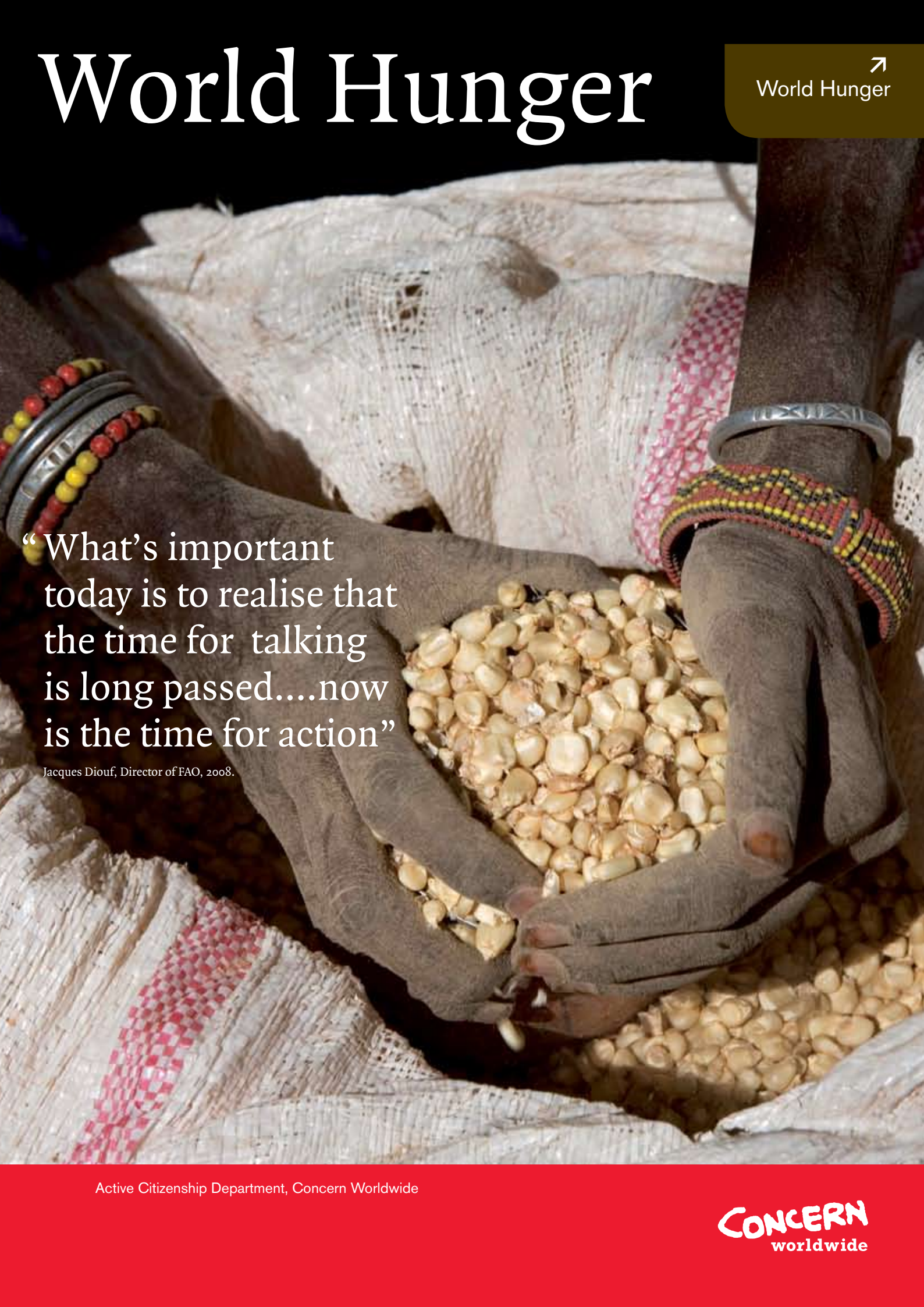


World Hunger

World Hunger 



“What’s important today is to realise that the time for talking is long passed....now is the time for action”

Jacques Diouf, Director of FAO, 2008.

Active Citizenship Department, Concern Worldwide

CONCERN
worldwide



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Written by Joanna Rea and Michael Doorly. Date of publication: February, 2009.

“ People who are forced to live from hand to mouth are denied a life of dignity”

Global Hunger Index Report 2007



Cover image: A portion of maize kernels is handed out by a Gabbra pastoralist woman (wearing their distinctive bracelets) during a food aid distribution in Kalacha organised by the Kenyan organisation CIFA, which is supported by Concern Worldwide. Gideon Mendel, Kenya 2006

Photo: The local food aid committee in Maikona, Kenya. Gideon Mendel, 2006.

Foreword

It is sometimes hard to believe that in the midst of unprecedented global wealth and progress in science, medicine and technology, millions of people still go hungry every day. They are denied their most basic rights and freedoms and are condemned to a life of suffering. **This is the real scandal and greatest contradiction of our time – poverty in a world of plenty.** Hunger, like so many other global issues, is a stark reminder of our divided and unequal world. At its most basic, hunger is a lack of food but ultimately, it is a political issue, it is a man-made problem. Therefore, hunger can only be ended with political will and action. Without this action and renewed international effort, millions of people will be left behind and **poverty and hunger will remain the biggest challenges facing humanity.** It is time to put an end to the injustice that is global hunger.

Hunger is the most extreme form of poverty, when families and communities are unable to meet their most basic food needs. **963 million people around the world go to bed hungry every night.** For a variety of connected reasons, they are unable to access the food they require; the credit they need to buy food, set up a business or buy tools, seeds and equipment; because they are unable to access the education needed to break the cycle of poverty and because the governments of the world have not done enough to put an end to hunger in a world of plenty.

This resource is intended for anyone interested in learning and thinking critically about hunger and increasing their understanding of the international efforts to end it. It will also highlight Concern Worldwide's approach to tackling hunger using examples and case studies.

“It would take a modest effort to end hunger and malnutrition worldwide. Hunger is a political condition. And so the key to overcoming hunger is to change the politics of hunger”

www.bread.org

Key facts and statistics

World food prices have increased by 46% since 2006; the prices of rice, wheat and maize have doubled in 2007.

25% of all hungry people are children.

Almost 10 million children under the age of 5 die each year from the effects of hunger.

Emergencies account for only **8%** of the world's hungry.

963 million people in the world go to bed hungry every night.

If current trends continue, there will be 580 million hungry people in 2015.

The proportion of total aid to agriculture has declined from 17% in 1980 to 3% in 2005.

Hunger claims 25,000 lives every day.

Hunger and malnutrition remain the number one risk to health in the world today.

In quantitative terms, there is enough food to feed every person on the planet.

Section One

Understanding Hunger

Introduction

The world had made progress towards ending hunger. In 1963, the first World Food Congress addressed the issue of hunger and at that gathering, US President Kennedy noted *"we have the means; we have the capacity to eliminate hunger from the face of the earth in our lifetime. We need only the will"*. In **1974** world leaders, for the first time, committed to end hunger within 10 years. In that year, **one in three people went hungry**. From 1970 to 1997, the number of hungry people dropped from 959 to 791 million. In the past 20 years, global infant mortality rates have reduced by 33 per cent and health conditions have improved more in the last 50 years than at any other time in history. Countries like Bangladesh, traditionally known for famine and food shortages, have transformed their agricultural industry with rice production 70 per cent higher than it was in the 1970s. **In the first half of the 1990s, the number of hungry people fell by 37 million** and the world was optimistic about achieving its goal of finally ending hunger.

However, despite this progress, **hunger began to increase again in the late 1990s - by almost five million people a year** - bringing the number back up to the current figure of 963 million people. Now, **one in seven people goes hungry**. In 2005, the FAO listed **35 countries as facing 'serious food shortages'** and any progress made has differed significantly between regions. For example, between 1970 and 1999, food production decreased by 11.3% in sub-Saharan Africa while, at the same time, it increased by 43.3% and 30% in East and South Asia respectively. One explanation for this stark difference is the success of the 'Green Revolution' in Asia which did not have a similar impact in Africa. Increasing population in Africa has combined with decreasing economic growth, limiting the ability of countries to feed their populations. **Sub-Saharan Africa remains the only region in the world where the issues of poverty and hunger are getting worse.**

Having failed to reach the target set in 1974, the international community set itself a **more 'modest' goal: to halve hunger by 2015**. However, at current rates, **the number of hungry people in the world will not even be halved until at least 2050**. A number of new threats have emerged such as rising food prices, climate change and growing demand which could increase further the number of poor and hungry people around the world.

The Green Revolution

In the 1950s Professor Norman Borlaug, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, developed varieties of wheat and rice that were resistant to disease and could produce high yields with water and fertiliser.

In the 1960s, the adoption of these new varieties of seeds was heralded as the solution to hunger, a 'green revolution'. The improved seeds were used with great success in India, Pakistan, Mexico and in some parts of Africa. However, although these seeds boosted production and led to an increase in the actual amount of food, these new practices did not reach poor rural farmers, especially those in Africa. Farmers did not have access to the water and fertiliser needed to benefit from these new seeds. While the 'green revolution' has been noted as one of the main contributors to the reduction of malnutrition in many Asian countries, it was not to become the solution to world hunger.

Critics of Borlaug's approach also argue that it increased dependency on expensive and environmentally harmful fertilisers and any benefits from agricultural production are concentrated in middle-income households and not in poor families.

Professor Borlaug was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1970 for his breakthrough work in plant breeding and its impact on food production.



Moses Kerokara at the Concern supported Farmer resource centre in Grand Bassa, Liberia. Photo: Christopher Herwig 2007

What is hunger?

“Hunger is much more than an empty stomach”
(World Food Programme)

We are all familiar with the stereotypical images of hunger – a small, black African child in the arms of its mother, looking sick and weak, helicopters air-dropping large bags of rice, refugees queuing for food rations following a natural disaster. The Ethiopian famine, floods in Bangladesh, refugees in the camps of Sudan. These images are beamed into our sitting rooms on an almost daily basis and they have become our main reference point for understanding hunger. Although awful and upsetting to see in today's world, these images do not accurately represent all the challenges that families, communities and governments face and the complex set of factors, structures and processes that keep people poor and hungry.

