

**Virtual High-Level Special Event on Food Security and Nutrition of the  
Committee on World Food Security (CFS)  
13-15 October 2020**

**Highlights from day one, Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020  
Overview of the Global Food Security and Nutrition Situation**

**Background:** The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) hosted a virtual [High-Level Special Event on Food Security and Nutrition](#) from 13 to 15 October 2020. In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Special Event was held virtually (Zoom) in lieu of the annual in-person Plenary Session of the Committee (CFS 47). The latter Session, held every year in October at FAO Headquarters, has been rescheduled for 8-12 February 2021. The objective of the Special Event was to keep food security and nutrition front and center on the global sustainable development agenda. The three-day Special Event brought together representatives from governments; United Nations agencies and bodies; civil society and non-governmental organizations; private sector associations; philanthropic foundations; international agricultural research centers; international and regional financial institutions.

**Part 1: Opening Ceremony**

The **first Plenary Session of the Special Event** (Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020, 1:00-4:00 PM, Rome time), moderated by [Ms. Musonda Mumba](#) (Chair, Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration) aimed at taking stock of the global food security situation guided by the [State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World \(SOFI\) 2020](#) and the [CFS High-Level Panel of Experts \(HLPE\) report "Food Security and Nutrition: Building a Global Narrative Towards 2030"](#).

- The Session was opened by [Mr. Thanawat Tiensin](#), **CFS Chairperson** and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the three Rome-based UN Agencies (RBAs) – FAO, IFAD and WFP. “We are at a critical turning point for humanity, and food production must radically change if we want to achieve truly sustainable development and achieve the goals we set ourselves for 2030”, said Mr. Tiensin. He further noted that COVID-19 has worsened a situation where millions of people are suffering from hunger, wasting and stunting. Mr. Tiensin finally highlighted that the work of the CFS - as a unique platform bringing together all stakeholders to find global solutions to food security and nutrition - needs to be at the core of the Food Systems Summit 2021.
- **FAO Director-General, Mr. Qu Dongyu**, focused its [remarks](#) on three main topics, namely the CFS guidelines, food loss and waste, and policy coherence. He underscored the relevance and timeliness of CFS’ ongoing work to develop Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems for Nutrition and Policy Recommendations on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches, while encouraging the Committee to sharpen the focus of the latter recommendations on innovation. According to Mr. Dongyu, countries could benefit from the CFS’ support in raising awareness and creating public momentum to eliminate food waste. In conclusion, he stressed the need for an even stronger coordination between CFS and FAO - including its decentralized offices - for the benefit of all Members and to achieve measurable results at country level.
- **IFAD President, Mr. Gilbert Houngbo**, during his [speech](#), stated that, because of COVID-19, the goal of ending hunger seems more elusive than ever, while noting that the pandemic has spotlighted the crucial role of small scale farmers who produce half of the world’s food calories. According to Mr. Houngbo, COVID-19 has also revealed the cost of underinvestment in agriculture, and it has underscored the need to restructure food systems to make them sustainable, climate-adapted, inclusive, resilient and efficient. He finally stressed the need to harness knowledge to scale

up solutions quickly - including through digital technologies - and transform rural areas in order to achieve global food security and nutrition.

- **WFP Executive Director, Mr. David Beasley**, started off his remarks by emphasizing that the Nobel Peace Prize 2020, recently awarded to WFP, is a recognition of the Organization's extraordinary commitment in conflict-affected areas and the understanding of the relationship between conflict and hunger. Mr. Beasley stressed that, while three to four years ago, 80 million people were on the brink of starvation, in 2020, prior to COVID-19, this figure increased to 135 million due to man-made conflicts and climate extremes. Because of COVID-19 and desert locust, 270 million people are now expected to become acutely food insecure by the end of 2020. He also focused on food loss and waste by underlining that 1.3 billion tons of food are wasted or lost globally every year: by reversing current food waste trends, enough food could be saved to feed 2 billion people. Looking ahead, Mr. Beasley stated that, over the next 6-12 months, all stakeholders, including donor countries and private sector, need to continue working to improve food systems, adding that the CFS is well positioned to do its part in that respect. Finally, he informed that, as at 13 October, WFP has mobilized 1.6 billion dollars out of the 6.8 billion required for the next six months, highlighting that "where there is food insecurity, there will be conflict; and where there is no food, there will be famine, death, destabilization, and an increase in migration".

