



Joachim von Braun speaking at the UN Food Systems Summit 2021

23 September 2021

From the Scientific Group...

Excellencies and colleagues,

This Summit is an urgent one and an unusual one. One unusual aspect is the deep involvement of science facilitated by UN leadership, for which we are grateful, especially to Deputy Secretary General Amina Mohamed and Special Envoy Agnes Kalibata.

The fact that hunger is growing and that 3 billion people do not have access to a healthy diet is a violation of human rights.

The Scientific Group for the Summit with its thousands of partners has identified innovations that will transform food systems in four Action Areas.

First, to nourish all people.

Science says we actually can come close to ending hunger by 2030. Our modelling shows that it only costs an additional US\$ 40 to 50 billion per year until 2030. Increased and sustainable productivity, technologies, better markets, reduction of food loss and waste, and social protection including school-feeding and nutrition programs are central in that investment.

Science brings technologies for food processing, and storage that reduce food waste and loss. The private sector innovations are important in this field. Currently, a third of total food produced is lost or wasted.

Hunger in conflicts is serious. Political science must further explore opportunities in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. This calls for UN and political leadership.

Second, to boost nature-based solutions and production.

The global food system emits about 30% of global greenhouse gases, but can and must become climate neutral.

Science helps sustainably manage soils, land and water sustainably, and to protect biodiversity and genetic bases.

Traditional food systems of Indigenous Peoples need respect and support by partnerships with science communities.

Aquatic foods must be better produced and used.

Science helps agroecological approaches to be advanced based on evidence.

Bio-science and genetics are nature-based too. Genetic engineering, genome editing for proteins and advancing essential micronutrients should be pursued.

Third, to advance equitable livelihoods, decent work and empowered communities.

The concept of a living income is coherent with a world without hunger.

Protecting the land rights of 500 million small-scale producers is paramount. Blockchain technology helps if embedded in sound governance frameworks.

Digital opportunities for food are not yet tapped anywhere near potentials.

Fourth, to build resilience to vulnerabilities

The food, climate and Covid crises must be addressed jointly because they are closely linked. A One Health approach for resilience is called for.

Finally, we stress science-based initiatives that should be part of successful implementation:

Good food is undervalued. The costs of unhealthy and unsustainably produced food must be accounted for. These costs add up to twice the market value of food. Our initiative for true valuation and costing of food warrants your support.

Governance must be addressed: Science and policy and stakeholders need to work productively together at country and global levels. An Intergovernmental Panel for Food would make sense. Science organizations with UN agencies and others should explore this on the way forward to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

Research is part of action: Governments should allocate at least 1% of their nations' food systems income to food research.

Excellencies, colleagues,

The science communities remain ready to support implementation and engage in the related dialogues.

Food is central for people and planet.

Thank you