



**STATEMENT AT THE UN FOOD SYSTEM SUMMIT BY
THE HONOURABLE MANEESH GOBIN, MINISTER OF AGRO INDUSTRY
AND FOOD SECURITY, REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS**

- **Your Excellency, The UN Secretary General,**
- **Your Excellencies Heads of States and Governments,**
- **Your Excellencies Ministers**
- **Distinguished Delegates**

On behalf of the Hon. Prime Minister and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius, I have the honour and privilege to address you all today. I wish first to thank you all for putting so much energy into building the necessary gateway towards the transformation of our food systems and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

Mauritius, as many other small States, is a net food importer. The Covid 19 pandemic has indeed further revealed our vulnerabilities as well as the systemic weaknesses in our food systems. Beyond a health calamity, it has caused economic hardships, severe disruption in services as well as restrictions on movement. Our food system, health system and economic system have all been under severe stress and the pandemic has compelled us to address our weaknesses. Our food system is also faced with other challenges such as climate change, water scarcity, land degradation, flash floods, loss of biodiversity, pest and disease outbreaks amongst, others.

As a Nation, we support the call for coordinated action for resilient, fair, sustainable, and more inclusive economies. We are conscious that a resilient agrifood system will not only increase productivity sustainably but will also decrease adverse effect on the environment.

Our Food systems are called upon to nourish a growing world population in such manners so as not to harm the planet and the people by addressing malnutrition and mitigating climate change.

In that regard, we embarked on a National Food Systems Dialogue with the assistance of the United Nations Coordinator with the participation of some 700 stakeholders in the crop and livestock production, agro processing, value chain and fisheries sectors. Major issues were discussed during the dialogues. Hard questions were asked. Can we continue with the same agricultural practices to nourish the world? How can we avoid being victims of external shocks such as climate change, flash floods and biosecurity threats? We sincerely hope that this Summit will provide a ray of hope.

Excellencies, before concluding, allow me to make a solemn appeal to all distinguished delegates. Allow me also to make this solemn appeal on behalf of other small island States and vulnerable regions.

Let us all pledge in the course of this Summit that we shall henceforth Pledge for a New Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture. Let us all pledge to come together with renewed vigour with the solemn aim of finding Nature-based solutions to man-made calamities. Such a new partnership and such a pledge should involve one and all – namely the farmers, the agro-chemical manufacturers, the transport agencies including maritime agencies, cargo and freight forwarders and so forth.

It is only by finding Nature-based solutions that we will achieve our ultimate goal which, to my mind, is the aim to look at our food systems through the farmers' eyes.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

I thank you for your attention.