

**Statement delivered by**  
**His Excellency Joseph Katema**  
**Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Zambia to FAO**  
**on the occasion of the**  
**42nd Session of the FAO Conference (14-18 June 2021)**  
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*Chairperson of the Conference,*

*His Excellency, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,*

*Honourable Ministers, Ambassadors, Permanent Representatives,*

*Heads of Delegations and Delegates,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am honoured to deliver this Statement on the Review on Food and Agriculture, Food System Transformation, from strategies to action. Allow me to tie this statement, with the thread that has in the near and recent past, enabled us to understand and fight hunger and poverty with renewed energy.

It is on farms, big and small, around the world that the interaction between people, planet, prosperity and peace can unfold in ways that will either take us to sustainable development or will make our task of zero hunger difficult. The world's population is expected to grow to almost 10 billion by 2050, with two-thirds living in cities. This will, as a result, boost and change agricultural demand, with some estimating that the world will need to close a 70 percent food gap by 2050. With further income growth and urbanization in low and middle-income countries, a dietary transition will happen towards higher consumption of meat, fruits and vegetables, relative to that of cereals, requiring commensurate shifts in output and adding pressure on natural resources. Within the complexity of this challenge, we can unlock opportunities to advance sustainable development by transforming agri-food systems.

Again, this is a case in which the agri-food system is, at times, signalling to farmers to produce more when the challenge is elsewhere. The challenge is that local production is not taking place where it needs to happen in order to feed currently hungry people. The painful thing is that most of the people living in hunger or that are food insecure, are themselves engaged in agriculture, either farming or livestock. In many African countries, where there is high prevalence of hunger, up to 80 percent of poor Africans depend on agriculture for income. In Zambia, for instance, about 70 percent of the population depend on agriculture for their livelihoods.

To address recurrent inability to access food, we therefore, need risk management options that can help buffer farmers against production variability (for example, through weather-based insurance), as well as social protection mechanisms (for example, cash for work, food for work) or other cash-transfer mechanisms.

Zambia has huge resource endowment and potential for agriculture production for a wide range of commodities. The country has potential to feed itself and the entire Region. However, climate change, low productivity, low value addition, fragmented markets and the recent COVID-19 pandemic, among other things have constrained growth of the sector. To small-scale farmers' resilience to the effects of climate change, Government is promoting technologies such as climate smart agriculture, irrigation, diversification, and commercialization. These interventions are likely to increase production and productivity in order to make food available for the ever-growing population, which is estimated to reach about 39 million by the year 2050.

Further, Government has embarked on the improvement of agricultural markets both at local and international levels. In addition to the development of appropriate marketing infrastructure, Government has continued to create a favourable policy environment to enable the participation of all players in the market. With farmers more connected to markets, to information, and to knowledge, lives on the farm can make agriculture more attractive to youth, including young people with skills.

We believe that the transformation of agri-food systems can be a fundamental enabler for the achievement of the SDGs. Doing so cannot be seen as a technical challenge to be addressed within the agricultural sector, but rather as a complex undertaking that calls for integrated approaches considering economic, environmental, and social aspects.

It might be appropriate to end by saying, and I quote "Doing one thing at a time is never particularly good advice when it comes to economic and social policy." It is particularly misleading in tackling massive challenges like the prevalence of hunger in the modern world. But, for all of us to do many different things together so that we can transform agri-food systems to transform our world.

Chairperson, I thank you.