

Media Update

15 October 2020

United Nations

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF RURAL WOMEN “BUILDING RURAL WOMEN’S RESILIENCE IN THE WAKE OF COVID- 19”

New York, 15 October 2020

Rural women play a critical role in agriculture, food security and nutrition, building climate resilience, and managing land and natural resources. But many rural women suffer from discrimination, systemic racism and structural poverty.

The COVID-19 pandemic has now affected more than half the world’s women farmers with restrictions on movement, the closure of shops and markets, and disruption to their supply chains. Combined with challenges including increased unpaid care and domestic work and rising rates of gender-based violence, rural women are bearing some of the heaviest burdens of the pandemic.

Digital channels can offer a lifeline in rural areas, providing information on access to healthcare as well as agricultural updates. However, the gender digital divide is particularly wide for rural women, who make up just a quarter of users of digital agricultural solutions.

Helping rural women through the pandemic and building their resilience for the future will require solidarity and support from all.

Together, we must invest in rural women so that they have access to the healthcare, social protection and agricultural information services they need. We must close the digital divide and provide essential services to respond to the shadow pandemic of violence against women. And we must tackle the

discriminatory land and inheritance laws and practices that make rural women vulnerable to losing their sources of income.

On the International Day of Rural Women, let us renew our commitment to rural women in all their diversity; increase our efforts to support them through the COVID-19 pandemic; and work with them to build their resilience to future crises.

United Nations

MEDIA ADVISORY

Voices of Food Systems Live: 24-Hour Global Relay Conversation

WHAT: A 24-hour global relay conversation on World Food Day to launch the UN Food Systems Summit engagement process for the coming year. The marathon virtual conversation will bring together celebrity chefs, indigenous peoples, CEOs, youth activists, celebrities, small farmers, heads of state, and the general public, to discuss how to transform our food systems in the next 10 years.

WHEN: Friday, October 16, starting at 12 p.m. Fiji Standard Time (8 p.m. EST October 15) and moving around the world every hour for the entire day.

WHO: **Jioji Konrote, President of Fiji**, will open this one-of-kind global dialogue with chef, author and TV presenter **Robert Oliver**.

Speakers across the 24-hours will include:

- **Amina Mohammed**, UN Deputy Secretary-General
- **Mariam Almheiri**, UAE Minister of State for Food and Water Security
- **Amelia Afuhaamango Tu'ipulotu**, Health Minister of Tonga
- **Alexandra Valkenburg**, Ambassador of the Delegation of the European Union to the Holy See, Order of Malta, UN Organisations in Rome, the Republic of San Marino
- **Agnes Kalibata**, UN Special Envoy for the Food Systems Summit

- **Massimo Bottura**, chef and food systems activist, UN Environment Programme Goodwill Ambassador
- **Sabrina Dhowre Elba**, model, activist and UN IFAD Goodwill Ambassador
- **José Andrés**, chef, restaurateur, and founder of World Central Kitchen
- **Kimberly Williams-Paisley**, Actress and Best-Selling Author

The sessions will focus on some of the world's most pressing issues: saving the last original colony of bees on a remote island; growing food in the middle of the desert; reintroducing ancient foods into modern kitchens; promoting non-violent movements to create change; hearing from refugees about the loss of their food culture; and much more.

Dr. Kalibata, and deputy to the Special Envoy, **Martin Frick**, are available for interviews on request.

Dr. Kalibata will also brief the press on **Monday, 12 October**, as guest at the daily UN noon briefing (12pm ET) on WebTV.

WHERE: The sessions will be broadcast via Zoom across Twitter, Facebook Live and YouTube. More information, including registration details, are available here: <https://bit.ly/VoicesofFoodSystems>

WHY: The UN Food Systems Summit is under way to identify bold new actions, solutions and strategies to deliver progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, each of which relies to some degree on healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems.

The Food Systems Summit Dialogues, launching on World Food Day, are a core component of the Food Systems Summit process and offer one of the most dynamic ways to engage stakeholders in considering their role in food systems, how their roles link with others, and ways in which they can unite around transformative actions in support of the SDGs. The Dialogues present an opportunity to engage all citizens as food system stakeholders, and to bring people together in a time where so much is pushing them apart.

The 24-hour global relay conversation will also highlight the Food Systems Summit's five "Action Tracks" and cross-cutting levers of change. With 10 years to go to deliver the SDGs, the online conversation must stimulate greater local participation and partnership for a global movement.

Each 50-minute session, which will be produced by Future Food Institute, will feature video messages, statements, commitments and calls to action.

More information: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/food-systems-summit-2021/>

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