Although extremely tragic and shocking, **emergencies** such as those described above account for just **8 per cent of people suffering from hunger**. Only a small percentage of hunger deaths are caused by starvation. The majority of hungry people suffer from **daily and persistent undernourishment, the less visible form of hunger**. Put simply, they cannot access enough food or the right kinds of food. Hunger is as much about quality as it is about the quantity of food. Unable to access the nutrients and energy their bodies need, poor people become **trapped in a cycle of hunger, sickness and weakness** with no energy to earn a living, access services or reach their potential. **Chronic hunger can be more difficult to see at first** but its effects are extremely damaging in the long run, for the individual, their family and community.

Emergencies account for just 8 per cent of world hunger

“A hungry mind cannot concentrate, a hungry body does not take initiative, a hungry child loses all desire to play and study”

World Food Programme

LiveAid

In 1984, Ethiopia became synonymous with starvation and suffering. As images of the devastating famine flooded into living rooms around the world, it became impossible to ignore the plight of the Ethiopian people. Images and reports became the inspiration for the LiveAid concert in 1984, the release of the chart-topping Christmas anthem ‘feed the world’ and an unprecedented outpouring of support and solidarity. Almost overnight the conscience of the world was ‘switched-on’. Bob Geldof, the main organiser of the concert, became a household name and money raised remains the largest amount of money ever raised for a single cause to date. Some believe that these events defined and inspired a whole generation and they are also widely cited by ‘celebrities’ and other high profile individuals as the motivation for their ongoing campaigning activities.



Child with MUAC band. Riad, Darfur, Sudan. 2004

Seed Bank Project

Community Management Groups in Angola

Mr Francisco Ulombe – his story

Mr Francisco Ulombe is 63-years-old and lives with his wife and three children in Chava Village, in the Ekunha district of Angola. Francisco is a former soldier and spent 17 years fighting during Angola's troubled past. Now he has become a farmer and wants to see improvements in the life of his family. He believes that by being part of the Community Groups he can do more to help his community. *"Now I feel I am still fighting ... but this one is different because I don't use guns, I use myself to convince people to work together for development"*.

Since the initial emergency many years ago, Francisco says many things have changed. He commented that *"Concern's approach and style of working has changed - there are more meetings to discuss project training and group leaders are organised to assist in managing community projects not like during the emergency projects where we only received what they gave to us"*.

When he first joined the seed bank project, he received agricultural seeds and tools from Concern. Gradually he became more and more active mobilising communities to attend meetings and training and to construct a seed bank warehouse. Respect for Francisco grew within the community as he became more active with these community activities.

In 2007, he put himself forward as a volunteer and was elected a leader of the Community Management Group (CMG) in his village. With assistance from Concern, he believes that he is in a strong position to help his community and reduce poverty. So far, as part of his new role, Francisco has attended training in problem analysis, wealth ranking, roles and responsibilities and improved agricultural techniques. He is now acting as a farm adviser for different projects in his community such as the demonstration plots and the goat-rearing project. Francisco is still a volunteer and does not get paid for his work – he has seen the positive benefits of the project on his own family and wished to offer support and advice to help other families and increase the standard of living in the whole village.



It is important to make a distinction between the different types of hunger – as they are caused by different factors. Their solutions also differ. Ending hunger will require a wide range of different approaches that take into consideration the different types of hunger.

Hunger weakens the immune system. Without adequate nutrition, people and especially children are unable to fight common preventable and often treatable infections. Malnutrition is associated with 53 per cent of all under-five mortalities, accounting for over six million a year.

Three main types of hunger

Chronic Hunger: defined as the condition of constant undernourishment or recurring seasonal undernourishment. It is caused by a lack of both sufficient quantity and quality of food. It results in stunted children and high child mortality due to hunger related diseases. This is the most widespread form of hunger in the world.

Acute Hunger: involves severe undernourishment over a distinct period, is reflected in wasting and starvation, and is caused by emergency situations which require immediate food aid. This is the most extreme form of hunger and accounts for approximately 8 per cent of hunger worldwide.

Hidden Hunger: refers to micronutrient and/or vitamin deficiencies found in the majority of people who otherwise have access to adequate calories and protein. This is the most difficult form of hunger to detect and it affects almost two billion people around the world.

Source: UN Hunger Task Force report, 2004

Key hunger terms

There are a number of terms and definitions used in discussions and debates about hunger. Some of the more commonly used terms are explained below.

Undernutrition – A condition resulting from inadequate consumption of calories, protein and/or nutrients to meet the basic physical requirements for an active and healthy life.

Hunger – A condition in which people do not get enough food to provide the nutrients for fully productive, active and healthy lives. People living in households where there is hunger are often forced to go without food because they cannot afford to buy it or cannot provide enough for everyone in the household.

Food Insecurity – The limited or uncertain availability or ability to acquire safe, nutritious food in a socially acceptable way. People living in households that are food insecure do not always know how to provide for their next meal and are often forced to cut back on meals or food portions to stretch resources.

Malnutrition – A condition resulting from inadequate consumption (undernutrition) or excessive consumption of one or more nutrients that can impair mental and physical health, and cause or be the consequence of infectious disease.

Food Security – Assured access to enough nutritious food to sustain an active and healthy life, including: food availability (adequate food supply); food access (people can get to food); and appropriate food use (the body's absorption of essential nutrients).

Source: www.bread.org, WFP, FAO

Livelihoods programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Kisenso is an area situated on the outskirts of the capital city Kinshasa, DRC. It is isolated from the city with no running water, electricity and poor transport. The area is further affected by ongoing soil erosion which destroys houses and roads.

In 2005, Concern started a programme of support for local NGOs (Non-Governmental-Organisation) to support them in their efforts to assist the population of Kisenso. Since 2006, Concern has been assisting people directly and has been working with local partners to increase their skills and capacity.

Christine Kwanda is 53-years-old and has been a beneficiary of Concern's programme from the beginning. *"Concern accompanies me"*, she says, happy about the professional guidance she gets with her small business, a food stall. Christine received a 'start-up' grant to help her establish her business. As her business grew, she applied for a second installment which enables her to increase and diversify her product range.

In addition to the grants, she has completed business training and she now calculates expenses and profits. Concern also supported the establishment of a transitional rotating savings scheme which enables participants to save their earnings. Christine is a member and the group has saved a considerable amount of money which it uses to continue to grow and expand its businesses.

Christine can also now afford to send all her children to school regularly and pay unexpected costs. She has gained respect in her family and community and she pays school fees for members of her extended family. *"Before, it was I who had to ask for help. Sometimes, I even had to take credit to buy food. Now I can put money aside for school and medical care."*

Christine is ambitious and in the future, she hopes to get a loan so she can continue expanding her business. She is determined to give her children the chance of a better life.



How much food do we need?

Food is the body's fuel and the amount of 'fuel' needed by each person differs depending on their age, sex, body size, physical activity and sometimes, their environment. Also, women require extra food during pregnancy and when lactating (breast-feeding).

On average, it is estimated that the body needs 2,100 kilocalories per day to facilitate a normal and healthy life.

A kilocalorie or Calorie is a unit of energy. It is the amount of energy needed to increase the temperature of one Kilogram of water by one degree Celsius.

“ No matter how you make the calculations, the scourge of famine need not be. It's a matter of incalculable dismay that we have allowed poverty to run amok”

Stephen Lewis, UN Special Envoy
for HIV&AIDS in Africa



South Sudan, 2007.
Photographer: Liam Burke/Press 22

Types of Malnutrition

Different forms of malnutrition depend on the nutrients that are missing in the diet.

Protein Energy malnutrition:

lack of major micronutrients such as carbohydrates, fats and proteins. This is the most basic form of malnutrition. Those suffering from this form of malnutrition may appear extremely thin and it can also cause facial swelling.

Vitamin A deficiency:

weakens the immune system, increasing vulnerability to diseases and preventable and treatable infections such as diarrhoea and measles. A lack of Vitamin A is also a leading cause of blindness in developing countries.

Other forms of malnutrition are less visible, caused by a lack of essential minerals and vitamins (micronutrients). A lack of iron, Vitamin A and Zinc are ranked by the World Health Organisation among the top 10 causes of death by disease in developing countries.

Iodine deficiency:

impedes the brain from developing properly. Millions of children are born mentally impaired because mothers do not consume enough iodine when pregnant.

Iron deficiency:

affecting billions of people, this is the most prevalent form of malnutrition in the world. A lack of iron causes severe tiredness and impedes cognitive development. This is particularly serious for children and pregnant women.

Lack of Zinc:

weakens immune system in young children, increasing their vulnerability to diarrhoea and pneumonia.

Microfinance in Haiti

Lejimene Merilas is 26-years-old and lives in a village in the north-western part of La Gonâve, an island off the coast of mainland Haiti. She lives with her five children, her parents and her husband. Her children are aged between three and nine years - Ejeffson, Kenshainie, twins Kenlove and Keshilove and the youngest, Lovedarling.

Home to 110,000 Haitians, La Gonâve is one of the poorest areas in Haiti. The roads are poor and there is little running water or electricity. The island has been forgotten by the Haitian Government.

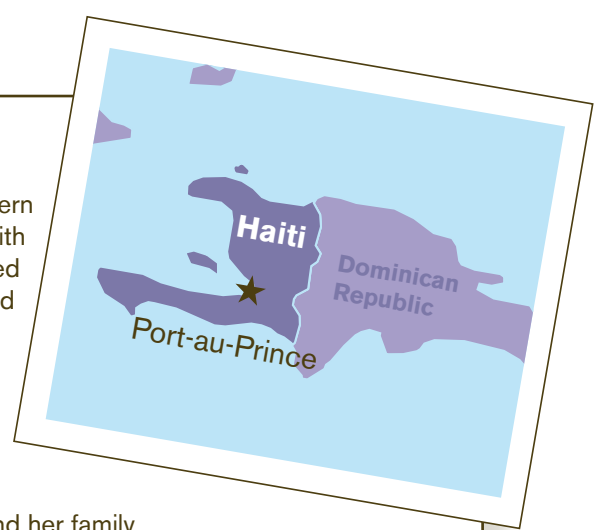
Before Concern established its programme on the island, Lejimene and her family relied solely on her husband's minimal daily income of 50 gourdes (€0.95 / US\$1.40). With nine people to feed, Lejimene found it difficult and often, she went without food herself so that others in her family could eat. *'It was a difficult time for my family; I wondered would it ever get better. My husband worked hard on the land every day but it was never enough.'*

In July 2007, Lejimene joined Concern's microfinance project. In partnership with Fonkoze, a long-established NGO, funding is provided to poor families to support and secure sustainable livelihoods. Specifically, the programme aims to enable 150 extremely poor households from poor rural areas to have access to microcredit.

