

**Taped message by Mrs. Nane Annan for
World Food Day
New York, 17 October 2003**

Hello and welcome to the United Nations. I am Nane Annan, and I am very happy to celebrate World Food Day with you today. World Food Day is a special day to observe a very serious cause, a day the UN and the Food and Agriculture Organization want to mark to make sure that every human has enough to eat. Freedom from hunger is one of our most basic human rights, but more than 840 million people around the world are hungry today. In countries where hunger is most common, one in seven children dies before they reach the age of five.

Imagine that we live in one of these countries. If we were lucky to live beyond our fifth birthday, we would be much smaller, because without proper nutrition our bodies cannot grow to their full size. We would not remember things we have learned, and we would probably have failed many of the tests at school. Because without food our brains cannot develop properly and it becomes very difficult to learn new things. We would be sicklier, and we would probably not be able to live beyond the age of 40. Our parents may not be here, because they would also have suffered from hunger. The lack of food would change our whole lives.

Right now, seven million people in southern Africa do not have enough food because of drought. Throughout the world, even in the wealthiest countries, there are people going hungry. But the good news about world hunger is that we can do something about it. There is enough food in the world to feed everyone. What we have to do is work together to make sure that the food reaches the people who are hungry, no matter where they live.

Many people all over the world are working to make sure that this happens. They may be family farmers, farming corporations, local and national politicians, volunteer groups, nonprofit organizations or people just like you or me. Today, as we celebrate World Food Day at the United Nations, we are also launching the International Alliance Against Hunger. It is an Alliance of members from around the world, from countries large and small working together to end world hunger.

The International Alliance Against Hunger is like sharing your lunch with a teammate who forgot theirs. We share because we have more than enough food, and our teammate has none. We share because we are part of a team, and we need each other. In the end, we both will make better players – and everyone wins. The International Alliance Against Hunger is a worldwide team working to end hunger and every single one of us is an important team member.

As team members of the Alliance, you can help to bring about a world without hunger in your hometowns. You and your teachers can start now by using Feeding Minds Fighting Hunger – a special set of lessons in many languages that will help you learn more about the problems and how you can help. You can get more information at www.feedingminds.org. Tell your family, your friends and others in your communities about this important opportunity to make a difference in our world.

Thank you for caring.