



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States

174th Session of the Council

(Rome, 4-8 December 2023)

Item 4: Global food security challenges and drivers

Mr Chair,

1. I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.
2. As highlighted by the latest SOFI reports, the world is experiencing an intensification of the major drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition, such as conflicts, climate change, population dynamics, economic inequalities and natural disasters. More than ever, addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach and joint action to tackle both immediate and long-term causes, including through fostering peace, building resilience and contributing to climate change mitigation, promoting sustainable food systems and healthy diets, ensuring equitable access to food, and strengthening international cooperation. Strengthened gender equality is key in this regard.
3. Among these challenges, conflict stands out as a critical driver that undermines efforts to achieve food security. Addressing conflict-related challenges requires a combination of conflict resolution, peacebuilding and sustainable development initiatives, paying due attention to humanitarian solutions and the de-escalation, based on in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus.
4. Important structural trends are preventing almost 3.2 billion people worldwide from enjoying a healthy diet. Poverty and inequality, exacerbated by rising food prices and the lack of social safety nets, increase the need for protection of vulnerable populations, responsible investments in infrastructure, sustainable food systems and market access.
5. In this context, one should not underestimate the importance of effective national policies to build resilient and sustainable food systems, support healthy diets promote inclusive economic growth and tackle price volatility and inflation, which all contribute to achieving food security and nutrition.
6. As highlighted in the reference document, due attention should be paid to the impacts of population dynamics, including ageing and urbanisation, throughout food systems. Such dynamics bring opportunities but also carry risks for the poor and most vulnerable, including smallholder farmers. Attractiveness of working in the food sector and generation renewal is also a key issue. To

address such risks and seize opportunities, we concur with the relevance of fostering balanced consumption and production patterns, and its implications throughout the food systems.

7. The importance of sustainable growth of agricultural production is also noteworthy, especially in low-income countries, where responsible investment in innovation is needed to break the vicious circles of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition.

8. The EU and its Member States underline the importance of multilateral cooperation in responding to the challenges of the current food crisis. We encourage FAO to intensify its cooperation with other UN organisations. Together, they have a crucial role to play in advocating for policies and interventions that promote resilience and stability in the face of these challenges and in averting future crisis.

9. Finally, we thank the FAO for the background document providing us with a basis to address this topic.

Thank you, Mr Chair.