Since becoming a part of this programme, Lejimene noted that her family's life has changed for the better. *'Today my family can eat potatoes and corn every day; I receive a food allowance of 200 gourdes (€3.80 / US\$5.50) each week through the project. I have also been encouraged to set up a small business in the nearby market. I am in a group with ten other women from the project and I sell soap and eggs at the market. From my 200 gourdes I can spend 100 gourdes on food for my family and the rest I put into my small business and I also save 10 gourdes (€0.19 / US\$0.28) each week, so far I have raised 150 gourdes (€2.85 / US\$4.17).'*

Lejimene also received three goats and eight chickens and attended a three-day training course on livestock management. The programme team visit the community twice a week to discuss important issues such as family planning, pregnancy, food and nutrition and health. Families in the communities have also been supported to build a rain-water collection system which will give them access to water during the dry season. Concern provided collection barrels that can store up to 50 gallons (189.27 litres). of water. Before this, Lejimene had to walk over three hours to collect just one bucket of unsafe drinking water.

When asked about the main benefits of the project, Lejimene commented, *'Not only can I feed all my family every day but I finally feel like I'm somebody in the community - selling my soap and eggs at the marketplace. It is great to be active.'*



The economic cost of hunger

While hunger has serious effects on individuals and communities, it also has an impact on the productivity and economic development of a country.

Economists estimate that every child whose development is impaired by hunger and malnutrition could lose 5 to 10% in lifetime earnings.

In an attempt to measure the economic cost of hunger, economists developed a measure called 'DALYs' – disability-adjusted life years – to measure the number of years lost as a result of premature death and disability, including hunger. (It is adjusted for severity). Of the 10 most significant DALY risk factors, six are related directly to malnutrition and hunger.

According to the FAO (Food and Agricultural Organisation), childhood and maternal undernutrition costs 220 million DALYs in developing countries. When other nutrition-related factors are also considered, the figure rises to 340 million DALYs. This is the equivalent to the entire population of a country larger than the United States being killed or disabled.

Hunger and malnutrition also create a huge burden on the already under-resourced health care systems of developing countries. Children born underweight require specialised medical care, as do weak pregnant mothers. Malnutrition also reduces the body's ability to fight common infections which can become serious and sometimes life-threatening. According to the FAO, medical expenditure related to child and maternal malnutrition costs in the region of \$30 billion per year.

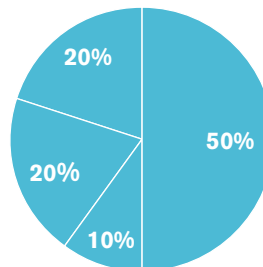
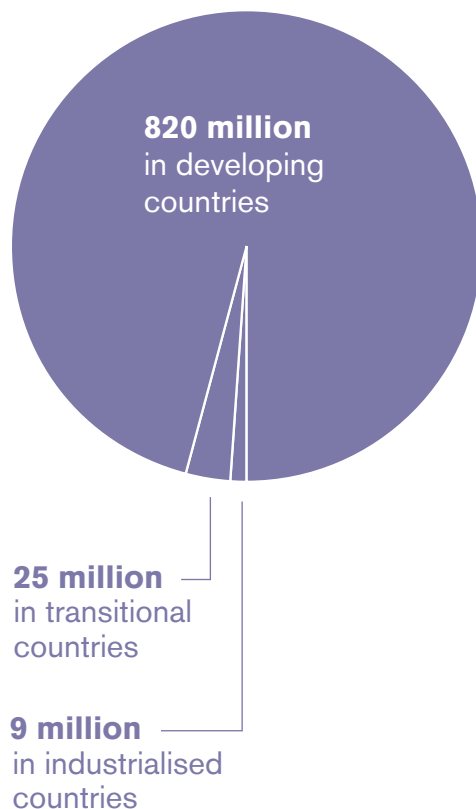
Economists also estimate that hunger is responsible for reducing the GNP of some developing countries by two to four per cent and the indirect cost of hunger is in the billions of euro. The cost of undernutrition to economic development is estimated at US\$20-30 billion per annum.

According to a group of the world's leading development economists, investment in nutrition (especially for pregnant women and children under two) is one of the best ways developing countries can reduce poverty and encourage economic growth.

Where are the hungry?

854 million people:

(The figure of 854 million is based on 2007 estimates from the Food and Agriculture Organisation. The food price crisis in 2008 increased the number of hungry people to 963 million (FAO, 2008)

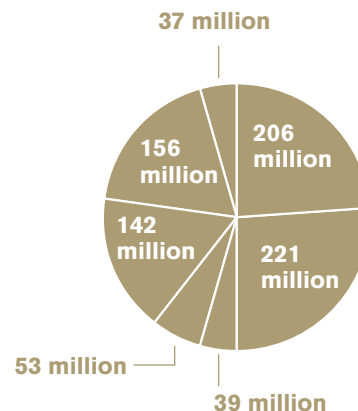


854 million people:

- **50%**; 430 million people: farming families in rural communities – severely affected by natural disasters.
- **10%**; 84 million people: communities dependent on herding, fishing or forestry.
- **20%**; 170 million people: landless families depending on casual labouring work.
- **20%**; 170 million people: living in urban settlements on the outskirts of large cities.

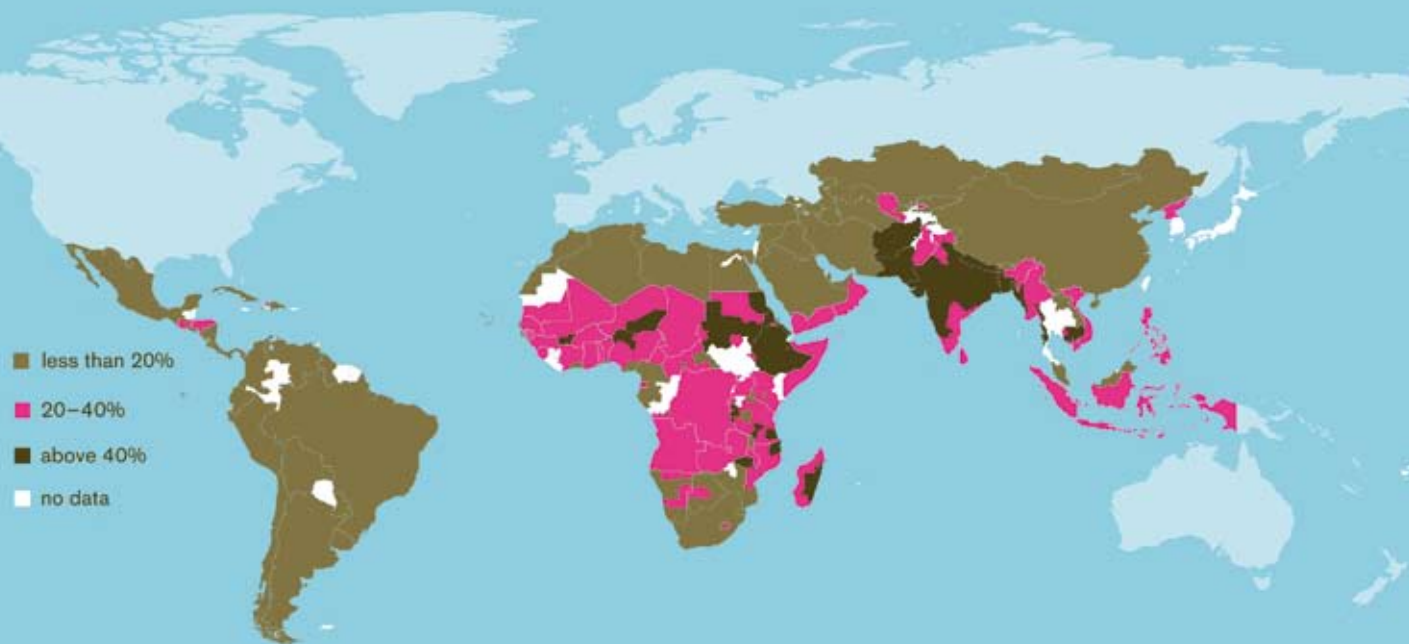
854 million:

- **206 million** in sub-Saharan Africa
- **221 million** in India
- **39 million** in North East and North Africa
- **53 million** in Latin America and Caribbean
- **142 million** in China
- **156 million** in other Asian and Pacific countries
- **37 million** in industrialised countries



Hunger hotspots: areas with more than 20% underweight pre-school children

Source: CIESIN 2005.



Hunger hotspots:

The UN Hunger Taskforce has identified hunger 'hotspots' around the world. These are areas within countries – states, provinces or districts – where the prevalence of underweight children under the age of five is 20% or more. The UN hunger task force identifies 313 hunger hotspots around the world, accounting for 107 million children or 79% of the world's underweight under-five children.

Where are the hunger hotspots?

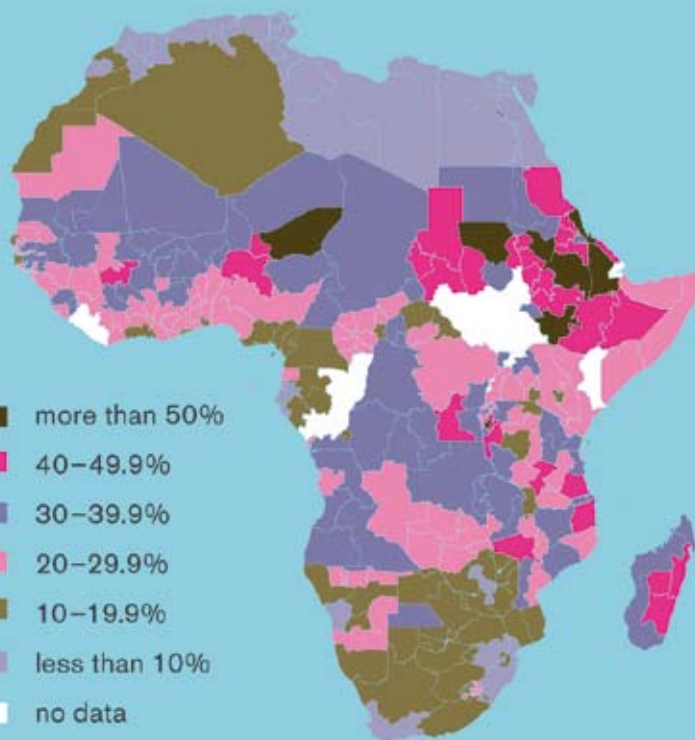
Africa: 229 hunger hotspots

Asia: 79 hunger hotspots

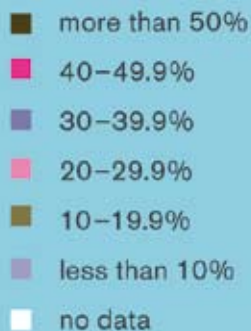
Latin America & Caribbean: eight hunger hotspots

Hunger hotspots in Africa: areas with more than 20% underweight pre-school children

Source: CIESIN 2005



A more detailed breakdown of Africa



Measuring hunger

The Global Hunger Index (GHI)*

This international index was designed by the International Food Policy and Research Institute (IFPRI) to rank countries using three key hunger indicators:

- The proportion of undernourished as a percentage of the population
- The prevalence of underweight cases in children under the age of five
- the under-five mortality rate

Put together, these indicators give a holistic and multidimensional view of worldwide hunger and **indicate whether countries are on track to achieve international targets for the elimination of hunger**. According to the index, approximately **one third are on target to reach their 2015 goals** and in another third of countries, improvements can be seen but are not sufficient for them to reach their 2015 goals (if current trends continue). **One fifth of countries have seen setbacks. Very few African countries, with the exception of Mozambique and Ghana, are making sufficient progress.** While improvements can be seen in Asia, this is mainly due to the high economic growth in India and China and progress is not in proportion to economic development, with increasing inequality in some countries.

