

SPEECH BY HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD FOOD DAY AND THE LXXV
ANNIVERSARY OF FAO
(16 October 2020)

I salute the Director-General of FAO and all those around the world who are sharing this World Food Day, on a date when we are also celebrating the 75th anniversary of FAO. Congratulations on the great efforts and achievements of all of you who form part of a global entity of which Spain is a loyal and proactive member.

The circumstances in which we currently live have again raised an issue that FAO and other organisations have long been advocating: the need to rethink current food production models from the standpoint of social, economic and environmental sustainability.

It is a fact supported by the economic and health indicators that global malnutrition is advancing: the figures for undernutrition, micronutrient deficiency, overweight and obesity are increasing according to FAO, which considers the annual cost of this imbalance to be 3.5 billion dollars.

But it is not simply a matter of enormous economic and social importance that will be tabled at the next UN Food Systems Summit in the coming year. It is also a public health priority linked additionally to environmental degradation in its broadest sense, loss of agrobiological diversity, food waste and the duty to ensure decent livelihoods for food chain workers.

In this respect and in the context of the pandemic, I would like to turn the spotlight on all those who have been working day to day throughout these months to prevent the health epidemic becoming a food crisis with unforeseen consequences. These people are all workers in the food chain, men and women who have made sure that a basic need such as food has been met for the majority of inhabitants of the planet.

But FAO is clear and warns: there are still hundreds of millions of people who do not have enough to eat. And many more millions who are ill due to obesity. These imbalances should make us think about how to strengthen food systems, seeking shorter marketing pathways

to encourage local, seasonal, sustainable and small-scale production, a strategy that would also make life easier for many women in regions of the world where their vulnerability is extreme.

Everyone one has the right to healthy food and Spain, together with FAO and other international organisations in all sectors, is working to make it sufficient, safe, nutritious, varied and of good quality, and to ensure that the price is affordable for the consumer and fair for the producer. We therefore need to remember that today. Our food decisions, what we buy every day to eat and our individual responsibility are also essential. And on this World Food Day we need to reflect on this.

Many thanks.