



UN agency calls for global day-long fast as symbol of war on hunger



FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf

11 November 2009 – The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) today called for a day-long, global hunger strike in solidarity with the planet’s one billion people who do not have enough to eat, ahead of next week’s World Summit on Food Security.

“I shall personally begin a 24-hour fast on Saturday morning,” **FAO** Director-General Jacques Diouf told a press conference in Rome. “We are suggesting that everyone in the world who wants to show solidarity with the one hungry billion people on this planet go on hunger strike next Saturday or Sunday.”

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will open the three-day summit in the Italian capital on 16 November, when immediate action will be sought to build momentum to end the scourge of hunger and malnutrition. Heads of State and government from FAO’s 192 members have been invited to attend.

“Given the close inter-relationship between food security and climate change, the Secretary-General will engage world leaders to advance both agendas together,” spokesperson Marie Okabe told a news briefing in New York.

Mr. Diouf said that despite all the promises made, concrete action on hunger has been lacking. “In the absence of strong measures another global food crisis cannot be excluded,” he warned.

He also launched an online anti-hunger petition, <http://www.1billionhungry.org/>, where visitors are asked to sign the petition if they agree that 1 billion people living in chronic hunger is unacceptable. Everyone is encouraged to use Twitter or other social media tools to spread the word about the initiative.

"I would urge as many people as possible to sign our petition," he said. "Each click will serve as another reason, in addition to the billion we already have, for ending hunger. Each click will also serve as a goad to world leaders to 'walk the talk.'"

During his stay in Rome, Mr. Ban will visit the headquarters of the UN World Food Programme (**WFP**), where he will participate in a commemoration for the staff recently killed in the attack against the WFP office in Pakistan. He will also meet with the staff of the UN International Fund for Agricultural Development (**IFAD**) and the FAO.

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