



**OPENING REMARKS DELIVERED BY ROCCO RENALDI, SECRETARY-GENERAL,  
THE INTERNATIONAL FOOD & BEVERAGE ALLIANCE ON  
AGRICULTURE & FOOD DAY OF THE UN COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY  
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Your Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am speaking on behalf of IFBA, which represents 12 of the world's largest food and beverage manufacturers working together to help consumers achieve balanced diets and active healthy lifestyles.

IFBA member companies are equally engaged in contributing to meeting SDG #2 and SDG #3.

SDG #2 through a series of measures that range from investment in small-holder farming, through combating food waste, to fortification of products, to combat stunting and malnutrition.

SDG #3 through actions to reduce "overnutrition": reformulation, innovation, consumer information, responsible marketing, and initiatives and partnerships to promote healthy, balanced diets and lifestyles.

Time doesn't allow me to go into any depth about these initiatives. So let me instead focus on the overarching theme that I believe we should keep firmly in mind when developing policies to address the SDGs, with a view to leveraging to the maximum the contributions that the private sector can make.

A "**whole of society**" approach is enshrined in the SDGs. It is also embedded in the UN Declaration on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, the WHO GAP, the ICN2 Rome Declaration and the Decade for Action on Nutrition among others. But it isn't so clear what a whole of society approach should mean in practice. We know it is necessary, but need a common understanding of what it means to implement it, to make it a reality. How do we do that? Here are three ingredients that I think are universally applicable:

1. **Government leadership:** Government needs to provide political leadership, to set the macro-objectives and overall strategy as a function of specific national needs and priorities. Government leadership is necessary to bring all relevant players around the table, to draw on non-State actors' expertise on what the shortcomings of the food system are, to identify where the unexploited opportunities are, to identify leaders in the private sector and mobilise resources to where investment will make the biggest difference. To enable food systems to meet the nutritional needs of the population, a cross-cutting whole-of-government approach is a necessity. Nutrition outcomes simply cannot be achieved through action in one policy area.
2. **Agreement on shared operational objectives:** It must be clear to all players what they are expected to achieve and it needs to be made sure that there is buy-in for these objectives, which must be



challenging but achievable. All links of the food value chain, all parts of the food system, must be represented and each one must take on a share of responsibility, as part of a holistic national strategy. Too often we operate in silos and in isolation from each other as stakeholders.

3. **Securing accountability and follow-up:** Multi-stakeholder approaches only work if based on mechanisms that enable stakeholders to hold each other accountable, whereby progress is measured and reported on, the reasons for any lack of action are analysed, genuine obstacles are addressed collectively, unjustified lack of action is pinpointed and good progress is praised. Again, the role of government as convenor and facilitator cannot be emphasised enough.

All this needs to be done at the national level, for each national dimension will be different. We must recognise that while the SDGs provide a global framework, the challenges, opportunities, obstacles and capacities can be very different from country to country.

International institutions, business and civil society can do much to encourage national action. But furthermore, it is our responsibility as international actors to flesh out framework recommendations that can guide national action.

The private sector entities I represent here today have sought to rise to the challenge and adapt their practices to address both under- and over-nutrition. We have more to do on our own patch, as individual stakeholders, but most importantly we need to do better at joining forces across the private, public and civil society sectors. Too often we witness discussions about *whether* government should engage with the private sector; we need to urgently move onto *how* and *on what* we need to work together.

I think the best use of our time and resources as international actors committed to achieving the SDGs is to help flesh out a robust, consensus blueprint for how effective whole of society efforts for food security, nutrition and health can be designed and implemented in practice, drawing on what has been shown to work across different settings.

At the same time, we should not delay joint action while awaiting international blueprints. I'd like to conclude with a message to government representatives in the room here today: we need to have the courage to experiment with novel approaches in working together, for it is through trial and error that we learn. As private sector entities committed to achieving the SDGs we stand ready to do so and are at your disposal.

Thank you for your attention.