

**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE OF LITHUANIA**

**MR KĘSTUTIS NAVICKAS**

**AT THE UN FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT**

23 September 2021

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure and honour to address you today at the UN Food Systems Summit. First, I would like to convey our thanks to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the initiative to convene a Food Systems Summit in 2021 as part of the Decade of Action to drive progress on Sustainable Development Goals. Our joint participation at the event is a clear indication of our share commitment to addressing the issue of agriculture food systems transformation for the sake of sustainable, climate-neutral and resource-efficient future.

Food insecurity and sustainability are widely recognized as among the most significant global challenges facing humanity in the 21st century, linked to a range of other challenges including climate change, biodiversity loss, soil degradation and water quality. The Farm to Fork strategy which is a part of the European Green Deal has been prepared to address these challenges with a sustainable food production system as its cornerstone. In addition, the new Common Agriculture Policy lays the foundation for a fairer and greener policy, which provides a sustainable future for farmers.

Let me underline that the development of organic farming production in our country is foreseen as one of the priority steps in the development of a sustainable production system which contributes to the preservation of biological diversity, ensuring food safety, and allows minimising the reliance on external resources. The strategic operational guidelines of the Ministry include the ambition to double the organic production area by 2030.

Lithuania attaches great importance to investing in consumers in agriculture and food production sector. To ensure the sustainable functioning of the entire food production chain, we apply measures aimed at the wider opening of local markets to farmers who directly sell their organic products to local consumers. Therefore, Lithuania welcomes the initiative to strengthen work on school meals through the School Meal Coalition that is being proposed for the Food System Summit.

In conclusion, we are fully committed to working with all countries to reach concrete and tangible results at the Summit, and an effective follow-up with strong commitments to action from governments and all other relevant stakeholders.

Thank you,