The Sheikh Zayed International Media and Knowledge Centre (SZC) was established with a generous donation from the United Arab Emirates to embody the enlightened vision of the country’s founder the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan on the role of agriculture in the service of culture and human progress.

Over the past decades, the UAE and FAO have established a unique partnership guided by the shared goal of eliminating hunger and malnutrition around the world.

The SZC is named after the country’s founder and late President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan, who helped turn large tracts of the desert green by investing in agriculture, and in particular in date palm production. Sheikh Zayed’s wife, the Mother of the Nation, Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak Al Ketbi, has since 2010 served as an extraordinary FAO Goodwill Ambassador, helping mobilize support for international efforts to eliminate hunger.

The SZC, which features a state of the art conference hall for live television transmissions, post production suites and e-learning facilities, is testament to the commitment of the UAE to create conditions for worldwide sharing of knowledge on agriculture and rural development that are critical for future generations.

The SZC has augmented FAO’s ability not only to share its expertise and knowledge on agriculture and rural development issues on a global level, it has also strengthened the Organization’s outreach to government institutions, centres of excellence, universities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) around the world. FAO is now equipped with interactive television transmission capacities, video conferencing, video streaming and digital media distribution services.

Communication lies at the core of FAO’s mandate and the addition of the SZC has boosted its capacity to work in a coordinated manner with its extensive network of decentralized offices.

“FAO is above all a knowledge organization and the storehouse of knowledge we have is the most valuable resource we have to offer. The Sheikh Zayed Centre will allow us to reach out and make knowledge available faster and more directly to help the world’s poor and hungry. We already have a very strong presence on the ground in all world regions, through our regional-sub regional and local offices and staff. This centre will add value to that network, better connect our Rome headquarters with the field.”

FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva on the occasion of the inauguration of the SZC.
The centre allows:

- Remote broadcasters to interview FAO leadership or technical experts on the latest happenings in the field or headquarters (via talk-back or duplex interviews);
- News conferences or meetings with remote, live participation of journalists/experts;
- Special, one-off advocacy events, such as the annual World Food Day.

The SZC is used by FAO to collaborate with broadcast outlets and as appropriate for joint events and programmes with the Rome-based sister UN agencies: the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Program (WFP).

Since its establishment in April 2012, over 100 high-profile events, meetings and major news conferences have taken place in the SZC, involving heads of state, ministers, dignitaries and high profile personalities, such as Nobel laureates and international media representatives. Most of these events were webcast live or via the FAO Intranet to ensure maximum participation of external audience.

Starting in early 2015, the SZC has been the venue of a major, scientific television programme focusing on environmental issues, broadcast by Italy’s national broadcaster RAI. The six part series, entitled: “Scala Mercalli”, addresses issues such as climate change, soils, energy and the planet’s
environmental sustainability, themes that are closely related to FAO’s work. The series is being aired during prime time every weekend.

Earlier, during the thirty-eighth session of the FAO Conference in June 2013, a series of 60 to 90 minute daily television programmes were broadcast from the SZC. Panellists drawn from member states, civil society, academia, media, FAO and other United Nations Organizations took part in interactive debates on key issues related to food security and agriculture. These programmes were transmitted via live streaming, and feedback/interventions were channelled through social media, using a specific Twitter #hashtag for immediate feedback.

In the run-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) on 19-21 November 2014 – an event aimed at stimulating debate concerning key nutrition issues and establishing a flexible policy framework, three Dialogues entitled “Communicating to Inspire Change: Dialogues on Nutrition,” were held in the SZC and run via webcast live at: www.fao.org/webcast.

These Dialogues with the BRICS, US and G77 and China were organized prior to the conference, allowing member states and media representatives to participate via Skype connection. The Washington Post, The Guardian, Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA), Thomson Reuters, Hindustan Times, South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), Xinhua news agency, ITAR-TASS news agency, Radio Vatican, EFE news agency were just some of the contributors to the discussions attended by Heads of States, Ministers, Member state representatives, academia and the media.

Additionally, the SZC has been utilised frequently for pre-recorded and live TV and Radio broadcasts. With the SZC on FAO premises, experts have been able to deliver live interviews to prominent global networks, most recently with Al Jazeera English; Al Jazeera Arabic; France 24; Russia Today; BBC World Service Radio; and Voice of America.

