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## FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

helping to build a world without hunger

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FAO urges international alliance against hunger on World Food Day

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**16 October 2003, Rome** -- FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf appealed for an international alliance against hunger on Thursday, World Food Day, as the UN Food and Agriculture Organization commemorated its foundation in 1945.

"Nations must turn verbal commitments to fight hunger into practical programmes that address the underlying causes of hunger," Diouf told high-level personalities from the different regions of the world assembled at the agency's headquarters in Rome.

"I believe that we are now at the threshold of the end of this long struggle against global hunger," he said in an optimistic speech, adding that there were three reasons for being hopeful about the future.

"First of all, never before in the history of the world has so much food been produced [...] secondly there is now a broad international consensus that hunger and poverty must end," he explained.

### Propelled by hope

"The third reason for my optimism today is that during the past year a number of countries have boldly put the fight against hunger at the forefront of national priorities," he added, citing Uruguay as one such nation.

The keynote speaker, President Jorge Batlle of Uruguay, added his voice to the appeal stressing freedom from hunger would only be achieved by uniting forces and placing the fight against hunger at the very top of the political agenda.

Launching his call for an international alliance against hunger, Diouf said: "I am hopeful that this renewed international consensus will be translated into an active global partnership that brings together the strengths of all those committed to ending hunger in a single effort."

Food producers and consumers, international organizations, scientists, academics, religious groups, NGOs, donors, policymakers and all those concerned



2003 World Food Day keynote speaker President Jorge Batlle Uruguay

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- [Five more international celebrities named as FAO goodwill ambassadors](#)
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- **Contact:**  
[Stephanie Holmes](#)  
[FAO Media Relations](#)  
[stephanie.holmes@fao.org](mailto:stephanie.holmes@fao.org)  
[\(+39\) 06 570 56350](tel:+390657056350)



Harvest of hope: a mother and her child in Myanmar.

about the problem of world hunger were already uniting in a number of countries, Diouf said.

### **Working together**

"Through an *International Alliance against Hunger* [we...] will create a broad global coalition to deal with this problem. Everyone must be part of the solution," he said.

Dignitaries attending the ceremony included Vice-Presidents Juan Francisco Reyes López of Guatemala and Solomon Berewa of Sierra Leone, Italian Minister of Agricultural and Forestry Policies Giovanni Alemanno and the President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Pier Ferdinando Casini.

Giovanni Alemanno said that Italy had every intention of fully participating in the International Alliance against Hunger, "This initiative has the dual aim of calling upon governments to create tangible actions to solve the problem of world hunger and coordinating the efforts of all involved," he said.

Monsignor Renato Volante, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to FAO, read a message from Pope John Paul II.

"The Alliance against hunger" [...] must be founded on the idea of the international community as a *family of nations* committed to pursuing the universal common good," Monsignor Volante said on behalf of the Pope.

"Bringing about this Alliance requires the exercise of solidarity on the part of Governments, international organizations, and men and women of every Continent," he added.

### **Spotlight on hunger**

The audience included five new FAO Ambassadors - celebrities who promote FAO's mission and message throughout the world.

Algerian singer Khaled, Mexico's pop group Mana, Israeli singer Noa and Oumou Sangaré of Mali along with former Miss Universe Justine Pasek of Panama were named new ambassadors during the ceremony.

Illustrating the potential of an alliance against hunger, a group of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) organized a forum presenting their anti-hunger strategies following the ceremony.

World Food Day also marked the launch of the Organization's Nutrition Country Profiles CD Rom - a collection of data and information on over 60 countries.

The profiles are intended to provide policy-makers, researchers, teachers and students with a valuable information resource: a comprehensive picture of a country's food and nutrition situation and the related geographical, economic and social context.

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**Contact**

Stephanie Holmes  
FAO Media Relations  
stephanie.holmes@fao.org  
(+39) 0657056350

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