

2020 HLPF Side Event

“On the road to the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables 2021: Highlighting health and nutritional benefits through sustainable production and consumption of fruits and vegetables”

13 July 2020, 12:00 – 13:30hs (EDT/NY Time)

Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Milenko Skoknic

I want to extend my sincere appreciation and welcome to my dear colleagues and everyone who has joined today on this side event. We are hosting this meeting together with the Permanent Mission of India and the Food and Agriculture Organization –FAO- in preparation of the official launch of the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables 2021, in the context of this year’s quite atypical High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development of ECOSOC.

The integration of fruits and vegetables production with nutrition and health, is of utmost relevance, as such, it is highlighted in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development in SDGs 2, 3 and 12: SDG 2- "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture", SDG 3: "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages", and SDG 12, "Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns".

In responding to and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, it becomes urgent to assess the effects of the pandemic on food security and nutrition, including the importance of fruits and vegetables, and to identify urgent and coordinated actions to avoid the most adverse consequences.

This pandemic has exposed the inequalities that exist in societies and threatens to set back such important areas as the fight against hunger, affecting especially the most vulnerable countries. As a result, the number of food-insecure people in the Latin American and Caribbean region is estimated to increase by 20 million.

Chile considers that it is fundamental to take the necessary measures to protect agricultural supply chains and avoid jeopardizing food security and nutrition,

factors that can have a major impact on the social and political stability of States.

In the same sense, it is essential to adopt public policies that promote sustainable food systems based on healthy diets, paying attention to the sustainability of production and consumption systems.

Notwithstanding their nutrition and health benefits, Fruits and Vegetables contribute significantly to human nutrition, food security and to the generation of income and employment for smallholders and family farmers.

With these objectives in mind, our country was active in the promotion of the "International Year of Fruits and Vegetables 2021", that was established last December by the General Assembly in a resolution presented by Chile, Costa Rica and Nigeria, with more than 73 co-sponsors.

Currently, Chile holds the presidency of the International Steering Committee of the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables, which is composed by State Members from all regions, International Organizations (including FAO and the WHO) and representatives from the civil society and the private sector (including organizations represented by two panelists today, *Slow Food* and *5-A-Day*).

So far, the Steering Committee has held 3 official meetings and agreed the Definition of Fruits and Vegetables and the Graphic Identity of the International Year, including the logo and visual support that we have the opportunity to be using today for the first time.

The steering Committee also defined the Objectives and Lines of Action of the International Year, that will focus on four (4) areas:

1. Raising awareness of and directing policy attention to the nutrition and health benefits of fruit and vegetable consumption;
2. Promoting diversified, balanced, and healthy diets and lifestyles through fruit and vegetable consumption;
3. Reducing loss and waste in fruits and vegetables food systems;
4. Sharing best practices on different areas such as:

1. Promotion of consumption and sustainable production of fruits and vegetables that contributes to sustainable food systems;
2. Improved sustainability of storage, transport, trade, processing, transformation, retail, waste reduction and recycling, as well as interactions among these processes;
3. Integration of smallholders including family farmers into local, regional, and global production, value/supply chains for sustainable production and consumption of fruits and vegetables, recognizing the contributions of fruits and vegetables, including farmers' varieties/landraces, to their food security, nutrition, livelihoods and incomes;
4. Strengthening the capacity of all countries, specially developing countries, to adopt innovative approaches and technology in combating loss and waste of fruits and vegetables, , from production to consumption.

Chile is committed to continue collaborate with others in order to face the enormous challenges linked to food at the global level, to reduce food loss and waste and to build agricultural systems more resilient to climate change. Those are some of the issues that we hope can be addressed during this International Year through an active and transparent dialogue with all actors in society.

With that in mind, we hope that this side event benefits to promote the conversation among all relevant stakeholders to ensure participation of all actors in the construction of a better, more sustainable and resilient fruit and vegetable sector.

Thank you