

Speech for the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Malta,

Hon Evarist Bartolo

for the UN Food Systems Summit

New York, 23rd September 2021

Secretary General,

Special Envoy to the UN Food Systems Summit

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is truly an honour to participate in the Food Systems Summit which has already contributed significantly towards our global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

As we gather today, it is encouraging to witness the engagement of a global effort at all levels, confirmed by the Food Systems Dialogues, to deliver on our Sustainable Development Goals.

Towards this end Malta is currently devising a national policy on food systems which fully embraces the interconnectedness between food, health and the environment. Moreover, through the ongoing (fruit and vegetable market Reform, Malta has launched a Food Agency which is expected to adopt measures and mechanisms which safeguard our food systems while promoting the consumption of local produce.

Furthermore, Malta fully embraced the call of the Secretary General and on 9 July 2021 we organised a food systems National Dialogue which prioritised the involvement of a wide range of sectors and stakeholders. The National Dialogue focused on Action Track 1 on ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all, and Action Track 2 on shifting to sustainable consumption patterns. The dialogue addressed the needs of consumers in terms of accessibility, availability and affordability of healthy food for children and the actions that the Government, relevant stakeholders, and citizens as advocates and consumers can take, to make healthy food for children more accessible, available and affordable.

Based on the outcomes of the national dialogue, we are once again engaging with all relevant stakeholders including the private sector, farmers and non-governmental organisation to develop a UN Food Systems Summit Pathway.

Young farmers are a key component of our food system. Farmers need to be supported and more importantly empowered to be part of a strategy to establish a healthier and more sustainable relationship with food systems. In this regard, the Government is committed to support farmers by ensuring that they have access to land, equipment, technical knowledge, the market and finance and to help them mitigate the impact of climate change.

In Malta, as a country, one of the problems we need to address is the high incidence of obesity, especially among children. Current efforts are targeted at establishing a healthy relationship

with food systems from an early age. In this regard, through our schools we are doing our best to empower and educate children to foster healthy eating practices and active lifestyles.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate the importance of the United Nations Food Systems Summit in finding common solutions by building consensus among different stakeholders.

Thank you.