



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE 41st GENERAL CONFERENCE
OF THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO)**

Sala Regia

Thursday, 27 June 2019

[Multimedia]

I greet the President, Mr Enzo Benech, the distinguished delegates of the different nations and agencies, and all those taking part in this 41st Session of the FAO Conference. In particular, I wish to convey my greetings and appreciation to the Director-General, Professor José Graziano da Silva, who in a few weeks will conclude his service to this Organization. My heartfelt thanks for your work. And I congratulate His Excellency Mr Qu Dongyu on his election as FAO Director-General. I am confident that, with the help and cooperation of all, we will continue to cooperate in expanding and increasing, with responsibility and commitment, the effort to attain Goals 1 and 2 of the 2030 Agenda, and thus eliminate the complex, grave and unacceptable scourges of hunger and food insecurity with greater speed and efficacy.

The goal of Zero Hunger worldwide remains a great challenge, even if it must be acknowledged that great progress has been made in recent decades. In order to combat lack of food and access to drinkable water, there is a need to intervene on their underlying causes. The origin of this tragedy lies above all in a failure of compassion, the lack of interest on the part of many and a scant social and political will to honour international obligations.

Lack of food and water is not an internal and exclusive affair of the most poor and vulnerable countries, but one that concerns each of us. The approach we take makes us responsible, in one way or another, for increasing or alleviating the suffering of many of our brothers and sisters (cf. [*Address to the Members of the European Federation of Food Banks, 18 May 2019*](#)). We are all called to hear their desperate cry and to find ways of enabling them to remain alive and see their

most basic rights respected.

One of these means, which is within our reach, is a reduction in the waste of food and of water. For this to happen, increased awareness of the problem and a greater sense of social responsibility will prove an investment, both short and long term. The younger generation will then pass on this witness to those yet to come, in the realization that this social tragedy can no longer be tolerated (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 50).

There is an evident link between environmental instability, food insecurity and migratory movements. The increased numbers of refugees throughout the world in recent years – the most recent UN statistics are striking – have shown us that one country's problem is a problem of the entire human family. For this reason, agricultural development needs to be promoted in the most vulnerable regions, strengthening the resilience and sustainability of the land. This can only be accomplished, on the one hand, by investing in the development of technology and, on the other, by coming up with innovative and solidary policies for development.

FAO and other international organizations are appropriate actors to coordinate necessary and decisive measures aimed at ensuring that all, particularly the poorest, have the access to basic goods. These multilateral bodies need to be supported by the commitment of governments, businesses, academia, institutions of civil society and private individuals. Joint efforts by all will realize the goals and commitments already undertaken, through programmes and policies capable of helping local populations to grow in a sense of responsibility for their countries, communities and, ultimately, their own lives.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming the commitment of the Holy See to cooperate with FAO and to support the global effort to eliminate hunger in the world and to ensure a better future for our planet and for mankind as a whole. May God bless you in your work and your devotion to the authentic progress of our great human family. Thank you very much.