

pre-Summit in Rome 26-28 July 2021

(Speaking time 5 minutes)

[Secretary-General], distinguished delegates, I am honoured to be here in Rome, at the Headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

I am particularly pleased to join such a diverse and inclusive community of food systems stakeholders, looking towards a common vision for a healthier, more resilient, sustainable and equitable food system.

Never has there been a need for us all here to take a leadership role in ensuring that we meet the requirements of ensuring safe, healthy and nutritious food for our expanding global population, while protecting our shared planet.

Ireland believes that sustainable food systems are crucial to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Ireland has long been a pioneer in sustainable food production – from our dedicated farmers and fishers to our pioneering and innovative processors, we have a commitment to safe food excellence.

The UN Food Systems Summit is occurring at a critical time for us all.

We are living in a time of great food inequality.

We know that between 720m and 811m people in the world faced hunger in 2020.

Worryingly, there were as many as 161m more hungry people in our world in 2020 than the previous year. The impact of COVID-19 has underlined the inequality and vulnerability of our global food systems, and the need for urgent action.

Ending world hunger and ensuring the right to food for all remains a central pillar of Ireland's foreign and development cooperation policies. For this reason, Ireland is supporting the work of **Action Track 1: *Ensure Access to Safe and Nutritious Food for All***. Ireland is also proud to be leading Member State support for the '*re-setting Wasting*' **game changer**, which forms part of the Zero Hunger Coalition.

The **Food Systems Summit** provides us with a unique opportunity to come together, to share our experiences, listen and learn from each other, and champion bold new solutions and build shared pathways towards more sustainable food systems for the future.

Ireland is responding to the food systems challenge.

Along with the rest of my Government colleagues, I have just agreed our latest stakeholder-led agri-food strategy which has been in development for two years.. '*Food Vision 2030 – A World Leader in Sustainable Food Systems*' charts a transformative pathway for the Irish agri-food sector to 2030. *Food Visio F030TTIIIff0T (P)*

1. A climate smart, environmentally sustainable agri-food sector;
2. Viable and resilient primary producers with enhanced wellbeing;
3. Food that is safe, nutritious and appealing, trusted and valued at home and abroad; and
4. An innovative, competitive and resilient agri-food sector, driven by technology and talent.

Ireland's four **National Food Systems Summit Dialogues**, which attracted over 8,000 participants, generated valuable insights and understanding from across our food system, and have contributed to the Food Vision Strategy.

Ireland has been a pioneer in leading out on these strategic roadmaps and they have served everyone – from the farmer to the process to the consumer – well.

I believe that Ireland's experience of stakeholder involvement in strategy formation will be of interest internationally. The Summit must address the important question of 'how' we transform food systems, and therefore Ireland has been leading on the formation of a new Coalition to address the theme of '***Rising to the Challenge of Food Systems Transformation***'.

To continue our leadership role, the Government of Ireland has appointed a **Special Envoy on Food Systems** {Tom Arnold} to engage and communicate Ireland's support and promotion of sustainable food systems both during and after the UN Food Systems Summit.

We will work together, to consolidate all of the substantive work of the Summit process to-date into a common vision and actions that will set an ambitious tone in the lead-up to the Summit in New York in September.

Ireland is **fully committed** to ensuring that the Summit is successful – and for Ireland, that means that the Summit should lead to positive change in our global food systems.

We are at a critical juncture as global food producers – we can and must to do more in feeding an expanding population; doing so safely and sustainably