

**“Our actions are our future.  
Better production, better nutrition,  
A better environment and a better life”**



By: Mical Tesfay

We are living in a world where millions of people are hungry or undernourished, while large numbers are chronically overweight due to poor diets. While millions of people go hungry, vast quantities of food are lost every day, either spoiled during production or transport or thrown into the waste bins of households, retailers, or restaurants. Up to 10 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions are associated with food that is not consumed. Food waste is filling up the world’s landfills, where it decomposes and generates methane, a greenhouse gas that is harmful than carbon dioxide. The planet will need to support 10 billion people by 2050, placing even greater pressure on natural resources, the environment, and the climate. Even at a current level, food production often comes at an unacceptably high price, degrading or destroying natural habitats, contributing to species extinction, and costing trillions of dollars in lost and wasted resources. However, the good news is that there is plenty that can be done to adjust the situation, and put us and the planet back on the right path.

This year, the World Food Day and International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is the second to be marked during the COVID-19, which has had devastating repercussions for food security and inequality worldwide in addition to the loss of livelihoods and incomes. And here in Eritrea, the day was commemorated yesterday, Oct, 15th of 2021 at the premises of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) under the theme “Our actions are our future. Better production, Better nutrition, Better environment, and a better life”; and this year’s theme for the eradication of poverty was “Building Forward Together: Ending Persistent Poverty, Respecting all People and our Planet.”



The food we choose and the way we prepare, cook, store and dispose of it make us an active part of the way in which an agri-food system works. Everyone is a consumer, and it is time to shift old patterns so as to transform agri-food systems for the better. The market can be influenced by opting for nutritious and environmentally and socially responsible products. As poverty and hunger go hand in hand, the theme emphasis on better production from a better environment to bring better nutrition adding up to bring a better life. This will help governments to design more sustainable policies, promote improved agricultural methods and motivate greater investment in sustainable healthy diets.

During the event, a welcoming remark was given by the chair of the organizing committee Mr. Amanuel Negassi, adviser to the Minister of agriculture.



Mr. James Wakiaga

Following him, an official opening speech was given for world food day by Dr. Saeed A. Bancie FAO representative in Eritrea. In his speech Dr. Saeed stated, “at the 42nd session of the FAO Conference, which was held in June this year, members endorsed the new FAO strategic framework 2022-2031, setting out the organization’s roadmap to support the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development through the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient, sustainable agri-food systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind”. This was followed by World Food Day and international day for the eradication of poverty video. After that Mr. James Wakiaga, UNDP representative on behalf of the UN resident and Humanitarian Coordinator gave a statement. In his speech, Mr. James said “as we begin the work to Build Forward Better, the United Nations will continue to support the government and its endeavors to ensure the people of Eritrea have access to and utilize productive assets, finance, equipment, and the right technology for improving economic opportunities, and others and this will entail building a cohesive partnership to accelerate the work the UN is contributing to sustainable agriculture and nutrition inter-alia, IFAD, FAO, WFP, UNDP collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture to promote the

resilience by developing a National Resilience Strategy with livelihoods and resilience lens”.



Dr. Saeed A. Bantie

He concluded by calling everyone to work together in solidarity to create wealth and expand on food security in Eritrea to contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2063 Agenda on Africa we Want. MoA video on achievements in the agricultural sector in food and nutrition security followed the speech. During the event, certificates were given to exemplary farmers. An exhibition on food products was displayed during the event in which participants of the ceremony had the chance to taste the products.

In his address on the occasion of the event, Minister Arefaine Brhe said that with a view to increasing production and productivity, the government is assisting smallholder farmers as well as small and medium-scale commercial farmers through the introduction of high yielding varieties, pressurized irrigation technologies renewable energy, plastic tunnels or small greenhouses and mechanization to produce not only primary products but also value-added ones. (For the full text of Minister Arefaine’s speech see inbox)

This year saw the launch of the first Food Systems Summit by the UN secretary-general, aimed at drawing up a roadmap for a major shift in the way the world produces and consumes food. Spread over more than a year and across locations worldwide, the summit’s activities involve a broad range of actors in examining

the most effective channels for making our food systems stronger and more equitable. Hundreds of events and activities taking place worldwide to mark World Food Day are exploring key outcomes of the summit and discuss the way forward.

To conclude, farmers, working in small plots of land (less than 2 hectares) supply more than one-third of all the food that is needed in the world. If these food heroes are to play a pivotal role in transforming food systems they will need better access to training, finance, incentives, and marketing. To fix the fractured agri-food systems, collective action is needed, so that everyone has enough safe and nutritious food to eat, and the entire food supply chain is more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive, with decent conditions and social protection for those who work on it. For this shift to happen, everyone must play their part

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