



13 June 2013

*Commemorative ceremony in honor of Senator, Nobel Prize Laureate
and FAO Goodwill Ambassador Rita Levi-Montalcini*

Her Excellency Mrs Josefa Idem, Minister for Equal Opportunities, Sports and Youth,
Her Excellency Senator Anna Finocchiaro,
Maestro Uto Ughi,
His Excellency Ambassador Gianni Ghisi, Permanent Representative of Italy to FAO, FAO
Goodwill Ambassadors present today,
Excellencies, Distinguished guests,

È un privilegio per me accogliervi oggi presso la Sede della FAO, per rendere omaggio alla straordinaria personalità civile, umana e istituzionale di Rita Levi-Montalcini.

Senator and Nobel Prize Laureate Rita Levi-Montalcini's journey represents a paragon of excellence in all fields: research, science, the transmission of knowledge to younger generations, and social engagement.

I would like to remember her, in particular, as the first FAO Goodwill Ambassador, honoring us by accepting this title in 1999.

Over many years, our Goodwill Ambassador tirelessly supported the fight against hunger and malnutrition, objectives which are very closely related to those of the Foundation bearing her name.

Her life was one of engagement also in support of women, in particular African women, for their emancipation, self-determination and dignity.



She taught us that the challenge of education is global and strategic, that the destiny and stability of the world are determined by the development-education nexus.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to close my intervention with Rita Levi-Montalcini's own words. She said, and I open quote:

"I have dedicated my life to science and social endeavors. Life has value if we do not concentrate attention on ourselves only, but mostly on the world around us. Helping my neighbor is for me an objective that has priority over everything else. This has always guided my existence. Rare are those who use their intellect, few are those who use their hearts, and unique are those who use both."

True to these words, she has always put her experience and knowledge at the service of the least privileged in the fight against oppression, misery and extreme poverty.

Thank you.