## **Part 2: Setting the Scene: Evidence and Science**

- **Ms. Jennifer Clapp, Project Team Leader** of the [CFS High-Level Panel of Experts \(HLPE\) report "Food Security and Nutrition: Building a Global Narrative Towards 2030"](#), presented the following main features and key messages ([link](#)) from the report:
  - The HLPE proposes to include *agency* and *sustainability* alongside the four established pillars of food security (i.e. stability, access, availability and utilization).
  - Five critical policy shifts are deemed necessary to support all dimensions of food security and achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2:
    1. Recognize the need for radical transformation of food systems;
    2. View food security and nutrition as a system interconnected with other systems and sector;
    3. Focus on hunger and malnutrition in all its forms;
    4. Recognize that food security and nutrition is context-specific and requires diverse solutions;
    5. Enabling conditions are governance and research.
- The [2020 edition of the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World \(SOFI\) report](#) - produced annually by FAO, IFAD, WFP, UNICEF and WHO - was launched in July 2020 during a virtual special event of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). **Mr. Màximo Torero Cullen, FAO Chief Economist**, provided a technical [presentation](#) on SOFI 2020 highlighting the following main features:
  - We are not on track to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and defeat malnutrition;
  - COVID-19 pandemic may add between 83 and 132 million people to the total number of undernourished people in the world in 2020;
  - Why are food systems not enabling the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and multiple forms of malnutrition? Underlying factors of inequality: conflicts; climate variability and extremes; economic slowdowns and downturns; cost and unaffordability of healthy diets.
  - Transforming food systems is necessary to end hunger and malnutrition in all its forms.
- **Ms. Carin Smaller, Director, Agriculture, Trade and Investment at the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)** presented the [main findings](#) of the research project ["Ceres2030: Sustainable Solutions to End Hunger"](#), two years after its launch at the CFS 45<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session (October 2018) by IISD, Cornell University and the International Food Policy

Research Institute (IFPRI). The project is driven by two guiding questions: 1) what are the most effective ways to end hunger, increase the incomes of poor farmers, and protect the climate?

- Interventions on the farm to directly improve productivity and incomes;
- Investments to improve storage and services as farmers need to move food to markets;
- There is a need to empower the excluded by ensuring every person's right to education, decent livelihood, and political voice.

And 2) what would it cost?

- Donors need to give an extra USD 14 billion per year from now until 2030. This means that they need to double their current spending on food security and nutrition;
- Governments of low- and middle-income countries also need to make contributions. They need to provide an extra USD 19 billion per year by mobilising domestic resources.
- If governments make this effort, it would remove almost 500 million people from the daily experience of hunger and double the incomes of 545 million small-scale producers. This would generate an extra USD 52 billion in private investment per year in the agriculture and food sectors.

- **Ms. Kundhavi Kadiresan, Managing Director, Global Engagement and Innovation, CGIAR**, focused her intervention on the role of agricultural research, science and innovation for food systems transformation. Ms. Kadiresan emphasized that, with over 3 billion people globally not being able to afford healthy diets, more research on fruits, vegetables, pulses, nuts, eggs, and dairies is needed. Agricultural research needs to be reoriented to ensure that solutions are created for and reach smallholders as well as all the key players in the value chain. Data and knowledge on landscapes are also needed to manage the natural resources and preserve biodiversity. Research is key to ensure agronomic gains at scale for millions of smallholders in the Global South. According to Ms. Kadiresan, the only way all of this can happen is through investing in the system approach to research. When it comes to resource constraints, she stressed that most of the donor funds are directed to humanitarian crises and development projects, while in half of the African countries, agriculture research spending is declining. Ms. Kadiresan concluded by calling on stakeholders to consider both public and private research and technology transfers in strengthening national agricultural research systems: “donors must invest in agricultural research as a matter of priority”.
- Throughout the **moderated open discussion (part 3)**, the following relevant questions and comments were raised in the Zoom's chat box:
  - *Did fortification efforts of WFP solve the problems of malnutrition around the world? The statistics are showing otherwise. (Parunandi Shravan)*
  - *Somehow the positions on food systems between WFP and HLPE seem contradictory. There is an important difference between thinking about “improving” food systems and proposing to “radically transform them”. (Alberto Rivera-Marquez)*
  - *Through the figures mentioned by WFP Executive Director during his intervention - is Africa the most affected continent? What are your suggestions for there to be food and nutritional security in Africa, particularly in Mali? (Fousseini Diabate)*
  - *FAO/IFAD/WFP 2015 report “Achieving Zero Hunger: the critical role of investments in social protection and agriculture” said it will cost \$265 billion each year (2016-2030) to end poverty and hunger by 2030. Could you explain why the latest cost estimates are significantly lower? (Arif Husain, WFP Chief Economist & Director, Research, Assessment and Monitoring).*

#### **Part 4: Country-led Action: Ministerial Roundtable**

- **Indonesia**: His Excellency Syahrul Yasin Limpo, Minister for Agriculture expressed Indonesia's support to the CFS' ongoing work to develop Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems for Nutrition: “CFS is becoming increasingly important to discuss global food security and nutrition policy

priorities among countries”, said the Minister, who also praised the critical contribution of the Committee and its policy products in the achievement of the SDGs. He informed that Indonesia’s agriculture contributes to about 14% of the national gross domestic product (GDP) and provides employment for almost half of the population. Despite economic slowdown due to COVID-19, there has been a 2.19% increase in the agriculture GDP as compared with 2019. He finally recalled the Ministry of Agriculture’s “4 ways of action” policy shift to food systems approach (2014-2024).

