



9 October 2012

State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI)

Press Conference Speaking Points

Thank all of you for presence. Following the presentation made by Mr Jomo Sundaram, I want to highlight four points today.

First, The numbers revealed show that we have made good progress in the reduction of the hungry. Between, 1990-1992 and 2010-2012:

The **number** of hungry people in developing countries fell from 980 million to 852 million.

And the **proportion** of the hungry in the developing world fell from 23.2 percent to 14.9 percent.

However, we need to recognize that these numbers are still too high: one in eight people are hungry in a world of plenty, that already has enough food to feed all.



This is unacceptable. For us at FAO and at the Rome-based agencies, the only acceptable number for hunger is zero. We will pursue this goal.

Second, we have lost speed in recent years. In fact, the projections show that the **number** of hungry people **stopped** falling in the period 2007-2009.

Several factors help explain this, most importantly, the economic slowdown which means less jobs and lower incomes; the higher level of food prices and food price volatility. Food price volatility, in particular, affect the poorest consumers and producers.

Third, let me point out that we have seen very different trends among the different regions.

We are losing the battle in Africa. In Sub-Saharan Africa we have today around 234 million hungry people. In the early nineties they were 170 million. That is an increase of 64 million.

Hunger has also gone up in the Near East and North Africa, mainly due to the conflicts in the region, clearly showing the link between conflict, food insecurity and hunger. They went up from 22 million to 41 million.

On the other hand, Asia and the Pacific are on target to reach the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of hungry



people. And the World Food Summit target of halving the absolute number of hungry people.

It has reduced the proportion of the hungry from 24.7 percent in the early Nineties to 14 percent. **And** the total number of hungry from 723 million to 528 million.

However, I also want to highlight that, around the world, we have success stories of countries that have made significant progress in the fight against hunger. Here are a few examples:

In Asia, Vietnam reduced the total number of hungry by almost 80 percent and Thailand by 75 percent between 1990-1992 and today.

In Africa, Ghana has managed to reduce the total number of hungry in 87 percent; Mali had reduced the total hungry in 44 percent before the situation worsened; and Cameroon has reduced the total hungry by 35 percent.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, Peru has reduced the total number of hungry in 54%, Nicaragua in 49 percent and Brazil in 40 percent.

My **fourth** and final message is that we still can achieve the Millennium Development Goal of halving hunger. But that would still leave around 500 million undernourished people in the world. As I said before, that is unacceptable



But as the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon pointed out at the Rio+20 conference, we need to look beyond the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of hungry people in the world. We need to look towards the **total** eradication of hunger, answering the call made by UN Secretary-General when he launched his “Zero Hunger Challenge” at Rio+20.

Bold goals are needed so that society as a whole embraces this cause, backing and pushing governments to transform political will into action at the scale needed to eradicate hunger.

We cannot settle for less than the total eradication of hunger and we are working towards this goal. Thank you.