

CFS 51 – HIGH-LEVEL OPENING CEREMONY

Chairperson of the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN).

Monday, 23 October 2023

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates, Excellencies and esteemed members of the Committee on World Food Security,

Today, I participate at the CFS plenary for the last time as member and Chairperson of the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition and it is with a sense of gratitude, but also with a sense of urgency that I address you on this occasion.

Alas, these past months have, once more, brought consistent and widespread evidence of this urgency from all around the world: Conflict and natural disaster are omnipresent; Floods with limited action by authorities affected lives and food security. Likewise, the numerous forest fires and heat waves.

The urgency to revamp food systems **to align with global sustainable development goals**, mitigate their impact on - and adapt to - climate change has never been so high.

But urgency does not mean impossibility: **it is still not too late to wipe out hunger by 2030**. If decision maker around the world act together, the goal of ending hunger can still be achieved.

In this context, let's hope that COP 28 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change will play a pivotal role in aligning international efforts towards a sustainable, climate-resilient future; which is so important for food security.

To make this vision a reality, **we need bold actions**. In particular, it is urgent to:

- **improve the impact of global scientific work** on food security and nutrition policymaking;
- to listen to the scientific bodies that alerts us every day, while offering pathways and solutions.

Nonetheless, this process can often become embroiled in political contention, underscoring the vital importance of ensuring that the provision of scientific advice is widely perceived as **legitimate**.

This legitimacy is essential for policymakers to embrace and act upon the advice, **preventing the unfortunate scenario** of policy recommendations being either **disregarded** or co-opted by the interests of powerful actors within the food system.

As you know, the HLPE-FSN is the main international independent and scientific body dedicated to food security and nutrition. Our working processes ensure legitimacy among stakeholders and a high

degree of scientific quality. We involve broad stakeholder consultations, incorporate different forms of knowledge and expertise, and uphold a rigorous scientific peer review process.

The importance of rigorous procedures, structured scientific assessments and expert panels cannot be overstated. Scientists have long warned us of the worsening food crisis, and now is the time to take more effective action. **The pace of implementation needs to accelerate, to strengthen the resilience of local food systems.**

The **HLPE-FSN** constitutes a collaborative and inclusive space for food security policymaking and policy innovation, and we firmly believe that **the international community should reinforce its role to play a greater part in shaping the future of global food security.**

To make it even more effective, **strengthening the collaboration with other science-policy-society interfaces and panels** of experts will be key.

With my fellow colleagues from the HLPE-FSN, we recently advanced very concrete proposals to achieve a stronger collaboration and mapped out the principles we see as necessary for legitimate scientific contribution to food systems policy advice, which we called the **I-TrACE Principles**.

“I-Trace” stands for:

- **I**ndependent
- **T**ransparent
- **A**ccessible
- **C**onsultative
- **E**vidence-Based

These principles are meant to guide science-policy-society interfaces for food systems.

This being said, one essential element I would like to emphasize one more time here today is the **right to food**, the fundamental human right to adequate food.

This legal framework is essential for ensuring food security and sustainable food systems. Many countries have taken steps to anchor this right, but there is still much work to be done to fully realize it.

Furthermore, I want to remind everyone that the concept of food security has evolved, recognizing the centrality of **agency and sustainability**, along with the four traditional dimensions of availability, access, utilization, and stability. These six dimensions of food security should guide our policies and actions. All of them.

Therefore, critical policy shifts are necessary to achieve “zero hunger” and the radical transformation of food systems, as it has been clearly established in the scientific literature:

1. Recognizing the need for a radical transformation of food systems as a whole to be more **equitable** and **sustainable**.
2. Taking into account the **deep interconnections** between food systems and ecological, health and economic systems.
3. Widening the policy spotlight and focusing on **hunger and malnutrition in all its forms**.
4. Designing more **context-specific policies** considering the specific conditions in different regions and locations. As it was stated during the World Food Forum last week, multilateralism should be more inclusive and involve a broader range of actors, such as local and regional governments. That is possible within the CFS. That is **why the CFS is so important**. And that is *your* opportunity to make a difference.

In conclusion, the path to a hunger-free world is still within our reach, but only if we act boldly, embrace the right to food, and make critical policy shifts while relying on the guidance of science. The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition is committed to this cause, and together, with the CFS members, stakeholders and other panels and organizations, we can contribute to build a more food-secure future for all.

Thank you for your support to HLPE-FSN and your kind attention!