



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

SIGNED BY CARDINAL ANGELO SODANO

ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD FOOD DAY 1998* To Mr Jacques Diouf

Director General

United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization

Dear Mr Director General, On the occasion of World Food Day, His Holiness Pope John Paul II wishes again to express his appreciation of the work of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization in rural areas and especially among those who actually work the land. With its focus upon the central role of women in achieving the goal of "Fiat Panis", this year's theme "Women Feed the World" moves FAO's range of concern beyond the technical measures required to secure food supplies to a consideration of the essentially human aspects of the struggle against hunger and malnutrition. The Church honours and respects "the feminine genius" in all its forms, and recognizes that in many practical ways women in rural areas are the point where the life of the family and the life of the community merge. This means that there can be no separation of women's *life in the family* as wives and mothers and their *life in society* as workers and economic producers. What emerges at both points is their legitimate desire to play their part in working for the common good, not only in their own everyday world but also in larger ways which look to society as a whole. Such a vision calls for a recognition of the equality of women and especially their equal rights. This is essential if women and men are to work together on the basis of reciprocal functions and complementary roles. It is all the more important at a time when humanity is facing new and important challenges. Mr Director General, the Holy Father expresses the hope that this World Food Day will help to bring a deeper understanding of women's capacity to nurture, to love and to educate. This will lead in turn to a deeper understanding of women not only as "feeders of the world", but as peace-makers and guardians of true human values. With the earnest prayer that God will "fill the hungry with good things", the Holy Father expresses once more to you, Mr Director General, and to all who share in the work of FAO, his sentiments of deep respect and esteem. Yours sincerely **Card. Angelo Sodano**

Segretario di

Stato

* *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. XXI, 2 p. 745-746. *L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English* n.43 p.12.
