



The President
of the
Economic and Social Council

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I am pleased to salute the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on the occasion of this year's World Food Day. The theme "International Alliance Against Hunger" is particularly timely, in the light of an increasing gap between the first UN Millennium Development Goal and the actual progress achieved. As will be recalled, we are all committed to reduce by half, by 2015, the proportion of people that live on less than one dollar a day, and reduce by half the proportion of people that suffer from hunger. The growing gap between targets and results is particularly disturbing, since in the aggregate world food production is ample enough to feed everyone.

The Economic and Social Council dedicated its High-Level Segment this year to promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development. Agreement was reached on a conceptual framework and practical actions to pursue rural development through an integrated approach, which could have a meaningful impact on levels of poverty and hunger in rural areas, precisely the areas where these conditions are most prevalent. The decisions adopted by the Council are very much in line with the International Alliance Against Hunger. They also build on the guidelines offered by the World Food Summit of 1996 and the Millennium Summit of 2000.

The high level of engagement between the different specialized agencies of the United Nations System, as well as civil society, with the goal of rural development was also noteworthy, all in line with the Council's role of introducing greater coherence, coordination and cooperation into the work of the different components of the United Nations System. Thus, the Council has tried to respond to FAO's exhortation of working together for an International Alliance Against Hunger.