

**Message from H.E. Mr. Jean Ping, President
of the 59th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
on the Observance of World Food Day**

The observance of World Food Day provides us with an opportune occasion each year to reflect on the millions of men, women and children worldwide facing hunger on a daily basis, the vast majority of whom live primarily in developing countries and mostly in the rural areas, where the magnitude of hunger and its impact on our world is most felt.

The Food and Agriculture Organization is to be applauded on its selection of *Biodiversity for Food Security* as the theme for World Food Day 2004, since it provides us with a timely reminder to reflect on the important role of biodiversity in ensuring that all people have access to nutritious food and lead quality lives. We must be ever mindful in our daily lives of the choices we must make to embrace, protect and preserve our rich biodiversity, or risk the consequence of failure. Using biodiversity remains the hope to curtail hunger and poverty for both the present and future. It can, indeed, increase food production, feed the world and ensure sustainable development.

Goal number one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) speaks about the halving of by 2015 the more than 800 million people who live in hunger and poverty. We have a mere eleven years to attain this goal, which, if present trends were to continue, would not be attained. I am, however, optimistic that it is possible for this goal to be met, and that the political will exists for us to accelerate efforts and take action to alleviate the plight of those ensnared by hunger and poverty.

So, in view of the aforesaid, I urge you to redouble efforts to eradicate these enemies, poverty and hunger, *inter alia*, through the protection and preservation of biodiversity as a pillar for a world without hunger.