

Grow, Nourish, Sustain Together: Our actions are our future

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STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. GEORGES REBELO PINTO CHIKOTI, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICA, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC STATES (OACPS) FOR WORLD FOOD DAY 2020

Brussels, 16 October 2020/OACPS: On the occasion of the commemoration of World Food Day in 2020, the Secretary-General of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), H.E. Mr. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti is honoured to join in raising awareness of the issues that contribute to poverty and hunger, as well as to recognise the crucial role of food heroes such as family farmers, and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) who toil tirelessly behind the scenes and play a unique role in feeding the world and supplying healthy and nutritious food.

World Food Day 2020 is marred by the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has had devastating effects on economic activities across the world, including the 79 Members of the OACPS. It has and continues to expose millions of families and livelihoods to poverty and social insecurity.

The slowdown on global trade and demand has compromised locally-grown and imported food supply chains. There have been drastic reductions in remittances and tourism has all but disappeared – activities that constitute the backbone of many OACPS economies. The collapse in commodity prices has exacerbated an already difficult situation, which in turn has further intensified food inaccessibility.

Today, 9% of the world's population, that is roughly 690 million people, are severely food insecure and 821 million people are chronically undernourished. A disproportionate number of these people live in developing nations - the majority of which are members of the OACPS. If we disaggregate these numbers, about 60% of those suffering from hunger are women and 22% of children younger than five years old are stunted as a consequence of poor nutrition or repeated infection due to malnutrition.

The prevalence of undernourishment provides the core indicator of hunger, while the gloomy state of food insecurity and malnutrition point to the fact that we must remain attentive and active in addressing these challenges.

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 seeks sustainable solutions to end hunger in all its forms by 2030 in order to achieve food security, so that everyone, everywhere has enough good quality food to lead a healthy and worthwhile life. Achieving this will require better access to nutritious food and to widespread promotion of sustainable agriculture. Therefore, the theme for World Food Day in 2020 of "grow, nourish and sustain" is extremely fitting if we are genuine in our intentions and actions to achieve SDG 2, by 2030.

Current methods of food production and consumption impose a severe burden on the environment and constituent natural resources, including in OACPS countries. Therefore, we must with urgency embrace the principle and practice of sustainable agriculture which requires us to integrate its three main goals of environmental health, economic profitability, and social equity.

The Secretary-General underscores the urgent need to scale up investment in the agricultural value chain and food system in order to provide affordable healthy diets for all. Further, to ensure decent livelihoods for food system workers, while preserving natural resources and biodiversity and tackling challenges such as climate change. In keeping with the core values of unity and solidarity, the Secretary-General reaffirms the OACPS' commitment to addressing short to medium and long-term recovery measures to support and grow the food and agricultural sector. This will ensure the health and wellbeing of the citizens of the

OACPS.

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