



UN food summit ends without specific targets for ending global hunger



FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf speaking at the closing of the World Summit on Food Security

18 November 2009 – The three-day United Nations summit on world food security wrapped up in Rome today with its host lamenting that it produced neither measurable targets nor specific deadlines for ending a scourge that afflicts more than 1 billion people around the planet.

On its first day, the summit unanimously adopted a **declaration** renewing a commitment to eradicate hunger sustainably and at the earliest date. Yet during the three days of talks 51,000 more children are estimated to have died of hunger – one every five seconds, 6 million a year – even though, in the words of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the world has more than enough food for all.

UN Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**) Director-General and summit host Jacques Diouf said the meeting, which agreed to work to reverse the decline in domestic and international funding for agriculture, promote new investment, and proactively face the challenges of climate change to food security, marked “an important step towards the achievement of our common objective – a world free from hunger.”

But, he declared, “to my regret the official declaration adopted by the Summit this past Monday contains neither measurable targets nor specific deadlines which would have made it easier to monitor implementation.”

FAO had proposed setting a target of 2025 for total eradication of hunger from the face of the earth and increasing official development assistance (ODA) to agriculture to \$44 billion per year for investment in developing-country agriculture and rural infrastructure.

At the same time, however, the summit produced four important commitments, Mr. Diouf said. These were: renewed efforts to achieve the first Millennium Development Goal of halving hunger by 2015; improved international coordination through broadened

participation by the public and private sector; international funding for agriculture in developing countries; and new investments in agricultural production there.

"I am convinced that together we can eradicate hunger from our planet," he added. "But we must move from words to actions. Let us do it for a more prosperous, more just, more equitable and more peaceful world. But above all, let us do it quickly because the poor and the hungry cannot wait."

Sixty heads of State and government and 191 ministers from 182 countries and the European Community attended the gathering, including Pope Benedict XVI who called for the rules governing international trade to be separated from "the logic of profit viewed as an end in itself."

Opening the summit, Mr. Ban laid out a series of necessary steps, ranging from immediate needs such as food aid, safety nets and social protection to longer-term goals achieved through increased investments in agricultural development, including provision of seeds, water supplies and land to ensure higher productivity, better market access, and fairer trade, above all for smallholder farmers, especially women.

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