

FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT 2021



Source: United Nations

The year 2021 has been declared by the United Nations General Assembly as the **International Year of Fruits and Vegetables**, in order to reduce environmental impact, promote increased consumption of these food groups and promote healthier lifestyles. To this end, the Secretary General, António Guterres, has convened a **Summit on Food Systems** to sensitize world public opinion and establish global commitments and measures that transform food systems, not only to eradicate hunger, but also to reduce the incidence of food-related diseases and tackling the climate emergency through sustainable food production.

On December 15, the Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres, declared 2021 as the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables. During the official launch of the year, Guterres assured that “fruits and vegetables are the cornerstone of a healthy and varied diet. They provide the human body with abundant nutrients, support the immune system and help reduce the risk of many diseases.”

The benefits that the consumption of fruits and vegetables brings to the human body are undeniable, but knowing such benefits, why don't we consume them as we should? Guterres pointed out that “factors such as population growth, increasing urbanization, increasing scarcity

of natural resources, agricultural pollution and changes in land use, high levels of food loss and waste and the effects Climate change highlights the fragility of our food system” as well as the difficulty for consumers to include fruits and vegetables in their daily diet.

It is for this reason that the UN, naming 2021 as the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables, seeks to provide attention to a critical sector and calls for a more comprehensive approach to production and consumption. This fact can benefit human health and the environment, trying to reduce the environmental impact, promote increased consumption of these food groups and promoting healthier lifestyles. But how can we do it?

A first step towards achieving this goal, according to the Secretary General, "will be the Food Systems Summit 2021. On it, we will ask everyone to intensify their efforts to make food systems more inclusive, resilient and sustainable." Furthermore, it stated that "we must unite to ensure that the most vulnerable receive nutritious food leaving no one behind." It is necessary to take advantage of the International Year to rethink the relationship with the way in which food is produced and consumed. "Let's review our food systems and commit to a healthier, more resilient and sustainable world. Improving our food systems all people have within their reach, and can afford, the varied nutrition they need."

The Summit on Food Systems is part of the task of fulfilling the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, this Summit seeks to achieve a better future for all, constituting a turning point in the way we acquire and consume food. In order for the Summit to be a turning point, the broad participation of all social agents, as well as civil society, is necessary.

The key to the success of the Summit lies in maximum collective participation and a

knowledge of the best practices that are already being carried out today. In other words, there are many examples of communities, farmers' organizations, companies, indigenous leaders and individuals who are already charting the course for positive change, and we must all learn from them. There are also global associations and leaders from all areas who are taking the lead to transform food systems. We need to unleash the best ideas and practices, from around the world, to help blaze that path, wherever they come from.

Knowledge of these practices will also mean the discovery of correlations between the multiple regional and national initiatives and alliances that already exist, or are being formed, to support the transformation of food systems. This also implies a learning between communities on how to respect the physical environment and value the way of consumption in our society. It is for this reason that a deliberate effort will be made to obtain empirical data and knowledge of these activities, in order to inform the general ideas and recommendations that will be formulated at the Summit.

The Summit will have a focus primarily on collective action where the Special Envoy will collaborate with United Nations Member States and other stakeholders to establish agile and innovative consultations, particularly at the regional and national levels. Civil society, farmers, indigenous peoples, governments, the private sector, research centers, think tanks, and executing agencies will intervene in the preparation process.

It is essential that deliberative processes such as the Summit, which will involve such a significant change in our lifestyles, seek to consider the valuable perceptions and guidance of people and communities around the planet, both those who have the most to gain or lose depending on how they function food systems.

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