

**STATEMENT  
BY  
THE MOST HONOURABLE ANDREW HOLNESS, ON, MP, PC,  
PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA  
AT THE  
UNITED NATIONS FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT 2021  
23<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021**

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Your Excellency, Mr. António Guterres, UN Secretary-General

Your Excellency, Mr. Abdullah Shahid, President of the General Assembly

Fellow Heads of State and Government

Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr. President,

For structurally vulnerable Small Island Developing States like Jamaica, which have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, this year's **Food Systems Summit** takes on special significance. Its staging underscores the international community's strong conviction that despite the pandemic, no one should be left behind, and that every citizen across the world has an equal and legitimate right to food and nutritional security.

Mr. President,

I wish to assure you that Jamaica remains committed to continuing our constructive work to advance the global foods systems agenda. We also commit to exploring synergies within the various workstreams of the *Financing for Development in the Era of Covid-19 and Beyond Initiative (FfDI)*, which I co-chair with the UN Secretary General and the Prime Minister of Canada, to achieve the Goal of Zero Hunger (SDG2).

While global food systems have expanded to feed the world's growing population, many people across the globe lack access to sufficient, safe and affordable food. In fact, between 720 million and 811 million people go to bed hungry every night, and at least 2.4 billion lack access to a healthy and nutritious diet.

In the Caribbean, food and nutrition insecurity are primarily the result of our small size, increasing exposure to climate change and related natural hazards. To compound our challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic has precipitated the worst economic recession in the region in the last half century.

Mr. President,

There is universal acceptance that there is no single model for food systems transformation, and the trade-offs vary by country and region. Multilateral assistance to developing countries to transform food systems should, therefore, be delivered in line with the national priorities and realities, ensuring that the processes of transition are just, equitable and fair.

At the regional level, the themes of the Food System Summit coincide with the priorities of the Caribbean Community. The Caribbean is committed to utilizing innovative strategies to achieve the SDGs through this transformation and have been working to finalize a regional strategy for advancing Agri-Food Systems.

As we engage in this conversation, we believe that the transformation of global food systems should strike a balance among the following objectives:

- The capacity to increase food production levels and variety;
- Agricultural health and food safety;
- Nutritional diversity and quality; and;
- Equitable food standards that govern trade, and environmental, economic and social sustainability.

International agricultural trade also has played a pivotal role in our food systems, given its direct impact on supply and demand flows and consumption patterns. Thus, food trade should be open, transparent, and predictable, guarding our commitments to quality without creating barriers to food security.

In keeping with the SDGs, we reaffirm our commitment to overcoming hunger and malnutrition and to contributing to the global basket of food; securing commodities from our domestic output.

Mr President,

In closing, let me reiterate that responding to these challenges requires an inclusive, multidimensional, systems-based approach that addresses the range and complexities of our challenges in a holistic and sustainable manner.

Our collective participation and contributions in this forum must move us closer to securing a joint commitment and united response to addressing this urgent matter.

I thank you.