

High-Level Side Event during the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**Countdown to 2030:****Transforming our Food Systems to Achieve the SDGs**

Time and Date: 13.15 – 14.30, 25 September | Venue: Conference Room 11, UNHQ

Concept Note

Background

Food systems are essential to human survival: Everyone must eat. Food and the supporting resources and systems that allow its production and delivery to your plate – and even where your leftovers go – affect every person on earth and speaks to the heart of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. Food systems impact human health, the climate, the environment, and social welfare, but currently, many food systems are unsustainable, and do not guarantee food security and nutrition for all.

Today, **one in every nine people in the world are hungry**, even as the world produces more than enough food for everyone. **Two in five adults are overweight**, and obesity is on the rise in almost every country in the world¹. For many people, better nutrition is not a question of choice, but of access. **This reality reflects a global food system out of balance** and makes feeding a population of **10 billion people by 2050** incompatible with our sustainability goals. Agriculture alone is responsible for up to **80% of biodiversity loss** and it accounts for **70% of freshwater use globally**. In addition, food systems contribute up to **29% of all greenhouse gas emissions**, significantly contributing to climate change. Climate change will in turn alter global food production patterns, increasing risks to food systems and threatening food security everywhere, particularly affecting the most vulnerable.

The evidence is clear, the *Global Sustainable Report (GSDR)* and the recent IPCC Report on *Climate Change and Land* recognize that to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement **we must transform our food systems**. Food systems impact every aspect of human life, **they can have a cross-cutting impact and multiply progress in the implementation of the SDGs**. The transformation of the global food system must, therefore, be carried out in a manner that enables more equitable access to nutritional foods, allows the incorporation of a changing understanding of what constitutes healthy eating for people and planet.

Without urgent action, we will not achieve the SDGs or meet our shared objectives on climate change. As we enter the **decade of action and delivery of the 2030 Agenda**, stakeholders from every sector are beginning to take action and change behaviours in support of a new vision of how and what food arrives on our plate. They need a shift in these patterns in a way that enhances inclusive economic growth and opportunity, while also safeguarding our biodiversity and the global ecosystems that sustain life. Taking a food systems approach to ensure human and planetary health at all stages will be critical.

¹ 2019 The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)

Objectives and Format

On the margins of the High-level Week of the 74th UN General Assembly, this event will showcase the potential of food systems as sustainable **transformative pathways to accelerate progress toward the SDGs and climate action**. The event is convened by **Ireland, Malawi**, the Kingdom of **Norway**, the Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**), the International Fund for Agriculture Development (**IFAD**), the World Food Programme (**WFP**) and the World Economic Forum (**WEF**).

The **format** of the event provides an opportunity for leaders from governments, civil society, private sector, and the UN System to share initiatives and efforts underway to transition our food systems along sustainable pathways. The event will particularly highlight the importance of identifying trade-offs of different policy actions in order to shift incentives, and ultimately to change behavior in a way that will build more sustainable food systems, and the potential synergies of food systems to multiply progress across the 2030 Agenda. As we enter the **decade of action and delivery of the Agenda**, the principle **outcome** of the event is to call all stakeholders to take action and understand the urgency of transforming food systems.

RSVP

To RSVP, please visit: www.bit.ly/food_systems_2030

Take note, seating is limited and the **registration deadline is on 19 September 2019**. If you do not have a United Nations ID, please RSVP as soon as possible and further communication will be provided.

For further information, please contact Mr. Travis Renz by phone (+1.212.963.1166) or via email (t.renz@ifad.org).