

## **Transcript – speech PgH: Federal Minister Klöckner**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to our “Policies against Hunger” conference, which was established 20 years ago. This conference has always been centred on one subject: the human right to adequate food. With our conference series, we want to draw increased attention to the issues of hunger and malnutrition in the international debate on food security. Every year, we choose a different focus area.

This year, it is school food and nutrition. Why this topic? Because we want to put the children of the world in the spotlight. And because pre-schools and schools are the places where most children can be reached in many countries. They are therefore the key points of departure to permanently improve the food situation of preschool and school children and to curb hunger and malnutrition. There is a clear need for action.

In countries such as Germany, excess weight and overeating are the main problems. We therefore launched the National Action Plan “IN FORM – German national initiative to promote healthy diets and physical activity” already in 2008. It also covers food and nutrition in pre-schools and schools. Besides health-promoting aspects, particular attention is given to environmental and climate stewardship factors. Because a healthy diet and a sustainable lifestyle are closely interlinked.

At the same time, many parts of our world are dealing with extreme problems. Around the globe, about 74 million children are going to bed hungry. More than 144 million children have stunted growth because they are chronically undernourished. And 47 million children are suffering from acute malnutrition, which impacts their entire development. The pandemic has further exacerbated these issues in many regions of the world. Especially because for many children, school meals are often their only meal for the day. Due to the pandemic, around 370 million children no longer have access to school meals.

But these figures show: If we take the right to adequate food seriously, in particular with a view to children and to our future, we need to jointly promote one thing also at international level: regular school feeding.

That is why it is a good thing that over the past months the World Food Programme of the United Nations has worked towards establishing a Coalition for School Feeding. I wish to thank Executive Director David Beasley most warmly for this. This Coalition ties in well with the UN Food Systems Summit, which will take place in September. Because it is basically aimed at three aspects: Firstly, reintroducing school meal programmes that were stopped or have been restricted due to the pandemic. Secondly, increasing the scope of school feeding programmes, particularly in lower-income countries. And thirdly, generally improving the quality of school feeding programmes worldwide.

Three aspects that are to primarily ensure that many millions of children regain access to school meals. And they are core priorities we, too, are committed to. In 2019, we therefore announced the establishment of a global action network for the promotion of healthy, sustainable school food and nutrition. For experts from national governments. We are delighted that this initiative will now be integrated into the new Coalition for School Feeding. We want to establish a network between countries and enable the exchange of experiences. Because these objectives will be best achieved if we pool our activities at international level. The Coalition for School Feeding is a particularly suitable tool to this end. Because stakeholders from international organisations, national governments, science and civil society will take part in it.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very proud that we – Germany – will contribute to this initiative. I was particularly delighted about the invitation to become a member of the High-Level Steering Committee. I will happily accept this invitation and am already looking forward to our cooperation!

Our conference wants to make an active contribution to the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition. Because we want to succeed in providing more children with school meals. And we want to improve the quality of this food. I would therefore be very pleased if we used this conference to make further progress on this issue. Also with a view to the UN Food Systems Summit in September, which is to incorporate the results of the next three days.

I would like to wish all those taking part in the conference fruitful discussions, every success, and all the best. Thank you!