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SPEAKERS IN HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL CITE

INSUFFICIENT PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING MILLENNIUM GOALS

JIM MORRIS, Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), said achieving the Millennium Goals would go a long way towards creating economic environments conducive to development in rural parts of the world. The international community's single most important undertaking was to cut poverty in half by 2015, and do it by eliminating child hunger. If States joined together in proclaiming that child hunger was no longer acceptable, that vehicle could be used to reduce poverty by 50 per cent. Food and nutrition were also central factors in making progress against HIV/AIDS.

The WFP was working with Madagascar's Government to help it cope with economic shocks by improving rural infrastructure, especially in the most vulnerable parts of the country. It mainly worked with women, who produced 80 per cent of food and did much of the home care in most of Africa. Some 60 per cent of rural ration cards were issued to women on behalf of their families.

The Programme was also looking at the impact of HIV/AIDS on women, and children, especially those who became orphans. Some 7 million to 8 million people in Africa had lost their lives to AIDS, and many more were weakened and unable to do their daily work, so traditional knowledge about managing the family farm was being lost. The WFP had partnered with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to teach orphans how to manage an agricultural facility.