



DICASTERY FOR PROMOTING
INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



FOOD FOR *LIFE*, FOOD *JUSTICE*, FOOD FOR
ALL
*The Holy See's perspective towards the United Nations Food
Systems Summit (II)*

FOOD JUSTICE: Jobs, innovation, and finance at the service of food
justice

26 May 2021

14.00-17.00 hrs

Introductory remarks – H.Em. Card. Peter K.A. Turkson (5')

Excellences,

Dear Professors,

Distinguished Permanent Representatives,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is a great pleasure for me to open up this afternoon's seminar, the second of the "*Food for Life, Food Justice, Food for All*" series, that will focus on the role of dignified work, finance and innovation in ensuring fair and sustainable food systems. Today's discussion takes place within the context of the Special *Laudato Si'* celebrations of the Church, especially, the launching of the *Laudato Si' Action Platform* and the inauguration of a 7-year *Laudato si' action* package that aims at generating a movement towards a change of heart and attitude towards creation and its inhabitants/poor (ecological conversion) and a sense of being *ecological*

citizens, connected with one another and with our ecosystems which sustain and nourish our lives, none of us being an *independent variable*. Thus we hope to turn the awareness of what is happening to the world, our common home, into our own personal suffering and to discover how to overcome injustices in the network of our relationships, with one another and with our world; for injustices are not invincible (Cfr. *LS*, 74). Since all created goods are destined for the wellbeing of all inhabitants of the earth, we hope, in particular, that the Holy See's perspective on food justice will help to widen the scope of our consideration of food justice in the post-covid-19 recovery

The affirmation is repeatedly made that the Covid-19 pandemic will negatively affect the poor, disrupting their food supply chains, reducing their purchasing power, interrupting production cycles, threatening in real time to throw millions into hunger and undoing progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal #2, *Zero Hunger*. According to the FAO's latest estimates, about 150 million people are currently projected to fall into food insecurity. As Pope Francis noted on the occasion of the World Food Day (Oct, 2020) "*For humanity, hunger is not only a tragedy but it is also shameful.*" In 2015, at the World Food Expo in Milan under the theme: "*Feeding the planet is possible. Beyond the paradox of food. Ideas and good practices to overcome the contradictions surrounding food in an international context,*" the Pope referred to the situation of food waste in a hungry world the *paradox of Abundance!*

Clearly, the lack of food is inextricably linked with other social struggles aggravated by the pandemic. In fact, food insecurity is not simply a lack of food. Poverty, marginalization, lack of democratic political processes, conflict, environmental destruction and biodiversity loss, and the consequences of climate change all contribute to food insecurity, increase inequalities and worsen the conditions of vulnerable communities worldwide, weakening an already broken global food system.

As Pope Francis says in *Fratelli Tutti*, "*all this calls for an alternative way of thinking. [...] if we accept the great principle that there are rights born of our inalienable human dignity [including the right to food and nutrition: FT, 189], we can rise to the challenge of envisaging a new humanity.*" (*FT*, 127). There is an urgent need to re-imagine and re-build food systems so that they may become more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable. But we must not think of this as an impossible enterprise. We have the potential to embark on this journey together, taking this unique COVID crisis as a unique opportunity. Let me recall Pope Francis' words that must guide this recovery: "*Our desire for a return to normality should not mean a return*

to social injustices or to a delay of long overdue reforms. Today we have an opportunity to create something different: an ethically sound economy, centred on persons, especially the poor, in recognition of their innate human dignity. “ (Pope Francis, General Audience, 19 August 2020).

When speaking of this potential, we highlight that which comes from the dignity and efforts of agricultural workers; the creativity and dynamism of technology and innovation; and the support of well designed and regulated financial markets in facilitating universal access to food. Each of these elements have something to contribute to all stages of food systems: from pioneering food production and consumption patterns that respect the natural cycles of our common home, to ensuring the resilience of food systems so that they may continue to provide food to everyone through crises such as this one. When organized in light of a *culture of care* – for each other and for our common home - each of these elements can engage in a fruitful interaction to produce food systems that leave no one behind.

Today we are honoured to have representatives of different sectors and institutions who can speak to the concrete aspects of these issues and the actions that are necessary. I wish we have a fruitful discussions that may help us contribute collectively to the pre-UN Food Systems Summit, and to building a fairer society, in which each person may granted equal opportunities for their integral human development. Guaranteeing everyone dignified access to food at reasonable and fair prices is a matter of social justice, ecological care, and building up an economy that is really people-centred.

God bless.