



Permanent Mission of Iceland to FAO

**Committee on World Food Security (CFS)**  
**51st Session in Rome, Italy 23-27 October 2023**

**Statement by**

**Ambassador Matthías G. Pálsson**

**on**

**Agenda item III: Coordinating Policy Responses to the Global Food Crisis - The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023**

Mr. Chairman.

There is enough food in the world to feed every person on the planet. Nevertheless, the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023 (SOFI) report reveals the chilling fact that we are **not** making progress in ending hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

**In 2022 between 690 and 783 million people in the world were facing hunger**, which is 122 million more people than before the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the same period, **2.4 billion people**, comprising **relatively more women and people living in rural areas**, did **not have access** to nutritious, safe and sufficient food all year round.

In his report from the SDG Summit in September the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, informed us that **only 12% of the SDGs are on track**; more than half are moderately or severely off track; and some 30% have either seen no movement or regressed below the 2015 baseline. We foresee that at the same rate, **almost 600 million people will be chronically undernourished in 2030**, far from the goal set in 2015.

The efforts of international organizations like FAO, WFP and IFAD, help millions of people but **still do not suffice** as millions of people die from hunger every year and almost 800 million people go to bed hungry every night.

We are experiencing a global food crisis.

Hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity have serious consequences on those who suffer these scourges. But the **most horrific consequences are the long-term effects on children.**

It is incomprehensible that in 2022 there were 148 million children under five years of age who suffered from stunting, 45 million suffered from wasting, while 37 million children were overweight.

The **international community must do more to confront this global crisis.** Among the approaches discussed in this forum is the **transformation of our agrifood systems** and Iceland fully supports that approach.

Icelanders, as an island nation, know that fish and other aquatic food form a **fundamental** part of healthy diets in many countries and provide the **animal protein** required to consume the **least costly healthy diet.** Small-scale artisanal fishers and fish workers, half of them women, produce the **majority** of this food and represent a large proportion of the workforce in many countries.

It must also be kept in mind that a **staggering 35 percent** of the global harvest in capture fisheries and aquaculture is either **lost or wasted** every year. This calls for our attention; when hundreds of millions of people go to bed hungry every night, it is **unacceptable** that one third of our blue aquatic food is wasted or lost.

It is for this reason that we **highly value** the message and goals of the **Blue Aquatic Food Coalition** which aims at **full integration** of **sustainably harvested blue food**, generated through **sustainable and equitable management** of natural resources from a healthy ocean and inland waters, into our food system.

In this regard we take note of the consensus that emerged from the July 2023 UN FSS Stocktake: namely, that food system transformation urgently **requires coordinated and inclusive action across the multiple sectors** that produce, transport, process, market and consume food, including those who have been previously marginalized such as fishers and other smallholders. We need linked up action in a multi sectoral, collaborative manner in order to achieve the SDGs.

Finally, Iceland looks forward to the **endorsement** of the Voluntary Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the context of food, later this week.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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