

Opening Remarks by Amson Sibanda

**Chief, National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch,
Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UNDESA**

International Workshop on “Applications of Juncao Technology and Its Contribution to Alleviating Poverty, Promoting Productive Employment, and Protecting the Environment”

20 February 2024, Nadi, Fiji
Grand Ballroom, Sofitel Hotel

Your Excellency, Honourable Vatimi. T.T.K. Rayalu, Minister for Agriculture and Waterways, Fiji
Your Excellency, Ambassador ZHOU Jian, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of Fiji
Prof. Lin Zhanxi, Chief Scientist National Engineering Research Center of JUNCAO Technology and inventor of the Juncao technology,
Officials from the National Engineering Research Center of Juncao Technology, Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University, China, and China-Fiji Juncao Technology Demonstration Center

Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bula and a very good morning to everyone and welcome to Nadi.

On behalf of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, I am pleased to welcome you to this International Workshop on Juncao Technology, convened under the auspices of the United Nations Juncao Project.

This gathering brings together participants from 20 countries who are members of the global Juncao family to exchange insights and experiences, particularly focusing on the successful implementation of Juncao technology in Fiji.

Your Excellency, Hon. Rayalu, we have heard so many good things about how your country has successfully domesticated Juncao technology, contributing to addressing food insecurity, reducing poverty, creating decent employment, empowering women and youth, and addressing the ongoing impacts of the climate crisis.

Amongst us, we have participants from Cameroon, East Timor, Fiji, Jamaica, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Micronesia, Nepal, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Tanzania, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Zimbabwe.

Our aim over the next few days is to learn how we can collectively address common challenges related to poverty and hunger, employment creation, and environmental degradation, and to identify strategies for overcoming them as beneficiaries of Juncao technology.

We firmly believe that the next three days hold immense potential for meaningful collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Despite challenges faced by many of you to get here, we remain confident that our collective commitment to this workshop will make the long hours you spent to get here worthwhile, thanks in part to the meticulous preparations undertaken by our dedicated organizers, particularly colleagues from the Ministry for Agriculture and Waterways, China-Fiji Juncao Technology Demonstration Center, Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University, and my own colleagues at UN DESA.

As we convene from different corners of the globe, let us fully take advantage of these peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and see how best to apply them in our own local contexts. Your dedication and active participation will contribute to the success of our endeavors.

Some of you may recall that UNDESA organized the inaugural Pacific regional workshop back in 2018. And we have continued to build on these activities. Last year, many of you had the opportunity to participate in workshops and study tours held in Rwanda, Ethiopia and Fuzhou, China.

Dear Participants,

The UN Food Systems Summit recognized the imperative to transform agri-food systems. Such transformation depends on scaling up investments in agriculture, technological transfer, building capacities of smallholder farmers, and the empowerment of women and youth.

In 2017, the Juncao Project was established under the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund, for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with generous support from the People's Republic of China. We are now in the second phase of this project.

To date, our capacity building activities have received participants from Albania, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Cook Islands, Eritrea, Fiji, Ghana, Jamaica, Laos, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Nepal, Rwanda, Papua New Guinea, Tanzania, Thailand, Tonga, Zimbabwe, and many others.

The Juncao project underscores the essential role of the transfer of technology through north-south, south-south and triangular cooperation – one of the means of implementation highlighted by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This capacity-building workshop aims to enhance knowledge and strengthen the national capacities of developing countries to improve their policies and programs supporting sustainable agriculture and environmental protection through the transfer of Juncao technology.

New technologies like Juncao can turbocharge progress toward the SDGs. By supporting mushroom cultivation even in rural settings with the least resources, this technology has demonstrated its

potential to contribute to food security, job creation and the protection of the environment.

Further, Juncao grass is a source of livestock feed.

The advent of mushroom cultivation in Pacific countries such as Fiji constitutes a significant milestone. Before the introduction of Juncao technology, mushroom production remained largely unfamiliar, with limited knowledge and utilization among smallholder farmers.

However, with the innovative approach offered by Juncao, farmers now have the means to cultivate various nutritious mushroom varieties using dried, chopped grasses, in contrast to traditional methods reliant on cutting down trees.

Today, Fiji proudly boasts over 600 mushroom farmers, a testament to the transformative power of Juncao technology. Under the guidance of Professor Lin's dedicated team, we have witnessed the establishment of two model villages dedicated to mushroom cultivation, serving as beacons of success and inspiration to many.

As we continue to embrace agricultural innovation, let us celebrate the remarkable journey of mushroom cultivation in Fiji and the opportunities it brings for prosperity and sustainability.

Together, we have an opportunity to demonstrate how the transfer of new technologies can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and promoting sustainable agriculture.

Thank you for taking time off from your busy schedules and travelling this far. I am sure you will find Nadi and the people of Fiji friendly and welcoming.

As Fijians like to say, the famous "Bula" spirit is not just a greeting - it's a way of life.

We have also been warned by the locals - you may have arrived as a visitor but when you fly back home, you will leave as family after you experience the Bula spirit firsthand through daily interactions with locals, and hopefully by participating in some traditional singing and dancing.

Thank you!
