

**Message from Dr. Stephen Hall, Director-General
The WorldFish Center, Malaysia
on the Observance of the World Food Day**

There are 80 or 90 million more people in the world every year to be fed, most of them poor and living in developing countries. The prevalence of hunger is particularly high among small farmers, herders, fishers and other people who rely on the natural resource base, with seventy percent of the world's food-insecure people being women.

More people means more demand for food. Meat and fish production must double in the next 25 years to meet projected demand. Fish, as well as other aquatic plants and animals are a crucial resource for millions of people throughout the world. Globally, fish contribute over 15% of the world's protein supplies. Today, fishing is the largest extractive use of wildlife in the world. How will the demand for more fish be met?

This year, we commemorate World Food Day by focusing on the theme of "Biodiversity and Food Security". The WorldFish Center, as a Future Harvest center of the CGIAR, has a mission to reduce hunger and poverty by improving fisheries and aquaculture. Based on the requirements of developing countries, we strive to develop and provide scientific tools, expertise and capacity building to research institutions, management agencies and NGOs, thus contributing to the understanding, conservation and sustainable utilization of aquatic biological diversity. For example, the national breeding programs supported by the Center maintain and continuously improve fish strains for distribution to farmers, while taking measures to ensure that genetic diversity of aquaculture species is not lost. WorldFish also maintains FishBase, the premier global biodiversity database on fish, in partnership with the FAO and with support from the European Union.

The task of ensuring fish for all is beyond the capacity of single nations or agencies. We need to work in a coordinated and concerted way to ensure that the benefits of aquatic biodiversity are available to the poor in the developing world in a sustainable manner.