

# VBT SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY: Changing perceptions and expectations lead to a fresh approach



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The Belgian cooperatives in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector plan to carry on working on sustainable development as we move forward. Changing perceptions and social expectations are stimulating us to adopt a fresh approach in order to ensure that we continue to conduct our business on a sustainable basis. At FruitLogistica in Berlin in early February 2019, we will be unveiling exactly what shape our new sustainability strategy will take. The present document gives an early preview of the broad brushstrokes of the new strategy.

## Sustainable Development Goals – a universal reference framework

The United Nations' seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form an international reference framework for the major social challenges in the period up to 2030. They are subdivided into five main topics:



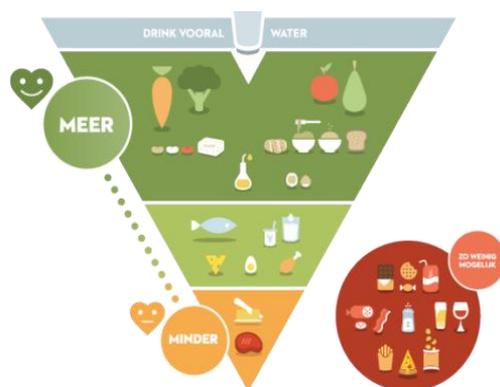
people, planet, profit, peace and partnership. Rita Demaré, VBT President: *“The cooperatives in the fruit and vegetable sector have already been focusing for years on the sustainability topics of people, planet and profit. Our new strategy sees us committing to work around the seventeen sustainable development goals. All these goals will be assessed and integrated. Communications will be issued on a regular basis from the point of view of the producers about the goals and challenges as they relate to our sector.”*

## The cooperative identity – delivering added social value

There is a clear link between sustainability and operating on a cooperative basis. Rita Demaré: *“The cooperative approach has put the VBT members into a strong economic position in the market, enabling them to achieve communal results in terms of sustainability and added social value. VBT regards the cooperative structure of the organisation as a huge asset when it comes to sustainability. The new strategy will concentrate more on this **cooperative identity**, and we will also be seeking to increase consumer involvement.”*



## Fresh fruit and vegetables – a prominent role in a sustainable diet



Whether you are big or small, young or old, fresh fruit and vegetables are good for everyone. They supply the nutrients and fibre which are essential for a healthy lifestyle. Fruit and vegetables have a **prominent role to play in a sustainable diet**. This is also expressed in the new nutrition triangle from the Flemish Institute for Healthy Living. Fruit and vegetables are at the apex of the triangle, and are always the products we need to eat more of. The cooperatives in the fruit and vegetable sector offer a wide and varied range of fresh products. Fruit and vegetables are ‘by their very nature’ sustainable products, and this another point that we will be focusing on in the new sustainability strategy.

The following marketing cooperatives pledge to continue to collectively support sustainable development:



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