The GHI focuses on **97 developing countries and 21 transitional countries. (118 in total)**

Global Hunger Index 2008

The bottom 10 countries with Extremely Alarming levels of hunger: 2008

The Democratic Republic of Congo

Eritrea

Burundi

Niger

Sierra Leone

Liberia

Ethiopia

Chad

Yemen, Rep

Angola

Source: Global Hunger Index 2008

From this ranking, we can see that countries that score highly are economically developed, politically stable and have well-functioning health and education systems. **Those at the bottom of the index suffer from conflict, instability, poor governance and a lack of basic services and infrastructure.** The difficult situations in many of these countries are compounded by **droughts** and the **HIV & AIDS** pandemic. Small farmers in these countries are faced with the twin issues of lack of quantity and quality of food. Importantly, this ranking also gives an indication of the policies and investment that would contribute to a world without hunger. The index also clearly shows that the 'hotspots' of hunger remain in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and South Asia, although for different reasons. **South Asia has a higher proportion of its population meeting its daily calorie requirement and a lower child mortality rate than SSA but it has the highest child malnutrition rate in the world.** In fact 40 per cent of the world's underweight children under five live in India alone and more than half of all children with low birth rates are born in South Asia.

* The Global Hunger Index is published annually by IFPRI, Concern and its Alliance 2015 partner German Agro Action

The South Asian enigma

South Asia has the highest prevalence of under-weight children in the world. This is unexpected given the region's economic growth and increasing agricultural production. The low status of women can be directly linked to this phenomenon – a lack of adequate maternal nutrition and education, combined with poor sanitation and hygiene lead to a reduction in the quality of infant and child care and significantly increase the infant mortality rates. Therefore, any attempts to address this problem must target women directly.



Aklima, 20, is being counseled by Concern volunteer worker Monowara, outside the Nutrition Centre in Kamlapur, Dhaka. Aklima is 9 months pregnant and suffers from malnutrition. Photo: Fabienne Fosse January 2004

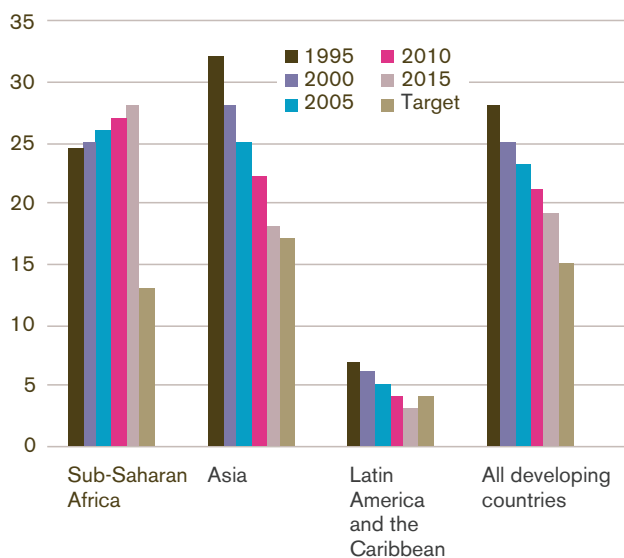
Progress on ending hunger

Most countries have made progress, albeit limited in many cases, towards ending hunger. However, African countries continue to struggle and Sub-Saharan Africa is currently losing the fight against hunger.

Rural poverty

Within countries, **the majority of hunger is found in rural areas**. Around the world, three quarters of all hungry people live on small rural farms in villages in Asia and Africa. Many rely solely on the land for food and are **extremely vulnerable to shocks or crises**. At the same time, the number of poor and hungry urban dwellers is increasing as farmers who are unable to work their land come to cities in search of work.

Percentage of underweight pre-school children (actual and projected)



Source: WHO

Marginalised Rural Farmers

“Rural people the world over share one profound thing in common: their’s is a story of neglect”

Bread for the World Institute, 2005

Half of the world’s undernourished people, three quarters of Africa’s malnourished children and the majority of people living in absolute poverty live on small farms. Any food that these farmers produce goes to feed their families and often, they are unable to meet their most basic food requirements. According to FAO, agriculture is a fundamental source of livelihoods for 90 per cent of rural households. In sub-Saharan Africa, the agricultural sector employs 67 per cent of the total labour force and accounts for 20 per cent of GDP.

These farmers are at the heart of the world’s poverty and hunger problems and therefore, they should be at the centre of national and international efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The problems facing rural communities reach well beyond agriculture – they have no access to vital services such as health and education and they are unable to buy or sell food at markets due to poor infrastructure. In their communities, water and sanitation facilities are inadequate, if present at all.

Many rural communities are caught in a ‘poverty trap’ which they are unable to escape without support and assistance. For too long, these marginalised and vulnerable farmers have been ignored or accorded a low priority. They face physical (local), policy and economic (national and international) constraints which hamper their efforts to secure a sustainable livelihood and to feed their families.

According to Concern Worldwide, international efforts to address poverty and hunger must re-focus on the needs of marginalised rural farmers.

‘ The poor are hungry and their hunger traps them in poverty’

WFP 2008

The causes of hunger and poverty

“Hunger is man-made. What misguided policies have caused, better focused policies can undo”

Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food.



Three hunger myths:

1 There is not enough food in the world

Although stocks of food have declined in recent years, there is still enough food to feed every person. The problem is with the distribution of this food and ensuring that those in most need can access the services they need to ensure their food security. However, the recent diversion of crops from food to fuel is having a significant impact on world food supply and stock.

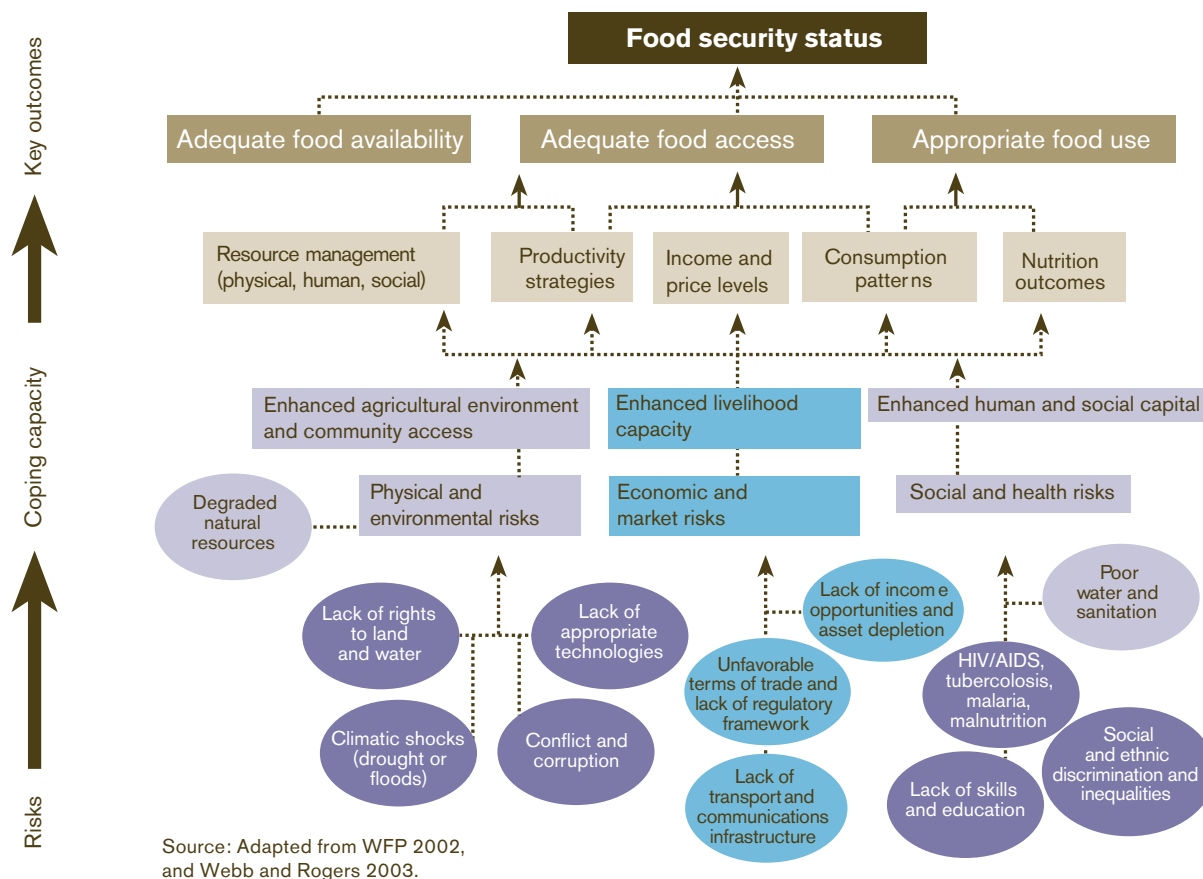
2 Nature causes famine

Although natural disasters cause immediate food emergencies, famine is caused by political situations and only ever affects poor and vulnerable people. Food is always available to people who can afford it and distribution to those who are unable to buy food is determined by government. Human behaviour and poor-decision making increase poor people's vulnerability, making them unable to cope when natural disasters strike.

