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منظمة  
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# CONFERENCE

## Forty-third Session of the Conference

Rome, 1-7 July 2023

## Message of His Holiness Pope Francis

Madam Chair,

Director-General of FAO,

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen:

I wish to extend my warmest greetings to all participants at the Forty-third Session of this Conference, who have come to Rome from all four corners of the world. I greet the Chair of this Assembly, Marie-Claude Bibeau, the Canadian Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, and the Director-General of FAO, QU Dongyu, whom I congratulate on being elected to a second term at the head of this Organization. I encourage him to continue his work, at a time when decisive and competent action is essential to eradicate the scourge of hunger in the world, which is advancing rather than retreating.

Millions of people continue to suffer from poverty and malnutrition around the world due to armed conflict as well as climate change and the resulting natural disasters. Mass displacement, along with the other effects of global political, economic and military tensions, undermines efforts to improve people's living conditions in recognition of their inherent dignity. It is worth repeating once again: poverty, inequalities and a lack of access to basic resources such as food, drinking water, health, education and housing are a serious affront to human dignity!

Today, many experts claim that the goal of *Zero Hunger* will not be achieved within the timeframe set by the international community. Yet this inability to fulfil our joint responsibilities must not lead us to turn away from our initial intentions and introduce new revised programmes which – far from benefiting people by responding to their real needs – fail to address them entirely. Instead, we must be very mindful and respectful of local communities, cultural diversity and traditional specificities, which cannot be altered or destroyed in the name of a short-sighted idea of progress, which risks becoming synonymous with 'ideological colonization'. For this reason, and I never tire of stressing this point, interventions and projects must be planned and implemented in response to the demands of the people and their communities; they cannot be imposed from above or by bodies that only act in their own interests or for profit.

The task we face is to achieve joint action by the entire family of nations, working in partnership. There can be no room for conflict or enmity, when the enormous challenges at stake

Documents can be consulted at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

require a holistic and multilateral approach. This is why FAO and the other international organizations will only be able to fulfil their mandate and coordinate preventive and incisive measures for the benefit of all, especially the poorest, through loyal and consensual synergy between all stakeholders. Governments, business, academia, international institutions, civil society and individuals must make a joint effort, putting aside petty differences and bias, so that everyone benefits and no one is left behind.

The Holy See, for its part, will continue to contribute to the common good, offering the experience and work of the institutions linked to the Catholic Church to ensure no one in our world goes without their daily bread and our planet is given the protection it needs, so that it can once again flourish as the beautiful garden that came from the hands of the Creator for the delight of humankind. May Almighty God richly bless your labours and efforts to achieve true progress for the whole human family.

Vatican City, 1 July 2023

Francis