



16 Juin 2013

38th Session of the FAO Conference Rome

Special Event: "Recognizing outstanding progress in fighting hunger"

Opening Statement

Dear Presidents, Prime Ministers, Vice-Presidents, Ministers, Ambassadors, Ladies and Gentlemen, friends,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to this ceremony.

In 1996, the leaders of 180 nations gathered in this very same room for the World Food Summit.

They pledged to eradicate hunger and agreed on a global target of halving the absolute number of hungry people by half, between 1990 and 2015.

Four years later in 2000, the international community met at the United Nations General Assembly in New York and agreed to eight Millennium Development Goals.

The first MDG aims at eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and its hunger target was to halve the proportion of undernourished people.

By the end of 2012, three years before the deadline, 38 countries had already reached the MDG number one hunger target.

Of these, 18 countries have also met the World Food Summit Goal, an even harder goal to reach.

Today we have come together to celebrate the achievements of these 38 countries.



For achievement of the World Food Summit goal to halve the absolute number of hungry people, we recognize 18 countries:

Three of them from Africa: Djibouti, Ghana, Sao Tome and Principe;

Three of them, from Asia and the Pacific: Samoa, Thailand, and Viet Nam;

Five of them, from Europe and Central Asia: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan.

Six from Latin America and the Caribbean: Cuba, Guyana, Nicaragua, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Venezuela; and,

One from the Near East: Kuwait.

For achievement of the MDG-one hunger target to halve the proportion of hungry people, we recognize:

From Africa: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria and Togo;

From Asia and the Pacific: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, and the Maldives;

From Latin America and the Caribbean: Brazil, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Panama, and Uruguay;

And from the Near East: Jordan.

To each and every one of you, I want to say that you are proof that when societies decide to put an end to hunger, and when there is political commitment from governments, we can transform that will into concrete action and concrete results.

Thank you for showing us that this is possible.

Before we proceed to the distribution of diplomas, let me mention that another eight countries are on track to meet the target of MDG-one by 2015. They are:

The Bahamas, Chad, China, Ethiopia, Gabon, Rwanda, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

It is also important to recall that, in 1990, 15 developing countries already had a prevalence of undernourishment below 5 percent and are not among those being recognized today. Still, they deserve mention:

Argentina, Barbados, Dominica, Brunei Darussalam, Egypt, Iran, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates.

I also want to acknowledge the strong regional commitments that are supporting and stimulating national efforts to end hunger.



In Africa, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Plan, the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund and the high-level meeting the African Union is co-chairing with FAO, IFAD and the WFP, with the support of the Lula Institute, on June 30 and July 1st are good examples of such commitment.

The Asia-Pacific region has just launched its Zero Hunger Challenge, responding to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's call.

Through the Iniciativa América Latina y Caribe Sin Hambre, Latin America and the Caribbean set the target to eradicate hunger from the region by 2025.

In the Near East and North Africa, the Water Scarcity Initiative is combating one of their main barriers to food security.

Let me also recall the participation of the international donor community in these efforts to eradicate hunger and promote food security.

FAO is proud to work with all our Member Nations, developed and developing countries, to reach our common vision of a hunger-free and sustainable world.

Dear friends,

I just wish to express gratitude for the attendance of all of you and recall two small but very important things. All the progress we have achieved is only half the road to be travelled. We The other half of the road is still ahead and we need to maintain and increase our efforts to eradicate hunger.

I believe that we all agree that with there is no acceptable number of hungry people other than zero.

The other thing I want to recall is that there are 928 days left to the Millennium Development Goals deadline. We still have a lot to do and I want to ask all the countries present here today and that have managed to achieve the goal of halving hunger to share their experience with those who are still on the way.

This way we can work together so that in 2015 we can celebrate further successes towards our goal of eradicating hunger.

Thank you all for your presence.