

High Level Political Forum 2020
7- 17 July 2020

General Debate

Statement by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO)

1. Until recently, the world has been making substantial advances toward eradicating extreme poverty, ensuring food security, advancing human well-being and building capabilities.
2. No more: Today deprivations and inequalities are resurgent, and hunger is again on the rise.
3. The COVID-19 pandemic, and its associated impacts have exposed pre-existing vulnerabilities in our agri-food systems, not only in countries in special situations and with vulnerable groups, but also in many solidly middle income and even advanced countries.
4. The current crisis tells us that it will not be enough to protect our food systems – we need also to begin innovatively to transform them – now.
5. Ecosystems degradation and unsustainable practices within food systems have contributed to the genesis and propagation of zoonotic diseases.
6. The way that we produce, distribute and consume food has been damaging to our land, soils and water, to the ecosystems that protect and sustain life, to our planet’s climatic resilience.
7. The current crisis can and should be recognized for what it is: a call for deep and holistic change.
8. Transformation of the food systems requires action in three areas:
 - (1) changes in dietary habits towards healthy diets, recognizing that what we choose to eat is important not only for our own health but for the health and well-being of others;
 - (2) sustainable development of agri-food production systems and food value chains, increasing efficiency and promoting sustainable use of natural resources; and
 - (3) a social agenda which considers the rights, needs and capacities of the most vulnerable and marginalized, a very large number of whom work in the food system.
9. FAO stands ready to support these efforts and join forces, hand in hand, with all concerned.