3 There are too many people

While the world's growing population is putting a strain on our ability to feed everyone, the number and density of people in a country does not determine whether people will go hungry or face food insecurity. For example, Bangladesh is a densely populated and hungry country while in Brazil and Nigeria, both sparsely populated, hunger exists beside abundance.

Vulnerability and food insecurity



Causes of hunger

The causes of hunger are diverse and complex. Here, some of the main causes are explored.

1. **War and armed conflict** significantly reduce the ability of poor people to access resources and services. Emergencies are often triggered by conflict and many families flee insecurity, leaving their livelihoods behind. Refugees are unable to provide for themselves and arable land is often mined, destroyed or lies fallow, creating long term food instability. Since 1992, the proportion of short and long-term food crises that can be attributed to human activity has increased from 15 to 35%, up from 10% in 1984. Food has also been used as a weapon of war when opposing forces burn crops and destroy food stocks and livestock in an attempt to starve their enemy. Water and wells are often contaminated or the surrounding area mined. Invariably, it is vulnerable people, mainly woman and children, who suffer most from such tactics. In most cases, hunger 'hot spots' are also 'conflict hot spots'. A recent attempt at measuring conflict-related agricultural output losses for all developing countries showed that they are extensive: for the 28 years from 1970 to 1997, estimated losses amount to almost \$121 billion at 1995 prices, or an average of \$4.3 billion per year. The same amount

of money could have ensured adequate food intake for 330 million undernourished people each year. In Angola it has been estimated that agricultural output at the end of the 1990s was less than half of what it would have been if the country had not had its long civil war. Conflict has created food emergencies in the DRC, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Liberia.

In the Darfur region of Sudan, over 2.3 million people have fled their homes, leading to one of the world's worst hunger emergencies in an area that had enjoyed good rains and crops.

Source: www.icrc.org, Nov. 2008

2. **Weather and Climate Change** are having an impact on efforts to address world hunger. Tropical regions such as Africa, Latin America and India will be most affected by changing weather patterns with drought, flooding and tropical storms making agriculture more difficult for poor families who rely solely on small plots of land for food. Our changing weather is also causing a change in cropping patterns and yields and reduced growing seasons in the Sahel region of Africa (according to the IPCC, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change).

Higher temperatures are increasing the number and range of disease-carrying insects in regions which had previously been free from mosquitoes and malaria.

Drought is now the single most common cause of food shortages in the world. Water shortages will also increase around the world as demand for this finite resource escalates with a growing world population.

Good arable land is being lost to desertification. In times of food shortage, farmers will sell their livestock to buy food. However, with increasingly adverse natural conditions year after year, poor families are running out of assets to sell and are unable to buy seed to plant.

In addition, poor farming practices such as overgrazing, over-cropping and deforestation are reducing yields and reducing the earth's ability to rejuvenate.

The world's farmland is under threat from erosion, desertification and salination. Furthermore, over one billion people depend on fish as their main source of protein, but over-fishing and the destruction of marine nurseries such as mangroves are reducing fish stocks significantly. All of the hunger hotspots are also areas of extreme climatic conditions.

The world does not have to make a choice between protecting the environment and economic growth and development. The development of new technologies and innovation will have the dual impact of creating new business opportunities and could stop and reverse the effects of climate change. As the Stern Report notes *"Changes in technologies and in the structure of economies have created opportunities to decouple growth from greenhouse gas emissions"*.

Source; Stern Report 2007, pg.viii

In 2006, recurrent drought caused crops to fail and heavy losses of livestock in Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya.

3. Agricultural infrastructure or the lack of it is a significant cause of hunger. A lack of key infrastructure such as roads, storage and irrigation severely impedes production. Improving agricultural infrastructure is seen as one of the key 'quick' solutions to ending hunger.

4. Lack of education, especially among women, is also a major cause of hunger. Without education about food and nutrition, people are unable to make choices about how they feed themselves and their families. Without education, people are unable to break the cycle of poverty and remain marginalised and vulnerable.

5. Poverty is both a cause and an effect of hunger. If farmers are unable to buy seeds, tools, fertilisers or equipment, their ability to feed their families is significantly reduced. Without food or money to buy food, families are forced to eat less, are weaker and become more prone to disease and infection. In turn, they are too weak to work their land or work for money.

Year after year, this has a cumulative effect, locking families and communities into a 'poverty trap'. Without assistance and support, it is almost impossible to break the cycle of poverty and hunger. The effects of poverty and hunger are passed on from generation to generation. Child hunger is often 'inherited' with almost 17 million underweight children born every year due to the inadequate nutrition of pregnant mothers before and during pregnancy. These children then grow up without adequate nutrition and minerals, impeding their physical and mental development. Chronic malnutrition has lifelong ramifications.

6. Population growth is increasing demand for food in some of the world's poorest countries. For example the populations of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria and Ethiopia are currently 52, 132 and 67 million respectively. By 2050, the populations of these three countries are estimated to reach 204, 279 and 186 million. At current rates, the world's population is expected to reach 9 billion people by 2050. Without innovative solutions, the world will find it increasingly difficult to feed its population. It is estimated by the UN that food production must rise by 50 per cent by 2030 to meet growing demand.

"Adults who were undernourished as children are physically and intellectually less productive, attain lower levels of education, ultimately earn less money and are more frequently ill than adults who enjoyed a normal dietary intake as children"

The Global Hunger Index, 2007, pg. 4

Women and Hunger

“Women are on the front lines. They grow, process and prepare; they gather water and wood and they care for those suffering from HIV and AIDS. Yet women lack access to credit, technology, training & services and are denied their legal rights – such as the right to land”

Kofi Annan

Women are responsible for the nutrition of their whole family – and yet, women are the most vulnerable to and most affected by hunger. More than 60% of chronically hungry people in the world are women.



Picking grain at farmers' resource centre, Grand Bassa County, Liberia. November 2007

Due to cultural traditions, women in many countries often eat after men at mealtimes. Moreover they are unable to access resources, such as credit, to start a business or purchase food or agricultural equipment.

Without education, girls marry young and often have many children. This creates numerous related burdens – they must feed a large family while also attempting to ensure that they receive adequate nutrition when pregnant so that their babies are born healthy. Oftentimes, this is not possible and a vicious generation to generation cycle of ‘weak mothers, weak babies’ is created. Without health and nutrition education, women cannot provide their children with a well-balanced diet. Women benefit enormously from training in farming techniques that increase yields and could ensure food security for their families and communities.

When pregnant, women are unable to access the additional food and nutrients they need so underweight mothers give birth to underweight babies. It is estimated that 50 per cent of women in developing countries are lacking in iron, meaning that 500,000 women die during childbirth every year. (Source: Unicef, 2009)

Ensuring that women have access to adequate nutrition would have a significant impact on our efforts to end hunger. The UN estimates that women's education was related to 43% of the reduction in child malnourishment between 1970 and 1995, the single most important factor. Better-educated mothers are more aware of nutritional issues and are better able to care for themselves and their families.

Achieving gender equality is crucial if the first MDG is to become a reality.

“Gender equality is not simply socially desirable; it is a central pillar in the fight against hunger”

UN Hunger Task Force

Women's Group in Liberia

Marthaline Glory is 31-years-old and lives in Chugbor, a slum community on the outskirts of Monrovia, the capital of Liberia. She is married with two children. Marthaline dropped out of school at a young age because her parents could not afford the school fees.

Life was difficult for Marthaline – without any training or skills, she could not earn an income to provide for her family and her husband was also unemployed. Marthaline's aim was to attend a beauty therapy course but she could not afford the high fees.

In February 2006, she participated in a six month training skills programme, organised by the Young Women Organised for Sustainable Development (UWOSD). With support from Concern, this local women's group was established to support vulnerable woman and provide a range of training programmes.

Having completed the course, Marthaline practised her new skills on family and friends and began to earn a small income. Gradually, more and more customers came to her house and her business expanded quickly. Now, she can feed her family every day, her children attend school and she can pay medical bills and take care of other household purchases such as soap, notebooks, uniforms and utensils)

Now, Marthaline employs the local woman and she is attending further training. She is also able to save some money and she is preparing to rent new premises to accommodate her increasing number of customers. In the future, Marthaline hopes to employ and train more women from the local community.



Pregnant mothers' clubs in Sierra Leone

The healthcare system in Sierra Leone does not receive the funding it needs to operate. As a result, the country has very high infant mortality and maternal mortality rates. The maternal mortality rate is 1,800 deaths per 100,000 and the infant mortality rate is 170 deaths per 1000 live births. Progress to reduce these alarming rates has been slow. Knowledge of reproductive health is also low and girls often become pregnant when they are very young. In her lifetime, a Sierra Leonean woman has a 1 in 6 chance of dying in childbirth. Many clinics are so over-stretched that they are unable to help women who arrive for care. Women are limited in the services they can access at critical moments during pregnancy. Some informal healthcare providers such as traditional healers provide alternatives but often these are of poor quality. Untrained Traditional Birth Attendants, unaware of their limitations and the need for timely referral of pregnant women with complications, continue to make the problem worse. Giving birth at home also has risks in slum areas, where disease and infections spread quickly.



To address some of these issues, Concern has developed a comprehensive programme with the aim of reducing maternal mortality rates. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Concern provides training for Maternal and Child Health advisers in midwifery and at the community level, support is given to traditional birth attendants. To date, 95 per cent have been trained in areas of operation.

Additionally, Concern established Pregnant Mothers Clubs in three slums areas of Freetown, the capital city. These are informal self-learning groups within communities that educate women about pre and post natal issues such as nutrition. They are facilitated by a Concern Health officer who delivers messages with a focus on prevention of risks. Open discussions also increase understanding of malaria, anaemia and other associated problems. These groups also serve as a forum for women to share stories and their own experience, helping women who are pregnant for the first time.

Members of the clubs are encouraged to attend health clinic for regular check-ups and Concern's health officer monitors their progress. As one member, Isatu Kamara (33 years), comments, *'If you don't go hospital, you don't get better'*. She is due to give birth to her second child and even though she experienced complications during her last pregnancy, this one has been trouble free because of her participation in the club. *'Before I started coming here, I didn't know why it was so important to sleep under a net, I didn't know that the medicine I would take can harm my baby if I take it when I'm pregnant. Now I know and I'll make sure others know too'*.

