

Concert for Peace

Message from Dr. Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO

Events like the Concerts for Peace in Japan and Tanzania have an important role to play in increasing the global effort to eliminate hunger and poverty.

Music has the power to unite and to heal and there is much that needs healing in this world today:

- ◆ Chronic hunger marginalizes large segments of the population from participating in economic growth, particularly in Africa where 200 million people – one third of the population of the continent – are chronically undernourished.
- ◆ Today, around 40 million human beings in Africa are facing food emergencies caused by natural and man-made disasters.

In this time of ample world food production, it is unacceptable that 840 million people around the world go to bed hungry every night. The goal of cutting by half the number of hungry people by 2015 – a target confirmed and reiterated by the Heads of State and Government at the World Food Summits of 1996 and 2002 – still lies out of reach.

A stronger political will is needed, expressed in concrete terms by making available resources commensurate to the importance of this historical challenge. Many nations have made verbal commitments to fight hunger, but few have done enough and on the scale required. Nations should work harder to create the policy environment, provide the resources and implement the programmes required to allow people to escape the vicious circle of hunger and poverty.

Defeating hunger and poverty is crucial for peace and stability in the world. Through a sustained assault on this scourge, we can provide a measure of hope, solidarity and stability for future generations. This has been aptly summed up by an ancient writer:

“I looked in the distance and saw a form; I approached and saw it was a man, I came closer and discovered it was my brother.”