



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Forty-seventh Session
"Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition"

8-11 February 2021

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF FAO

Distinguished Delegates,

Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. We are in a decisive period with rapid developments and fundamental changes happening all around.
2. A pandemic with devastating impact on global health, economies and societies that may push some 100 million people into extreme poverty and many more into chronic hunger and malnutrition.
3. Unsustainable agri-food systems that continue to put pressure on natural resources, biodiversity, the environment, and climate.
4. A world that is off-track in achieving SDG2.
5. More than 3 billion people with no access to healthy diets.
6. Nearly 690 million suffering from hunger.
7. 2 billion people consuming low quality diets that cause micronutrient deficiencies and contribute to diet-related obesity and non-communicable diseases.
8. We have only nine harvests before we reach the year 2030.
9. The pandemic has prompted all of us to rethink the way we produce, process and consume food.
10. And to reconsider the way we address the global challenges of today.

11. Challenges that are too big for any region, country or sector to overcome alone.
 12. We must galvanize all partners to work together in harmony and solidarity to make agri-food systems more inclusive, resilient and sustainable.
 13. The CFS has a crucial role to play within these collective efforts of promoting policy convergence and coherence to transform our agri-food systems, end hunger and ensure food security and nutrition for all.
 14. As the host of the CFS Secretariat and one of its funders, FAO strongly values the Committee's potential, as a unique global platform for multi-stakeholder engagement, in the fight against hunger and malnutrition.
 15. Consequently, we invited the CFS to organize a Special Event at each of the FAO Regional Conferences held last year, and I joined my friend the CFS Chair to speak at all of these events.
 16. FAO employees support the use of CFS policy products in their activities, and the FAO Representatives advocate for all countries becoming members of the Committee.
 17. I am pleased to note that **Nine countries** have recently joined the CFS, namely Croatia, Djibouti, Honduras, Latvia, Maldives, Moldova, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Ukraine.
- Ladies and Gentlemen,
18. Over the course of the last 18 months, **fundamental transformative action** was taken at FAO.
 19. We proceeded with structural adjustments and refocusing of all efforts to be in alignment with our original mandate and Basic Texts, for a new FAO that is more efficient, effective and inclusive.
 20. We launched the **Hand-in-Hand Initiative**, which is evidence-based, country-led and country-owned, and aims to accelerate agricultural, transformation and sustainable rural development to eradicate poverty (SDG 1) and to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG 2).
 21. State-of-the-art tools bolster this innovative approach: The Hand in Hand Geospatial Platform, the Data Lab for statistical innovation, and Earth Map.
 22. Our holistic **COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme** harnesses science, technology, data, human enterprise and creativity to build back better.
 23. We introduced a modern **FAO Strategy for Private Sector Engagement to enhance our strategic partnerships**, scale up and steer all our efforts to jointly achieve the SDGs.
 24. We continued strengthening our interaction with **Civil Society**, ensuring, for instance, that their voice is heard at all regional conferences and within relevant activities of FAO.
 25. We presented a **new Strategic Framework** that puts at its center the vision of **Leaving No One Behind** through **sustainable, inclusive and resilient agri-food systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life**.
 26. We strongly believe that accelerating and scaling up science, technology and innovation is key to meeting the aspiration of transforming our agri-food systems and moving towards achieving the SDGs, especially SDG1, SDG2 and SDG10.

27. We appointed the first **Chief Scientist** in FAO's history. She is a member of the **Core Leadership Group** along the Deputy Director-Generals, the Chief Economist and the Director of my Cabinet.

28. This unprecedented transformative process produced a new, reformed and energized FAO that is focused on better serving its Members and strengthening cooperation with its partners.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

29. Now is the time to translate CFS products and recommendations into concrete action on the ground, at regional, country, and local levels.

30. But change can only happen if ALL stakeholders take responsibility and action.

31. This means, integrating the CFS policy frameworks, as appropriate, into national dialogues, legislative frameworks, as well as national, regional and global development efforts.

32. The **CFS Guidelines on Tenure** have become the reference document on land tenure and governance issues, including efforts to reverse land degradation and prevent further biodiversity loss.

33. I am glad that ASEAN is now using the **CFS Principles Responsible Investments in Agriculture and Food Systems** as the corner stone of their work.

34. The CFS Framework for Action in Protracted Crises is another important tool that can help improve the food security and nutrition of populations affected by, or at risk of, protracted crises by addressing critical manifestations and building resilience; adapting to specific challenges; and contributing to addressing underlying causes.

35. More needs to be done to further implement these guidelines and principles.

36. **And this week, the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition are submitted for adoption after more than three years of multi-stakeholder negotiations.**

37. This is a vitally important task, and I thank all those involved in the hard work required to get to this point.

38. I must stress that for all CFS products, including these guidelines, it is essential that they rely on clear science and evidence, and that you develop negotiation modalities to speed up the process keeping the science and evidence while not sacrificing inclusivity.

39. Once these Guidelines are adopted, FAO will work closely with IFAD, WFP, WHO and others to ensure that they are distributed, understood, and used in achieving the transformation needed to eliminate all forms of malnutrition.

40. Because the value of all guidelines lies in their application on the ground!

41. The work you will start soon, to negotiate Policy Recommendations on '**Agro-ecological and Other Innovative Approaches**' is also timely and relevant.

42. It is a valuable contribution to agri-food systems transformation, especially if that transformation is to be empowering, equitable, regenerative, and promoting new technologies while protecting the environment and the rights of all producers.

43. CFS has a challenging program for this year, which will look into **inequalities, youth engagement** and **data systems**. In all these topics, FAO is ready to share its expertise and support you.
44. I am also pleased to see that **food loss and waste** is among the side events scheduled for this week, led by FAO and its partners.
45. FAO strongly supports all Members in reducing food loss and waste given its overwhelming benefits for consumers, producers, our natural resources and our environment.
46. Here again, the CFS can take full advantage of its inclusive structure and engage with all stakeholders.
47. The dynamic and engaged **FAO Youth and Women Committees** are ideal partners in that context.
48. We commend CFS for playing a visible and critical role in the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit.
49. We need to ensure that the outcome of the Summit leads to impactful and concrete **post-meeting action**.
50. Coherent, effective and collective work by the CFS with all partners after the UN Food Systems Summit will be vital, in this context.
51. FAO is committed to a dynamic and impactful Committee on World Food Security that adds value and momentum to our common goal of achieving the SDGs.
52. Let us work together for this noble mission and **historic duty**.

Thank you.