



15 October 2012

SIGNING CEREMONY OF THE PROJECT

“ESTABLISHING A HUNGER-FREE INITIATIVE FOR WEST AFRICA”

Your Excellency, Minister of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection of the
Federal Republic of Germany, Mrs Ilse Aigner,

Your Excellency, President of the Commission of ECOWAS, Mr Kadré
Ouedraogo,

Your Excellency, Commissioner in charge of Agriculture, Environment and
Water Resources, Dr. Lapodini Atouga,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The latest report on the State of Food Insecurity in the World, released last week,
shows that, while global hunger has declined, food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa
has been on the rise for the past 20 years.

In 1990, there were 170 million undernourished; today, there are 234 million.

We need to reverse this situation. But it's not only about more funds, it's about
working together and focusing better our efforts in areas where we can really make
a difference.



And it's about getting everyone onboard so we can reach the goal of ending hunger. It's about renewing commitment and improving governance with the participation of different actors, mainly governments, congressmen and congresswomen, civil society and private sector.

The project we are signing today is one more step in this direction.

In the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, we are launching today the Hunger-free initiative for West Africa.

Let me express my great appreciation to ECOWAS and the German Government for joining efforts with FAO to make this possible.

I want to thank the German Government for contributing 2 million Euros to this project.

Minister Aigner might recall, the discussion around this project started in a conversation we had shortly after I was elected Director-General. We agreed to increase our efforts in Africa, mobilizing all stakeholders to guarantee the right to food and adequate nutrition to all. This project is a result of this.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In FAO, we are integrating this project as part of the new cross-cutting strategic objectives that we are proposing to focus its work on.



We are also making an effort to work more and better with other partners, contributing to nationally and regionally efforts to promote food and nutrition security.

We need more cooperation among governments and the active involvement of political leaders, civil society, media, academia, development partners, and others, throughout the region.

When we stand together, we can make things happen. We saw this during a similar initiative in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The project agreement we are signing today is just the start. And it has the potential of becoming a model for other regions in Africa and Asia.

Thank you.