

Measures towards zero hunger in Africa

ROME, Italy - FAO special ambassador: Zero Hunger Europe, Carlo Petrini, met with Gabriel Rugalema, FAO representative in Kenya, as part of his visit to the country earlier this month, aimed at building networks in Africa towards hunger eradication.



Image by 123RF

Petrini called for the joining of forces towards the provision of good, clean and fair food, while growing Kenya's [Ark of Taste Project](#).

The Slow Food international president and founder is in Kenya to firm up collaborations with local organisations and partners towards the movement's first congress in the African region in 2017.

He urged FAO to identify unique and unrecognised food products that deserve to be included in the international catalogue of endangered heritage foods which is maintained by the global [Slow Food](#) movement.

"Behind each product we have a community. We have the possibility to work together with FAO to preserve products at the risk of extinction. Apart from nutritional value, these products contribute towards both our patrimonial and cultural heritage," he said.

In view of the next Slow Food International Congress to be held in Nakuru, Kenya, in June 2017, Rugalema, promised that his team would support the event with expertise as well as in various areas discussed during the meeting.

"Slow Food and FAO are already doing a good job, but there are more opportunities as the needs are immense. It's a great prospect to explore further how our collaboration and different strategies can meet these needs," said Rugalema.

During the meeting, various areas of possible collaboration such as biodiversity and the food composition table in Kenya, inclusion of the wealth of pastoral communities, food safety strategies, policies towards food security – all areas that FAO currently involved in were discussed.

In his role, Petrini is tasked to help ensure a better understanding of FAO's vision of a world free of hunger and malnutrition.

Slow food movement

The slow food movement in Kenya started in 2004 and currently has 30 local chapters of the [Terra Madre](#) (Indigenous

Peoples) network. The three main activities relevant to Petrini's visit, include the expansion of the Ark of Taste project; the Terra Madre Indigenous people's network; and the [10,000 "clean and fair food gardens"](#) in African schools and communities" with 350 gardens in Kenya.

During the current visit, the [Slow Food Chefs' Alliance in Kenya](#) will be launched. The alliance brings together a network of chefs who, through an agreement, commit to support small producers by using their products in their kitchens.

There are currently 50 Kenyan products in the Ark of Taste – all with strong cultural links such as the [River Nzoia Reed salad](#), the [Ogiek honey](#) grown by a local forest community, the [Molo sheep](#) and the [Pokot Ash yoghurt](#).

There is a potential for many more in the 170 countries that the movement has reached. Italy, where the foundation begun now has 700 products nominated and identified in the Ark of Taste. The visit gives an opportunity to explore further Africa's potential for this prestigious mark.

By coming together, both organisations strongly benefit from each other's well established organisational reputations that contribute towards value addition and better niche markets, knowledge, preservation of well identified and beneficial traditional food practices and the overall goal to end hunger.

In his role as a special ambassador: Zero Hunger, Petrini is tasked to help ensure a better understanding of FAO's vision of a world free of hunger and malnutrition, in which food and agriculture contribute towards improving livelihoods, particularly those of poor people.

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