



Background: Her Excellency Mariam Almheiri, Minister of State for Food and Water Security, is participating in a high-level virtual event organised by the Committee on World Food Security.

Date of event: October 13-15, 2020 - (HE to participate October 15th)

Title: 'Strengthening Global Governance of Food Security and Nutrition'

Brief: To develop her excellency's speaking points for a **3-minute intervention** on the topic that she is participating in, which is: *'The state of global food security and the contribution of the two ongoing CFS policy processes towards sustainable food systems.'*

Talking Points:

- Thank you Chair, hello everyone and I hope you are all safe and well.
- Thank you so much for all the great speakers we have had today. Global food systems are under unprecedented pressure. We all know the predictions that by 2050, the world's food production and supply networks will need to sustainably feed more than **9 billion people**, meaning they will have to produce food to meet demand that will be **60% greater** than it is today. The current pace means that it is likely that targets in relation to SDG 2 – 'Zero Hunger' - will not be achieved in many parts of the world.
- So what is required now is nothing less than a complete **paradigm shift** in the way we produce food and our relationship with it.
- We need to provide adequate nutrition for the **690 million people** who are undernourished and also on the other side of the spectrum address **the quality of issues that see two billion people globally being overweight.**



- I couldn't agree more that we need a plan. A plan to ensure food security for all. The UAE has already started, we have a national plan – the National Food Security Strategy with short and long term targets.
- The revised proposed **CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems** is a vital contribution to this goal of transformation, addressing as it does the complex factors relating to food security and their interrelationships that govern our ability to create a sustainable food security landscape and to ensure that we leave no person behind.
- These proposed CFS guidelines are in alignment with what the UAE is doing to create a sustainable food secure future. Its section '**Sustainable Food Supply Chains to Achieve Healthy Diets in the Context of Climate Change**' highlights the interconnectedness of climate change, agriculture, food systems, diets and nutrition. The UAE is committed to this path, by reducing its environmental footprint across its entire food value chain; from using solar-powered desalination techniques to supply water for irrigation to its focus on Controlled Environment Agriculture that minimises the use of precious resources such as water.
- The proposals' **socio-economic aspects**, such as its support for small shareholder farmers, also mirrors what the UAE is doing to ensure food security is developed at all levels. We have several national initiatives in place to support small shareholder farmers such as providing them shelves at all retailers, opening up tourism agriculture and encouraging the community to buy local. Another example is what the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development is doing in the UAE and region with its programmes to support small farmers and develop the local communities in which it operates.¹
- **Food Safety** is an integral component of the proposed CFS guidelines, which highlight the need for global and national cooperation on food safety and for every stakeholder to be responsible for the sourcing, handling, and quality control of food. Food safety is enshrined in the UAE's National Food Security Strategy, which targets

¹ <https://www.aaaid.org/en/>



a 35% reduction in food safety incidences by 2021. It is a particular priority for us, with our 90% net food imports creating an imperative to establish the provenance of the food we bring into the country in order to reduce the incidences of food-borne illnesses.

- The UAE also **commends** the commitment to ensuring **agrobiodiversity** in the CFS guidelines. For the past two decades, the country's **International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA)** has been at the forefront of promoting agrobiodiversity and crop diversification. The centre has introduced climate-smart and resource-efficient crops such as quinoa, pearl millet, sorghum and Salicornia, among others, to UAE local farmers as well as farmers in countries in Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa.
- Another important aspect of the proposed guidelines and policy recommendations is the **promotion of sustainable healthy diets** through food and nutrition education,
- The Food & Water Security Office has been active in educating its citizens through its **Nutritional Labelling Policy and the National Nutritional Guidelines**, which aims to ensure that citizens have tools to obtain nutritional advice to help improve the nutritional status of the UAE community for a more sustainable and healthier future.
- The CFS guidelines are **comprehensive in their recommendations**. As a final point to mention of the many that highlight a mutually supportive stance is the focus on eliminating food waste. With an estimated annual food waste in the UAE at 197 kg per person – one of the world's highest per capita – the UAE is committed to massively reducing the amount of food it throws away. We have an interim target to reduce 15% of our food waste by 2021 have also partnered with international organizations such as the United Nation's World Food Programme for its '#Stop the Waste' campaign to help support our national efforts to reduce food waste.
- The proposed **CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition** promises a holistic approach to the transformation of food systems – nothing less is needed to



ensure all elements of the community are engaged in creating a future for food that is sustainable, healthy and biodiverse.

709 words = 4.5-minute speech approx..