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Message of the Holy Father for World Food Day

The following is the Message sent by the Holy Father Francis to the director general of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, His Excellency Mr. Qu Dongyu, on the occasion of World Food Day, read out by Msgr. Fernando Chica Arellano during the *World Food Forum* (Rome, 14 to 18 October):

Message

Mr. Director General,

The 44th *World Food Day* invites us to reflect on *the right to food for a better life and future*. This is a priority, as it satisfies one of the basic needs of human beings, namely to be nourished in order to live in accordance with adequate qualitative and quantitative standards that guarantee the dignified existence of the human person. However, we see this right frequently undermined and not fairly applied, with the harmful consequences that this entails.

In the interest of promoting the right to food, the FAO keenly proposes to consider a transformation of food systems that takes into account the plurality and variety of nutritious, affordable, healthy and sustainable foods as a means to achieve food security and healthy diets for all.

This requires not forgetting the intrinsic social and cultural dimension of the act of nourishing oneself. In this respect, political and economic decision-makers at international level must listen to the demands of those at the bottom of the food chain, such as small-scale farmers, and of intermediate social formations, such as the family, who are directly involved in providing food for people to eat.

Vigorous solutions to address and solve the food problems of our time require that we consider the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity as the foundations of our development programmes and projects, so that we never delay truly listening to the needs that come from below, from the workers and farmers, from the poor and hungry, and from those who live in hardship in isolated rural areas. Jesus Christ has taught us: “Whatever you wish that

men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets" (*Mt 7:12*).

Humanity, wounded by so many injustices, urgently needs effective measures to lead a better life, acting together in the same spirit of fraternity and in the knowledge that this planet that God has given us must be a garden open to serene coexistence. This is what I was thinking of when I proposed to consider the paradigm of integral ecology, so that the needs of each person and of the person as a whole are taken into account, so that their dignity is protected in their relationship with others and in close connection with the care of creation. Only if we take the ideal of justice as the guide for our action can people's needs be met.

This also requires that we allow ourselves to be challenged and moved by the condition of others, and that solidarity becomes the main focus of our decisions. In this way, the protection of future generations will go hand in hand with listening to and acting in favour of the demands of present generations, through an intra- and intergenerational alliance that calls us all to fraternity and gives a new, more authentic meaning to international cooperation, a cooperation that must animate this Organization and the entire multilateral system.

On this path, full of obstacles and difficulties, but at the same time exciting and full of challenges, the international community can count on the encouragement of the Holy See and of the Catholic Church, which never cease to make their tenacious contribution so that everyone may have food in adequate quantity and quality for themselves and their families, so that each person may lead a dignified life and so that the painful scourge of misery and hunger in the world may be definitively defeated.

With these sentiments and desires, upon all of you and upon those who work for this noble cause, I invoke the blessing of Almighty God, who never tires of sustaining those who have the good of all humanity at heart.

From the Vatican, 16 October 2024

FRANCIS
