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Message of the Holy Father to the Director General of the FAO for the inauguration of the World Food Forum (Rome, 1 to 5 October 2021)

The following is the message sent by the Holy Father Francis to the director general of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), His Excellency Mr. Qu Dongyu, on the occasion of the inauguration of the World Food Forum, taking place from 1 to 5 October 2021 in Rome and organised by the FAO Youth Committee. The text was read out by His Eminence Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin:

Message of the Holy Father

His Excellency

Dr Qu Dongyu

Director General of the FAO

Mr. Director General,

I greet cordially, on behalf of the Holy Father Francis, all the participants in the World Forum on Food, aimed at promoting youth-led action for the transformation of our food systems. I thank His Excellency and the Youth Committee of the FAO for having opportunely chosen to convene this significant meeting and for offering your support to a new generation of leaders who hunger for justice.

Today young people all over the world are cultivating their creativity and their energy to face the structural causes of the current food crisis, from prolonged armed conflicts, to the devastating effects of climate change. Their sense of belonging to the same community and to the planet entrusts to you the urgent task of acting and facing the challenges that afflict the human family in an innovative way. Their gift for us consists of bringing innovative solutions to face old problems, and the courage of not letting themselves be limited by a short-sighted way of thinking that refuses to change.

A few weeks ago, world leaders met in New York for the United Nations Food Systems Summit. They undertook to work together to ensure the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal number 2, which aims to eradicate hunger in the world. Their words are a promise to our brothers and sisters, to our sons and daughters, and to our grandchildren.

With this conviction, I ask all the young people gathered in the World Food Forum to be intrepid and decisive. I ask them to remain united and steadfast in their intentions. Not to be miserly in their dreams, to fight for a better future and to transform these longings into concrete and meaningful action. To turn their back on routines and false mirages, and to regenerate this world that has been shaken by the pandemic. And all this will become a happy reality if they sow seeds of solidarity, creativity, and nobility of the soul.

It is now up to those who must fulfil the commitments formulated in recent months not to disappoint the new generations. Look deeply into the eyes of the young people who ask you for change, and listen to them. Listen to their concerns and be inspired by their vision, because it is our present that will define their future.

May they remember us for our decision to be hopeful when faced with desperation, and to remain united in the mission of guaranteeing that nobody remain without the necessary means to live a dignified life.

I pray for you all that your work in these days be filled with divine Blessings.

Vatican, 1 October 2021

Cardinal Pietro Parolin
Secretary of State
