

**Statement delivered by**  
**His Excellency Zsolt Belánszky-Demkó**  
**Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Hungary to FAO**  
**on the occasion of the**  
**42nd Session of the FAO Conference (14-18 June 2021)**  
**16 June 2021**

*Dear Director General,*  
*Excellencies,*  
*Distinguished colleagues,*

It is an honour for me to represent my country at the 42nd session of the FAO Conference. We do believe that the fulfilment of Agenda 2030 requires an integrated and comprehensive approach. After the positive trends in the past decades, in recent years hunger and extreme poverty is on the rise again, and this situation is further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, more efficient tools are still needed to reach the Zero Hunger target.

The challenge is enormous since the world's population is projected to reach around 10 billion by 2050, resulting in a significant increase in global demand for food. Global climate change poses another challenge to farmers, as agricultural production is a more and more risky activity due to the unequal distribution of rainfall. Food production is one of the largest users of water, while our available water resources are limited, so it is important that we manage them sustainably.

As for our country, Hungary's location is favourable, located in the catchment area of the Danube river, where a large amount of natural surface water is available. In order to increase the safety of agricultural production and to make optimal water management we have recently taken several measures:

- We launched an irrigation development program to make optimal use of our surface waters.
- We put more emphasis on prevention, develop forecasting, water-saving irrigation management and drought damage prevention.
- We promote natural water retention measures, the change of land use and cultivated crops to local environmental conditions, as well as an increased reuse of treated waste waters.
- We increased our research activities on the road to sustainability too.
- We put special emphasis on improving the quality of soils, as good condition of soils improves the drought tolerance of production areas.
- In addition, we focused on several other aspects of sustainability as well.
  - o We have achieved progress in reducing food waste, we established a new, more sustainable waste management system; we also made progress in catering sector by promoting use of local products.
  - o We have created many activities in education and in awareness raising, we made progress in promotion of healthy diets in schools and among elder generations.
  - o We strengthened the situation of the family farms by an Act, as family farmers are the backbone of sustainable agricultural production.

But, there are a lot left to do.

It is clear that the use of precision technology can achieve safe agricultural production and higher quality of products without environmental degradation.

In order to share best practices our country contributes to the global thematic dialogues, such as dialogue on Food Systems or on water.

We welcome the UN Secretary General's initiative to convene the Food Systems Summit to bring strong actions for the transformation of the food systems to make them healthier, more resilient and environmentally sustainable. In Hungary we started consultation through a national dialogue about the way toward sustainability to improve food production and consumption policies and practices to protect and to improve the health and well-being of individuals. We recognized that food systems are complex, and are strongly interlinked with natural resources, water, energy, with health aspects, and so on. In this spirit we keep the dialogue alive with the involvement of additional stakeholders and continue to encourage innovative approaches toward sustainability.

Reacting to the threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we are pleased to inform you that Hungary has significantly increased its international development cooperation. As part of this, Hungary dedicated 16,1 million dollars to agricultural development in 2020, significantly contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Moreover, in the framework of development aid, Hungary provided mobile water purification systems on four continents to those in need. It is also a great pleasure to inform you that under the patronage of Mr János Áder, President of Hungary, the Planet Budapest 2021 Sustainability Expo and Summit will be held at the end of this year in Budapest. The objective of Planet Budapest 2021 is to contribute to sustainable development by offering widely applicable, innovative and pragmatic solutions to the challenges of sustainable development.

In the hope that we together can create a more sustainable climate resilient food system, I wish you all a successful Conference.

As another closing remark, let me remind you of the Hungarian candidate for the position of Independent Chairperson of the Council to be elected tomorrow; Mr Zoltán Kálmán, very humble person supported by the Hungarian Government, is very well known to us and very respected as well. I am sure he would fully represent each and every Member of FAO.

Thank you for your attention.