

# Opening statement by the Secretary General at the Expo 2015 Milan workshop, co-organised with the Italian Representation to the EU, 28 April 2015, Brussels

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Excellencies; Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Permanent Representation of Italy to the European Union for the initiative to organise this workshop in collaboration with the ACP Secretariat. I welcome you all to the ACP House. This is your home.

As you may have been aware, the theme chosen for the 2015 Milan Universal Exposition is "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life". This theme embraces technology, innovation, culture, traditions and creativity; and how they relate to food, nutrition and the broader issue of sustainable development, which in the light of new global scenarios and emerging issues, will be focused on the right to healthy, secure and sufficient food for the world's inhabitants.

For many of our ACP countries, the concerns in this sector in the years to come are compounded by forecasts of increasing uncertainties regarding the quantities and qualities of food that will be available globally. These concerns were largely ignored at a time when it appeared that increases in resource availability would outstrip increases in consumption. However, the rapid depletion of agricultural surpluses has clearly manifested the urgency of the problem of how to Feed the Planet and prevent hunger.

In a large number of our ACP countries, agriculture remains the single most important sector. This sector will however continue to be the largest single occupation for the foreseeable future in our rural communities.

In today's contemporary global environment, sustainable agriculture and rural development need to be strengthened through best practices to meet the challenges of improving the livelihoods of our rural populations. This can be done by enhancing farmer's income, increasing farm output to meet market demand, and producing in a sustainable manner, to conserve the environment. These need to be linked together.

Globally, production capacity for food products is unequal due to the presence of two main factors involved in sustainable production along with equitable distribution. These components are the environmental capacity of the area of production, and the human capacity along the production value chain. Nevertheless, the origin of food products can closely be linked to quality, tradition, competitiveness, and profitability to mention a few. These are the focus of the Milan Expo 2015.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The seven proposed sub-themes of the Milan Expo 2015 - Science for Food Safety, Security and Quality; Innovation in the Agro Food Supply Chain; Technology for Agriculture and Biodiversity; Dietary Education; Solidarity and Cooperation on Food; Food for Better Lifestyles; and Food in the World's Cultures and Ethnic Groups are very important elements that require the world attention if we are to feed ourselves in the next coming decades.

Again, I welcome you all to this workshop and I hope we will be able to find the time out of our tight schedule to visit beautiful city of Milan for the very important Expo 2015.

I thank you very much.

**Dr Patrick I. Gomes**  
**ACP Secretary General**

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