

**Your Excellency, distinguished delegates,**

It's my honor to deliver the following statement on behalf of the 3 Baltic countries: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. However, we fully support the statement delivered on behalf of EU member states.

The topical discussion of the current FAO Conference, that of the sustainable food systems for food security and nutrition is important and timely as it reflects the shift of the paradigm from only feeding the World to feeding the World in a safe and healthy way. Furthermore, those different actors whose activities can determine the outcome need to be defined. As can be seen from the useful background document, this topic is common for all countries, as everyone is lacking in one or another aspect of nutrition, be it micronutrient deficiency or weight related issues.

We all need to share responsibility to deal with the challenges, but we need to keep in mind that most of the solutions are local. Let us remind that the volume of trade of the agricultural products, although it has increased significantly, in a whole food chain still comprises only a small part of the total food consumed.

In the case of our region, quick widening of food choices during the past 20 years have amongst the positives also brought about issues of overweight, obesity and growing food allergies, where especially population groups with less income and education are those that are more vulnerable to the danger of heavily processed calorie-rich food, often containing trans fats or unhealthy ingredients. Therefore, diversification of diets should be efficiently politically prioritized. In the free market this cannot be achieved unless consumers are educated, can read the food labels and know what is good for their health. Hence, it is vital to turn our efforts especially to children, pregnant and nourishing mothers in educating them towards healthy nutrition.

Furthermore, from sustainability and efficiency point of view, we cannot underestimate the burden of increasing food waste. Such high quantities of food, particularly losses of unconsumed food are unforgivable and immoral.

Finally, we have to ask ourselves, what should be the role for the FAO in this context? We know that one of the biggest assets and additional value of FAO is its data collection capacity and as significant knowledge caps exist in monitoring and evaluating, how policies can affect healthier diets, this could be one of the key fields of activity for the future.

I wish us all a successful conference and strength in fight against the global problems we address here.