

Checked against delivery

**Statement delivered by
His Excellency Swantje Nilsson
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of Germany
on the occasion of the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference (1-7 July 2023)
4 July 2023**

Dear Chair,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As Germany takes the floor in this new term for the first time, please allow me to start with congratulating Dr. Qu on his reelection.

Germany looks forward to continuing close and trustful cooperation with Dr. Qu himself and all of FAO. Germany aligns itself with the Statement made by Spain on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States and is grateful for the information provided by FAO on the State of Food and Agriculture. It has already been underlined in many interventions at this Conference that we are faced with enormous challenges in the efforts to achieve food security for all people on this planet. We all have committed to ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030. That is just a few harvests away.

With the Corona pandemic, the climate and biodiversity crisis, but also due to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine with its effects on global food security we urgently need to step up our efforts. Jointly. And now! But where to start?

Agricultural and food systems transformation towards more sustainability and resilience. Our minister is looking forward to discussing this with you during the upcoming UN FSS Stocktaking event at the end of this month. Innovation and smart technology: enable farmers, so they can contribute to both, climate adaptation and climate mitigation. We need to work harder on reliable incentives for mitigation.

A focus on the restoration of natural resources, we need to deal with depleted soils or the lack of water. All these issues are at the heart of FAO's mandate. We very much appreciate that FAO has introduced more multi-stakeholder formats, more open discussions as we need some fundamental shifts to succeed with the necessary transformation. We already have a lot of shared values and achievements we can build on and which provide a coherent guide to navigating through the current crises.

We even have a lot in our toolbox already. Let us focus on commonalities, interlink approaches and tools and develop them further. Jointly!

We have already achieved so much, look at the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT) and the Voluntary Guidelines on the realization of the Right to Food as elaborated in our Committee on World Food Security.

We are convinced that many people would benefit from greater attention, appreciation and implementation of the various guidelines and policy recommendations of those guidelines. For it is precisely there where women's rights, land (access) rights, youth participation, agroecology, responsible investments and sustainable food systems are interconnected.

The Guidelines on the Right to Food were adopted by FAO Council in 2004. They have not lost any of their relevance in the 20th year of their existence. And they cover both the improvement of agricultural structures as well as the access to production resources such as land, water – the pertinent subject of this General Debate – or for example seeds.

In last week's "Policies against Hunger"-Conference in Berlin more than 200 participants from all sectors concluded that a human rights-based approach can help the transformation of our food systems towards more sustainability and resilience. They underlined that the needs and rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups must be taken into account when designing sustainable food systems. To quote

our Organization FAO: “The Right to Food provides a change of perspective: the hungry cease to be a problem, they become both part of the solution and actors of their own development.” And yes, it is our job as governments to always find pathways for people to be part of solutions and not be left behind as a problem.

Solutions need to be context specific and concrete. Thank you for focusing on water and all its interconnectedness today. The realisation of the right to food also helps to mobilize the full food production capacity lying in a holistic approach, targeting e.g. food loss and waste as well as more sustainable production methods. Sustainable aquaculture has potential to a resource-saving and climate friendly food production. One instrument to unlock this potential further could be innovation along the nexus waste-feed-food, by using organic waste from food production and use it, e.g. for insect production, and eventually as feed in aquaculture. This could help reduce the impact of aquaculture production on fish stocks, and at the same time to the reduction of food waste.

We need to meet, best physically and bring all the knowledge from our countries into the room.

Let us start acting! Let us move from the general debate to specific action!

Thank you.