

Social protection and agriculture

breaking the cycle of rural poverty



16 October 2015
World Food Day

World Food Day Ceremony

Friday, 16 October 2015 - Expo Milano Auditorium, 11.45 – 12.40

Remarks at opening ceremony for World Food Day at Milan Expo

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Milan (Italy), 16 October 2015

I am deeply honoured to join you as we mark World Food Day to end hunger.

The United Nations is deeply grateful to the Government of Italy for its commitment and support.

I was especially pleased and privileged yesterday to be part of the very meaningful 60th anniversary celebrations of Italy's membership in the United Nations. I sincerely appreciate the many top Italian officials and lawmakers who marked this milestone.

I also thank the citizens of Milan and the organizers of Expo Milan 2015 for choosing the inspiring theme "Feeding the Planet, Energy for All (Life)."

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen.

Three weeks ago, world leaders adopted a new plan to achieve sustainable development over the next 15 years aiming 2030.

Agenda 2030 is ambitious and achievable. It is integrated and universal. It recognizes that poverty and hunger have complex and interconnected root causes.

We made our promise. Now it is time for action.

We will never realize our vision for sustainable development without rapid progress toward ending hunger and undernutrition. And to do that, we have to empower women, give young people opportunities and support smallholder farmers.

Social protection – our theme for this Day – reaches the most vulnerable people. It prevents people from falling into extreme poverty and hardship. And it also protects household food and nutrition security.

To end hunger for all people forever, we have to recognize the indivisibility of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the World Leaders on September 25th. And we have to work across all the sectors of all life to deliver on the totality of the 2030 Development Agenda.

People everywhere know that hunger cripples communities and compromises our future.

The SDGs reflect this awareness.

They underline the profound impact of how we chose to grow, process, distribute and consume our food.

I have seen it in our pavillion so many waste and losses of our food and resources, valuable resources. I hope I suggest you, you all go and see. You will be surprised and ashamed. I think we are all ashamed to have all this waste and losses.

People, the our planet Earth and our future are all affected.

To achieve a life of dignity for all, we must end hunger and undernutrition.

To achieve zero hunger for all, we must pursue a broad agenda.

That is why all of these 17 SDGs are fully integrated.

We have to cut across traditional boundaries that separate ministries and portfolios.

We have to overcome this so called silo mentalities, and we are all together.

We have to forge new partnerships and create better ways of working.

I thank the delegates from the Committee on Food Security for their participation today for participating in this meeting. For their great commitment and leadership. The Committee's members are creating new ways for many stakeholders to collaborate to end hunger.

Honourable Ministers,

Excellencies,

and Mr President

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since we are in Italy, perhaps I should say a word about fashion. Milano is known worldwide by its fashion.

Unfortunately none of my many briefing papers tell me anything about fashion today unfortunately. My wife may be very disappointed that I do not ever change my style!

So it was quite strange when I was featured I myself felt very strange and a little bit nervous when I was offered to have a special interview, cover story, in the world wide – world class – in the fashion magazine Vogue Italia about three years ago.

And you might have seen myself in the cover page, everybody thought “How come UN Secretary General who is an unstylish person, just appears in this Vogue?”

At that time, I had the chance to meet the editor, Franca Sozzani. She is now one of many goodwill ambassadors helping the United Nations to champion the fight against hunger.

I applaud these great advocates for the cause – especially those here today.

We need all partners in this campaign – fashion experts and diplomats, agency leaders, rock stars and athletes, global world leaders and city mayors, governors. Most of all, we need local communities.

Presidents, Prime Ministers and Ministers, they make the policies of the governments. But it is mainly community leaders, mayors and governors who work and implement, they are the real ones who are working on the ground, and I highly applaud their strong commitment.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Seven decades ago, countries established (FAO) the Food and Agriculture Organization with a ringing promise of “ensuring humanity’s freedom from hunger.”

I applaud the vision of the Italian government and people, even before – 10 years before joining the United Nations – they invited, and hosted, for 70 years, this FAO. And Rome is now known as the global hope for our food security, IFAD and World Food Programme. And I really thank the Italian governments’ strong support for that.

Today we continue to aim for the Zero Hunger Challenge which I together with FAO Director General launched three years ago in Rio de Janeiro to keep this promise to our world.

The 2030 Agenda is our road map to success.

Hunger is more than a lack of food – it is a terrible injustice, unfairness and inequality.

We are here today to pledge again to achieve food security for all the people around the world – to build a global movement to end hunger. This will go hand-in-hand with greater health, economic development and social inclusion for individuals and societies.

I count on each and every one of you to capture the spirit of this Expo Milano and continue the fight against hunger all year round.

Let us work together, so that everybody in this world will be able to live with human dignity.

Thank you for your leadership and for your strong commitment.

Grazie mille. Thank you.