



**Statement of the Permanent Mission of the Holy See
to the United Nations and Other International Organisations in Geneva
at the 49th Session of the Human Rights Council**

Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

Geneva, 14 March 2022

Mister President,

The Delegation of the Holy See takes note of the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food and welcomes the emphasis on the role of farmers and indigenous people as “stewards of seed systems for all of humankind.”¹

Properly understood, stewardship is an expression of responsibility, not an act of dominion.² Everyone has a responsibility towards the natural environment, and to neglect such a responsibility is to disregard “the message contained in the structures of nature itself.”³ In a particular way, farmers respond to that responsibility through the promotion of the continuous renewal of biodiversity.

In the context of the current pandemic, last year alone, “twenty million more people have been dragged down to extreme levels of food insecurity; severe destitution has increased; and the price of food has risen sharply.”⁴ It is also concerning that “Biodiversity has been decreasing for approximately a century”, weakening the resilience of food systems against climate change.⁵

Moreover, the Holy See is “aware that individual, self-centered and conflicting - but powerful - economic interests prevent us from conceiving of a food system that responds to the values of the Common Good, solidarity and the ‘culture of encounter.’”⁶ In line with the principle of subsidiarity, it is vital that farmers have “access to the services necessary for the production, marketing and use of agricultural resources.”⁷

Pope Francis reminds us that “it is not enough to produce food. We need a new mindset and a new holistic approach and must plan food systems that protect the Earth and keep the dignity of the human person at the centre.”⁸

Thank you, Mister President.

¹ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, A/HRC/49/43, 18.

² Cf. Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, 116.

³ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁴ Pope Francis, Video Message on the Occasion of the Fourth World Meeting of Popular Movements, 16 October 2021.

⁵ A/HRC/49/43, 2&4.

⁶ Pope Francis, Message to the Pre-Summit for the United Nations Food Systems Summit, 26 July 2021.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*