

Estimated Commissario Unico

Dear Presidents of the National Council and Council of States

Dear representatives of the cantons and cities

Dear representatives of the Expo

Dear visitors of the Expo

Not only here in Italy – but in Italy especially – when we think of food and nutrition, we think of taste and pleasure. Of culture and creativity. We think of hospitality and generosity. Of sensuality, vitality and “joie de vivre”.

A World Expo is always an exhibition about ourselves: about how we live together and how we shape the world, how we form and change it.

By choosing the theme "Feeding the planet", the organizers have sent out a clear signal. This topic is to be shown in all its breadth, and on the subject of food, we all know;

Nutrition can also mean that there is poverty and lack. Hunger and suffering. Exploitation and waste.

Ladies and gentlemen, the goal is clear: Everyone has the right to healthy and sufficient food.

Where are we today? – There are some good news:

Since the early 1990s, the number of hungry people has fallen by more than 200 million worldwide. These figures are encouraging. And this also means that we do certain things right. But we also know:

- 800 million people do not have enough to eat.
- And one out of nine people globally are going to bed hungry every night.

Food security is a complex issue and the fight against hunger is far more than just a question of the distribution of available food: hunger goes hand in hand with the reduction of poverty.

And here as well, there are some uncomfortable questions that need to be asked:

- Why do so many countries remain in abject poverty although their soils are rich in oil, gold, copper, diamonds and other valuable minerals and metals?
- How is it possible that of the 25 countries with the world's highest child mortality, 12 countries are resource-rich African states?

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are fighting against hunger and for food security. We invest heavily in development cooperation. Switzerland has, for example, last year alone, supported the poorest countries with CHF 3 billion.

But what do we do, if we find that in resource-rich countries wealth is not used for poverty reduction?

Are we paying enough attention?

Are we brave enough to be committed to an equitable distribution of wealth?

For one thing is clear: 70 percent of people affected by extreme poverty today live in resource-rich countries.

And as long as we do not manage to resolve this contradiction, we will not be able to feed the whole planet.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are countless measures to combat hunger and poverty, and I would like to mention just two of them:

On the state level, we have to increase transparency in the commodities industry. Switzerland as a leading commodity trading hub has a special responsibility here. The Federal Council presented initial proposals, more steps need to follow.

And on an individual level, each and every one of us can contribute through their own consumption patterns. Here, Switzerland plays a very good role: no other country consumes per capita more fair trade and organic products.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Expo Milano 2015 raises issues of great relevance. I therefore wish the Expo much attention and success.

I would like to thank the organisers, thank Italy and the City of Milan for the hospitality and convey to you herewith the greetings and congratulations of the Swiss government.