

“Mapping the vulnerability of mountain peoples to food insecurity – sharing the results of a FAO global study”

Remarks by Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations

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1. Thank you all for your presence and for this opportunity to raise awareness on the particular challenges faced by mountain peoples and mountain environments. In particular to Ms. Monica Mucavi, Director of FAO Liaison Office to the United Nations, for the initiative, as well as to all the distinguished speakers.
2. Peru is a long-standing member of the Mountain Partnership and a strong supporter of sustainable mountain development. This can be seen as the natural projection of a central position in the Andean region – a particularly challenging geography in which thousand of years ago a civilization was originated thanks to mountain peoples capacities to manage such geography and the cultural and biological diversity that it hosts.
3. The resilience of the Andean agricultural development led to the sophistication of the Inca Empire, governed from the mountain city of Cusco. But most importantly, the agricultural developments of Andean indigenous peoples have ever since contributed to the alimentary security and to the enrichment of sustainable gastronomies all over the world.
4. It is thus not a coincidence our hosting of the 2014 World Mountain Forum in Cusco, in order to promote concrete action for Sustainable Mountain Development. Our commitment with mountain peoples was further advanced during the UNFCCC COP 20 in Lima, when we organized the Mountain and Water Pavilion.
5. We welcome today this constructive dialogue on how to focus on mountains and call for targeted investments, policies and interventions that can help break the cycle of poverty and hunger of mountain communities.
6. In these regards we want to take the opportunity to highlight the importance of the FAO report “Mapping the vulnerability of mountain peoples to food insecurity”. As Peruvian history shows, mountain agriculture has significant potential to contribute to improving food security. Investments and technical support are however needed to diversify and boost mountain production systems through, for example, integrating indigenous knowledge and traditions with modern techniques.
7. Acknowledging the value that very fragile ecosystems along with intangible cultural heritage represent for indigenous communities in the Andean highlands entails a high vulnerability as well as an opportunity or sustainable development. This is of course related to the need of addressing poverty in all its forms and dimensions, transcending traditional measurements of poverty and development based on income averages.

8. The Peruvian gastronomic boom is a good example of how this actually works, clustering the food chain to the safeguarding of the cultural and biological diversity that is on its base. All this while eradicating poverty and hunger, fostering innovation and ensuring inclusive and sustainable patterns of production and consumption.
9. An enabling environment should however be ensured at the very local level, in order to empower mountain peoples. As stated in FAO report (and with this quote I conclude):

“The realization of this potential calls for enhanced dialogue concerning key resource management issues and ecosystem services between mountain people and lowlanders. Good governance systems with robust participation and ownership of mountain communities as well as secure land tenure are crucial driving factors for promoting inclusive growth. This is particularly relevant to mountain areas which are not only geographically isolated, for they are also often politically and socially marginalized”.

I thank you.