Excellency,

I have the honour to invite you to the first United Nations Food Systems 2023 Stocktaking Moment, scheduled to take place at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, Italy, from 24 to 26 July 2023.

I am grateful to the Government of the Republic of Italy for its leadership in hosting this first Stocktaking Moment in partnership with the Rome-based agencies, the United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub and the wider United Nations system. Ahead of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Summit in September, marking the midpoint of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the 2023 Stocktaking Moment provides a unique opportunity to highlight the role of food systems transformations as a critical SDGs accelerator.

In just a few months, two years will have elapsed since the global community came together during the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit, to affirm the power of transforming our food systems to realize our shared vision of a better future for people, planet, and prosperity.

Since then, the world has had to endure more crises, which have further tested the resilience of our societies, already battered by the COVID-19 pandemic, the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, and most recently by an unprecedented cost-of-living crisis. Projections are that nearly 670 million people will be facing hunger in 2030 - eight per cent of the world population - which is at the same level as in 2015, when the 2030 Agenda was adopted.

Yet, in the face of such a sobering outlook, I am today more convinced than ever, that healthier, more sustainable, equitable and resilient food systems that respect the planet, can help us to recover lost ground and resolutely advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
To this end, I hold true to my promise to convene the 2023 Stocktaking Moment. This meeting will bring together Heads of State and Government, ministers of agriculture, environment, health, planning, finance and all relevant stakeholders (women, youth, food producers, Indigenous Peoples, civil society, the science community and academia and the private sector), food systems coalitions, international non-governmental organizations, foundations, alliances and the United Nations system, to take a critical look at the progress achieved on the commitments to action and acceleration that were taken two years ago.

In preparing for the 2023 Stocktaking Moment, I would like to encourage national and sub-national stocktaking exercises that could take the form of inclusive, multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder national dialogues on sustainable food systems, similar to the 624 Member State dialogues countries organized ahead of the 2021 Summit. In addition, you are invited to submit, on a voluntary basis, a national progress report on food systems transformation, using the template provided by the United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub. Your contributions will help accelerate global learning on solutions that work, and enduring challenges and bottlenecks, and enrich preparations for the 2023 Stocktaking Moment. They also will inform priorities in the next biennium.

Excellency, I count on you or your representative, at no lower than Ministerial level, to join us for this first Stocktaking Moment, and invite you to include your National Food Systems Convenor in your delegation.

We would appreciate being notified of the names, official titles, email accounts and addresses of the members of the delegation no later than 23 June 2023, via online registration, which is available through the password-protected area of the FAO Members Gateway at http://www.fao.org/members-gateway/home/en/, accessible by the Permanent Representatives accredited to the FAO.

More details on the programme and logistical arrangements will be provided by the United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub, through their regular engagements with your National Convenors and Permanent Representatives, as well as through their website at https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org.

Let us seize the opportunity of the 2023 Stocktaking Moment to reaffirm our commitment to transform our food systems, to act with urgency and at scale, for accelerated progress towards all the Sustainable Development Goals.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

António Guterres