

**Statement delivered on behalf of**  
**Her Excellency Jennie Nilsson, Minister for Rural Affairs of the Kingdom of Sweden**  
**by**  
**Ms Pernilla Ivarsson, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Representative of the**  
**Kingdom of Sweden to FAO**  
**on the occasion of the**  
**42nd Session of the FAO Conference (14-18 June 2021)**  
**15 June 2021**

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is an honour to take the floor to speak on this important topic. Sweden aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union and its 27 Member States.

I particularly welcome the focus on action today. It is clear that time is not in our hands. As many have already stated – hunger, malnutrition, biodiversity loss and other effects of climate change are increasing.

We thank the FAO for their work in addressing these issues.

Looking towards the Food System Summit, but also beyond, it is my firm conviction that the will for change and that there is an understanding that Agriculture is part of the solution.

Sweden has held seven national dialogues in preparing for the summit. Our main conclusion from those dialogues is that the level of knowledge is high, and the will to contribute to change is even higher. This is true across sectors and stakeholders, not the least private sector.

We can also see a high engagement from youth. But, we cannot wait for the next generation. We must take charge now and do what we can to provide a better future. Or at the very least, a future that is acceptable.

Because we should be worried that climate change is accelerating, and policy to counter that change is slow. Even when the will is there, impact so far is too weak. It is our duty to ensure that there are real results.

So, what do we do?

First of all, we need to ensure systemic strength. By that I mean that our systems must be built in such a way that they are resilient and continue to serve their purpose even when there is a crisis.

To achieve this, we need continued worldwide openness and collaboration.

It also requires addressing inequalities. We cannot accept a world where some suffer while others have more than they need. Gender equality is a major transformative power. In this regard Sweden therefore supports and looks forward to the CFS voluntary guidelines on gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition.

Systemic strength also means having a holistic view of health, as so clearly shown by COVID-19. A strong One health approach is necessary to protect people, animals and the environment. Combatting AMR is at the core of this approach.

I also want to give some more specific examples of actions for increased sustainability.

First, Sweden believes that schools are a fantastic infrastructure for transformation, in particular school meals. We have a very long experience of working with school meals and both free and nutritious school meals are a legal right for all children in Sweden. We know how important the school meal is for children and young people in terms of nutrition, health, equality and learning aspects with direct bearing on sustainable development.

Sweden therefore welcomes the initiative to strengthen global school meals through the School meal coalition that is being proposed for the Food System summit and we want to point out that the issue of school meals is important for all countries, including high-income countries.

Second, we cannot continue to waste resources. An overall circular approach is necessary, and I look forward to the implementation of the new European Circular Economy Action Plan agreed in March this year, as well as worldwide efforts to increase circularity.

As a part of a circular approach, food waste and loss can significantly be reduced. To achieve this, measurement is key since what gets measured gets managed.

In this context, I would like to highlight an interesting national initiative on methods for increasing knowledge about losses and resources in food production. It was developed by the Swedish Board of Agriculture and the Swedish Food Agency, and we are sharing this method in the preparations towards the Food Systems Summit.

Third, a successful transformation towards sustainable agriculture and food systems can only happen if all three dimensions of sustainability are respected. They go hand in hand.

The Swedish FAO-Committee recently produced a publication with the title “Towards 2030 – sustainability as the business case for agriculture and forestry”. A number of very interesting examples can be found there, and we are happy to share it with you.

Finally, diversity is key to success. Countries and their individual contexts require a multitude of solutions. But the end goal must be a joint one – we must reach the Sustainable development goals as set out in the 2030 Agenda and we must keep global warming below 1.3 degrees as set out in the Paris Agreement.

We can do this together.

Thank you.