



The President
of the Economic and Social Council

**Statement of the President of ECOSOC, on the occasion of the World Food Day 2007 Observance,
Delivered by H.E. Mr. Léo Mérorès, Vice-President of ECOSOC
New York 18 October.**
on the occasion of World Food Day
New York, 18 October 2007

His Excellency Mr. Srgjan Kerim, President of the General Assembly
Mr. Ismael Benavides, Minister of Agriculture of Peru
Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Assistant Secretary-General
Mr. James Godfrey, Chairman of the Board, International Potato Center and
Mr. Jacques Diouf, Director-General, food and Agriculture Organisation
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

Welcome to the World Food Day observance which this year holds a message that will sound so simple and obvious to all of us, but is still so far from being a reality for millions of hungry people: the right to food.

The choice of the Right to Food as theme for World Food Day is of particular relevance, given the efforts necessary in many countries to bring about change in view of the 2015 goal of halving the number of hungry. It reaffirms the international community's awareness of the role of human rights in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the interdependency that exists between human rights, development and security.

Today coincides also with the launch of the International Year of the Potato. The Year of the Potato will provide us with the opportunity to focus global attention on the potato and its role in world agriculture and economy. Special attention will be given to promote better linkage to markets, in order to help potato farmers compete and increase their income.

We share a common vision. It is a vision of a world without hunger, where people are able, by themselves, to obtain the food they need for an active and healthy life. It is a world where safety nets ensure that those who lack resources still get enough to eat. In this context, the persistently high number of men, women and children suffering from chronic hunger is unacceptable.

The challenge of eliminating hunger is no longer a question of lack of means in the hands of the global community, but rather a question of equitable distribution. The vision of a hunger-free century is still possible if there is political will to mobilize those resources to the benefit of the hungry. Concrete actions – and changes - especially with regard to the

structural root causes of hunger, are necessary. Promoting the realization of the right to food will contribute to this end.

ECOSOC, as the principal UN body for coordination in social, economic and related matters is well placed as forum for this important debate.

Ensuring that every human being enjoys adequate food on a permanent basis is not only a moral imperative and an investment with high economic returns: it is the realization of a fundamental human right. It is time to make hunger history and the right to food a reality for all.

Thank you.