

Transcript of the interview with Nobel Peace Laureate Muhammad Yunus - 2006 Nobel Peace Prize recipient

FAO – Nobel Peace Laureates Alliance for Food Security and Peace

Question 1 - How do you view the FAO-Nobel Laureates Alliance? (00'01-00'43)

This alliance is a good significant step by FAO, bringing people together, make the awareness. Because indifference has caused the whole problem. We're indifferent. So hopefully, with the presence of the Nobel Laureates, some awareness will be created beyond the existing awareness. And excite the people that yes it can be doable. It's a doable thing. Anytime we can overcome this hunger issue – we have of enough food, enough of ability to reach out with food to the people, we can do instantaneously almost, if you want to do that. But, our mind is not there.

Question 2 - How can your experience with the Grameen Bank contribute to the success of the Alliance? (00'45-01'46)

My goal is zero poverty. And I've been talking about zero poverty for many, many years and I talk about putting poverty in the museum. It doesn't belong to human society. It's forcefully we have done that in a way we didn't understand what we are doing, or we're simply careless about it. We don't care who does what. That's what caused poverty. And we created a system which encourages, which pushes people into poverty, rather than taking them out. Poverty has become sort of a prison for them. So, all we have to do is fix the system and people will be out. There's nothing wrong with the poor people. Poor people are as good as any other human being. They're creative, they're enterprising, they want to take care of their children. They have their goals, their ambitions, their dreams of their life. They cannot do that because the system will not let them come out. So that way I'll be in the Alliance I'm trying to bring that other people into the Alliance. When I'm invited to join it, I'm already there. You can't stop me.

Question 3 - What will be your broader contribution to the building of peace and food security? (01'47-03'13)

It's all integrated it's all linked with each other. These are not separate issues. We simply see it with different kinds of lenses... this we see the women empowerment, this we see the food security, this we see something else. This is all linked. Hunger and poverty is linked. And they're linked to the peace. You cannot have peace, leaving behind all the people – poor people and hungry people – you can't have peace. So there's no peace without food security for everybody. You cannot have food security without having peace. So this have to coexist together. You take one, other gets disrupted. Automatically it will continue to happen. So we have to make sure we ensure peace. Again – this is something that has to come out of our own feeling, it's needed for the whole world. We don't go and cause all these problems by creating conflicts and wars and all the different kind of balances that creates terrorism and so on. So how to address that kind of thing and, at the same time, take care of the hunger, take care of malnutrition, take care of poverty, so that we don't go into terrorism we don't go into conflict.

Question 4 - What concrete actions are you going to propose to the new-borne Alliance? (03'13-04'11)

Financial system is the most concrete thing. When we talk about food sometimes we forget these are related issues. How can you go to the food if you don't have the money? They're plenty of food in the market but I can't buy it. I don't have an income. So I can just watch food in front of me but I cannot touch it. I cannot put it in my empty stomach. So that's where you need to create income. And income is not something that falls on your lap automatically. You have to work, and you're ready to work. You're not shy of working, you're ready to work. Poor people work very hard, but they don't get anything out of that. So you bring the money to them, suddenly the work becomes more meaningful. We have the capacity to solve all of the human problems we see around us. That's what the human beings are all about. Creative power. We are packed with unlimited creative power. But we don't use it. We use it only for money making, taking a job and working for that.

**Interview conducted by FAO's Maria Angela Rosati*
Note: *Questions not recorded*