



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

26 March 2009

Excellency,

In keeping with the priorities of the sixty-third session outlined in my inaugural address, and in partnership with specialized agencies and organizations, I am convening an informal General Assembly thematic dialogue on the Global Food Crisis and the Right to Food on Monday, 6 April of this year in the Trusteeship Council Chamber.

While global food prices have fallen from their highs of early last year, the food crisis is far from over. As we know, hundreds of millions of people continue to slide into poverty and hunger; and we as an international community must not let the global financial crisis and the drop in food prices eclipse the urgent need to address the structural causes of the food crisis and world hunger.

The one day dialogue will be organized into two separate, but interrelated panels, comprised of experts from various disciplinary fields, including economics, agronomics and agro-ecology, and human rights. The panels will provide Member States a unique opportunity to hear key voices and engage a range of actors from the north and south involved in agricultural and food issues, including small-farmers and scientists.

Particular attention will be given to the work of the UN Special Rapporteur to strengthen the global response to world food crisis by developing tools specifically based on the recognition of the right to food as a human right, recognized in international law. Today there is an emerging consensus among key stakeholders that a rights-based approach to the food crisis offers a much needed perspective to the international discussion.

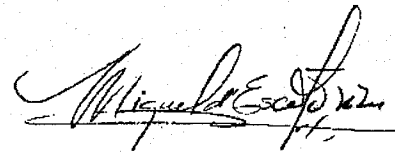
All Permanent Representatives
and Permanent Observers
to the United Nations
New York

In his concluding remarks to the High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All in January of this year, the Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon stated: 'We must continue to meet urgent hunger and humanitarian needs by providing food and nutrition assistance and safety nets, while focusing on improving food production and smallholder agriculture. This is the twin-track approach taken in the Comprehensive Framework for Action. We should be ready to add a third track—the right to food—as a basis for analysis, action and accountability.'

I believe such an approach will offer new insights not only in identifying those who are most vulnerable, but also to identify practical ways to introduce and operationalize the right to food at the international, regional and national levels.

Please find attached a Concept Note for the interactive thematic dialogue. This note was prepared by the UN Special Rapporteur Professor Olivier de Schutter at my request. A more detailed programme and information on the panelists will be submitted shortly.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of the highest consideration and esteem.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann', written over a horizontal line.

Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann