



FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION (APRC)

CFS SIDE EVENT ON “*DRIVING FOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION TOWARD SUSTAINABLE, HEALTHY DIETS*” – Friday, 4 September 2020

REMARKS BY THE **HONOURABLE LOPA OO NATANIELU MUA**, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES OF SAMOA

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me thank the CFS Chair, the FAO DG, and the CFS Secretary for this opportunity to speak today at this event and express our appreciation for the various policy products that the Committee has produced for all of our governments.

I met with the CFS Chair and Secretary earlier this year in Berlin at the Global Forum for Agriculture, and was very impressed by the energy and enthusiasm they bring to the fight against hunger and malnutrition. I told them about the challenges Samoa faces with ensuring healthy diets for our people and the major problem of obesity that many of our fellow islanders are contending with as a result of heavy dependency on imported foods.

To my delight, I learned that CFS is preparing Voluntary Guidelines this year, which members will endorse at CFS-47 in February. Samoa is strongly supportive of this effort, and will do all we can to utilize those Guidelines in our policy-making, aimed at ensuring food security and reducing malnutrition for our population.

The CFS’s High Level Panel of Experts report (#13) on Nutrition and Food Systems is an excellent report which all of you should read, as it provides the scientific basis for the draft Guidelines that are being negotiated.

We recognize that transforming entire food systems is not simple and will involve tough decisions. But, we have no choice. We will all need to look at our context-specific policies, laws, regulatory frameworks, strategies, plans and programmes to see what works best for us.

While Samoa performs well against other developing countries, it still experiences a major malnutrition burden among its under-five and adult population:

-55% of women and 39.9% of men are obese;

-82% of women and 73.6% of men are overweight;

-31.3% of women of reproductive age are anemic, and 26.6% of our adult women have diabetes, compared to 22.7% of our men.

As we have all learned, such nutrition issues has left our people even more vulnerable to the ravages of COVID-19, and is costing our national health bill enormously. In this light, we see the



CFS Guidelines as a valuable tool to guide our policy makers in developing inclusive, appropriate, and context-specific food security and nutrition policies.

In closing, let me again thank the CFS and strongly endorse the work it is doing to support countries in dealing with the major challenges we face, in terms of hunger and malnutrition.

Thank you.