As FAO and the Government of the United Arab Emirates look ahead to ensure that the SZC continues to be a key reference point and communication tool, concerted efforts are underway to heighten the use of this centre of excellence to reach out to the world, keeping alive the wise vision of the late ruler of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.
COMPLETED EVENTS

2015-2016

- Presentation on TV Programme by RAI 3
- Launch of The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets (SOCO) 2015-2016
- FAO Council Side Event — Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) Follow-up
- World Farmers’ Organization (WFO)-FAO Second Conference
- Seminar on Biodiversity for Soils
- Town Hall meeting — Land and Water Days 2015
- Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Side Event: Sustainable soil management
- Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance (LEAP) Partnership stakeholder meeting
- Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Side Event: Supporting the Role of Fish in Food Security and Nutrition
- Launch of The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) 2015
- Committee on World Food Security (CFS) 42
- Launch of the Family Farming Knowledge Platform
- FAO Conference — Side Event on Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture
- FAO Conference — Side Event on Asia and the Pacific Regional Rice Initiative
- FAO Conference — Side Event on Soils with the Goodwill Ambassadors
- FAO Conference — Side Event on Family Farming and Rural Territorial Development in FAORLC
- FAO Conference — Side Event hosted by Japan: African Agricultural Development through the Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD) Process
- FAO Conference — Side Event on Near East and North Africa’s Water Scarcity
- FAO Conference — Side Event on Building Resilience in Africa’s Dry lands
- Press Conference by President Maduro
- Launch of The State of Food Insecurity (SOFI) 2015
- Presentation by the Vice President of the Dominican Republic to the Permanent Representation and FAO staff on the role of women in family farming
- FAO/European Union (EU) Seminar on Agriculture and Climate change
- Press Conference organized by the Italian Permanent Representation on “Fondazione la Fabbrica della Pace”
- Workshop for FAO policy practitioners: Scaling up FAO’s role and work in country policy support.
- Launch of Pastoralist Knowledge Hub
- Second Annual Meeting of the Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance Partnership and Developing reference methods and databases
- Presentation on TV Programme by RAI 3, Scala Mercalli
- Visit with the RAI (Radio Television Italiana)
- Press Conference of Regione Lazio and the Regional Agency for Development and Innovation of Lazio Agriculture (ARSIAL)

2014

- Presentation on TV Programme by RAI 3, Scala Mercalli
- FAO Investment Center (TCI) Investment Days Plenary
- Council Side Event: World Soil Day
- Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) / World Food Summit (WFS) Awards Ceremony
- Second International Conference on Nutrition (Press)
- Press Conference by the Director-General of FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO)
- FAO-Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)-International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Expert Meeting on Emerging Activities to Combat Climate Change
- Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) Dialogues on Nutrition
- Global Dialogue Side Event on EU-Common Agriculture Policy and Family Farming
- Global Dialogue Side Event by the Permanent Representation of Argentina on Family Farming
- BRICS Dialogue on Nutrition
- Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Side Event on Family farming interventions to close the gender gap
- Launch of The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) 2014
- World Food Day (WFD) meetings
- Social Protection in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Annual Launch 2014: Right to Food and Nutrition Watch
- Commodity Markets
- Press Conference of Ministerial Meeting
- “South Africa — A good Story to Tell”
- International Symposium on Agro ecology for Food Security and Nutrition
- Press Conference on the launch of The State of Food Insecurity (SOFI) with the Director-General, World Food Programme (WFP) and The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- Biodiversity Briefing
- 50th Anniversary - FAO Investment Centre Retreat
- South African Embassy Visit
- Press Conference of the Launch Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2014-2023
- Interactive Session with Professor Yunus Nobel Laureate
- Media event inaugurating the upcoming Italian Presidency on the European Union
- Committee on Forestry — The three rainforest basins
- FAO Council — Side event hosted by Morocco
- Decent employment in Fisheries and Aquaculture Contact Person
- UN EXPO 2015 Milan
- Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture
- The Global Blue Growth
- FAO/ROME Expo 2015 Launch
- Joint Press Conference with DG and Chair Parson of North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC)
- Launch Plan and Programme: IPC Global Strategic Programme 2014-2016
- Numerous Visits by International and Italian Schools