

BELGIUM

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Speech on the occasion of 47th CFS plenary session

“Food security and nutrition: building a global narrative towards 2030”

Mr Chairman,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to be here today with you, to discuss a topic that concerns us all, food security and nutrition. Ongoing conflict and climate change in combination with COVID-19 have pushed millions of people in extreme poverty and food insecurity. In uncertainty about what is a fundamental right for all, food. Food to live.

Let's face it, eradicating hunger is a promise we have been trying to keep since ages. Still we are not on track to realize it. Still too many people do not have access to food, especially healthy food. Even before the pandemic, 690 million people were undernourished. COVID may add between 83 and 132 million. These numbers are unacceptable. However, they should not discourage us. On the contrary, they should push us to action. To build back better.

I am proud to say that the Belgian development cooperation will prioritize food security in the cooperation with our partner countries. Belgium is also funding the Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism of the FAO and is a top donor for both the SFERA Fund (FAO) and the WFP Immediate Response Account. We call upon others to do the same.

With nine more years to go towards the Agenda 2030, Belgium is convinced that 3 observations remain particularly relevant if we truly want to accelerate progress on SDG2:

First of all, to end hunger, we do not only need more investment, we need better investment. Research and innovation are needed to make our food systems ready for the future and to inform our policies. Belgium **values the work of the CFS** in promoting policies based on science and evidence. We support the spreading, use and application of all CFS products and recommendations at all levels. This will help us to maximize our actions, to make real changes.

I wish you every success in the approval of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition later this year (VGFSyN).

Secondly, the Belgian development cooperation fosters a **transformation to more sustainable food systems**. We need a food system that provides sufficient nutritious food for all, without further damaging our planet and in a way our grandchildren will still be able to feed themselves. We can transform value chains by promoting more sustainable practices such as agroecology. We value, in particular the **ongoing policy convergence process on 'Agroecological and other Innovative Approaches'**, and look forward to the adoption of the Policy Recommendations.

The UN Food Systems Summit will serve as a critical contribution to the Decade of Action and to deliver progress on all 17 SDGs. A bottom-up and inclusive approach is required. The engagement of civil society is crucial. The voices of the farmers producing our food should be heard.

Thirdly, Belgium is also committed to make **food systems more inclusive** and to **address inequalities**. It is unequal access rather than insufficient global production that is leaving people hungry. In all regions of the world, women are more likely to be food insecure than men. Advancing gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment is essential for ensuring food security and nutrition for all. To build a world free from hunger, we must support them and strengthen their livelihoods. Belgium emphasizes the critical importance of providing predictable and reliable access to social protection programmes and health protection systems.

Belgium stands firm in its ambition to accelerate progress on SDG 2. I will continue to count on you, but you can also count on me, to make progress. That is my engagement, that is the engagement of this Belgian government. We will continue our firm commitment to the CFS.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.