



***6 September 2012***

***Inauguration of IPS Offices at FAO Headquarters***

***Remarks by José Graziano da Silva, FAO Director-General***

**Mr. Mario Lubetkin,**

**Ms Rita Mannella, representing the Italian Government,**

**Colleagues and friends,**

It's a pleasure to welcome Mario and IPS to FAO Headquarters. This follows similar agreements that IPS has with the UN in New York and Geneva, among other places. This is also part of FAO's open door policy that we have implemented this year.

We are bringing into FAO different views, different partners that make a contribution not only to improve the global food security debate and governance but can also help the assistance provided to the countries. These partners include the private sector, cooperatives, non-governmental and civil society organizations, and academic institutions.



IPS is among them. It is a non-profit, international, non-governmental communication organization that enjoys general NGO consultative status with ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council). It also began as a cooperative of journalists and maintains that spirit.

As I have said before, strengthening partnerships is essential to fulfill FAO's mission of eradicating hunger and promoting sustainable food security and agricultural development. This is a task that is too big for one single agency or country.

Partnership means working together with those that share our vision and goals and the paths that we need to follow to reach them. It does not mean that we need to think or say the same thing all the time.

On the contrary. If we recall the process related to the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of the Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests, it was precisely the active participation of governments, the private sector and civil society, expressing different opinions in a constructive manner, that allowed for the successful approval and endorsement by the Committee of World Food Security of a consensus text on such a complicated and important issue. We are welcoming IPS in this same spirit. We share a common vision and goals and each have different contributions to make.



The widespread support that IPS receives from Governments, including from our host the Italian Government represented here by Claudio Miscia, and from international institutions attest to this.

IPS' contribution to economic and social development and cooperation is the provision of free communication and a professional flow of independent information.

We need to speak and act freely, openly and constructively to advance towards the eradication of hunger and the promotion of a more sustainable world. This editorial independence is crucial and is clearly expressed and guaranteed in the Memorandum of Understanding that we just signed.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The signing of this Memorandum of Understanding marks a new step in the already existing partnership between FAO and IPS that exists at Headquarters and around the world, including in Latin America and the Caribbean when I was Regional Representative.

There are many possibilities that can and are already being explored by IPS and FAO's Office of External Communication and Partnerships that will help inform and further engage the general public, the international community and decision-makers in promoting food security and agricultural development.

I look forward to this new chapter of the cooperation and, once again, welcome IPS.

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