

Committee on World Food Security 50

Rome, 10 - 13 October 2022

President of ECOSOC, H.E. Lachezara Stoeva of Bulgaria

Opening Statement

Excellencies,
Distinguished representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to join the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) for its 50th annual plenary session, especially at such a critical moment for global food security and nutrition.

We all have a very clear sense of the gravity of the situation. The war in Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic, among a long list of inter-linked shocks, have destabilized our global food, energy and finance systems. They have compounded the climate change crisis and the pre-existing obstacles to realizing the SDGs.

The Secretary-General has spoken publicly on our collective concerns regarding the ability of the global community to achieve the goals agreed to in our 2030 Agenda, especially SDG 2 on no hunger. We have seen the numbers in the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2022 and the continuing deterioration of the situation. The picture is extremely grim.

We need to act with utmost urgency to prevent a global food crisis.

The Food Systems Summit convened by the Secretary-General last year identified the key issues. It spelled out a course of action for countries and for the UN System. Now we should implement its outcomes. The input and support of the Committee on World Food Security are critical in this regard.

The Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, launched by the Secretary-General, is also providing timely and useful analysis and policy recommendations from the whole of the United Nations System.

I also want to commend Member States for adopting UN General Assembly Resolution 76/264, entitled “State of global food insecurity”, which urges the international community to jointly support countries affected by the food security crisis.

The CFS is a unique and extremely valuable UN body. I welcome its 2019 reform which connects Rome with New York; and the CFS to ECOSOC and the UN General Assembly. I am also pleased to see that the CFS proactively contributed to the annual thematic reviews of the High-Level Political Forum. I was especially pleased to see the CFS and the President of the General Assembly co-convene a high-level event on 18 July aimed at fostering coordinated, rapid action in response to the current global crisis.

The CFS is one of the few places where government officials work side-by-side with civil society and the private sector, UN experts, scientists, bankers and others toward policy convergence on critical food security and nutrition topics. It is a good model of how to engage civil society in setting policies in an intergovernmental context.

Your Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (2021) and the Recommendations on Agroecological and other Innovative Approaches (2021), and on empowering Youth to be agents of change in agriculture and food systems -- along with the outstanding scientific reports of the CFS High Level Panel of Experts, are huge contributions to the global debate on food and agriculture. Likewise, your upcoming work on data, inequalities and urban/rural linkages is timely and important. You have also underscored the link between food and climate change.

The work of the CFS can be the basis for the kind of transformative policies that should be featured at the SDG Summit in September 2023. We must ensure that policies to achieve SDG 2 on zero hunger build on synergies with other SDGs. The many ideas, proposals and commitments from the 2021 Food Systems Summit are also important contributions to the SDG Summit.

As we undertake the mid-term review of the 2030 Agenda in 2023, we need to bring the most innovative and the boldest ideas that can help us overcome the current challenges and move on to a path of accelerated SDG progress.

As President of ECOSOC, I look forward to connecting more regularly with the CFS. The valuable reports and policy tools of your Committee should be shared among our Council Membership.

I wish you all a very successful session.

I thank you.