

Your Excellency, Ambassador Tiensin,

Honorable, Dr. Kalibata,

Kind Delegates and Observers,

We would like to start by thanking Ambassador Tiensin and the CFS Secretariat for organizing this important meeting and Dr. Kalibata for participating.

Despite decades of progress in reducing global hunger, we learned from the most recent SOFI report that in the last four years, the number of people living in hunger has increased. As you've already heard, more than 820 million people in the world are still hungry, highlighting the challenge of achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 2. We also learned that about 2 billion people in the world experience moderate or severe food insecurity.

We are deeply troubled by this reversal in trend. After so many years of progress, we are greatly concerned about how this impacts prospects for achieving SGD2, which envisions a world without hunger by the year 2030. As the recent HLPE report notes, the COVID19 crisis may worsen this reversal in trend.

If a global economic slowdown follows, according to the SOFI, it could lead to a rise in unemployment and decline in wages and incomes, challenging access to food and essential social services for the poor. Both reports note that access to nutritious food may be affected as well as access to basic social services, such as health care.

We appreciate the uniqueness of the CFS as the only multi-stakeholder platform within the UN system for global coordination on food security and nutrition. We work with the CFS, as a multi-stakeholder platform, because it is a rare place that brings together diverse set of actors.

With only 10 years left to achieve the targets outlined in Agenda 2030, a global pandemic and potential economic downturn may make this goal harder still to achieve. However, we continue to believe that concerted action from the food, nutrition and agriculture community through the CFS can help turn the tide.

We will continue to work with partners to build consensus on the highest impact interventions, generate data to track progress and invest in innovation that drives the frontiers of our field forward. We hope that the Food Systems Summit and the work of the Secretary General's Envoy helps the agricultural development and nutrition community reduce institutional fragmentation and build better accountability mechanisms.

Together we can make use of the CFS as a not only as a forum to track and take action towards a common goal, SDG2, but also respond to new and emerging crises such as COVID-19 currently and greater challenges still, such as climate change.

We are all here today because we also understand the challenges of agriculture and nutrition and the dire need for investment. With this in mind, we would like to acknowledge the contribution of farmers, small holders in particular, as the single biggest investors in the sector. The Food System Summit, we hope, will bring attention to the challenges they face and encourage the kind of investments and improvements in policy they need.

We look forward to seeing plans for the Summit take shape. The Summit could be a vital moment on the road to achieving SDG2. Previous Food Summits have been critical in drawing global attention to agriculture and nutrition and coalescing the community around specific actions. For example, the 1996 Summit developed a consensus definition on food security, which we still use today for monitoring, analysis and decision making.

Given the breadth of stakeholders that the Summit is likely to bring into the discussion and the prospect of engaging the highest-level decision makers, it is vital that Summit is able to produce similarly concrete, actionable outcomes and time-bound recommendations. This should include specific financing and policy commitments building on the example of the UNSG's climate action summit last year.

We are excited about the attention that the Summit will bring to food, nutrition and agriculture and we are eager to learn more about the work that Dr. Kalibata will do. We warmly welcome her presence at the CFS and look forward to working with her as the UNSG's Envoy.

Thank you