

*Message of His Holiness Pope Francis  
for the Opening of the Second Regular Session  
of the Executive Board of the World Food Programme*

To Mr David M. Beasley  
Executive Director of the World Food Programme

On the occasion of the opening of the second regular session of the World Food Programme, I am pleased to greet Mr David M. Beasley, Executive Director, and Ambassador Hisham Mohamed Badr, current President of the Executive Board, together with all members and participants.

At the beginning of this new session, you are seeking to formulate practical initiatives aimed at making more effective the fight against hunger in the world. Your many projects include promoting decisive measures to eliminate food waste, a phenomenon that increasingly weighs on our conscience.

In many places, our brothers and sisters do not have access to sufficient and healthy food, while in others, food is discarded and squandered. This is what my predecessor Saint John Paul II called the *paradox of abundance*, which continues to be an obstacle to resolving the problem of feeding humanity (cf. *Address at the Opening of the International Conference on Nutrition*, 5 December 1992).

This paradox involves mechanisms of superficiality, negligence and selfishness that underlie the culture of waste. Unless we recognize this dynamic and seek to contain it, it will be difficult to honour the commitments of the Paris Agreement on climate change and realize the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda. Accomplishing this objective is the responsibility not only of international organizations and governments, but of everyone. Families, schools, and the communications media have an important task in educating and raising awareness in this regard. No one can be considered exempt from the need to combat this culture that oppresses so many people, especially the poor and vulnerable in society.

The World Food Programme contributes to this cause by recently launching its global campaign *Stop the Waste*, highlighting the fact that food waste damages the lives of many individuals and prevents the progress of peoples. If we wish to build a future where no one is left behind, we must create a present that radically rejects the squandering of food. Together, without losing time, by pooling resources and ideas, we can introduce a lifestyle that gives food the importance it deserves. This new lifestyle consists in properly valuing what mother Earth gives us, and will have an impact on humanity as a whole.

I assure you, in addition, that the Catholic Church is working to foster solidarity among all people and desires to cooperate with the World Food

Programme by reaffirming that each human being has a right to healthy and sustainable nutrition.

I would like this campaign to help assist all those who in our time suffer the effects of poverty, and to demonstrate that whenever the human person is put at the centre of political and economic decisions, peace and stability are consolidated between nations, even as mutual understanding, the foundation of authentic human progress, everywhere increases.

May your commitment and dedication awaken in all people of good will the desire to build a new and better world under the banner of fraternity, justice and peace. May God bless all those who walk on this path.

From the Vatican, 18 November 2019