

New FAO Chief moves on global eradication of hunger

Support to poorest countries to be scaled up



New FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva

3 January 2012, Rome- Two days after taking over, FAO's new Director-General José Graziano da Silva told his inaugural press conference that the total elimination of hunger and undernourishment from the world will be his top priority.

Graziano da Silva told journalists that with a term in office of only three and a half years there was no time to lose. FAO would begin by scaling up its support to a number of low-income, food deficit countries, especially those facing prolonged crises.

"Ending hunger requires the commitment of everyone: neither FAO nor any other agency or government will win this war alone", said Graziano da Silva, adding that he wanted to work "in the most transparent and democratic way" with member countries, United Nations agencies the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders.

Hunger eradication was the first of five strategic priorities he intended to pursue at FAO, Graziano da Silva said. The others were: move towards more sustainable systems of food production and consumption; achieve greater fairness in the global management of food; complete FAO's reform and decentralization; and expand South-South cooperation and other partnerships.

Rebuilding trust

"We need to rebuild trust between the Secretariat and Member States to move forward, and I plan to do so by promoting a transparent and constructive relationship with Member States and FAO Governing Bodies", he said.

The Director-General also emphasized that he would strive to make FAO more effective and responsive by administrative cost-cutting and efficiency gains. He stressed that efficiency savings would not cut into FAO's technical work and he would try to use them to strengthen the Organization's direct assistance to countries.

"I am convinced that the Organization can make a significant and growing contribution to food security and sustainable food production and consumption in the world," he concluded.