

**Video message given by the
President of the Republic of Italy, Sergio Mattarella,
Marking the 75th Anniversary of the Food and
Agricultural Organization of the United Nations**

Director-General and Permanent Representatives,

Today we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. Italy proudly hosts the Organization's headquarters and serves as the overall hub for the United Nations' food and agricultural activity, building upon the history of its predecessor, the International Institute of Agriculture.

We above all also celebrate today the goal of eradicating malnutrition and hunger as well as the poverty which provokes them.

We also commit ourselves to fully realising the affirmation that among our fundamental human rights is the right to food.

Over the years, agricultural productivity, food systems, distribution chains and nutritional education programs have allowed us to take great steps forward.

Nevertheless, we still think of the millions of men, women and children who still struggle to get access to basic necessities in too many areas of the world, suffer from hunger or risk falling into food insecurity, a condition which conflict, climate change, the resulting forced migrations and now the global pandemic have further exacerbated.

In 2020 alone, approximately 100 million more people are living below the poverty line.

This is a moment of decisive choices for the entire planet. It is a moment for making a serious global commitment based on recognising the value of agriculture, the responsible use of natural resources and safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystems. It is a moment for strengthening and promoting sustainable agricultural and food systems in every community in order to assure healthy and adequate food supplies.

The theme today is “*Grow, nourish, sustain. Together. Our Actions are our future.*”

This theme calls on us to fight to protect lives in every corner of the planet and to confront and overcome persistent inequalities.

There is only one path for doing this and that is working together.

There is a growing awareness that solid international cooperation is needed in order to build sustainable food systems while drawing on the contributions of public and private actors as well as individuals and communities.

The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the World Food Programme has been a clear and welcome event in this regard.

We are all called upon to continually and decisively adopt an approach that will contribute to putting into action the 2030 Agenda.

I particularly welcome the commitment by FAO and its Director-General, Qu Dongyu to work with Italy and many other countries in forging a “food coalition” aimed at limiting the effects of COVID-19 on food systems.

An adequate and balanced diet should be within the reach of all. Food, with its ancient and inextricable link with cultures, traditions and the land, should be seen as a noble cause. We must safeguard it by preventing food waste, which is a negative

trend that unfortunately continues to characterise the wealthiest regions of the planet.

We look forward to the international community rediscovering a profound sense of the precious bounty the earth offers us while recognising our responsibility to share and safeguard it for future generations.