

World Food Programme



FACTS AND FIGURES



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GLOBAL HUNGER

- Despite progress made in the fight against hunger in the last decades, roughly 800 million people (more than the combined populations of the United States, Canada, Russia, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Japan) still suffer from chronic hunger.
- What is worse is that progress against hunger has slowed to a crawl and in most regions the number of malnourished people is actually growing.
 - Every day, 24,000 people die of hunger, malnutrition and related diseases.
 - In the last 50 years, an estimated 400 million people worldwide have died from hunger and poor sanitation. That's three times the number of people killed in all wars fought in the entire 20th century.

New Trends

- In recent years, conflict and recurring natural disasters have added millions to the numbers of people needing help from the international community. The last decade has seen a tripling in the number of victims of large natural disasters compared with the 1960s, affecting 136 million people, on average, every year.
 - Climate change, in particular, has resulted in a serious increase in drought and floods affecting some of the most vulnerable people in the poorest countries on the planet. This phenomenon will require significant and additional resources from donor countries.
- HIV/AIDS has infected 42 million people worldwide – the majority of whom live in developing countries. Besides the suffering, socio-economic structures are under threat. The productive generation is dying off, leaving orphans and elderly unable to grow food; AIDS and famine are directly linked.

Impact of Hunger and Malnutrition

- Hunger and malnutrition affects peoples' economic growth, health, productivity and quality of life. The world produces enough food to feed everyone.
- Malnutrition is one of the prime causes of low birth weight in developing countries, where, each year, some 30 million infants are born with low birth weight. Babies who survive remain underweight and sickly throughout their childhood and adolescence.
 - If childhood malnutrition was eliminated in India, for example, the country's gross domestic product could increase by up to US\$28 billion, according to the World Bank. This is more than India's current combined expenditures on nutrition, health and education.
- An estimated 150 million pre-school children worldwide are underweight, and 200 million are stunted, but experts agree this is only the tip of the iceberg. Each year, 11 million children under the age of five die from hunger, malnutrition and related diseases – equivalent to one child every five seconds.
- Hidden hunger or micronutrient deficiency – the lack of essential nutrients in food – is still widespread.
 - An estimated 254 million pre-school children are affected by vitamin A deficiency in 118 countries, a leading cause of preventable blindness. On average, improving vitamin A intake can reduce death rates in children by 23 percent, due to its ability to strengthen the immune system.
 - Iron deficiency, the leading cause of anemia, remains pandemic, affecting two billion people. The phenomenon is partly responsible for high rates of illness and death.



Why the public in donor countries should care

- The overwhelming reason to give aid is humanitarian. It is a basic human value common for all peoples and societies to assist those less well off than them. Saving the lives of the victims of emergency humanitarian crises is the most obvious way of doing this.
- The continuing pressure of illegal immigration into many developed countries is caused, among other reasons, by poverty and hunger in developing nations. The majority of these people would prefer to remain in their countries with their families.
- The cost of countering this immigration tide is tremendous. In the long run it is more efficient, and humane, to invest in countering hunger and poverty in developing countries.
- Creating purchasing power: these countries purchase growing amounts of manufactured goods from donor nations, so maintaining positive relations can help create or secure markets.
- Creating long-term trading opportunities: poor countries can buy little. Strongly growing economies in developing countries offer the prospect of increased world trade and an expanding range of trading partners.

What can be done

- Much hunger today is a creation of politics. And it demands political solutions. There are no obstacles – other than lack of political will – that would prevent the world from ending hunger tomorrow.
- To halve the number of hungry people by 2015, will require investment in agriculture, trade reform and better research. But the international community has a duty to feed people who are hungry today.
- For the 300 million children (more than the entire population of the United States) whose lives are scarred by hunger, food aid is what they need now.
 - For a modest sum of 19 US cents, 22 euro cents, or 25 yen a day, a meal can be provided in school that both helps end childhood hunger and promotes education.
 - School feeding can significantly contribute to global efforts to halve hunger.

World Food Programme and Hunger

- WFP is the largest humanitarian organisation in the world and the United Nations' front-line agency in the fight against global hunger. WFP assists around 80 million people a year in 82 countries, including most of the refugees and internally displaced people.
 - WFP provides emergency aid to save the lives of people caught up in conflict or natural disasters, and helps the world's poorest people to build better lives.
 - WFP moves food by whatever means – from ships to barges and even canoes, from air drops to pack mules. Every day, WFP has 20 aircraft and 40 ships on the high seas – bringing food to those in need.
- Over the last 40 years, WFP has fed more than one billion of the world's poorest people, delivered over 60 million tonnes of food to 100 countries and committed more than US\$30 billion for relief and development activities worldwide.
- Nothing is more pressing than giving life-saving help to victims of emergencies.
- The new phenomenon of shifting weather patterns and conflicts are bringing about a major shift in WFP's work and claiming resources on a large scale.
- Totally dependent on voluntary contributions, humanitarian agencies like WFP are caught between the rising needs of the hungry and donor budgets feeling the pinch of the global economic slowdown.