- **United Kingdom (UK):** in his [remarks](#), the Right Honourable (Rt. Hon.) [Zac Goldsmith](#), Minister of State, Ministry for Pacific and the Environment informed of the new UK’s Aid commitment to address COVID-19 and famines (£119 million), and appointment of Mr. Nick Dyer as UK’s first Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs. The Rt. Hon. Goldsmith stressed that UK has been working on a new National Food Strategy and - as President of the next UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) - is putting nature at the heart of the country’s response to climate change. He concluded his remarks by noting the “[Leaders’ Pledge for Nature](#)”, launched by UK, European Commission and Costa Rica at the recent UN General Assembly, which sets out ten commitments to tackle biodiversity loss by 2030. To date, 76 countries have signed this pledge as a recognition that “the relation between hunger and nature is intrinsic”.
- **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN):** Dr. [Aladdin D. Rillo](#), Deputy Secretary-General, Economic Development pointed out that an ASEAN food safety regulatory framework agreement is currently being developed with a view to being signed in 2021 by the region’s Ministers of Agriculture, while highlighting that strong public-private partnerships around food safety are crucial. Dr. Rillo mentioned the ASEAN resilience network which has been created to assess the impact of climate change on food security and nutrition in the region. In conclusion, he informed CFS of an action plan which has been developed by ASEAN to implement the CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems ([RAI Principles](#)): “responsible investments in agriculture should be seen in a more holistic approach, not in isolation but linked to other initiatives”, said Dr. Rillo.
- **World Bank:** Mr. [Martien van Nieuwkoop](#), Global Director, Agriculture and Food Global Practice emphasized that the Bank has established a COVID-19 team which works closely with FAO and WFP. When it comes to the way forward, the Bank is looking at key approaches that should be taken to ensure food security in the context of COVID-19, such as keeping borders and food markets open. The Bank has also put in place the following short-term response strategies, among others: \$20 billion portfolio in agriculture investments; \$500 million early response finance mechanism; and \$500 million for the locust response. According to Mr. van Nieuwkoop, investments in agro-logistics would be crucial to improve the availability of food given the amount of food loss and waste and greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. Finally, he underlined that the Bank is actively involved in the CFS and would be willing to explore further collaboration with the Committee in the context of the Bank’s country programmes.

### **Partner Event “Google Maps for Food Systems: A New Dashboard and Set of Actions to Inform Better Food and Nutrition Policy”**

[[Event recording](#), password: CFSPE2020+]

**Organizers:** Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN); John Hopkins University (JHU); FAO; WFP; The Rockefeller Foundation; Nigeria; Indonesia.

**Objectives:** 1) Better understand how to visualize key information for food systems at the global, regional and national levels; 2) track progress on diets and nutrition at country level to see if policies or

other interventions are yielding results; and 3) identify policy and programmatic actions that can promote sustainable food systems for healthy diets and improved nutrition.

- During the event, **Ms. Saskia De Pee, Senior Technical Advisor & Chief, Systems Analysis, WFP Nutrition Division**, as one of the panellists, shared her views on the relevance of the [food systems dashboard](#) to WFP. Ms. De Pee started off her remarks by highlighting that WFP operates in 80 low- and middle-income countries, reaching over 100 million people annually with food assistance and working with governments and other partners to strengthen food and social protection systems in support of the most vulnerable. Ms. De Pee stressed that WFP has an in-depth understanding of local food systems and works to ensure access to safe, nutritious and healthy diets. She pointed out that [WFP's Fill the Nutrient Gap](#) tool well intersects with both the food systems dashboard and the “[No Regret](#)” set of policy action to shape food systems. While WFP will be thoroughly reviewing the dashboard and thinking about possible ways to apply it, Ms. De Pee suggested to consider adding data relating to SOFI 2020 and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as expressing the environmental indicators, particularly greenhouse gas emissions per country and per capita. According to Mr. De Pee, these missing data represents an opportunity for further collaboration with WFP. In this regard, she also recommended the organizers and participants to make use of [WFP HungerMap LIVE](#).