

## ZERO HUNGER GOAL

*630 girls, aged 9 to 14 years, members of the Focolare Community and hailing from 17 different countries, discuss the Zero Hunger Goal at the FAO headquarters in Rome.*

Today's youth can become the first generation that will manage to eradicate hunger in the world. This is indicated by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals approved by the 193 United Nations Member States on September 25, 2015. The Member States agreed on the commitment to implement these goals within 15 years (2015-2030), and the "Zero Hunger Goal" is at the heart of the whole programme. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is very keen on achieving these objectives, so 630 young girls, aged 9 to 14 years, were gladly welcomed at its headquarters in Rome. This group of girls that belong to the Focolare Movement visited FAO on June 22, 2018. Many others worldwide followed this event through live streaming, and among them there were 400 young boys taking part in a congress at the Focolare International small town of Loppiano in Tuscany.

It was the first time that the Movement's young generations, who owe their origin to Chiara Lubich, were favoured with such an opportunity, that thrilled not only the girls seated in the prestigious plenary hall, but also FAO. "I'm so pleased to see this hall so full of young women", commented **Marcela Villareal**, the FAO director for the division of partnerships and South-South cooperation. "I've been working here at FAO for more than 20 years and I have delivered many speeches in this hall, but I've never seen it so beautiful, so full of young ladies. Thank you for your all support towards the Zero Hunger goal".

Today, there are 800 million people in the world who suffer from hunger. After steadily declining for over a decade, owing to violent conflicts and climate change, global hunger appears to be on the rise. Villareal said: "For us here at FAO, this is the biggest scandal and we struggle daily not only to provide the necessary food but also a decent living, where children can live a full life. We are convinced that through our work we can achieve a world without hunger".

The United Nations signed the sustainable development agenda in September 2015; this includes 17 goals that are to be achieved by 2030.

**Sabina Zaccaro**, from the FAO office for institutional communication said: "Never before have world leaders pledged to commit themselves together to such a wide and universal agenda. To defeat world hunger (objective no.2), we need to overcome poverty (objective no.1). But to do this we must all live a sustainable way of life (objective no.12), while we combat the climate change through specific means(objective no.13)".

## THE FIRST ZERO HUNGER CITIZENS

The Focolare youth, scattered all over the world, can give a strong personal daily contribution towards the achievement of the Zero Hunger goal by 2030. On October 16, 2018 FAO will celebrate its 73rd year and it will have the opportunity to re-launch this objective.

**Clara Velez**, Head of the FAO office for the dissemination of promotional activities confirmed: “We will avail ourselves of this occasion to speak about various topics on newspapers, TV, in schools, on streets. Each year we are focussing on a particular issue (immigration, climate change.....), and this year our focus will be on zero hunger. It’s marvellous having you here with us today. On October 16, representatives from all countries will be seated in this same hall and they will be given the book you have received today. This book explains how we can combat hunger through our daily actions. The passport on its last page entitles you to become the first Zero Hunger citizens, with rights and duties that need to be respected”.

But what are the duties of Zero Hunger citizens?

**Laura Hernandez** from the FAO office for dissemination and promotional activities maintained: “One third of the food produced in the world is wasted and thrown away. I’m convinced that you do not want to participate in this scandal. There are certain things we can do at home. For example, when food is left over, one can freeze it or eat it the next day. When we go to a restaurant and do not manage to finish eating all the food, we can consume it later at home. Then, do check the food labels and do not be deceived. The expiry date indicates the date when the food ceases to be good for consumption; but if the label states that the food is “preferably consumed by...”, this means that it can be consumed even a few days after that date. Another important and precious commodity is water. We must not waste water, so the tap should be closed while we brush our teeth. And mum and dad should be reminded to use the dishwasher at full capacity, or to use the dryer only when needed”.

### **The Commitment Statement**

Finally even the girls voiced their thoughts. Elena and Agnes, who represented them said: “We are very honoured and happy to be here. From now on we will definitely contribute towards this goal with greater enthusiasm. We do feel part of the zero hunger generation.

And what a great dream it is to imagine a world without hunger, even thanks to our contribution towards it! We are so happy to collaborate with FAO, because it is only by joining forces that we can manage to achieve such a high goal as Zero Hunger by 2030”.

Focolare children and teenagers in 11 countries have been gathering ideas to try and find out how the problem of world hunger can be solved.

“Our three H motto: *head, heart and hands* originated from these ideas, and our Commitment Statement came into being. *Head* for us means that we have to inform ourselves and study the problem both at a global and local level. *Heart* means that we that we have to make ourselves and others aware, and involve as many people as possible to achieve our goal. Then we need to act, so we have to make use of our *hands*”.

At the end of their visit, the girls handed over their Commitment Statement .to FAO and there was the symbolic gesture of the passport: the girls wrote their commitments on this small document and signed it. They became the first #Zero Hunger citizens.

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