



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Fiftieth session
Making a difference in food security and nutrition

10-13 October 2022

STATEMENT BY THE CFS CHAIRPERSON

Honourable Ministers,

Director-General of FAO, Dr QU Dongyu,

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a pleasure to see so many of you here in person once again at FAO'S headquarters in Rome, as well as everyone who is taking part online.

We meet at a time of global emergency. The world is facing a food crisis that is devastating communities and countries around the world. A systemic, multi-layered and highly divergent crisis, a cost of living and human development crisis, threatening lives and livelihoods in a way we might not have seen for decades.

People all over the world are suffering: from Cairo to Caracas; from Dhaka to Dakar; from rural villages in Kenya to small farmers in the Central American Dry Corridor.

As is so often the case, the ones who suffer the most are the poorest and most excluded households – people who spend more than half of their income on food. Women and girls are particularly affected as they tend to have less access to food and are last in line. Children's growth is stunted and they drop out of school to work. Millions of vulnerable households are falling back into poverty.

This jeopardizes our ability to achieve our inalienable right to adequate food. The Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 2 on zero hunger, are under threat.

As we have heard, the world has enough food this year – even though distribution and access pose great challenges – but 2023 and beyond could be far worse if urgent action is not taken.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am encouraged by the strong will to take action that we have seen in recent months.

However, action alone is not enough. We must act together, ensuring that all our actions are aligned and converge to support regional and national efforts, and to support the most vulnerable people primarily.

Unfortunately, we may need to more than coordinate initiatives. We need a collective plan, a common framework for action that mobilizes and channels all the necessary resources.

Your Excellencies, the Committee on World Food Security has offered its global platform in support of these efforts; you have already been reminded of the joint effort embarked on by the President of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly, when we held a high-level special event on food security on 18 July in New York with this message: “Time to act together - Coordinating policy responses to the global food crisis”. And we did so with the support and in support of the UN Secretary-General’s Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance.

I am pleased that H.E. Abdulla Shahid, the former President of the General Assembly and current Foreign Minister of the Maldives, will take part in this plenary today to brief you on the outcome of this meeting.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

This is not just another crisis. This crisis reveals the structural deficiencies of our food systems.

We must focus on building long-term resilience in our food systems, even as we address the response to the current crisis.

We must transform our food systems to provide sustainable food security, adequate and affordable nutrition and healthy diets for all, while simultaneously providing decent jobs and incomes for small-scale farmers, family farmers, food producers in general, food workers, SMEs and cooperatives.

In short, we must achieve food systems that are carbon neutral, reverse biodiversity loss and restore ecosystems, putting people first; food systems that form the basis for prosperity and poverty eradication.

This means a two-pronged approach: urgent action in the face of the crisis, with long-term transformation.

So, as we address the responses to the global crisis today, we will also dedicate the Committee’s traditional Special Event in plenary session on Thursday morning to the efforts you are leading to implement and follow up on national pathways and partnerships to make food systems more inclusive and sustainable.

Colleagues, the CFS will of course continue to provide science-based policy guidance on critical issues related to SDG-2 such as the policy recommendations we will adopt in this plenary on promoting youth participation and employment in agriculture and food systems for food security and nutrition. I believe, and I am sure everyone shares my view, that the agreement on these policy recommendations is a beacon of hope in these undoubtedly tough times for multilateralism.

To conclude,

The world can count on this Committee, they can count on all of us and those we represent. The Committee was reformed in 2009 to respond specifically to global crises, to be the platform where governments – currently 137 Member States, the UN system, the international financial institutions, the research community and hundreds of representatives of civil society and the private sector who are with us in person today – come together to promote coordinated policy responses to eliminate the scourge of hunger and malnutrition. We support the efforts being made by individual countries.

We count on your leadership and coordinated action.

Thank you