

Opening Remarks by Mr. Anshuman Varma, Programme Officer, CSAM

Inception Workshop of the China Pilot on Integrated Straw Management in China

29 August 2018, Laixi, China

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the ‘Inception Workshop of the China Pilot on Integrated Straw Management’ organized by the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in collaboration with China Agricultural University (CAU) and Qingdao Municipal Agricultural Machinery Administration (QMAMA), Laixi Municipal Agricultural Machinery Administration with the support of the Qingdao Zhitao Agricultural Machinery Specialized Cooperative.

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to our co-organizers, China Agricultural University (CAU), Qingdao Municipal Agricultural Machinery Administration (QMAMA), Laixi Municipal Agricultural Machinery Administration and Qingdao Zhitao Agricultural Machinery Specialized Cooperative, for their commitment and dedication in organizing this event with so much professionalism and efficiency.

Many countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including China, are facing the issue of burning of straw residue which poses an important public health and environmental concern while also contributing to Greenhouse Gas emissions from the agricultural sector. Therefore, as a follow up to the outcomes of the *4th Regional Forum on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Asia and the Pacific* organized by CSAM in November 2016 in Hanoi, Vietnam, the Centre has launched an initiative on promoting Integrated Straw Management through agricultural mechanization in the Asia-Pacific region.

As a first step, a team of experts was engaged to conduct research on the status of straw burning in three sub-regions, namely East Asia, South-East Asia and South Asia, in order to collect the available and proven practices of straw management in different countries. The research paper titled “Status of Straw Management in Asia-Pacific and Options for Integrated Straw Management” was completed in early 2018.

Based upon the findings of the Research Paper and discussions at a *Regional Workshop on Integrated Straw Management* held in November 2017 in Kathmandu, Nepal, it was

decided that three pilots will be implemented in China, India and Vietnam to examine and demonstrate selected technologies for using straw as fertilizer, as fodder, and for mushroom growing, in order to reduce straw burning and its negative impacts on human health and the agricultural ecosystem.

China is a vast country, with its total output of straw ranking the first in the world. China's straw output is not only large in quantity, but also rich in variety. With increasing straw output, efficient and environment friendly utilization of straw becomes critically important. In line with the selection principles for pilot sites as recommended in the Research Paper led by CSAM, complemented with on-site assessment, it has been decided that the pilot in China will be established in Laixi of Qingdao City in Shandong Province.

CSAM is a Regional Institute of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) with a vision to achieve production gains, improved rural livelihood and poverty alleviation through sustainable agricultural mechanization for a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable Asia and the Pacific. The Centre's work is contributing towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the global community at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, including Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 2 (No Hunger).

Facilitating discussion and knowledge exchange on the theme of efficient straw utilization via sustainable agricultural mechanization is now an important element of CSAM's work. We are pleased to play a role in convening key stakeholders to explore opportunities for synergy and collaboration. In this context, the Inception Workshop here today, aims to bring together relevant stakeholders to discuss findings of the socio-economic survey conducted by the experts from China Agricultural University (CAU), deliberate upon techniques for integrated straw management identified for the current Pilot, in particular 1) returning straw to the field as fertilizer and 2) using straw as fodder for cattle. This workshop also seeks to lay out a Work Plan for establishing the Pilot Site for the current and the coming years.

I am confident that through the discussions at this workshop, we can together work towards achieving three objectives, namely:

- (1) To examine and develop a set of integrated straw management technology models for the pilot site;
- (2) To improve farmers' awareness of technologies and methods of integrated straw management at the pilot site;
- (3) To explore ways to upscale application of the proven integrated straw management technologies in Shandong Province.

I look forward to listening to your valuable insights and learning about your good practices. I also look forward to hearing more about practical opportunities to continue to work together to achieve sustainable agricultural mechanization in order to progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and realize our shared commitment to ‘leave no one behind’ in the coming months and years.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you every success in your deliberations.

Thank you.