Tehran calls for stronger agricultural diplomacy to improve food security

FAO: Innovation, resource efficiency vital to strengthening Iran's agricultural sector



Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi addresses the World Food Day conference in Tehran, Iran, on November 2, 2026.
MIZAN

Economy Desk

Iran called for stronger agricultural diplomacy to help ensure sustainable food security, with Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi saying on Monday that Tehran was ready to expand scientific, trade and joint investment cooperation in agriculture with countries across the region and beyond.

Speaking at a World Food Day conference in Tehran attended by government officials, researchers, producers and representatives of international organizations, Gharibabadi said food security went beyond access to food and required ensuring that everyone had sustainable access to sufficient, safe and affordable food, IRNA reported.

He cited geopolitical crises, wars, climate change, drought, resource constraints, supply chain disruptions and economic inequalities as threats to the food security of millions of people.

Agriculture was no longer simply an economic sector but had become a pillar of national security, independence, development and stability, he said.

Gharibabadi said agricultural cooperation could help build trust, strengthen international relations, ease tensions and foster closer ties between nations.

He called for greater use of diplomatic channels to expand cooperation in agriculture, livestock farming, fisheries, food industries, modern technologies, agricultural trade and natural resource management.

Opportunities for int'l cooperation

Gharibabadi identified technology transfer, joint research, investment in agricultural infrastructure, improved water efficiency and the development of sustainable supply chains as major areas for international cooperation.

He said Iran's diverse climate, skilled workforce, research institutions and strategic geographical position offered opportunities to expand international partnerships.

Iran had considerable capabilities in greenhouse technologies, seed and sapling production, food processing, irrigation technology, livestock farming and aquaculture, he said.

Tehran was ready to turn these capabilities into opportunities for joint development through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, with neighboring countries, West Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus and Africa among its priorities, Gharibabadi added.

He identified water shortages, drought and dust storms as major agricultural challenges facing Iran and the region, calling for cooperation on sustainable water management, water-efficient production methods, knowledge exchange and early-warning systems.

Gharibabadi also said the effects of wars and unilateral sanctions on production, trade and the supply of essential goods could not be overlooked. The war against Iran had damaged infrastructure, production activities and trade, in addition to causing humanitarian, security and economic consequences, he added.

Unilateral sanctions could also create serious obstacles to obtaining essential agricultural inputs through restrictions on banking, insurance, transportation and financial transactions, even when food and medicine were formally exempt, he said.

Gharibabadi voiced support for the role of international organizations, particularly the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in achieving sustainable food security.

Referring to decades of sanctions and damage to some agricultural infrastructure during two recent wars, including the 12-day Israeli war in June 2025 and the 40-day US-Israeli war that began in late February, he said Iran remained an important model for ensuring food security.

Meanwhile, Farrokh Tayrav, the FAO representative in Iran, said water shortages, climate change and soil degradation were among the main challenges facing the country's agricultural sector, stressing the need to combine modern technologies with traditional knowledge.

The future of food production and sustainable food security in Iran depended on innovative solutions, more efficient use of resources and stronger resilience in agricultural systems, he said.

Iran's agricultural output rose to 137 million tons over the past year, from 130 million tons, despite severe drought, water shortages, sanctions and energy imbalances, according to Deputy Agriculture Minister for Crop Production Majid Anjafi, who announced the figures in August.

Citing FAO data, Tayrav said global cereal production reached about 3.1 billion tons in 2024, up 27% from 2010.

But the main challenge was turning these gains into sustainable access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food for all households, he said.

Food security went beyond increasing agricultural production and rested on four dimensions: food availability, access, utilization and stability, Tayrav said. Achieving it required a focus on long-term sustainability and effective public participation, he added.

Iran, Brazil seek to expand trade to $10b despite shipping challenges

Economy Desk

Iran and Brazil are seeking to increase bilateral trade to $10 billion, but disruptions to shipping routes and sharply higher transportation costs are posing challenges to expanding economic ties, an Iranian transport official said on Monday.

Abazar Barari, deputy head of international affairs at Iran's Federation of Transport and Logistics, said the two countries' trade had grown in recent years and Brazil's economic capacity, particularly in supplying essential goods and agricultural products, offered opportunities for further cooperation.

Speaking at an Iran-Brazil trade cooperation meeting, Barari said disruptions to traditional shipping routes following the recent war had complicated supply chains. Logistics had become a major challenge for global trade, particularly between Iran and Brazil because of the geographical distance and the large volumes of cargo involved, he said, according to IRNA.

A significant share of bilateral trade consists of bulk commodities such as sugar, corn and grains, which are more economically and operationally suited to large vessels than to land transport, Barari said. Replacing sea routes with road transport would impose substantial additional costs and complications, he added.

Traditional shipping routes have faced restrictions since the war, forcing some trade onto alternative routes using intermediary ports,


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including through Turkey, Barari said. These alternatives also involve security, time and cost considerations, he added.

The cost of shipping a 40-foot container, which previously stood at about $3,000, had risen to at least $8,000, Barari said. Land transport costs along alternative routes had also increased significantly.

He said other Iranian ports could help develop trade routes and reduce reliance on restricted maritime corridors. Even if the wartime situation ended, restoring normal shipping operations and lifting possible restrictions would take time, making advance planning for alternative capacity, particularly at Chabahar port, necessary, he added.

