

Statement by Mr. Georgi Sabev, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry of the Republic of Bulgaria

on the occasion of the UN Food Systems Summit

(23.09.2021)

**Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Republic of Bulgaria welcomes the holding of the UN Food Systems Summit and the emphasis put on the nexus of food, health, climate, energy and biodiversity. We highly value this comprehensive and inclusive approach in the effort to transform the food systems on a global level, leaving no one behind.

The fact that one third of the food produced for human consumption is being lost or wasted worldwide, which amounts to about 1.3 billion metric tons per year, is a very serious problem, which needs to be tackled in the shortest possible terms.

Food systems cannot be resilient to crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, if they are not sustainable.

The Farm to Fork Strategy initiated by the European Commission aims at accelerating our transition to a sustainable food system that should ensure food security, nutrition and public health, while at the same time making sure that everyone has access to sufficient, safe, nutritious, sustainable food. It should also preserve affordability of food, while generating fairer economic returns, especially for primary producers, and fostering competitiveness of the EU supply sector and promoting fair trade.

Bulgaria, as a Member State of the European Union, is committed to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 to “halve food waste at retail and households level and reduce food waste throughout the food chain by 2030” and has taken the necessary actions. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry of the Republic of Bulgaria has drafted a National Program for Prevention and Reduction

of Food Loss for the period 2021-2026, which will initiate a long-term national policy on the awareness and commitment, related to the food waste problems.

Taking into account the challenges to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Republic of Bulgaria is interested in the international coalitions developed under the UN auspices and shares their goals of improving school meals and reducing food loss and food waste.

The need for a fundamental transformation of the food systems is now undisputable. Food systems need to be transformed in order to contribute to the establishment of more sustainable diets and at the same time become more resilient to the climate change while still preserving the volatile environment. Bulgaria supports the efforts made by UN agencies, funds and programs to accelerate the implementation of national commitments made in this area and we are a constructive and reliable partner.

I am convinced that today's Summit will encourage all of us to take the necessary steps in order to achieve sustainable food systems at regional and global level. The cooperation on a global scale is of paramount importance and it is the only way to carry out successful joint activities and initiatives.

Thank you for your attention!