After giving birth, women receive a 'pregnancy kit' with some basic necessities to help them care for their new baby. This initiative is producing tangible results with an increasing number of women having institutional deliveries (15 per cent) skilled attendance (85 per cent) and more women accessing neo-natal care. The effect has been magnified by members disseminating information to others and encouraging them to come to the weekly meeting. Pregnant women are also assisted to draw up delivery preparedness plan to have a safe and clean delivery at home if the situation demands. Equipped with their newly acquired knowledge, they are now much more confident about giving birth. Membership of the clubs has continued to grow as word spreads among the local community. Although they are only newly established, these community-based clubs have the potential to have a transformational effect on the alarming infant and maternal mortality rates in Sierra Leone. Although these clubs are not an alternative for an effective, well-functioning health system, they are serving an important purpose for many women.

Hunger and HIV and AIDS

Hunger and HIV & AIDS have a number of reinforcing effects on each other and it is at the community level that the link between food insecurity and HIV & AIDS is most destructive.

Both hunger and HIV & AIDS weaken the body's immune system, making people susceptible to preventable diseases. Adequate nutrition, along with antiretroviral drugs, can significantly prolong the life of a HIV positive person. On the other hand, malnutrition accelerates the progression of HIV to AIDS and significantly reduces the life expectancy of a HIV positive person.

Without access to adequate nutrition, those weakened by the disease are unable to work and provide for their families. Unlike other diseases that affect the young and the old, HIV and AIDS affects the most economically active and productive groups in society. Since 1985 approximately seven million African agricultural workers have died from AIDS in the 25 most affected countries and 16 million deaths are likely in the next two decades. By 2020, it is estimated that the AIDS pandemic will have claimed one fifth of the agricultural labour force in most southern African countries. A study in Zambia found that 67% of farm workers had lost at least one co-worker to AIDS over a three year period. The loss in household income triggers food insecurity, especially when families are forced to choose between vital healthcare and adequate food.

Without adequate nutrition, the illness progresses much faster and people die sooner than they would with proper nutrition, often leaving young children to fend for themselves. Older children often drop out of school to tend to sick parents or to look after siblings. Children orphaned by the disease are vulnerable to hunger and may face further poverty, malnutrition, stigma and discrimination, exploitation and a lack of access to education and health care. HIV and AIDS directly compromises a family's food security.

Families are struggling to cope with the dual burden of hunger and the HIV and AIDS pandemic and traditional family and community structures are increasingly unable to absorb the additional burden of orphans.

UNAIDS and WFP estimate that it would cost an average of US\$0.66 per day to provide nutritional support to a HIV positive person and their family.

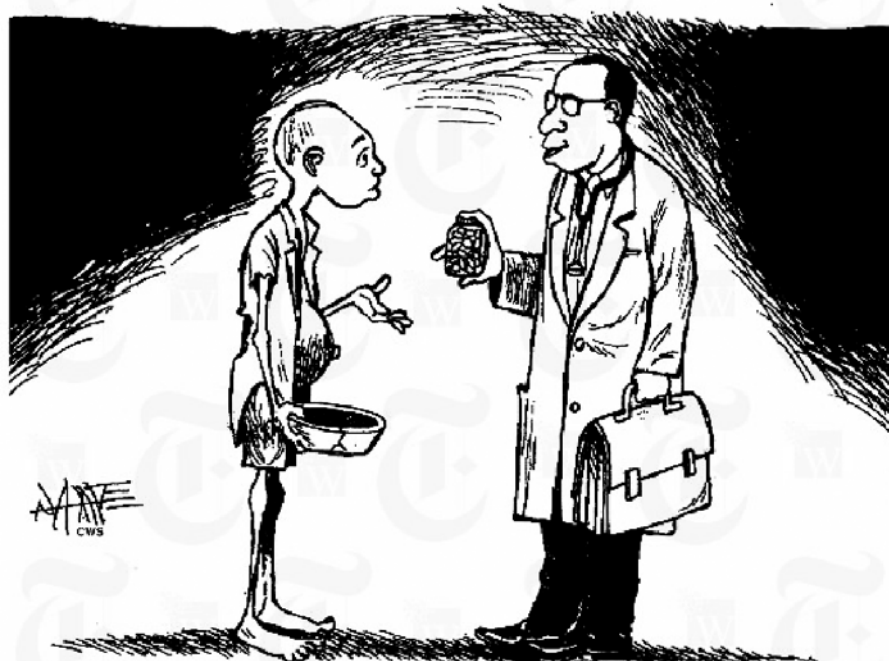
“I had always believed that people living with AIDS would clamour for drugs: I was wrong; they clamour for food”

Stephen Lewis, UN Special Envoy for HIV&AIDS in Africa

“Food is the first medicine”

Breda Gahan, Concern HIV and AIDS adviser

NAMATE
ZIMBABWE INDEPENDENT
Harare
ZIMBABWE



CARTOONISTS & WRITERS SYNDICATE <http://CartoonWeb.com>

"TAKE THESE ANTI-RETROVIRALS WITH FOOD."



The dramatic increase in flooding and river erosion for the past twenty years has caused many people living on the shrinking silt island of Aralia, in the Haor flood plain of north east Bangladesh, to lose their homes.
Photographer Gideon Mendel 2006



Introduction

Despite the world's ability to produce enough food for every person on the planet, solving world hunger remains a complex issue. In recent years, a number of new challenges have emerged, such as climate change, rising food prices and the use of arable land for bio-fuel instead of crops. **In 2008, there were food crises in 37 countries.** Some of the proposed solutions are also controversial – including GM crops, the use of biotechnology and reform of global agricultural policy. Some of the key debates are outlined here.

1. Bio-fuels (food versus fuel)

“We drive, they starve”

According to the UN, it takes 232kg of corn to fill a 50-litre car tank with ethanol. That is enough to feed a child for a year.

The diversion of crops from food to fuel production is having an immediate effect and will also have significant long terms effects on the world's poorest people.

In an attempt to reduce its dependency on foreign oil, US is planning to divert 18 per cent of its grain output to ethanol and has set a 45% biofuel target for corn by 2015 – ironically, the same year that the world has committed to reach the target of reducing global poverty and hunger by half. Similarly, the EU has set a 5.7 per cent biofuel target by 2010, although this is under review in light of recent events.

“ While we rage about global warming, global hunger has swept in under the radar screen”.

International Business Editor, *The Telegraph*,
19th April 2008.

In Ghana 27,000 hectares of land is being used to grow sugar cane which will be used to produce 150 million litres of ethanol per year destined for the Swedish market. If 27,000 hectares were to be used to grow crops such as wheat it would feed 30 million people in the developing world.



Bio-fuels: a false economy?

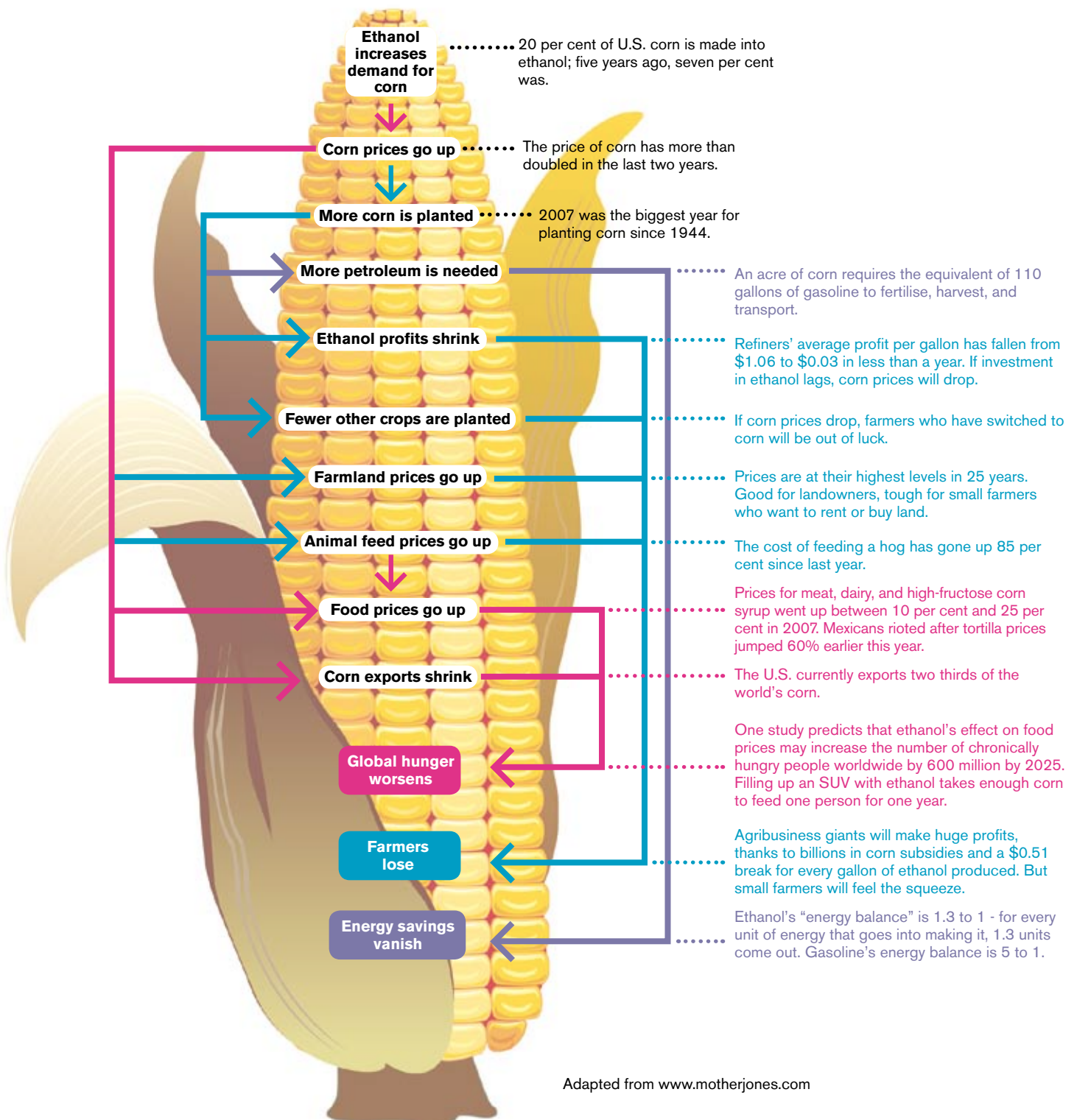
It is widely believed that politics are interfering with real decisions about bio-fuel – decisions that would actually be good for the environment and have the potential not to interfere with food production.

