

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

BELGIUM

Speaker: HE Lieven De La Marche - Ambassador - Permanent Representative

Rome, 23 October 2023

Speech on the occasion of 51st CFS plenary session

“Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition”

Mr Chairman,

Ministers and Secretaries of State,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Belgium aligns itself with the Statement delivered by Spain on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States.

Unfortunately, the **2023 SOFI report** reaffirms again that **we are not on track to achieve the zero hunger objective by 2030**.

The ongoing global food and nutrition crises, rooted in **structural issues** such as climate extremes, economic downturns, combined with growing inequalities are pushing us off track to meet the SDG 2 targets.

Furthermore, the **intensification of conflict** in several parts of the world, especially **Russia’s war of aggression** against Ukraine causes a persistent and increasing security crisis, as indicated in the key messages of the SOFI 2023 Report.

Belgium advocates for coordinated solutions through multilateralism to tackling these global crises affecting all aspects of food systems, agriculture and nutrition. and we envision a **stronger global governance** for a **rights-based regulation** of our food systems.

SOFI rightfully focuses on urbanization, and the challenges linked to the rural-urban continuum. Belgium is pleased that CFS will take this up in its new multi-year program of work.

In that context, **food system transformation** is key.

In recent years, the **three regions** in BE have elaborated sustainable food strategies that have food systems transformation as a basis.

BE has launched a **Protein Strategy** to offer new economic opportunities for all the agri-food chain, from production to consumption.

In addition, the **Belgian development cooperation policy** gives particular attention to **food system transformation**. Some examples of our commitment are :

- The fact that BE takes part in the **School Meals Coalition** and the **agro-ecology coalition**, promoting both healthy and nutritious food in schools and a more sustainable way of producing food.
- Furthermore, achieving **gender equality** and empowering women and girls, in the context of Food Security and Nutrition, has always been a high priority of the Belgian development cooperation. We therefore strongly support the **endorsement of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines** at this 51st plenary session.

To conclude, **Belgium remains committed to continue working together with the CFS** to increase its efforts to facilitate solutions to the unprecedented global food crisis.

We would like to **thank the outgoing Chair**, Mr. Ferrero for his valuable engagement during the past two years; and we **wish the new CFS Chair** (Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile), **every success** in her endeavors.

Thank you Mr. Chairman