Iran has remained on a war footing since a US-Israeli coalition launched attacks in late February, triggering a 40-day conflict that included strikes on civilian areas and infrastructure. The country, which has been under Western sanctions for decades over its nuclear program, was also facing a maritime blockade from the south, targeting its trade and oil exports.

Trade heavily skewed toward Brazilian imports

At the same meeting, supply chain and business development expert Sina Alipour said Iran imported about $3 billion worth of goods from Brazil in 2025, while its exports to the South American country totaled only about $91 million, according to figures he cited.

Corn and soybeans accounted for about 87% of Iran's imports from Brazil, Alipour said. A substantial share of the corn and soybean meal used by Iran's livestock and poultry industries comes from Brazil, he added.

Some food industry inputs, including glucose and fructose produced through corn processing, are also linked to this supply chain, he said.

Iran imported about $912 million worth of goods from Brazil in the first four months of 2026, with imports reaching about $346 million in April, Alipour said. He cited the two countries' membership in the BRICS group and their populations of more than 90 million in Iran and over 200 million in Brazil as factors supporting closer economic ties. But expanding trade would require more than increasing imports, Alipour said, calling for sustainable logistics, financial and commercial infrastructure, closer direct ties between private-sector companies and stable channels for cooperation. He also proposed exploring opportunities for Brazilian companies to operate in Iran and partner with domestic producers, particularly in food production and the livestock and poultry sectors.

TPO: Exports to Turkey jump 59%, shipments to Oman rise 23%

Economy Desk

Iran's exports to Turkey rose 59% and shipments to Oman increased 23% in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year, which began on March 21, despite regional tensions and disruptions to trade routes, an Iranian trade official said.

Abdolamir Rabihavi, director general for West Asia and Africa at the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, said trade with some countries in the region had continued to grow, with export figures showing gains in both markets.

The United States imposed the naval blockade after the 40-day war that began in late February, as part of efforts to pressure Tehran into accepting Washington's terms for an agreement. The restrictions have targeted Iran's oil exports and maritime trade.

Regional developments had affected Iran's trade with some Persian Gulf countries, but Oman had been less affected despite its location in the Persian Gulf, Rabihavi said, according to IRNA.


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Iranian exports to Oman increased to $1.164 billion in the six months from March 21, from $948 million in the same period a year earlier, a rise of 23%, he said.

Exports to Turkey climbed to $4.373 billion from $2.756 billion over the same period, an increase of 59%, Rabihavi added.

He said some problems along the country's southern maritime routes had persisted in recent months, while some restrictions on land routes had eased, allowing greater use of the country's land border crossings.

Rabihavi expressed hope that the positive export trend would continue in the second half of the Iranian year, leading to further growth in trade with countries across the region.

Leader signals shift ...

Such circumstances would place Washington in a position where it faces growing strate-

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gic uncertainty, potentially forcing it to back down from its positions and serving as a deterrent in its own right.

The Leader's directives can therefore be assessed through three analytical dimensions.

First is the emphasis on the immediacy of Iran's response, which signals the elimination of any time gap between an attack and retaliation. This would deprive the enemy of room for diplomatic maneuvering to contain Iran's response or consolidate tactical gains. It would also increase the psychological cost of decision-making and narrative management for the United States, forcing Washington to assume from the outset that any attack could trigger an all-out war.

Second is the reference to removing geographical restrictions on Iran's military response. This provision extends the scope of retaliation beyond a limited regional theater of conflict, maximizing uncertainty over the scale and location of any response. Such uncertainty would undermine the United States' ability to calculate potential gains and costs. Consequently, American enemy bases, assets and interests in other regions would also be exposed to danger, underscoring Iran's unlimited missile capabilities.

Third is the reference to expanding the target bank to include both tangible and intangible assets, as well as Iran's control over the timing of the conflict. This reflects the Islamic Republic's determination to turn war into a long-term war of attrition against US interests.

The timing of the military directives alongside diplomatic efforts in Doha points to Iran's adoption of the classic strategy of diplomacy from a position of strength. Accordingly, offensive deterrence will serve as an arm of and complement to diplomacy, sending a message to the United States that the door to dialogue remains open while making clear that any resort to force by Washington would invite severe and uncontrollable punishment. This combination would increase pressure on the other side's decision-makers while simultaneously signaling to mediators and regional actors that Iran is not entering negotiations from a position of weakness.

Under this strategy, US and Israeli decision-makers have understood the central message behind the Leader's calculated move: a shift in their cost-benefit calculations. They will therefore have to view any potential attack as likely to trigger not a proportionate response, but unlimited retaliation, with Iran determining the conditions under which the conflict ends.

For regional actors, these directives also demonstrate Iran's determination to maintain its central role in the Middle East's security equations.

At the domestic level, meanwhile, the meeting and the directives issued convey a message of unity of command, strategic combat readiness and reliance on popular support. They indicate that, in the event of enemy aggression, Iran's response will be offensive and punishment-driven.

The Leader's meeting with senior military commanders and the issuance of these directives can therefore be interpreted as a structured effort to prevent war through a credible threat of severe and unlimited punishment. Unlike purely defensive deterrence, this approach focuses on imposing unacceptable costs on an aggressor while maintaining diplomacy as a complementary instrument. The move reflects Iran's effort to bring the war to an end from a position of offensive deterrence; one that views military power not as a substitute for diplomacy, but as a necessary condition for its effectiveness, with implications for the regional balance of power.