



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Food
Coalition
A COVID-19 RESPONSE

HIGH LEVEL LAUNCH EVENT

**A GLOBAL ALLIANCE TO PREVENT THE HEALTH
CRISIS BECOMING A FOOD CRISIS**

5 November 2020 | 12:30 to 14:30 Rome time

#FoodCoalition

BACKGROUND

In a remarkably short period of time, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has reached most countries in the world. Countries struggle to contain the effects of the pandemic, which poses major threats to lives as well as livelihoods. While government responses have tended to be of a national nature, a global coordinated action needed urgently in order to avoid the health crisis from becoming a food security crisis.

In 2019, 690 million people were hungry and an estimated 2 billion people in the world did not have regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food. As a result of COVID-19, between 83 and 132 million more people could be pushed into hunger during 2020, and the nutritional status of the most vulnerable groups is also likely to deteriorate.

The crisis has demonstrated the urgent need for coordinated collective action at the global level to avoid precipitous acts that can add to the compounding effects of food crisis to those of the pandemic and recession. New and innovative thinking is needed to enhance our ability to survive a prolonged cycle of pandemic outbreak and economic shock.


Global and multi-stakeholder policy dialogues and exchange of experience across countries can help to identify emerging challenges and build support for measures and approaches that may worsen the situation through unintended consequences. Effective policy assistance support and opportune expertise need to be made available to countries without delay.

The COVID-19 crisis could pose long-term effects on food security and nutrition through multiple disruptions in food systems that affect food production, health of farmers, access to agricultural inputs, access to markets, rural jobs and livelihoods, and a decrease in both rural and urban demand of food due to a loss of jobs and incomes, among others. Farmers are already reporting a stark increase in food losses as a result of reduced demand and market disruptions. People's access to diverse and nutritional diets will also be affected around the globe, but more so in countries with high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition.

THE FOOD COALITION

Against this background, suggested by the Government of Italy, FAO is launching the establishment of a Food Coalition, calling for an alliance, a voluntary network of networks working together to prevent that the health crisis becomes a catastrophic world food crisis.

The Food Coalition is a multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral alliance that will activate and mobilize support for unified global actions in response to COVID-19. The Food Coalition will support innovative COVID-19 initiatives, identified in the context of various synergistic lines of action, not only to ensure global food access, but also to increase the resilience of and, in many cases, the transformation of agri-food systems in a more sustainable manner. In response to the current emergency, the Food Coalition will support existing and future efforts to help countries get back on track to meet the Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on Ending Hunger and Eradication of Poverty (SDG 2 and SDG 1).



The Food Coalition will also promote the establishment of a web-based hub that provides access to country needs and demands in the form of “Action Sheets” being developed by FAO’s COVID-19 working groups, in close consultation with decentralized offices and national stakeholders. This will serve as a “Basket” of specific needs at all levels, where Members and other partners can easily access project-focused information and data as well as the funding gap on the ground, the type of assistance that would be required in order to facilitate mobilization of resources and expertise. The Action Sheets and their indicated project requirements will continually be updated.

HIGH LEVEL LAUNCH EVENT

The Official Launch Event of the Food Coalition will be held virtually on 5 November 2020, at 12.30 hours CET, with the participation of High-Level Speakers. It is a call for global coordinated action bringing all the efforts and partners around the centrality of food and towards sustainable food systems. FAO invites all partners to join this event and the Food Coalition through a variety of mechanisms, including finance, in-kind contributions, South-South Cooperation and advocacy events.

Provisional Agenda

| 12:30–13:00 | High Level Opening

- Opening remarks: FAO Director-General, Dr QU Dongyu
- Prime Minister, Italy, Prof. Giuseppe Conte
- Deputy Prime Minister, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Ms Carola Schouten
- Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Dr Tawakkol Karman

| 13:00–13:40 | High Level Panel: How COVID-19 amplified the work on Agri-Food Systems Transformation

Presentation by FAO Chief Economist, Mr Máximo Torero

Remarks by:

- Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, State of Israel
- Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Federal Republic of Nigeria
- Permanent Representative to UN Rome-based Agencies, People’s Republic of China
- Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italy

| 13:40–14:20 | High Level Panel: Why is Global Joint and Coordinated Action needed?

Presentation by Deputy Director-General, Beth Bechdol

Remarks by:

- Minister for Environment and Energy, Republic of Costa Rica
- Minister for Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies, Italy
- Permanent Representative to UN Rome-based Agencies, United States of America
- Permanent Representative to UN Rome-based Agencies, Russia Federation

| 14.20–14.30 | Wrap up by Deputy Director-General, Beth Bechdol

Closing Remarks by Prof. Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

For further information contact: food-coalition@fao.org

In order to join the meeting, you should register by using the link below:

https://fao.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYrcuGpqz0sH9cK_pY4uZwx3TTv7QR6Mzhq