

Global Bioeconomy Summit
Statement by FAO Deputy Director-General,
Maria Helena Semedo
20 April 2018, Berlin, Germany

Your Excellency, Julia Klöckner, Federal Minister for Food and Agriculture
Honorable Ministers and Ambassadors,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen

1. On behalf of Mr Graziano Da Silva, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, I would like to thank the German Government and the City of Berlin for again inviting me to this excellent platform on bioeconomy.
2. Since the last **Summit in 2015, major global developments – such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement - have been shaping decisions and actions of the international community.**
3. Today, more than ever, we are facing a **more complex world**, calling for **bolder responses and actions** at all levels.
4. **All of us have a role to play:** the UN, Governments, the private sector, NGOs, civil society, research and others.
5. From climate change to poverty, today's challenges call **for holistic, cross-cutting and inclusive solutions**, like sustainable bioeconomy.
6. Therefore, I am pleased to note that since 2015 about **50 countries worldwide have created policy strategies** related to bioeconomy development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. Let me share **some key points**:

8. First, **sustainable bioeconomy is foremost about nature and the people who take care of - produce - and use biomass.**

9. **Family farmers represent a major asset for sustainable bioeconomy development** – not only as producers of biomass, but also as holders of important knowledge on how to manage natural resources in a sustainable way.

10. Second, **achieving sustainable bioeconomy is complex.** We should not oversimplify bioeconomy development, this can have risks and be counterproductive.

11. We all agree that **food security** is a priority. It is not just about food production – if is often about lack of access to food.

12. In fact, we produce enough food to feed the planet.

13. **Bioeconomy can improve access to food**, such as through additional income from the sale of bio-products.

14. Or consider **climate change**. Just because a product is labelled bio does not mean it is good for climate change, it **depends on how it is produced**, and in particular on how much and what type of energy is used in the process.

15. And my third point is that we should **ensure that all relevant knowledge – traditional and new** – is equally important in bioeconomy and should be equally shared and supported.

16. **Innovation plays a key role** – it is about new technologies, but also new way to better support existing ones - and it needs to be contextualized.

17. **My fourth point:** FAO agrees with the recommendation of the 2015 Summit on the “need to establish an international forum for bioeconomy as an informal network to foster strategic dialogue with policy-makers, private sector, civil society and scientists”.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

18. Let me share with you what **FAO can offer** to promote sustainable bioeconomy.

19. We work across the **conventional bioeconomy sectors - agriculture, forestry and fisheries**, but also on technologies relevant to bioeconomy, like information technology and biotechnology – with emphasis on small-holder biomass producers.

20. We support **FAO Member States** with our vast **technical expertise and know-how** on the sustainable production of food and non-food goods.

21. At the same time, we promote **strategic partnerships** with civil society, the private sector and research institutes.

22. FAO’s role as a **global neutral forum to discuss complex and sensitive bioeconomy topics such as bioenergy and biotechnology** is widely recognized.

23. We also promote **traditional and new knowledge and technology**, such as the *Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems* – they represent agricultural Knowledge forged over centuries. We now have 50 sites in 20 countries.

24. On the other hand, in November 2018, we will be hosting the *1st International Symposium on Innovation for Smallholders and Family Farmers*. Earlier this month we concluded the *2nd International Symposium on Agroecology* in the context of SDGs, which endorsed an Initiative to scale up agroecology.

25. In addition, thanks to the generous support of the Government of Germany, we are currently **developing sustainable bioeconomy guidelines** with the support of a multistakeholder international sustainable bioeconomy working group.
26. In that context, we have identified **25 cases from around the world that serve as successful bioeconomy examples to develop good practices**. For instance, **a group of women fishers in Zanzibar** are producing cosmetics from algae, opening up a whole new market for niche products.
27. In **Malaysia** there is a government programme supporting community-based bioeconomy.
28. And in **Colombia**, an entire community participates in a project that transforms pineapple husk into bio-degradable packaging.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

29. In conclusion, we know the **challenges** of sustainable bioeconomy - and **collectively - we already hold solutions** to address them.
30. By this, I mean that we **produce sufficient food** to address hunger, and we **have knowledge, tools and approaches to produce and use biomass in a sustainable way**.
31. But we need to bring this together with the **appropriate enabling environment**, including policies, institutions, capacities, good governance and financial support.
32. To do so, we must **foster internationally-coordinated efforts** and ensure **multi-stakeholder engagement at local, national and global levels**.

33. This calls **for measurable targets, means to fulfill them and cost effective ways to measure progress.**

34. FAO is already moving ahead in the **global development of sustainable bioeconomy** and stands ready to continue to do so.

35. **Together, let's harness the development for sustainable bioeconomy for all and leave no one behind.**

36. Thank you for your attention.