



***20 February 2013***

## **INAUGURATION INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF QUINOA**

Your Excellency Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey, Vice President of the General Assembly of the United Nations,

Your Excellency Mr Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization,

Your Excellency Mr Evo Morales, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia,

Your Excellency Mrs Nadine Heredia Alarcón de Humala, First Lady of Peru,

Distinguished Representatives,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All human beings have the right to adequate food. This has been recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Yet, there are today 870 million human beings who are suffering from hunger.

Hunger causes the death of defenceless children, affects the human development of the poorest and most vulnerable, leads to the loss of years of life from premature death and disability, and is the cause and consequence of poverty.



We cannot remain idle when one in eight persons in the world lives in hunger.

We must rise against this reality, join forces and confront it with passion.

FAO is committed to help eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

Eradicating hunger requires the leadership and commitment of countries, appropriate means of governance and the support of the international community, civil society and private initiative.

We are approaching 2015, the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals. FAO's latest figures on hunger tell us that about 50 countries have already accomplished the goal of halving the undernourished population.

So that all countries can achieve the goal for 2015 of eradicating hunger in the Rio + 20 Conference on Sustainable Development.

We are here today to recruit a new ally in the fight against hunger and food insecurity: quinoa.

Quinoa is an Andean grain that has been conserved by the indigenous peoples of the Andes for thousands of years. It is a food with unique qualities: it not only possesses all the amino acids and vitamins that are needed for life, but it also has an extraordinary capacity to adapt to different soils and agroecological conditions.



Quinoa can withstand extreme temperatures, can grow at altitude and can tolerate drought, poor soils and high salinity. Besides the Andean countries, it is grown today in France, England, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Italy and the United States. It has already demonstrated high seed yields in Kenya and Mali.

Preliminary FAO assessments indicate that quinoa could be successfully cultivated in the Himalayas, on the plains of northern India, in the countries of the Sahel and in Yemen and other arid parts of the world.

The "International Year of Quinoa" will not only serve to stimulate development of this crop at a global level, but is also recognition that the challenges that face the world today can be tackled by drawing upon the wisdom gained by ancient peoples and by small family farmers, who currently produce the bulk of such crops.

It is therefore a great pleasure for me to be with you today for the launching of the International Year of Quinoa, confident that the coordinated efforts of governments, development agencies, civil society and the private sector will enable us to reap its multiple benefits and thereby advance towards our common goal of achieving a world without hunger. A world with zero hunger as stated by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in the Zero Hunger Challenge.

Thank you for your kind attention and support.