



13 March 2014 – FAO Director-General [José Graziano da Silva](#) has pointed out the “remarkable results” achieved in some countries of the region in reducing hunger. The call for a “massive effort” to end hunger in Asia and the Pacific by Graziano da Silva has received positive responses by FAO countries, boosting the mission for an end to hunger in the world’s most populous region.

“Thailand and Viet Nam have reduced the number of hungry people in their countries by over 80 percent,” the Director-General said as he addressed the 32nd FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific,. China has also achieved the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of halving the proportion of hungry people by 2015, he added. “For Asia as a whole, the proportion of hunger has fallen from 24.1 percent in 1990-92, to 13.5 percent in 2011-13.”

While the region is on track to achieve the MDG hunger goal, more must be done, the FAO chief said. Even if Asia and the Pacific reaches the target of 12 percent, it would still have well over 500 million hungry people, more than all other regions combined. “We must not tolerate a situation in which a single man, woman or child is still condemned to suffer hunger in this prosperous region where there is enough food for all and the means exist to put an end to hunger,” Graziano da Silva said.

Zero Hunger Challenge

FAO is calling on member countries in the Asia-Pacific region to step forward with national campaigns to promote the [Zero Hunger Challenge](#), which was launched on a global scale by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2012.

The Director-General invited all countries “to take on board the Zero Hunger Challenge, engaging all their people in a massive effort” to bring about a lasting end to hunger in the region by 2025. The government of Timor-Leste has already taken up the call, launching the region’s first National Zero Hunger Challenge earlier this year. “The launching of the National Zero Hunger Challenge in January of this year marks the beginning of our mission to have a food-secure and nourished country,” Marcos da Cruz, Vice Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, told participants, adding that Timor-Leste has among the highest proportions of child stunting, under-nutrition and infant and child mortality.

FAO regional initiatives

FAO has spent the last two years strengthening its technical abilities at regional, sub-regional and country level, Graziano da Silva told the conference.

“We are working much more closely with governments, with international and regional institutions, with civil society and with the private sector to advance our goal of a food secure and sustainable world,” he said. “But our work will only matter if we transform this vision into reality. The renewed FAO is swinging into action.”

In addition to the Zero Hunger Challenge for Asia and the Pacific, FAO has developed three other regional initiatives to respond to priorities set by member countries at the last regional conference in 2012 at Hanoi. A Regional Rice Initiative is now in its second phase and is being followed up at country level. The Regional Blue Growth initiative is designed to guarantee that the region’s oceans and marine resources are used in a more sustainable way. Another regional initiative aims to develop local value chains for food security and nutrition in Pacific island countries.

This year, 2014, has been designated by the United Nations as the International Year of Family Farming and the Director-General has called on member States across Asia-Pacific to “work together, particularly at the national level, to reposition family farming at the centre of agricultural, environmental and social policies on national agendas.” Family farmers and smallholders “do so much with so little, imagine if (they) received greater support from governments,” the Director-General said.

The 32nd FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific has attracted more than 200 participants mainly from governments of 41 countries in the region. Twelve ministers and nine vice- ministers participated, as well as civil society organizations and observers.

UNRIC's related links:

UNRIC's backgrounder on [food waste](#)

UNRIC's backgrounder on the [global food crisis](#)

UNRIC's article on [chronic hunger](#)

UNRIC's article on the [Zero Hunger Challenge](#)

UNRIC's article on hunger as a [development failure](#)