

Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets in Europe and Central Asia

A joint FAO /WHO Regional Symposium and initiative

in collaboration with UNICEF and WFP

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*Opening Remarks FAO REU ADG and Regional Representative for*

*Europe and Central Asia, V.O. Rakhmanin*

Dear colleagues and friends,

I am honored and very pleased to welcome you to the opening of the Regional Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets in Europe and Central Asia and to thank our UN partners – World Health Organisation, United Nations' Childrens' Fund and World Food Programme for the effective joint work to organize this regional event.

We can promote healthy diets, only if we work together in a comprehensive manner. That is why I am happy to greet here many participants from national governments as well as from academia, private sector, professional associations, farmers and civil society. The consultation and collaboration between different players and actors are strongly encouraged by the [Second International Conference on Nutrition](#), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the [United Nations Decade of Actions on Nutrition](#) 2016-2025. Today's symposium

is strongly linked with these major global policy processes. In the coming days, we hope to advance this agenda and to explore the ways to develop effective policies and programmes as best suits individual national environments.

The 2030 Agenda presents a new governance framework which recognizes that it is important today for every country without exception to develop sustainability. It recognises that sustainability is the universal challenge, the universal goal, the collective responsibility upon which we all need to act – each within our own competency and capacity. The aspirations of the Agenda are high and transformative. It demands to end poverty, hunger and malnutrition, to ensure universal access to health care and well-being, quality education and learning. All of these - with strong attention to gender issues, elimination of exclusion and inequalities and actions to efficiently use, conserve, protect and enhance natural resources in the changing climate, shifting to sustainable consumption and production.

Various sectors and actors are inter-dependent. The 2030 Agenda calls for policy coherence and the FAO encourages enhanced cooperation and accountable partnerships, providing data, norms, standards and guidance which are crucial to fostering the transformational change. While transforming food systems, it is essential to work in an inter-sectoral

manner to achieve several objectives, such as improved income and poverty reduction, improved food security and nutrition, enhanced health and well-being. Food security, quality nutrition and healthy diets for all are still to be achieved in our region and I believe the symposium will offer a platform for constructive discussions and policy recommendations, coordination and collaboration among our countries.

Dear participants,

I look forward to your conclusions which we plan to bring to our governing body – the FAO European Regional Conference which will be held in May 2018.

I wish us all a successful symposium.