According to Goldman Sachs, the cost to produce ethanol from corn is \$81 a barrel; from wheat is \$145 a barrel and \$232 from soybean. Therefore, it is not cost effective to produce ethanol from these crops,

and yet, this is exactly what is happening. Only one crop, sugar cane is cost-effective at \$35 a barrel.

The production of crops for ethanol production is also heavily subsidised in the US. In 2006, subsidies worth **US\$11-12 billion** were used to divert 100 million tons of cereals from human consumption.

There is a possibility that technology will produce a non-edible and cost effective grain that can produce ethanol from marginal land without jeopardising food security around the world.



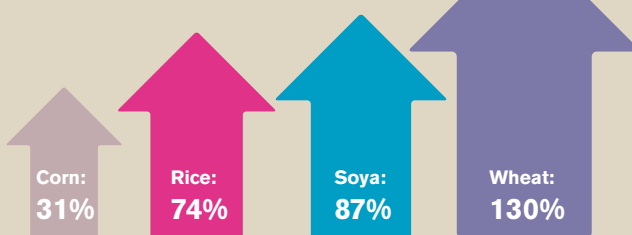
Adapted from www.motherjones.com

Volatile food prices

Until recently, the prices of global food commodities have been relatively stable. In real terms the price of some commodities such as corn and soya had fallen over the past 60 years. As prices were so low, countries did not see the need to accumulate large stocks and many poor families were able to produce or purchase enough to feed their families. However in the first half of 2008 the price of basic food rose dramatically and became a major political and economic issue. It is widely believed that the world is entering a new era of food volatility. Overall food prices have increased by 46% since 2006, up 83% in the last three years. The poorest and most vulnerable suffer the most from price increases as they spend more than 80 per cent of their income on food. While food price increases soared in early 2008 leading to food riots breaking out in 25 countries prices in the second half of the year began to drop. Many commentators however were quick to note that despite the price drop only some of the elements and causes of the crisis had changed. *"Prices came down in the international commodity markets which are of help to import-dependent poor countries. But in many countries the international price change is not quickly passed on to the domestic markets. For instance, in many African countries [prices] remain far above long-term trends. This, added to the financial crisis, means that capital for investment in agriculture is very limited and employment and income of the poor is reduced in the recession. Hunger will increase further."* Joachim von Braun, IFPRI Dec 2008.

The amount of money being spent globally on imported goods is set to top US\$1 Trillion in 2008.

Price rises in a single year, March 2007-March 2008



Source: Bloomberg, except rice: FAO/Jackson Son & Co

This crisis threatens to reverse all gains made in poverty reduction in recent years and will have a seriously negative impact on efforts to realise the Millennium Development Goals.

"It is a fundamental human right that people have enough food to eat and a sustainable livelihood. The devastation caused by hunger and food insecurity is instinctively understood in Ireland, for historical reasons."

Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Micheál Martin, 2009

International organisations that are tasked with ensuring that poor families have access to basic nutrition are also affected by rising food prices. As the price of food increases, they are forced to cut back on what they have planned to purchase. The World Food Programme (WFP) will be forced to ration its food supplies if donors do not support its need for additional funding. For example, WFP may be forced to cut rations to people in refugee camps in Darfur by up to 30 per cent.

Increasing food prices:

- Global food prices rose by 40 per cent between November 2007 and May 2008).
- Wheat prices have increased 83% from January 2007 to January 2008; maize has increased by 50% and rice by 20% in the same period.
- From February to May 2008, rice has doubled in price.
- Food products that poor families rely on are no longer affordable.

Consequences for poor families:

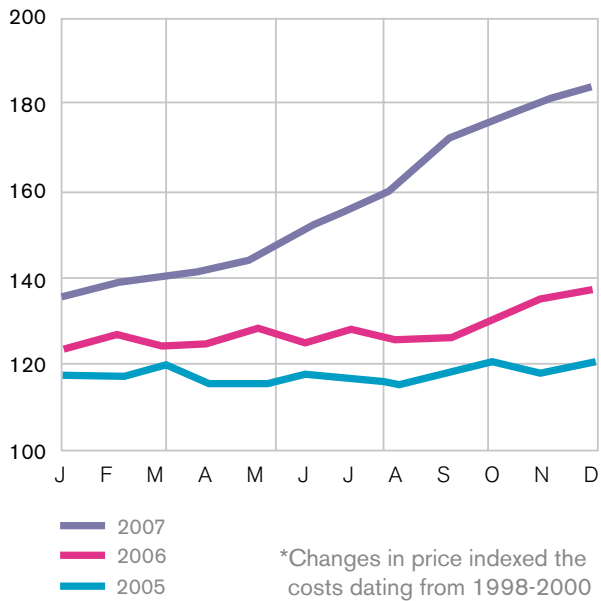
- Families are no longer able to purchase basic food products and are forced to make cut-backs to an already minimal and insufficient diet.
- Families have also had to reduce the number of meals in order to make food stocks last longer. This has both an immediate and long-term impact on the health of family members, especially children.
- Families are forced to make difficult budget decisions between health care and education or basic food.
- Child malnutrition and mortality rates will rise significantly, reversing any recent gain in these areas.
- Civil unrest will affect the most vulnerable in society and a lack of stability will hamper the distribution of food assistance.
- Families may resort to borrowing money or selling their agricultural tools and equipment, making them less likely to meet their future food needs.
- Families in desperate situations may resort to eating the seeds that are for the next year's harvest. This will have serious a long-term impact on the family's ability to be food secure in the future.

"The threats are obvious to us all. Yet this crisis also presents us with an opportunity. It is a chance to revisit past policies....we have a historic opportunity to revitalise agriculture. While we must respond immediately to high food prices, it is important that our longer term focus is on improving world food security – and remains so for some years"

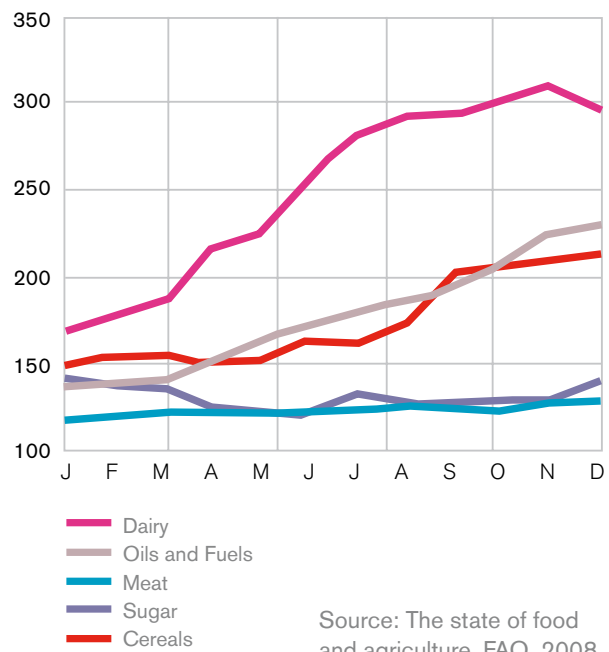
Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General of the UN, June 2008

Food Prices

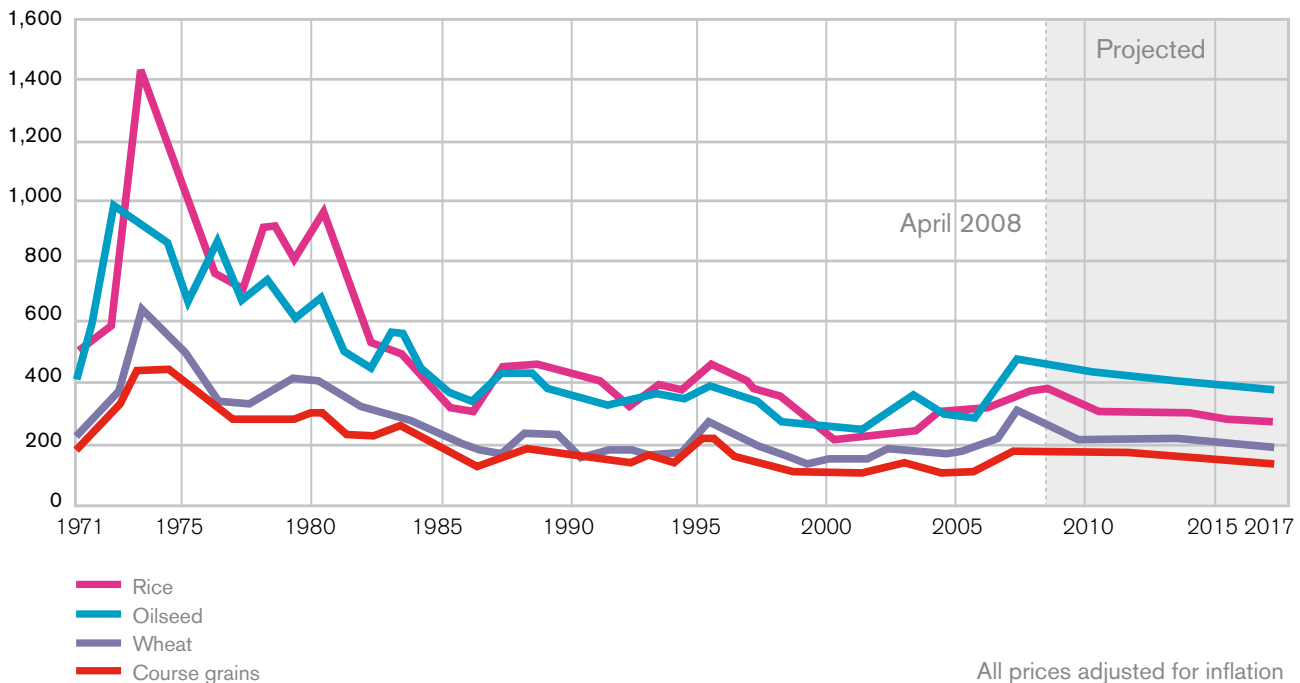
Rising Food Prices, 2005-2007
1998-2000 = 100*



Price Rises by food type, 2007
1998-2000 = 100*



World food commodity prices
\$US/tonne



“A silent tsunami which knows no borders sweeping the world”

Josette Sheeran, Executive Director, WFP

Farmer schools in Tanzania

The Masasi district in the Mtwara region of Tanzania has an estimated population of 440,987 people. It is one of the poorest districts in the region with small-holder farmers and subsistence farming. Crop yields and livestock production are low and the region suffers from persistent food insecurity.

