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FAO Asia-Pacific calls for urgent action to protect â??Right to Foodsâ??

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This yearâ??s World Food Day theme, â??Right to Foodsâ?• for a Better Life and a Better Future, underscores the importance of the accessibility and affordability of a healthy diet as well as the long-term environmental health that sustains food production. The rising rates of malnutrition are affecting all socio-economic groups, with global obesity rates projected to increase from 14 percent in 2020 to 24 percent by 2035.

The Asia-Pacific region plays a vital role in global agrifood systems, employing 793 million of the 1.2 billion people employed in the agricultural sector globally, and significantly contributing to feeding a global population of 8 billion. Despite this, more than one-third of the global population, approximately 2.8 billion cannot afford a healthy diet, with 1.66 billion facing this challenge in Asia alone.

The note of caution was emphasized during the regional observance, convened today in Bangkok, by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

World Food Day observance: honoring young leaders

Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand, FAO Goodwill Ambassador for Asia and the Pacific, presided over the regional World Food Day ceremony. Her Royal Highness emphasized that â??food must be produced sustainably to ensure communities have access to nutritious food, even in times of crisis. Ultimately, the nutritious and diverse

food needs to reach peopleâ??s plate; thus, we must ensure that it is available at affordable prices."

The event celebrated innovation, recognizing five remarkable young leaders from Thailand, Indonesia, Samoa, Nepal, and Papua New Guinea for their contributions to strengthening agrifood systems and sustainability in the region. Her Royal Highness presented them with awards to acknowledge their innovative initiatives. While acknowledging the contributions of the young innovators, Jong-Jin Kim the Assistant Director-General and FAO Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific stated, â??Technology and Innovation provide us with new solutions to the complex problems that we face today in our agrifood systemsâ?•.

Certificates were also awarded to winners of the regional photo contest on food security and nutrition from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea, and Mongolia, part of FAO's "Four Betters" initiativeâ??better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life â?? leaving no one behind.