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Audience with the participants in the Conference of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on the theme: “Food and humanitarian crises: science and policy for their prevention and mitigation”

This morning, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the participants in the Conference of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on the theme: “Food and humanitarian crises: science and policy for their prevention and mitigation”, to whom he delivered the following address:

Address of the Holy Father

Your Eminence,

Mr. President,

Dear brothers and sisters all!

I address to you a warm welcome on the occasion of the Conference on the theme “Food and humanitarian crises: science and policy for their prevention and mitigation”, and I thank President von Braun for his kind greeting.

The theme you have chosen is more appropriate than ever, not only for academic debate, but also because it makes an appeal for farsighted authorities and practical policies, in order to alleviate the sufferings of so many of our brothers and sisters who lack healthy nutrition and access to sufficient food. A scholar said to me a few months ago: “If weapons were not made for one year, world hunger would end”.

This is an urgent challenge, because all too often situations marked by natural disasters, but also by armed conflicts - I am thinking especially of the war in Ukraine -, political or economic corruption and exploitation of the earth, our common home, hamper food production, undermine the resilience of agricultural systems and dangerously threaten the nutritional supply of entire populations. At the same time, these various crises have

been exacerbated by the long-lasting effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, while we are also witnessing the decline of fraternal solidarity - this is a fact: wars and misery lead to the decline of fraternal solidarity -, and this decline is brought about, among other things, by the selfish demands inherent in some current economic models.

From this perspective, there is a need to become increasingly aware that everything is closely interrelated: today's problems require an outlook capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis (cf. *Fratelli tutti*, 137). An important element of this outlook is the understanding that a crisis can also become an opportunity, a favourable occasion to recognize and learn from the mistakes of the past.

In this sense, I hope that your Conference may help us all to emerge better from the crises we are currently experiencing, not only by focusing on technical solutions, but above all by reminding us how essential it is to develop an attitude of universal solidarity based on fraternity, love and mutual understanding. In this regard, the Church wholeheartedly supports and encourages your efforts, together with those of all those who work not only to feed others or respond to crises, but also to promote integral human development, justice among peoples and international solidarity, thus strengthening the common good of society.

Dear friends, once again I express my gratitude for your valuable service in collaboration with the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, and I assure you of my prayers, that your work will bear fruit in helping to address the many problems arising from food and other humanitarian crises. Crises are a different matter from conflicts. Conflicts are closed in on themselves, from a conflict it is difficult to come out constructively. Instead from crises you can get out, you must get out, but on two conditions: from a crisis you cannot get out alone, either we get out together or we cannot get out. This is important, you cannot get out alone, you need the community, the group to get out. And, on the other hand, you come out of a crisis to improve, always to move forward, to progress. That is why I thank you for your attitude in the face of this crisis, to come out together and to come out better. On all of you I invoke the abundant blessing of Almighty God and I ask you to please pray for me. Thank you!
