

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to commend Secretary-General Guterres for calling this summit.

We need to get global food systems fit for the future if we want to feed a growing population on a planet that's rapidly losing the space and capacity to do so.

In this make-or-break decade, humanity faces one overarching challenge: learning to live within planetary boundaries.

And let me be clear – if we fail, the planet will still be there. It will be humanity who will pay the highest price.

Food production and consumption are major drivers of the climate crisis and looming ecocide. And yet, agriculture and farmers are the first to suffer the consequences if we fail.

So we must act now if we don't want our children to fight wars over water and food. We must act now if we don't want millions more to lose their homes and go to bed hungry.

In the European Union, we have put forward the Farm to Fork Strategy to fundamentally change how we feed ourselves. But the shift to sustainable food systems needs to be a global movement.

First of all, to fight the climate crisis, we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors. The European Union has set its target of climate neutrality by 2050 into law. Better farming practices, climate neutral supply chains and new business opportunities through carbon farming will help us to get there.

Secondly, we need to protect 30% of land and 30% of sea, and allow nature to restore itself – we know it can, if we humans just allow it to do so. By 2030, we will also halve the use of pesticides in Europe, and farm a quarter of agricultural land organically.

Thirdly, we need to turn the page on a food system that drives too many people to unhealthy food choices. The easy choice must become the healthy and sustainable choice.

But the shift to sustainable food is not just about regulations and targets. We have teamed up with food companies and retailers, and developed the EU Code of Conduct for responsible business and marketing practices.

The commitments made in the Code will trigger a real change and I encourage all companies active in the food chain to sign up as well.

Europe is working to make EU food systems the global standard of sustainability. And we invite everyone to join us, so that, together, we can make sustainable food the global standard.

Let this summit be a crucial milestone on this journey.

Thank you.