



# COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

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

**11-14 October 2021**

**STATEMENT BY THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL**  
**(Video Message)**

Delegates, partners, colleagues and friends.

It is an honour to join this 49<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee on World Food Security.

You meet at a critical moment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has multiplied the hunger and malnutrition challenge.

Last year, up to 811 million people went hungry — a 20 per cent increase.

Three billion people — almost half of humanity — cannot afford a healthy diet.

Last month, I convened the Food Systems Summit at the UN General Assembly.

The message was clear.

We need transformative action to ensure that the world's food benefits all people.

Food systems can and must be critical engines for economic recovery.

For ending poverty and reducing inequalities.

For decent work.

And for addressing the planetary emergencies of climate change, pollution and shocking biodiversity loss.

At the Summit, nearly 100 governments stepped forward with national pathways for food systems transformation.

Over 150 governments made clear commitments and actions.

And they pledged to keep working with all those who contributed to the Summit.

From businesses and civil society groups.

To Indigenous Groups, women and young people.

To farmers and other workers who keep food systems up and running around the world.

We need all hands on deck.

Including yours.

We need your ideas and policy expertise to drive change across food systems.

From land tenure, to responsible agricultural investment, to emergency nutrition response and famine prevention.

Your products have helped put these issues front-and-centre.

You have the full force of the United Nations family standing with you.

It's time deliver the food systems our world so desperately needs.

For people. For prosperity. For our planet.

My friends —

Let's get to work.