

## **Agricultural cooperatives can help end global hunger, says UN food agency**



A woman farmer

2 November 2012 – Agricultural cooperatives provide small-scale food producers with what may be their best chance to compete in global markets, the head of the United Nations food agency said today, adding that cooperative units were particularly important for farmers in the developing world.

Speaking at a week-long meeting of the World Cooperatives Congress in Manchester, England, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's ([FAO](#)) Director-General, José Graziano da Silva,

[told](#) gathered delegates that cooperatives can help small- and medium-scale farmers and fishermen add value to their production and gain access to wider markets.

“Cooperatives follow core values and principles that are critical to doing business in an equitable manner, that seeks to empower and benefits its members and the community it is inserted in,” said Mr. Graziano da Silva.

“This is especially relevant in poor rural communities, where joining forces is central to promoting sustainable local development,” he added.

Mr. Graziano da Silva stated that in a world that produces enough food for all and despite gains in the fight against hunger, it was “unacceptable” that close to 870 million people continue to suffer from chronic malnutrition. He further stated that greater cooperativization would help reduce hunger and poverty across poor rural communities.

“Whether you are in the UK, Brazil, Kenya, Thailand, or Nepal, cooperatives help to generate employment, boost national economies and reduce poverty,” he noted. “This, in turn, helps to improve food security.”

The FAO chief emphasized that his agency was committed to fostering the growth of agricultural cooperatives around the world and hinted at the appointment of special ambassadors for cooperatives to promote the issue, as well as develop approaches, guidelines, methodologies and training tools on organizational development and policy.

Moreover, he called on those gathered to contribute to the global plan of action expected to emerge from events held in honour of the International Year of Cooperatives – a year-long celebration currently being observed in 2012.

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