Role of mechanization in addressing impact of Covid-19 pandemic in the agricultural sector in the Asia-Pacific region
OUTLINE

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Covid-19 pandemic

• Brought unprecedented challenges in the agricultural sector in the Asia-Pacific region
• Threatens to stagnate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, reverse gains made in recent years
• Between 83 and 132 million people may be added to the ranks of the undernourished globally in 2020 due to the pandemic
Impact of the pandemic on agriculture

- Lockdowns & Quarantine
- Disconnected Logistics & Transportation
  - Shortage of Labour
  - Shortage of Other Inputs
  - Interruption in Trade
  - Inability to Sell Produce
- Delayed or Postponed Agricultural Production
- Food Insecurity
- Decline in Income
- Decreased Purchasing Power
- Food Waste
- Risk of Social Instability

Photo source: myanmar.ifpri.info
Examples of positive government interventions

- Exempting farmers and stockbreeders from movement restrictions
- Facilitating transportation of agricultural produce
- Creating ‘green channels’ for smoother delivery of raw materials and produce, food imports
- Dedicated aid programmes for several industries including agriculture
Role of sustainable agricultural mechanization in supporting recovery and building resilience

- Introduce greater speed of operations in food production
- Address shortage of manpower & support social distancing measures
- Improve efficiency of storage and processing including for perishables to empower farmers to better decide time and price of sale
- Promote conservation agriculture for enhancing resilience of smallholders
- Mechanization solutions for livestock farms to prevent and control zoonotic diseases
- Retain returning migrant workers & youth in agriculture

Photo courtesy: Zheng Guohua
Recommended priorities for region to ‘Build Back Better’ through Sustainable Mechanization

- Address needs of smallholder farmers
- Strengthen rural infrastructure
- Promote ICT-enabled mechanization technologies
- Promote research and development
- Encourage role of youth
- Deepen private sector engagement
Thank you!