



The UAE Calls for Innovative Ideas in Finding Solutions to Global Food Security Challenges

UAE Minister for State for Food Security reveals the country's plans to address global food security challenges through its latest international initiative, the "FoodTech Challenge"

Rome, Italy / Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 16 October 2019. On the occasion of World Food Day, marked at the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome, Her Excellency Mariam bint Mohammed Saeed Hareb Almheiri, UAE Minister for State for Food Security, spoke to the significance of global food security challenges and their impact on future generations.

Appealing to university students, early-stage start-ups and tech incubators in advanced urban farming markets from around the world, the Minister revealed plans by the UAE government to foster international collaboration to find innovative solutions across the food value chain through an open call-for-submissions to the "FoodTech Challenge."

Open to applicants from around the world, the FoodTech Challenge seeks commercially viable solutions that promote sustainable food practices and stimulate domestic food production in the UAE. At the end of the competition, four teams will be awarded against a \$1 million prize pool defined by in-kind support totaling \$150k via Catalyst, a Masdar-BP accelerator, and a \$100k cash prize.

Reinforcing the UAE's commitment to enhancing global food security, the FoodTech Challenge launched on September 23rd in support of the country's aim to encourage the adoption of urban farming solutions at the national, community, and household levels. Launched by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the FoodTech Challenge is an initiative of the UAE Office of State for Food Security in partnership with Tamkeen, an Abu Dhabi-based company mandated to deliver projects to meet the UAE's vision of knowledge-based development.

Placing emphasis on the importance of empowering youth and attracting their interest in the food security sector, the Minister underlined the UAE's commitment to providing opportunities for young people to push the boundaries of innovation in food production by creating sustainable farming systems that can be adopted by future generations.

Speaking on World Food Day, H.E. Mariam bint Mohammed Saeed Hareb Almheiri, UAE Minister of State for Food Security, said: "Despite challenges related to scarcity of water resources and arable land, we have begun to see agtech solutions gain traction in the UAE. The FoodTech Challenge works towards the goal of attracting bright minds and encouraging innovators from around the world to take part in shaping the future of sustainable food systems. We believe that by setting this contest in motion, and delivering results through agtech solutions, we can create a replicable model for the world."

Her Excellency continued by stating that the challenge promotes the advancement of research and development initiatives focused on finding alternative technologies, growing methods, and substitute

crops to address global food security challenges associated with rising population numbers, an increasing food gap, malnutrition, food waste, and changing environmental factors.

Applications for the FoodTech Challenge will remain open until February 2020, when submissions will be shortlisted and the top 10 teams will present their business cases at an awards ceremony held at New York University Abu Dhabi in April 2020. A panel of VIP judges including agtech industry experts will select four winners across two categories: household farming and community farming.

Entrants can submit their applications via www.foodtechchallenge.com.

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About Tamkeen

Tamkeen is an Abu Dhabi based company mandated to deliver projects to meet the UAE's vision of knowledge-based development. Tamkeen works with a variety of local and international institutions to enrich the UAE's social, cultural and educational landscape.