

Dr Jacques Diouf
Director General
FAO
Rome



19 October 2004

Dear Director General

World Food Day 2004

This year, as in previous years, the UK Food Group has marked World Food Day on 16th October in London. We were pleased to coordinate the publicity for a themed series of seminars, workshops and a plenary at the European Social Forum as well as co-sponsoring two seminars on food sovereignty, trade and agricultural biodiversity – the latter being the theme of this year's World Food Day.

The events were very well attended with capacity audiences. However, I have to inform you that there were a number of interventions that were highly critical of FAO's recent report on the State of Food And Agriculture which promoted increased investments in genetic engineering in the name of the 'Fight against Hunger'.

I was mandated, by the delegates at the World Food Day events at the European Social Forum 2004, to convey a message to FAO expressing their concerns. Annexed to this letter is the full statement in which is included the following specific message to FAO:

“In solidarity with peasant and smallholder farmers’ organisations and joining the hundreds of organisations and social movements across the world that have already criticised FAO for the contents of its 2004 SOFA report on biotechnology, delegates at the European Social Forum 2004 World Food Day events condemn the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) for promoting the development and use of genetically modified crops for eradicating poverty and hunger; and call on FAO immediately to reject the agendas and the direct and indirect influences of Trans National Corporations in its normative and operational work; and to reorient all its efforts to tackling the root causes of hunger, promoting sustainable agroecological technologies and defending agricultural biodiversity.”

I would be pleased to learn what steps FAO will be taking to address the concerns raised by delegates to the European Social Forum and, through the UK Food Group, will endeavour to convey this information to them.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patrick Mulvany

Chair, UK Food Group

enc: World Food Day flyer and Seminar programme