take over as the new chairman of APRACA here in Guangxi. This is the second time for ADBC to take up the rotating chairmanship of APRACA since our last one 20 years ago. In a span of 20 years, we have experienced the "economic miracle" of the Asia-Pacific region, witnessed APRACA growing from strength to strength, and ADBC, in itself, also benefited a lot from exchanges and cooperation with APRACA and its member institutions. Thank you again for your long-term trust in and support to the ADBC, which will inspire me to work even harder to fulfill my role as the Chairman of APRACA. As the Chairman institution of APRACA, ADBC will join hands and work closely with APRACA member institutions and partners to promote

exchanges, cooperation and knowledge sharing in the field of agricultural finance across Asia-Pacific.

First, we will focus on implementation. We will continue to put into action the APRACA Strategic Plan 2019-2024 and other decisions made in this meeting, striving to put APRACA on a sustainable track. We will well organize other routine work, including training, consultancy, personnel exchange and best practice sharing to strengthen cooperation.

Second, we will organize joint research. We will bring into full play the platform role of APRACA in expertise exchange by organizing multilateral research teams, conducting on-site visits and hosting seminars. We will refine the mechanism of CEREFA and boost communication between APRACA member institutions.

Third, we will promote experience sharing. We encourage member institutions to share more of their successful experience in addressing climate change, safeguarding food security, and promoting inclusive growth via multiple online and offline channels. ADBC will soon publish *The Role of Agricultural Policy Bank in Poverty Alleviation*, which is designed to share with other countries our practices in supporting China's poverty alleviation. We hope that member institutions can also summarize their best practices in written forms and share them with us.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear friends,

Recent years have witnessed intricate impacts brought about by climate change, regional conflicts and pandemic, which brought greater uncertainty to the food production and circulation across the Asia-Pacific.

Yet, luckily, we' ve developed a keen understanding of what' s lying ahead and have already put forward many constructive suggestions. Taking this opportunity, I would like to tentatively share a few of my thoughts on the future development of APRACA and its member institutions.

First, we need to increase support to green finance and food security, to expedite the transition of agri-food system into one that is greener, more inclusive, resilient, efficient and sustainable, thus contributing to the realization of the UN SDGs.

Second, we need to increase and improve financial supply, which requires us to better allocate resources, innovate in products, optimize services, prevent and control risks, refine the financial governance system, and improve the efficiency of financial governance, so as to better serve the real economy associated with agriculture and rural areas.

Third, we need to expand the influence of APRACA, which is also what I'd like to emphasize today. I think we should approach this from three avenues: enhancing APRACA's value proposition, expanding its membership base, and boosting its international influence. First, we need to enhance APRACA's value proposition. As the chairman institution, ADBC will coordinate with the vice-chairman institution and APRACA Secretariat to extensively hear opinions and suggestions from member institutions and improve our working mechanisms accordingly. Today's EXCOM and General Assembly meetings offered a space where inspiring ideas and profound insights are shared. We must heed them and form

consensus in order to optimize our work mechanisms and improve performance. Better services and support must be provided to member institutions, which is the top priority as ADBC assumes the chairmanship. Member institutions will have more confidence in APRACA if we can offer more value to them. Therefore, we hope to join hands with the vice-chairman institution, NABARD, and other EXCOM members, to enhance the mechanisms, operation and outcomes of our work. Second, we need to expand membership base and be financially sustainable. As an institution serving the Asia-Pacific region, APRACA counts its current members as concentrated mostly in the Southeast, South and Northeast of Asia, with insufficient membership coverage for the rest of the region. There is still room for membership growth in Central and Western Asia and the Pacific and a large number of outstanding institutions in Southeastern and Northeastern Asia remain outside of the family of ARPACA. In this light, we should encourage and incentivize current members to promote ARPACA and recommend more potential members. As for financial sustainability, my suggestion is two-pronged. On the one hand, we need to expand membership base to drive increase in membership fee collection; on the other hand, we need to address non-payment of membership fee on a case-by-case basis. Circumstances vary when it comes to non-payments: some institutions lack the willingness, some run into financial difficulties and wish to postpone payment to a later date, and some are hindered by technical issues such as foreign exchange control. The situation as it stands means there is no

one-size-fits-all solution and calls for improved one-on-one communication and category-based management. For instance, a grace period or assistance can be offered to help troubled institutions weather difficulties, and those that wish to withdraw membership should have their intention respected. Even the Paris Climate Agreement, the major international accord on tackling climate change, will see countries signing out and then back in from time to time. It is therefore my belief that as long as we run APRACA well, its membership base will be retained, grown and consolidated. Let's all work toward this direction then. Third, we should boost APRACA's international influence. More efforts are needed to improve all-round cooperation between APRACA and national governments, companies, international financial institutions and UN agencies, so as to build consensus for development and achieve more significant results. Apart from research project outcomes, it is also important to achieve more practical results. Now, there is a lack of quantifiable and concrete outcomes that can showcase what APRACA has achieved in terms of serving agricultural, rural areas and farmers. I hope that in developing future development plans, APRACA should prioritize some key projects. These projects not only include medium-to-long term policy-oriented and theoretical studies, but also should showcase innovative practices and models in service of agricultural and rural financial needs. We can widely promote application of such best practices among member institutions and help them achieve tangible outcomes, which will in turn boost APRACA's international influence. Key

members can take the lead in this process. ADBC will actively undertake key projects and tasks and produce concrete and quantifiable results. Members from India, a major population and agriculture country, should better summarize and share best practices. In China, we say, "Fragrant wine needs no bush." However, even fragrant wine needs to be promoted diligently. Therefore, we should not only produce results but also make them better known. This will help a broader range of institutions worldwide to become aware of APRACA and enable us to better fulfill our mission. Of course, these tasks are challenging, and they require us to build consensus and work together.

As a Chinese saying goes, long and arduous as the journey is, but with sustained actions, we will eventually reach our destination and embrace a brighter future. Last November in the 2022 APEC CEO Summit, our President Xi Jinping noted in his written speech that the 21st century is the Asia-Pacific century. With this important judgement, we believe that, despite of all these difficulties and challenges, Asia-Pacific will still embrace enormous opportunities, and APRACA will certainly play a greater role in regional rural finance.

Finally, I wish you all enjoy your coming field trip tomorrow and sincerely hope you will visit China more often!

Thank you all!