



# COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

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

**11-14 October 2021**

**STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF FAO**

**Excellences,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,**

1. I am pleased to address the **CFS Plenary**, which brings us together to share our collective vision and commitment to the **2030 Agenda**.
2. We are all aware that we are **not on track to ending hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition**.
3. The SOFI 2021 report confirms that:
  - the number of undernourished people in the world continues to rise;
  - up to 811 million people in the world faced hunger in 2020;
  - 2.4 billion people lacked year-round access to adequate food; and
  - more than 3 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet.
4. **COVID-19** is further threatening the food security of millions of people around the world.
5. The **UN Food Systems Summit** last month highlighted the inter-linkage of the challenges faced by our planet, its people and habitats.
6. **Complex challenges require integrated solutions.**
7. And **urgent** attention to the transformation of our agri-food systems.

8. At FAO, we have already taken important actions to accelerate transformation towards **MORE efficient, more inclusive, more resilient and more sustainable agri-food systems.**
9. These include **FAO's Hand-in-Hand Initiative** and the **COVID-19 Response and Recovery Program.**
10. And **FAO's new Strategic Framework 2022-2031** will aim to accelerate transformation where it is mostly needed - at country level.
11. However, these actions alone are not sufficient.
12. To achieve successful transformation, we must **establish and strengthen partnerships** with all relevant actors.
13. For **greater synergy, efficiency and effectiveness.**
14. The **CFS is a crucial partner** given its unique role as an inclusive global platform hosted by FAO and supported by the RBAs for multi-stakeholder engagement.
15. For gathering collective efforts to promote convergence and coherence of policies to transform our agri-food systems and ensure food security for all.
16. As we enter the **Decade of Action** – the last mile towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda - the CFS has already made some key contributions:
17. It has endorsed a major policy product on the **“Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition”.**
18. And the **High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition** provided valuable support for the **science-policy interface**, including through the **“Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems” Report**, as well as an **Issues Paper on COVID-19.**
19. Furthermore, in line with the **CFS Multi-Year Program of Work**, the Committee will now focus on the important topic of *Youth, Gender Equality and Women and Girls' Empowerment, data, and inequalities.*

Dear Colleagues,

20. This 49<sup>th</sup> Session will also elect a **new Chair.**
21. It is an important moment for the CFS to learn from the lessons of the past experience and from the work carried out by the outgoing Chair.
22. I take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Chair for his work and contribution to the work of the CFS.
23. It is an opportunity for CFS to strengthen its position, and to support implementation of the UN Food Systems Summit outcomes.
24. FAO will continue to partner with CFS, in collaboration with **IFAD and WFP,**

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25. And to use its **system network of offices and experts** to promote **increased awareness and uptake** of the Committee's products, reports and multi-stakeholder engagement.
  26. CFS will also contribute to and continue to be on the **agenda** of the next round of **FAO Regional Conferences** in 2022.
  27. FAO is ready to use the CFS network to promote FAO products on the ground.
  28. It is crucial for **Members** to continue to actively engage with the CFS processes and effectively apply CFS policy frameworks into national dialogues, legislation, and country and regional development plans.
  29. FAO remains committed to a strong CFS that contributes concretely to achieving the SDGs, particularly **SDG2**.
  - 30. We have nine seasons left to achieve the 2030 Agenda and meet the SDG targets!**
  - 31. For Better Production, Better Nutrition, a Better Environment and a Better Life for all, leaving no one behind!**
  32. I wish you a productive session, fruitful debates and successful outcomes!
  33. Thank you