



25 September 2013

Special Event of the President of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Madam Co-Chair,

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

As we plan the way forward for the next development goals, allow me to share some of the lessons we have learned in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), focusing on MDG 1 to halve the proportion of hungry people. I would like to highlight three points. If MDG 1 is not achieved, it will be even more difficult to achieve any of the others.

First: ending hunger and extreme poverty, despite being a bold goal, is not only a possibility. It is an obligation, a duty of the state, a responsibility of every citizen.

According to FAO's latest figures, almost 40 countries have already met the MDG hunger target. 80 others are on track. They show not only the way it can be done, but also point the way we can do it.

Political will and partnerships have proven to be key. Countries have achieved better results when people agree to take decisive action, especially the private sector and civil society.

Of course, Governments need to be at the helm of this process, but ending hunger and extreme poverty requires the support of an entire society. That is lesson one.

The **second** lesson we have learned is that the rural poor are not only part of the problem, but also a major part of the solution to hunger.

Over 70 percent of the world's food insecure live in rural areas. But these same people already produce most of the food consumed in developing countries.



Sometimes, all that they need is a small push forward or a buffer on which to fall back on during hard times. That is why linking social protection with productive incentives is so important for the poor. This combination brings about additional benefits and can help spur local economic growth also.

Third, we need to make our food systems more efficient, sustainable, and fair. We need to shift to more inclusive and sustainable approaches in both production and consumption sides. And to do this, we need to demonstrate how sustainability benefits producers and consumers. So, achieving very concrete results is essential.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Time has come for one final, concentrated and coordinated push to meet the MDGs. And we cannot stop there. We need to carry that momentum forward, working to reach even bolder goals, as laid out by the UN Secretary General in the Zero Hunger Challenge.

If we open our minds to new ideas, new partners, new ways of acting, we can and will eradicate poverty and hunger in our lifetimes. Thank you for your attention.