

LAUNCH EVENT: UN Nutrition Discussion paper
The role of aquatic foods in sustainable healthy diets

Friday, 7 May 2021
2:00pm to 3:30pm (CEST)

Panel discussion:

- *As Chair of the CFS, what are the commonalities between the report's findings and the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition? And what actions can be taken at country-level for the local production and consumption of aquatic foods in low- and middle-income countries?*

I am delighted to join you here today and speak about aquatic foods which is a topic that's very close to my heart. As some of you might know, I am Thai citizen; fish and seafood is one of our main dishes in Thailand. Additionally, fried fish and fish soup can be served to school students for the school lunch programme in Thailand. Fish is the primary source of animal protein for most of our people, particularly those living in coastal and near coastal areas or along rivers.

I would like to congratulate UN Nutrition, WorldFish, and other partners for organizing this event and for the excellent paper. This puts a spotlight on fish and aquatic foods and their role in achieving sustainable and healthy diets. This is critical as we seek ways of addressing escalating global hunger and malnutrition. It is also key as we prepare for the UN Food Systems Summit where we will agree on actions to accelerate progress towards the 2030 development agenda and the SDGs.

The work you are doing aligns very well with that of CFS, which I Chair. For a start, I am glad to see so many references to the work of the CFS-High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) in this new report of UN Nutrition. Actually, I see three different HLPE reports referenced.

One of these reports, report # 12, on 'Nutrition and Food systems', is the basis for the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition that we endorsed at 47th CFS in February this year.

The other two reports are: a report on fisheries and aquaculture, and the latest global narrative report issued in 2020.

The CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition promote policies and actions that enhance the livelihoods, health, and well-being of populations. The CFS guidelines also underline the importance of aquatic ecosystems, fisheries and aquaculture for healthy diets and nutrition. It is just like the new UN Nutrition report being launched today.

To continue enjoying the health benefits of fish and other aquatic foods, Thailand, and the rest of the world must fully acknowledge the strong interlinkages between sustainable food systems and healthy diets.

We need to encourage innovative partnerships and approaches that support governments in this effort. This new report by UN Nutrition is one such approach. I would also like to acknowledge our ongoing partnership between CFS and FAO Fisheries to highlight synergies and complementarities between the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries.

For Thailand and for CFS, and for all of us, achieving food security and ending malnutrition is our common global priority as indicated by SDG2 on Zero Hunger. Our food systems must be transformed to become nutrition-sensitive and sustainable, so that everyone is granted access to safe, diverse and high-quality diets at all times.

Aquatic foods is a good place to start. I encourage you all to utilize this UN nutrition report and well as the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition in your work. These are your products, and now we need your actions.

Thank you!