

# INVEST IN FOOD TRANSITION

*for healthy and sustainably produced food for everyone*

**OUR CALL TO THE NEXT CABINET: The new cabinet needs to head the transition towards a sustainable food system, through which the Netherlands will contribute to green growth, healthy food for all, and a more peaceful world with less conflict and more stability. The cabinet will work together with businesses, civil society organizations and knowledge institutions to achieve this. In 2022 the Netherlands will be the world leader in sustainable food systems.**

Many of the current crises and conflicts in the world are caused by (food) scarcity, drought, climate change, failing governance and the unequal distribution of raw materials. The recent famines in Africa are an example, and the surge of migration is also linked to these crises. One of the main causes of these problems lies in our global food system. The way we produce food at present causes a big strain on natural resources and contributes to climate change, resulting in big biodiversity losses, deforestation, and scarcity of land, water and raw materials. Often in contexts characterized by a lack of good governance and legitimate authorities often. More and more companies are feeling how these developments hamper their growth opportunities and threaten their continuity. What's more, food scarcity leads to conflicts and drives people in poor regions away from their homes. Overconsumption and obesity are a growing problem too, while at the same time 800 million people face hunger and extreme poverty. It's high time for a new chapter in our global food system.

More and more parties are recognizing the need for a societal shake-up, in the direction of more sustainability. The Dutch Sustainable Government Agreement, signed by more than 300 organizations and companies, leaves no room for doubt. And the Netherlands is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations and the targets set in the Paris climate agreement. Guaranteeing sustainable production and consumption patterns and food security for all are crucial if we are to achieve these goals.

## **Food transition means gains**

Investing in effective food policies and programs will lead to gains in several areas. It is key to sustainable, climate-proof food systems, to worldwide food security, and to jobs and healthy people. Investing in sustainable and inclusive food systems will offer unique opportunities for strengthening and utilizing the innovation potential of businesses and knowledge institutions in the Netherlands and in developing countries.

We call on the negotiators of the new cabinet to include food transition in the new coalition agreement. The ambition is to create a sustainable food system that contributes to achieving the SDGs and climate objectives. We urge the new cabinet to invest in this, together with businesses, consumers, civil society organizations, farmers and the academic world.

The new agenda is based on six principles:

1. **Entrepreneurship.** Strengthen value chains that are geared towards sustainability, inclusivity, fair trade and human rights by focusing trade and investment policy on innovative entrepreneurship and the creation of shared value.
2. **Climate and Environment.** Invest in production methods that do no harm to the environment, ecosystems or biodiversity, that emit less greenhouse gases, and that prevent water pollution and land degradation.
3. **Less hunger.** Strengthen the position of entrepreneurial farmers in value chains and the way they work with food-producing small and medium enterprises in developing countries.
4. **Health.** Develop products and services that contribute to a balanced, healthy and nutritious diet for everyone, and reduce malnutrition.
5. **Less waste.** Use innovations in the circular agro-food economy and agro-logistics to reduce food waste.
6. **Partnership.** Encourage partnerships in which government, farmers, businesses, civil society organizations and knowledge institutes work together as equals.

The Netherlands is well equipped to take on a pioneering role in the transition to a sustainable global food system. Food and food security have been a major policy spearhead for the last eight years. We are a leading player in the international arena and have achieved successes. More and more Dutch companies are basing their value chains on sustainability criteria. Dutch development activities have reached millions of small-scale farmers, leading to increased production and market access. Our awareness of, and interest in sustainable, healthy food has increased and we have devised innovative solutions to reduce food losses, close cycles and to adapt to and mitigate climate change.

### **Now is the time to act**

As the issues concerning climate change and stability climb higher up the agenda, we need to give extra impetus to transitioning our food system. This will require broad societal change and political leadership. The new cabinet needs to make big investments in the food transition agenda. These will result in multiple gains: reduced emissions, less waste, less hunger, shorter production chains and healthier choices. Opportunities will open up for companies, civil society and knowledge institutes in the Netherlands and developing countries. People will become more resilient to the effects of climate change and sustainable economic development will be enhanced.

Everyone in this world has a right to healthy, sustainable and sufficient food that has been produced fairly and transparently. With our joint expertise, knowledge and entrepreneurship we can make a contribution to healthy food for everyone within the limits of the planet. We are ready to make the transition to a truly sustainable global food system possible and urge the new cabinet to take action with us!