



## **WORLD FOOD DAY 2021**

“Our actions are our future. Better production,  
better nutrition, a better environment and a better life”

### **OPENING STATEMENT**

**BY**

**SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ORGANISATION OF  
AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC STATES (OACPS)**

**H.E. MR GEORGES REBELO PINTO CHIKOTI**

Friday 15th October 2021

13:00-14:30

Excellencies,  
Esteemed colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen

I thank the FAO for the kind invitation to provide brief remarks for the opening of this FAO-organised event to mark World Food Day 2021. The event shines a spotlight on some of our world's most pressing challenges and opportunities - if we are to accelerate efforts to end hunger and improve nutrition for the wellbeing of our peoples.

We observe World Food Day 2021 as the world continues to grapple with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and the climate and biodiversity crises. And we see global hunger and malnutrition rates continuing to escalate.

Food insecurity and malnutrition continue to rise in many of the 79 Members of the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS). This is due to conflict, to climate change, to extreme events from natural hazard risks, to economic shocks, and the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. In Africa today, millions are hungry and undernourished and in the OACPS' Small Island Developing States, 56% of adults suffer from obesity, with malnutrition cited as the key risk factor for the burden of their non-communicable diseases (NCD). We are failing to feed our people in a healthier and more sustainable way.

Our food production and associated land-use changes contribute significantly to ever-present crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, and pollution. Overfishing in our oceans and inland waters puts global food security at risk, as well as the livelihoods of many million people depending on fish for both nutrition and their economic security.

We stand at a pivotal moment in time, and it falls on the global community to take urgent actions to end hunger and malnutrition and reverse the unsustainable practices so that we live within planetary boundaries.

The commendable outcomes of the Inaugural UN Food Systems Summit process and the national pathways provide an essential stepping stone for accelerated actions that promote sustainable food production practices to provide nutritious foods for all. Leaving no one behind. Ensuring producers, especially women and the youth, have a seat at the table.

In this regard, the OACPS supports and promotes transformative approaches such as agroecology, regenerative farming, and effective management of 100% of coastal and marine resources to ensure productivity, resilience, and based on the best available scientific information and traditional knowledge.

It is OACPS' considered view that a transition to sustainable and healthy diets must, amongst other interventions, promote traditional local diets and implement targeted fiscal policies to halt the consumption of unhealthy foods and drinks.

At a time when climate change is putting pressure on our food systems, let us promote interdisciplinary approaches to develop more sustainable, inclusive and resilient solutions to addressing food insecurity.

The OACPS reaffirms its commitment to supporting genuine and durable partnerships to promote coordinated actions at all levels to end hunger and malnutrition in all its forms and to transform food systems to meet our health needs and preserve the environment.

In closing, as we commemorate the World Food Day, the message should be clear. We have solutions to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms. This is the moment to mobilize actions for *Better Production, Better Nutrition, a Better Environment and a Better Life*, and leave no one behind as we pursue this.

I thank you for your attention.