

**Statement delivered by**  
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**Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the**  
**Kingdom of the Netherlands**

**on the occasion of the**  
**42nd Session of the FAO Conference (14-18 June 2021)**  
**15 June 2021**

Good morning Rome and anyone who is with us now online,

It is an honour for me to speak to you and “From Strategy to Action”, I think no motto could have been more appropriate for this year’s FAO Conference. Indeed, action is urgently needed, and more than ever, we feel the need to join hands.

The COVID-19 pandemic has left deep scars and revealed the vulnerabilities of both local and global food systems.

People who were already suffering from hunger and malnutrition are hit hardest.

Meanwhile, prices of food and raw materials are soaring.

The Dutch Government is committed to contributing its share to make the world’s food system more sustainable and resilient.

We support the systems-based approach to contributing, because when it comes to the food system, challenges are interconnected.

For example, tackling food scarcity and hunger should not undermine our commitment to increasing biodiversity. And improving our health through food should go hand in hand with measures to prevent carbon emissions.

We want to work towards a food system that relies on the power of nature and does not harm it. A resilient food system, that can absorb blows such as pandemics, market shocks and global warming.

In order to achieve this and in anticipation of the UN Food Systems Summit later this year, we would like to focus on three points in particular:

- Firstly, the food system needs better governance, locally, nationally and internationally.
- Secondly, our international agricultural policy requires a stronger scientific basis. When redesigning the food system, we should base our decisions on evidence, on what has been proven to work.
- Thirdly, governments are not the only stakeholders. There is also a role to be played by consumers, civil society organizations, knowledge institutions and private companies. They can make the difference if they are truly involved and committed, as we all are.

Finally, I would like to point out that the Netherlands has an excellent candidate for the post of Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council. I would therefore like to encourage you to cast your vote for him later this week.

I wish you all the best.

Thank you.