



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

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Statement

by

H.E. Hon Dr. Ralph E Gonsalves

Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saint Vincent and the
Grenadines

“Draft Statement for United Nations Food Systems Summit”

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Your Excellencies,

The eradication of hunger is one of humanity's most noble, yet enduring, ambitions. Amidst this perilous climatic epoch, *as bleached coral reefs mangle our seas and global carbon emissions scorch across the earth*, the quest to defeat undernourishment seems an insurmountable task. Still, embedded within our collective consciousness, reside the tools to address malnutrition and to safeguard the ecological systems on which our continued human existence so heavily depends.

Through a renewed multilateralism, *with this United Nations and its specialised agencies at its core*, we can ensure that everyone, everywhere has access to safe and nutritious food.

All stakeholders, including farmers, fishers and indigenous communities must mobilise themselves, *alongside their national governments*, to establish sustainable practices and to provide adequate sustenance to all.

For our part, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has embarked on an ambitious campaign to support our small farmers; to help build their capacities and expand their production of organic and nutritious foods. So, too, have we engaged our fisher-folk.

All of this we have pursued despite the economic fallout of COVID-19, and the recent volcanic eruptions that destroyed approximately one-third of our nation's productive capacity. Notwithstanding these

immense hurdles, we have kept the faith to ensure that life, living and production continue *for all our people*. The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) have been our committed partners during these trying times.

Global stakeholders, in particular developed countries, are being summoned to match these endeavours with deep emission cuts, and wide-ranging commitments for predictable and reliable development financing. More pressingly, the international financial architecture must be suitably reformed: to provide social protections to the most vulnerable; to account sufficiently for our Small Island Exceptionalism; and to strike a balance between economic well-being and ecological welfare through the promotion of sustainable economic practices.

As changing climatic conditions, substantial biodiversity loss, and exploitative corporate arrangements lay waste to our global commons and the food systems they sustain; we must no longer allow narrow self-interest or a materialistic individualism to starve the many to whet the appetites of a few. During this pivotal decade to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, let us work together: To build stronger comparative networks; to defeat hunger; to end conflict; to strengthen resilience; to promote justice; and to advance sincerely a common agenda for all of humanity. I thank you.