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Special FAO Seminar on Food and Nutrition, 25 November 2020, 10.30 (CET)

Urgent call for agri-food systems transformation to achieve healthy diets for all.

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, the world was off-track to end world hunger by 2030. The decline in the number of hungry people in the world had reversed its course in 2014 – wiping away decades of progress. Chronic hunger was up by 10 million last year, and by nearly 60 million in the last 5 years. More than 690 million people were chronically un nourished in 2019. Across the planet, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to tip over 130 million more people into chronic hunger by the end of 2020 as it intensifies the vulnerabilities and inadequacies of global food systems.

Key drivers behind the rise in hunger include the effects of climate variability and climate extremes on food supply chains and livelihoods, triggering food price spikes and volatility, reducing access to food and diminishing the quality and diversity of diets. Increased civil insecurity and conflicts have eroded food security and triggered deep economic recessions. Economic slowdowns and recessions and the associated loss of income and purchasing power compromise access to food, especially nutritious food, due to its relatively higher costs. The Covid-19 pandemic is proving a shock of unprecedented global reach, disrupting food supply chains and exacerbating income inequality, compounding difficulties in access to food.

Overcoming hunger and malnutrition in all its forms (including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity) is about more than securing enough food to survive: what people eat – and especially what children eat – must also be nutritious. Diet quality is a critical link between food security and nutrition, and unhealthy diets are a leading cause of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

There is ample food for everyone in the world and we live in a world that has achieved unprecedented economic growth and wealth, yet underlying inequalities persist. The high cost

of nutritious foods and the low affordability of healthy diets place them beyond the reach of vast numbers of families. More than 1.5 billion people cannot afford a diet that meets the required levels of essential nutrients and 3 billion people cannot even afford the cheapest healthy diet.

The Covid-19 pandemic provides us with a powerful wake-up call on the fragility of food security and nutrition. It also provides an opportunity to re-evaluate how we can address the drivers behind the trends and inequalities so as to achieve a transformation of food systems that can reduce the cost of nutritious foods and increase the affordability of healthy diets.

A global switch to healthy diets would help check the backslide into hunger and malnutrition, and also contribute to the mitigation of climate change. The transformation of our food systems to provide affordable healthy diets could reduce direct and indirect health costs by up to 97% and slash the social cost of greenhouse gas emissions by 41% to 74% by 2030.

This special seminar sets out the compelling case and makes an urgent call to look afresh at how to consolidate and channel our knowledge and stimulate innovative thinking and actions to expedite agri-food systems transformations as to achieve healthy diets for all. A distinguished and expert panel of global leaders will focus specifically on the following aspects:

- Access to healthy diets for all, family health and the role of women
- How to prevent food loss and waste as an urgent action
- How to use innovation for food and agriculture
- What we do to link the needed agri-food transformation to the macroeconomics packages being implemented by countries

Agenda

10.30	Moderator: Ms Yasmina Bouziane, Deputy-Director, Office of Communications, FAO
10.35	Welcome address by Mr QU Dongyu, Director-General, FAO
10.50	Screening of the video: All we know on access to healthy diets
10.55	Keynote address by Her Majesty Queen Máxima of the Netherlands, United Nations Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development
11.10	Keynote address by Her Majesty the Queen of the Belgians, SDG Advocate
11.25	Video keynote address by Her Royal Highness, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand
11.40	Dialogue Moderator: Ms Ismahane Elouafi, Chief Scientist, FAO
	Panelists: Mr Lawrence Haddad, Executive Director, GAIN Mr Francesco Branca, Director of Nutrition and Food Safety, WHO Ms Anna Lartey, Director of the Food and Nutrition Division, FAO
12.30	Screening of the video: Food Loss and Waste
12.35	Lunch Break
14.00	Moderator: Ms Beth Bechdol, Deputy Director-General, FAO

14.05	Screening of the video: All we know on innovation for food and agriculture
14.10	Keynote address by Her Excellency Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, AU Commissioner
14.25	Keynote address by Her Excellency Cecilia Morel, First Lady of Chile
14.40	Keynote address by Her Excellency Maria Juliana Ruiz, First Lady of Colombia
14.55	Dialogue Moderator: Ms Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General, FAO
	Panelists: Mr Ousmane Badiane, Executive Director of Akademiya 2063 Ms Shirley Tarawali, Assistant Director-General, ILRI Mr Grahame Dixie, Executive Director, Grow Asia Mr Bukar Tijani, Assistant Director-General, FAO
15.40	Screening of the video: Bringing food and agriculture into macroeconomic recovery plans
15.45	Keynote address by Mr Máximo Torero, Chief Economist, FAO
16.00	Dialogue Moderator: Mr Laurent Thomas, Deputy Director-General, FAO
	Panelists: Mr Máximo Torero, Chief Economist, FAO Mr Arif Husain, Chief Economist, WFP Mr David Laborde, Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI
17.00	Closing remarks by Mr QU Dongyu, Director-General, FAO



Speakers:

Mr QU Dongyu, Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Her Majesty Queen Máxima of the Netherlands, United Nations Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development

Her Majesty the Queen of the Belgians, SDG Advocate

Her Royal Highness, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand

Her Excellency Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko – African Union Commissioner

Her Excellency Cecilia Morel, First Lady of Chile

Her Excellency Maria Juliana Ruiz, First Lady of Colombia

Mr Máximo Torero, Chief Economist, FAO

Panelists:

Mr Lawrence Haddad, Executive Director of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

Mr Franceso Branca, Director of Nutrition and Food Safety, World Health Organization (WHO)

Ms Anna Lartey, Director of the Food and Nutrition Division, FAO

Mr Ousmane Badiane, Executive Director of Akademiya 2063

Ms Shirley Tarawali, Assistant Director-General, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)

Mr Grahame Dixie, Executive Director, Grow Asia

Mr Bukar Tijani, Assistant Director-General, FAO

Mr Máximo Torero, Chief Economist, FAO

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Mr David Laborde, Senior Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

Moderators:

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