



**Intergovernmental Institution
for the Use of Micro-algae Spirulina
Against Malnutrition**

Permanent Intergovernmental Observer to the United Nations Economic and Social Council

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*“There are people in the world so hungry that God
cannot appear to them except in the form of bread”
Mahatma Gandhi*

**STATEMENT BY: AMBASSADOR H.E. REMIGIO MARTIN MARADONA
DIRECTOR GENERAL & HEAD OF IIMSAM OBSERVER DELEGATION TO
THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

On the Observance of the:

**UNITED NATIONS WORLD FOOD DAY
(16TH OCTOBER 2008)**

**United Nations Headquarters
Goodwill Ambassadors & Press Luncheon**

**For the Official Launching of:
The Celebrate Life Campaign Initiative Against Malnutrition**

IIMSAM

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Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

We have gathered today on the occasion of the World Food Day under the shadows of the global food crisis and financial turmoil across the world, to express our solidarity for our ambition to realise a world free of hunger and malnutrition.

UN Resolution 62/164 The Right to Food which IIMSAM perceives as the bedrock of the very Right to Life first finds mention in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the year 1948.

In the year 1996, the international community through the World Food Summit in Rome reaffirmed "the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger."

More than a decade has passed and we are much lagging behind to realise our goals. Meanwhile, immense damage has been unleashed by our apathy and shortcomings that have extracted an immense toll from the humankind; and the developing and the least developed countries bearing the disproportionate brunt of it all.

A recent report by the UNICEF notes that child deaths in the year 2007 were over 9 million; and the FAO reports that rising prices have plunged an additional 75 million people below the hunger threshold, bringing the estimated number of undernourished people worldwide to 923 million in 2007.

These statistics present an abysmal picture and also ask for a serious introspection from us- we that share the lofty platforms to discuss the very issues that impact the humankind and its well being. What stops us to translate our ambitions into concrete actions?

I get a sense of '*mea culpa*' when I notice that as the international community celebrates the World Food Day, how many of us would care to think about the children that are dying at this very moment. I am indeed a culprit of my own conscience much like you are. To make something a ritual is very easy but to fulfill it is immensely difficult and challenging.

A few days back the international community celebrated the World Non-Violence Day commemorating Mahatma Gandhi. Around 150 countries have issued commemorative stamps on the great man. But how many stop and ponder about our unfortunate brethren about whom Gandhi says that *there are people in the world so hungry that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread.*

The other day I was discussing the very issue with our Ambassador in India Mr. Manish Uprety and Mr. Tushar Gandhi, the great grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and IIMSAM goodwill ambassador who heads the Mahatma Gandhi Foundation; and we came to the

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conclusion that unless the need to tackle hunger is prioritized by the international community, peace and prosperity shall remain a distant dream in our world.

Friends! , an enlightened human being is the one that makes world a better place for all.

And we are fortunate to have an enlightened one as our Secretary General of the United Nations who talks about and emphasises on the very need of fresh ideas to strategize the initiatives of the international community to counter challenges faced by the humankind.

IIMSAM firmly believes in the approach of the Secretary General H.E. Ban ki Moon that asks for a “real commitment and real action” to realise our noble ambitions.

Malnutrition is the biggest challenge in securing and realizing the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. IIMSAM advocates for food fortification, which in essence means, adding a little Spirulina to the food so that all the essential proteins, minerals, vitamins and nutrients that are required for the healthy functioning of human body are delivered to the peoples of the world. We aspire to make Spirulina a key-driver to eradicate malnutrition, achieve food security and bridge the health divide.

IIMSAM prioritises the marginalised and concentrates to work from the grassroots up to initiate multi-tiered empowerment processes leading towards building of various capacities and capabilities. Our programmes have a priority for the developing and the least developed countries; and I am pleased to inform you that **4** of IIMSAM’s Country Programmes are lead by disabled people and **2** of them are women.

IIMSAM’s Project Fallujah under the supervision of our goodwill ambassador ***Dr. Tarik alAbdullah in Fallujah, Iraq*** is manifestation of the fact that firm determination is the key to success. Nutritional rehabilitation of children and women through Spirulina and that too in a zone ravaged by conflict is not only a significant lesson for various agencies involved in reconstruction processes but also commendable and worthy of emulation across the world.

Celebrate Life is a campaign that is initiated by our goodwill ambassador from Italy, ***Dr. Marco Fantinel*** on behalf of IIMSAM.

It is a unique idea as it gives an opportunity to people who share good times with family and friends to connect with the lives of their fellow brethren by being a part of an invisible process that would effect a positive change in the lives of the less fortunate ones. No wonder, the very concept emanated from Italy, a country which is a leader in Food and Agro industries and also a leader to champion important causes from various international platforms. I express my gratitude to Dott. Castiglione, Agriculture Minister of Italy who especially came from Italy to express solidarity with the cause and mandate of IIMSAM on the World Food day.

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I would like also like to acknowledge and express my gratitude for the immense hard work of **Mr. Anthony Angiulli**, President of Friends of IIMSAM Foundation who spared no effort to solicit the support of various conscientious people for the cause of IIMSAM and its mandate to realise a world free of hunger and malnutrition.

The members of the Friends of IIMSAM foundation are not just eminent citizens but what connects them is their zeal for a better world for the humankind.

I also welcome our new goodwill ambassador **Dr. Mufada Kamal** to join in our efforts to save precious lives that are lost to malnutrition; and to affect a positive change in the lives of those who are marginalised because of malnutrition.

I recall **Margaret Mead** who said that “never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Our goodwill ambassadors and the members of Friends of IIMSAM Foundation indeed manifest to it.

Friends!, it was in the year 1974 that Spirulina was declared as ‘the best food for the future’ at the World Food Conference organised by the United Nations. It has already been 34 years that have extracted a heavy toll on human lives and caused immense suffering worldwide. How distant is the future that was mentioned in 1974; and how long shall we wait for that future to arrive? How many more deaths of innocent children will occur before the international community incorporates Spirulina as a tool of policy and practice in the food security agenda.

I seek your support and cooperation for IIMSAM and for our efforts that aspire to make Spirulina a key-driver to eradicate malnutrition, achieve food security and bridge the health divide in our ambition to realise the UN Millennium Development Goals. As long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over.

On the occasion of the World Food Day, I am confident that each one of us here would be an agent that would effect a positive change towards a world free of hunger and malnutrition.

Thank You.

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