

29 October 2009

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki,
President of the 64th Session of the General Assembly,
At the World Food Day**

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen

The food-price volatility of the recent past and the continuing relatively high prices of food products have led to a dramatic and unacceptable rise in the number of people suffering from hunger and malnutrition. The situation becomes even more alarming in the context of the current economic and financial crisis and the challenge of climate change.

For the first time in history, the number of people suffering from hunger has passed the one billion mark. This represents 15 per cent of the world's population, most of them from the developing countries.

Several factors have converged to make the current crisis particularly devastating for poor households in developing countries. These include low agricultural productivity in contrast to the population growth rate, growing scarcity of natural resources where water availability and land tenure are significant problems, as well as the effects of climate change, notably higher temperatures, greater rainfall variability and more frequent extreme weather events such as floods and droughts. By 2050, the population is projected to rise to 9.1 billion from current 6.7 billion, requiring a 70 per cent increase in farm production.

The challenge is not only to increase global food production but to increase it where it is mostly needed and by those who need it most. There should be special focus on assisting smallholder farmers, women and rural households including for their access to land, water and high quality seeds and other modern methods and technologies.

Short term improvement measures and long term structural solutions are imperative as part of an integrated, sustainable development strategy. Such a comprehensive strategy should provide for, inter alia, safety nets and assistance as well as social protection schemes, market access and fair trade.

Excellencies,

Global problems require effective responses and coordinated international political attention. Next month's World Summit on Food Security in Rome will be an important opportunity to renew our

political will and commitment to eliminate hunger and to find a comprehensive solution to this global challenge.

“Achieving food security in times of crisis” is the theme chosen for this year’s World’s Food Day. I believe that moments of crises often inspire people to action. We must act now, by mustering adequate political and financial support for emergency food assistance and ensuring increased long-term investment in agriculture and food production, for the common good of our present and future generations.

Thank you.