

ECOSOC 54th Commission on Population and Development
Video Message by Dr QU Dongyu,
FAO Director-General

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Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

1. It is a pleasure to address you at the opening of the 54th Session of the Commission on Population and Development.
2. We welcome the Secretary-General's report on the occasion of this event and the Commission's work on the multi-faceted theme of '*Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development*'.
3. This theme is central to FAO's mission and it is critical for achieving the 2030 Agenda.
4. Agri-food systems lie at the heart of sustainable development.
5. Their transformation is decisive for the unprecedented challenge of nourishing and sustaining close to 10 billion people by 2050.
6. The Secretary General's report highlights three critical challenges:
 - Food systems are *already* exceeding planetary boundaries for key resources;
 - Dietary patterns are unbalanced leading to both chronic and infectious diseases; and
 - Food systems continue to suffer vast inequalities, as evidenced by the persistence of hunger and food insecurity. Billions of people cannot afford healthy diets and struggle for decent livelihoods within and outside agriculture, and in rural and urban areas.
7. FAO's projections on the future of food and agriculture highlight that a 'business-as-usual' scenario is simply not an option.
8. It would lead to unacceptable levels of undernourishment, malnutrition and further environmental degradation.
9. We need to take concrete action to achieve the many goals set out in the 2030 Agenda simultaneously.
10. This means addressing and minimizing trade-offs:
 - Increasing agricultural output while reducing green-house gas emissions and natural resource stress;
 - Scaling-up automation while supporting employment;

- Providing income earning opportunities for all - while ensuring decent wages and work conditions;
- Benefitting from big-data use - while warranting collective ownership, openness, transparency, and preventing uncontrolled concentration.

11. To achieve such a transformation, we call on the international community to focus on actions that:

- Favour responsible consumption and production patterns to ease pressure on ecosystems, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change;
- Encourage the development of sustainable and affordable agricultural technologies;
- Apply policies that create income-earning opportunities, build human capacity and provide revenue supplements where needed;
- Implement arrangements to clarify big-data ownership, and ensure control, openness, transparency and confidentiality;
- Ensure that trade rules for food and agricultural products take into consideration social and environmental impacts;
- Support research to identify best practices for improving nutrition, including interventions to address obesity;
- Ensure that programmes and policies to improve food security, nutrition and social protection benefit women, youth, older persons and others living in vulnerable situations.

12. The work of this Commission makes a valuable contribution to ongoing discussions on more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems.

13. This includes the High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development and the United Nations Food Systems Summit.

14. Together, we can pave the way for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind.

15. Thank you.