

## **Transcript statement**

Albania is making great efforts to improve and transform national food systems, to make them more resilient against the challenges of the future. Demographic developments and climate changes have given an impact on the development of the food systems. Naturally, the Sustainable Development Goals provide a comprehensive framework through which each country orients its efforts for development.

Albania is a small country in the heart of the Balkans with a high agricultural potential which is the main pillar contributing to 19% of the GDP and employing around one-third of the national labor force. Therefore, strategic interventions are introduced for the sector by aiming to transform agriculture into an engine for the further economic development of the country. Diversification of the rural economy, improvement of the food value chain systems, an increase of exports by reaching new markets worldwide are the main outlines that Albania is following to build a sustainable agriculture system.

Albania has made significant progress: agricultural exports have increased by 27% in the last three years by introducing the label “Made in Albania”. This was achieved by radically improving irrigation systems for agricultural land, as well as dedicated efforts to introduce and standardize products under quality schemes. Furthermore, developments in agriculture can have positive spillovers in other sectors, too, by creating opportunities for boosting rural tourism and transforming Albania into an exciting destination.

We come into this Summit through a long path of the National Dialogues which brought together more than 350 participants who contributed to the vision of creating the pathways for the next decade to the food systems in Albania. These Dialogues gave us the opportunity to reflect with all stakeholders on the importance of the transformation that this system should go through to achieve the desired Sustainable Development Goals within 2030.

Albania’s overall objective is to transform its food system into a sustainable one, that ensures food security and nutrition for all.

This brings us to the following Commitments:

1. Ensuring a competitive value chain in food systems,
2. Developing agrotourism and short value chains as mechanisms of rural development,
3. Establishing an effective system of food safety, veterinary and plant protection,
4. Guaranteeing the sustainable use of natural resources, environmental protection, preservation of ecosystems, and enable climate change mitigation and adaptation
5. Create effective systems of crisis management.

Changes in our food systems must happen and we are aware that this transformation cannot be achieved alone. It is vital to ensure a multi-stakeholder involvement such as producers, unions, associations, academia, civil society organizations, international organizations, and the donor community hand in hand.

