



ITALIAN PRESIDENCY

H.E. Mr. Marcello SPATAFORA's Message, on Behalf of the European Union

World Food Day 2003: "International Alliance against Hunger" -New York, 17 October 2003-

More than 840 million people, around 800 million of them living in developing countries, still suffer from chronic hunger which clearly constitutes a global challenge. The majority of them lives in rural areas and derives its livelihood from agriculture. The European Union reaffirms its commitment to fight this great global challenge. The overarching framework for our concerted action is the Millennium Declaration, at whose heart is placed the clear goal of cutting in half the percentage of people living in extreme poverty and of people suffering from hunger by the year 2015. We are supportive of an approach which tackles hunger in a comprehensive and integrated way, incorporating areas such as food security, education, health, water, sanitation, and environment. Also, the European Union remains convinced that the fight against hunger is a fight that can be won through the enhancement of international cooperation and partnership: therefore it welcomes this year's World Food Day theme, "International Alliance against Hunger".

The European Union gives utmost importance to the "World Food Day" celebration as it sheds light to the urgent need for freedom from hunger to become a reality. Many different groups must work in a united effort, bringing together the strengths of food producers and consumers, international organizations, agribusiness firms, scientists, academics, donors, policy-makers, private individuals, religious groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and all others committed to reducing the suffering caused by hunger. We now need concrete actions, and a strong focus on implementation. This is an opportunity to move forward together, to reduce poverty and to guarantee the most basic of human rights, to be free from hunger.