

## European Union pledges increased support for UN efforts to slash world hunger



EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso (left) and FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva. Photo: EU/Cornelia Smet

11 October 2012 – The European Union (EU), already the largest single source of voluntary funding to the United Nations food agency, today pledged to scale up its aid to the world body in efforts to fight malnutrition, which kills 2.5 million children annually and afflicts 870 million people overall.

“We are partners in the fight against under-nutrition amongst the world's poorest and in the promotion of global food security,” the European Commission’s President, José Manuel Barroso,

said at a meeting with UN Food and Agriculture Organisation ([FAO](#)) Director-General, José Graziano da Silva, in Brussels.

“For the European Commission, food security is a key priority: worldwide, the EU is already the largest donor of aid to fight food and nutrition insecurity and we will step up our efforts,” he added, according to an [FAO news release](#).

The European Commission represents the interests of the EU as a whole. It proposes new legislation to the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, and it ensures that EU law is correctly applied by member countries.

In his meeting with Mr. Graziano da Silva, Mr. Barroso reiterated full EU commitment to the UN Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)) and a development aid target for donor countries of 0.7 per cent of gross national income by their 2015 deadline. “The European Union will continue to support the on-going FAO reform politically, operationally and financially,” he said.

The eight MDGs, agreed on by world leaders at a UN summit in 2000, set specific targets on poverty alleviation, education, gender equality, child and maternal health, environmental stability, HIV/AIDS reduction, and a ‘Global Partnership for Development.’

Mr. Graziano da Silva praised the EU as a valued partner. “We are working together at the global and national levels to promote food security and sustainable agricultural development,” he said, noting that latest FAO figures issued earlier this week show that while almost 870 million people, or one in eight, suffer from chronic malnutrition, the number has declined more sharply between 1990 and 2007 than previously believed.

“The new hunger figures show that we are on track to meet the MDG target of halving the proportion of hungry people (by 2015). But we need to look beyond that and aim for the total eradication of hunger, answering the Zero Hunger Challenge,” he added, referring the goal set by Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon at last June’s UN Conference on Sustainable Development ([Rio +20](#)) in Brazil. “With hunger, the only acceptable number is zero.”

Both leaders stressed that governments and the national and international communities have an important role to play in strengthening global governance mechanisms, noting that increased market transparency and coordination were helping avoid spikes in international food prices.

With a yearly investment of around €1 billion euros, the EU is by far the largest donor in the world in the fight against food and nutrition insecurity, contributing over €580 million to the FAO since 2007.

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