

Statement by President of the Republic of Finland Sauli Niinistö at the UN Food Systems Summit on 23 September 2021

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

last year almost ten percent of the global population suffered from undernourishment, according to UN estimates. This is a sad statistic.

We, as the global community, are not delivering on our promises to eradicate hunger. We must find the will and the resources to fight global hunger. We also need to address the many drivers behind it, including conflicts, climate change and biodiversity loss. It is our human responsibility.

The COVID pandemic has made our inter-dependences clear. Our food systems rely on each other. To achieve socially, economically and environmentally sustainable food systems, we need broad multilateral cooperation.

Reforming our food systems has the potential to positively affect many other Sustainable Development Goals. Finland is committed to doing its part in achieving these goals nationally, and in international partnerships.

Complex issues can only be tackled with a holistic view. Therefore, Finland strongly supports the One Health approach. We also want to highlight the need for coherent, sustainable natural resources policies combining food, water, forests and energy.

Finland has been actively promoting the establishment of the School Meal Coalition. In Finland, free-of-charge school meals have been provided since the nineteen-forties. Initially, to address post-war poverty and mal-nutrition. Later, the national school meal system has proven to be an investment in the future and in the economic and social welfare of the society.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

food systems are closely linked to broader issues of stability, equality and human rights. Let us work together to deliver on our promises and to fulfil our human responsibilities.

Thank you.