

**Parliamentary Briefing of the European Parliamentary Alliance against Hunger and Malnutrition - Achieving a sustainable Food Systems Transformation**

**- Reflections for the UN Food Systems Summit**

**Joachim von Braun (speaking notes)**

Chair of Scientific Group for the UN Food Systems Summit 2021

Professor for Economic and Technological Change, ZEF, University of Bonn

*Introduction of the work of the Scientific Committee, the 5 Action Tracks and some of the solutions, recommendations the Scientific Group has already put forward*

21 May, 2021 11:00 –13:00

Dear Member of EU Parliament Marlene Mortler and distinguished Members of the European Parliamentary Alliance against Hunger and Malnutrition,

Dear FAO DG Qu,

Ladies and Gentlemen, It is an honor to be invited to speak to you on the FSS.

I will make three overarching remarks related to the FSS opportunity, and then respond point by point to Marlene Mortler's challenging 4 questions and relate to EU leadership opportunities.

**1. Summit must lead to action for People:** The Food Systems Summit is happening at a critical moment when hunger and vulnerabilities have significantly increased as a result of COVID19 and Climate Change and conflicts. **Leadership from the EU** is going to be critical for how the Summit responds.

**2. Summit must lead to action for our planet:** The UN SG launched a Food Systems Summit concerned that we must be paying attention to relations between food and nature, climate, biodiversity, water cycles, soils, etc. EU F2F can help guide that.

**3. Countries world-wide are not in agreement on how to act.** If they were, we would not need a summit. Yet the need for agreement has never been stronger. Needed are roadmaps, political frameworks, financial commitments on a few priorities. EU can play important roles to help define these priorities. I will hint at a few.

**Distinguished MEP Marlene Mortler, you asked:**

**1. Is the Commission's strategy suitable for defining and achieving sustainable food systems?**

The EU's Farm-to-Fork strategy can be a game-changer. The concept of sustainability needs to be precisely defined, taking into account multi-dimensionality and trade-offs between objectives. More explicit attention should be to international dimensions of the F2F. ch 4 is a beginning.

The F2F strategy (3.1) on Research, innovation, technology and investments” is excellent and actually of global relevance. EU scientists publish about 140T articles in the field of food, agr and environment per annum, China 80T and USA 70T. Without innovation, the food system will be doomed. Without innovations, achieving the production for SDG2, could add about 80% greenhouse gas emissions from farming and food by 2050. EU Bioscience, plant breeding, digital innovations, food and one health-systems science,..

The Scientific Group has identified 5 areas of institutional and 5 areas of technical innovations that will enhance the food systems transformation.

**1. incentivize availability and affordability of healthy diets and nutritious foods.**

**Ensure food prices reflect true costs.**

**Revisit value of food.** Food is cultural, many things. Valued through market prices. That does not include external costs, like climate, biodiversity, health costs. Sustainable & healthy food is too expensive, Unsustainable& unhealthy food is too cheap. Rethinking lifestyles as President Sassoli just called for, must be on the agenda.

**2. overcome inefficient and unfair land, credit, and labor arrangements**

**3. de-risk food systems.**

**4. facilitate inclusion, empowerment, rights of women and youth.**

**5. strengthening the science - policy interface:** we need to embrace the whole food chains from resource use to consumers. That is complex and needs systems science and a strong Science-Policy Interface for sustainable agriculture, food and nutrition systems. The global science community needs to be mobilized. **A sound new science – policy interface would be a concrete outcome of the UNFSS.** The European Commission took an excellent step by establishing a High Level Expert Group to assess needs and options to strengthen the international Science - Policy Interface for Food Systems Governance. We supports this and interact with the Expert Group.

**2. How can the very different starting points of the various people be taken into account and included in the proposed solutions?**

Countries want to and should develop their **context specific own food systems strategies.**

Farmers are central, small scale and women are central. Summit most strengthen their voice.

We find it important that **no people are excluded** from the Summit. Indigenous peoples’ food systems and knowledge are getting attention. The summit process is very gender and youth focused.

### **3. What measures can we take to support local farmers, fishermen and foresters, as well as food producers, to shift to more sustainable practices and provide access to knowledge, markets and finance?**

The investment in **skills and training** needs to have very high priorities. Good management practices that contribute to the promotion of sustainable food systems, must be rewarded. Payments for ecosystems services are an option.

You asked **about costs and finance**: we know how much it will cost and what categories of interventions need to be targeted to **end hunger cost effectively**. It is about 40 Billion Euro per annum in addition until 2030. The mix of the identified **low-cost, high-impact interventions** include: scaling social protection programs, integrated soil fertility management, the AfCTA, child nutrition programs, agricultural R&D, and female literacy. Clearly, this portfolio is hunger-reducing in sustainable ways as most of the interventions are also income-enhancing and empowering.

**Financing the end of hunger** needs a set of initiatives in which the EU and its member countries should play a key role. Considered should be 1) doubling the annual international development funding (ODA) for food, agriculture, nutrition which is 12 Bill Euro; 2) an End Hunger Fund; and 3) most importantly, using some of the expected 650 Bill US\$ of additional **Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)** for the IMF for guarantees of country actions, such as a “zero hunger bonds”. 4) Pledges by companies, investment funds, and philanthropies must also come to the table.

### **4. How can we ensure coherence between EU aid policy and the national policy of the recipient country?**

In support of coherence, I suggest early assessments of how the implementation of the **European Green Deal** will affect economic and social life in EU and in Dev Countries. **Sound modelling** needs to be done and we are progressing with FAO and IFPRI.

An EU focus on **Africa** ought to have high priority. The Trade relations can be improved.

The EU as big food importer **can help set standards**: EU can use trade policy to promote more sustainable practices among its trading partners, to reduce deforestation and to enhance basic social **standards in value chains**.

In closing: The food and hunger issues addressed with the Food Systems Summit in 2021 must get connected to COP26 on climate, to Biodiversity COP 15, and the rebuilding after COVID finance issues. EU and your Parliament in particular can play key roles for making the FSS and the follow up to it a success.

Thank you.