



16 October 2012

WORLD FOOD DAY CEREMONY

Honorable Staffan de Mistura,
Under-Secretary of State, Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Honorable Ministers,

Heads of Delegations,

Mr. Kanayo Nwanze, President of International Fund for Agricultural
Development,

Ms Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director of World Food Programme

Mr. Emile Frison, Director-General, Bioversity International,

Mr. David Nabarro, Special Representative to the UN Secretary General on
Food Security and Nutrition

Mr. Luc Guyau, Independent Chair of the Council

Representatives of civil society and the private sector,

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen



I declare now open this 32nd World Food Day which coincides with the 67th anniversary of the founding of FAO.

First of all let me say how pleased and honored I am this morning to acknowledge the presence of Ms. Elizabeth Atangana, FAO Special Ambassador for the International Year of Cooperatives. Her presence here today, after a long trip from Cameroon, is a vivid testimony of her commitment to the global effort to ensure universal food security.

The theme of World Food Day “Agricultural cooperatives – key to feeding the world” highlights the role of cooperatives in improving food security and contributing to the eradication of hunger. By drawing world attention to this strategic issue, it is my hope that this year’s World Food Day will be an important milestone on the road to achieving the sustainable policy and program efforts needed to feed the present and future generations.

World Food Day gives us an opportunity to take stock of a progress we made, we have made, in our efforts to guarantee the right to food to all.

Last week FAO, IFAD and WFP presented the 2012 edition of the State of Food Insecurity in the World, SOFI. The report shows that we have made some progress towards achieving the first Millennium Development Goal, to halve the proportion of undernourished people by the year 2015.

But it also shows that that progress has slowed since 2007. Nearly 870 million men, women and children still go hungry every day. In Africa and in the Near East the number of undernourished people is still growing.

We cannot allow that in a world of plenty. We already produce enough food for every human being.

At the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the Zero Hunger Challenge, bringing together hunger eradication and zero stunting in children and stunting eradication, 100% increase in small farmer productivity, 100% sustainable food production, and zero food waste and loss.



I truly believe that it is possible to reach zero hunger, if we work together, focus our attention, and coordinate our efforts.

Farmers are an important part of this effort. Small-scale farmers are the main providers of food in many countries around the world, but they are also among the world's poorest people. Cooperatives can help smallholder farmers to overcome these constraints. As the theme of this year's World Food Day proclaims: they are *key to feeding the world*.

This year, FAO opened a liaison office space for farmers and cooperatives, here in our Headquarters. And, we are working to raise awareness of the important role of agricultural co-operatives play and build joint programs with them.

We do this with the collaboration of IFAD and World Food Programme and in coordination with the Inter-Agency Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives.

We work also with other partners, such as the International Labour Organization; the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs; the International Co-operative Alliance, and the World Farmers' Organization, private sectors and NGOs all around the world.

Cooperatives hold a key to feeding the world, but so do governments, civil society and private sector to achieve food security for all we need to work all together. It is not enough to reduce hunger. Let us set bold goals: With hunger, the only acceptable number is zero.

In my country there is a song that says a dream that we dream alone it is only a dream, but a dream that we dream together becomes real.

Thank you for your attention.