



Statement by Åsa Skogström Feldt

**President and CEO of The Hunger Project, to the
Interactive Session of the General Assembly on the
Elements of the Political Declaration, 19 Feb 2015**

Mr. President, I am honored to be here on behalf of millions of rural women, men and youth active in The Hunger Project across Africa, Asia and Latin America.

On their behalf, I would like to make one point on what we must do to reach the world we want. We must empower people.

It is time to rethink our approaches. Women and men living in poverty are not the problem; they are the solution. When given the chance, women, men and youth will provide the leadership, intelligence and hard work to overcome their poverty and preserve the environment.

In mobilizing people, we must **start with women**. Women are the majority of those living in poverty. Women do far more than their fair share of the work. They invest in the development of their families and communities. Women must be empowered as key change agents

This declaration must call for a **world of opportunity** that empowers people to succeed as **authors of their own development**.

Mobilizing people's self-reliant efforts must be the starting point of revitalized partnerships.

National ownership is critical – and it must reflect the ownership, aspirations and participation of people and their local communities.

Strong institutions must build from the bottom up – with people's own associations and participatory local government.

Unleashing people's power to lead their own change is indeed the road to dignity for all.

Thank you.