

Opening remarks by H. E. Ambassador Sebastiano Cardi, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations, at the event “Mapping the vulnerability of mountain peoples to food insecurity sharing the results of an FAO global study” (May 6th, 1.15 pm, CR 6)

Mrs. Mucavi,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me welcome you all today and warmly thank the co-organisers of an event that focuses on a topic dear to my Country, the peculiarities of mountains' people and their vulnerability to food insecurity. This may come as a surprise but – although when you think of Italy, beaches and seaside usually come up in your mind – Italy is also a land of mountains, such our Alps and Appenines.

Italy's foreign policy and development aid, in fact, has traditionally prioritized the most vulnerable: the most fragile societies, but also the most delicate ecosystems. It is not a coincidence, as these realities largely overlap on the world map. In this perspective special efforts have been devoted to islands, oceans, drylands and, here we are, mountains.

Back in 2002 Italy has been one of the proud founders of the Mountain Partnership together with Switzerland, FAO and UNEP, and my country has been, ever since, a continuous and

proactive supporter to an alliance that we deem the most important global instrument to advance the sustainable development of mountain regions. The Mountain Partnership Secretariat itself, as you know, is hosted in Rome.

Mountains account for over 60% of the world's freshwater resources for domestic, agricultural and industrial consumption, and represent as well an irreplaceable source of food, biodiversity, energy, timber, medical plants, minerals and tourism.

And yet, the impact of poverty and malnutrition in mountain areas is far higher than anywhere else and the vulnerability of mountain ecosystems to climate change and natural disasters place on their natural resources and food security an ever-increasing pressure. Italy's commitment to face those challenges has been embodied, lastly, by 2015 EXPO and by its most visible outcome document, the Milan Charter.

Finally, we welcome FAO's initiative to launching a Mountain Facility as a new funding mechanism linked to the Mountain Partnership to address food security crises in mountain regions. We call on all partners to contribute to it.

I look forward to a lively and interesting discussion ahead of us today. Thank you.