Concern's food security programme in the region focuses on reducing poverty and targets 3,000 young men and women directly and 21,000 young people indirectly. Specifically, the programme promotes the production of a sweet variety of the cassava crop that is resistant to drought, rodents and vermin (wild pigs, donkey, and rats). Cassava can be used to produce flour, cakes, bread, biscuits and as animal feed.

Concern has established and run Farmer Field Schools to introduce the new crop and promote land ownership. Concern has also developed a partnership with a local NGO called KIMAS – a well established organisation that is operational in 15 villages in the district.

The target population is involved in the design and implementation of the programme and these include some of the poorest people in the villages as well as economically active small-holder farmers.

Since the introduction of the farm school, there have been a number of improvements including:

- Increased production of cassava by small scale farmers.
- Early maturing of crops – six months instead of 12 months for previous variety.
- Improvement in farming techniques, increasing yields and surpluses.

Overall, food security in the region has been increased.

The programme has been a success for a number of reasons including:

- The participation of farmers in the design and delivery of the schools, providing farmers with an opportunity share indigenous knowledge and experience
- The active involvement of local government in the formation of farm groups at community level.

Despite these successes, some challenges remain such as disease and pest control, the high price of improved cassava cutting and the lack of crop processing facilities.



Varieties promoted

- Kigoma red and Kitumbua (sweet varieties)
- Sumu ya panya and chimanje (Local bitter varieties of cassava)
- Kigoma mafia, Kigoma supa, Sheria, Liumbukwa and Chinanyanga (Local sweet varieties)

Why have prices increased?

There is no single factor that has led to the dramatic increase in the price of food. A number of related issues have converged, and together they have created this crisis. These include: bad weather in food producing countries, increased production of bio-fuels, climate change, increased demand from industrialising countries, reduced stocks and the high price for oil. Overall, there has been an increase in demand and a decline in supply.

1. Increased demand

The world's population continues to grow and the demand for food from newly industrialised countries such as India and China are creating more demand for foods such as meat and dairy products, both of which are resource intensive to produce. More resources, such as water, oil and land, are needed to produce processed food so as demand for these increases, prices will continue to rise.

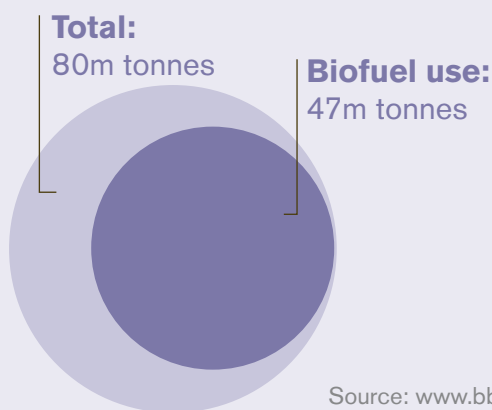
The FAO estimates that processed food now accounts for 80 per cent of all global food and beverage sales. The FAO also notes that while this increase in demand is having an impact on food prices, this has been a gradual process and not the main contributor to the current crisis.

It takes 8.3 grams of corn feed to produce one gram of beef and 3.1 grams of pork

While 100 million tonnes of food will be diverted to 'feed' cars this year, 760 million tonnes will be used to feed animals. This could cover the current food crisis 14 times over.

Demand for Biofuels

Rise in use of coarse grains 2005-7



Use of vegetable oil 2007-17 (tonnes)

2005-95m
2007-105m (+9.2%)
2017-143 (est) (+49.5%)
Of which biofuel:
2005 - 4m
2007 - 9m (+113.9%)
2017 - 21m (+388%)

2. Climate change/weather

A number of droughts, floods and other changes in climate and weather patterns have resulted in low yields of main food crops. For example, in Australia the harvest in 2008 produced very low yields and continued desertification is reducing the amount of land available for agricultural production.

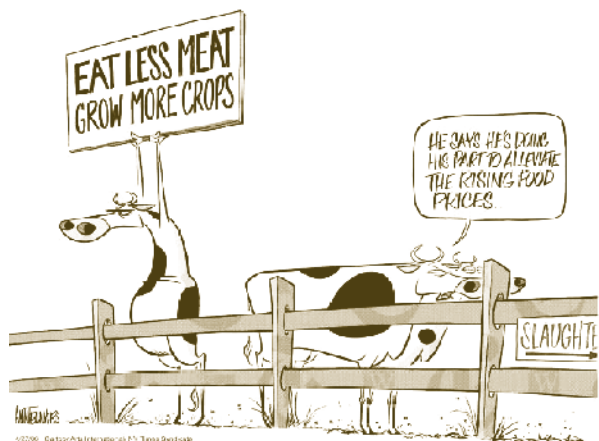
3. Reduced stocks

Stocks of food are at an all time low. World grain stocks have fallen to a quarter-century low of five million tonnes – enough food for eight to 12 weeks. Coupled with these other factors, some countries placed trade restriction on the export of these dwindling stocks to ensure that they had enough for their own populations. This forced international prices upward. Even countries that have the reserves to purchase food are finding it difficult to source. In 2008 food export controls have been imposed in Russia, China, India, Vietnam, Argentina and Serbia.

4. Bio-fuels

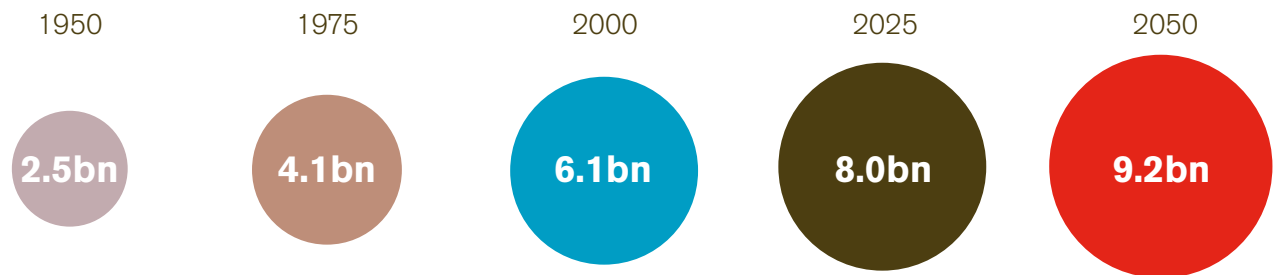
Following a number of initiatives to reduce global carbon emissions, northern industrialised nations embarked on an ambitious plan to invest and grow bio-fuels as an alternative to oil. They set targets for a move towards bio-fuels and this created a market for farmers to grow bio-fuel crops rather than food crops. In some cases, they did not have to change the crop itself – for example, maize can be used as both food and fuel. As more farmers moved towards more lucrative fuel-crops, food production began to decline. If current trends continue, ethanol (bio-fuel) production will account for 30% of the US corn crop by 2010. This will significantly reduce the amount of land available for food production and force the price of corn upwards on international markets.

“Taking food from the poor to burn in the cars of the rich. Biofuels are a crime against humanity” George Monbiot



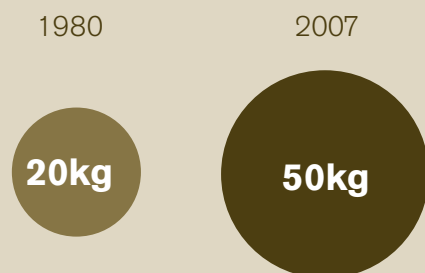
Predicted world population growth

Source: www.bbc.co.uk



Changing eating habits

Meat consumption in China per capita

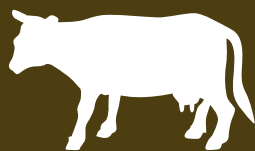


Source: www.bbc.co.uk



Pressure on resources

1,000 – 2,000 litres of water is needed to produce 1kg of wheat



10,000-13,000 litres of water is needed to produce 1kg of beef

Solution to the current food crisis

Short term solutions:

- Assistance in the form of food and cash must be immediately disbursed to poor communities and families. International organisations, such as the World Food Programme, must be supported by donors in their efforts to support food distribution to those most affected by the rising price of food. WFP estimate that the current funding shortfall is in the region of \$755 million.
- As many of the world's poorest people are small farmers, they must be supported with the necessary seeds, tools, training and equipment so they can grow food for their families. They should also have access to appropriate credit to facilitate investment in equipment and diverse crops.
- There must be an urgent review of biofuel targets set by the US and EU. Alternatively, more sustainable ways of reducing carbon emissions and dependence on expensive oil must be found; solutions that must not affect those who are least responsible for the problems and are most affected by an increase in the price of food – poor families and communities.
- The governments of developing nations must be supported in their efforts to develop and implement systems of social protection for those most affected by this crisis now but which also act as a preventative tool in the future.

Long term solutions:

“The world has made only slow progress in reducing hunger in past decades, with dramatic differences among countries and region.”

Joachim von Braun, Director General IFPRI, 2008

The current crisis is not a short-term event and will have long and lasting impacts. While it is crucial that short-term needs are met, investment in longer-term solutions must also be incorporated into all programmes.

5. The high price of oil

Increasing oil prices have increased the cost of food production the whole way along the supply chain, from fertiliser production to transport. The price of food in countries that rely on imports has risen by 74% in recent years. The price of oil peaked at \$140 a barrel in 2008 but fell back dramatically in early 2009 to under \$40. The price of fertiliser also increased following the rise in oil prices which meant that farmers in poor countries planted (and therefore harvested) less produce.

Long-term solutions include:

- Additional resources must be allocated by donor and recipient governments to agricultural and rural development, especially targeting small and marginalised farmholders. Policies must focus on long term food security.
- Slowing population growth. At current rates, the world population is estimated to reach nine billion by 2050. It will be extremely difficult for the world to feed this large population, compounded by climate change, and competition for scarce resources such as water. Policy makers must consider strategies, such as economic growth and increasing girls' access to education, which will slow the rate of population growth.
- Science and bio-technology have important roles to play in world hunger through the development of strengthened, weather resistant and higher-yield crops as well as new products. While there are strong opposing opinions on the role of biotechnology, this debate is a crucial one and must be considered with a view to finding a solution for the world's hungry people. (Please see page 36 for a debate on biotechnology). Developing countries must also be assisted to improve their scientific infrastructure.

“Soaring food prices should be a wake-up call for the world to make long-term investment in the food supply chain”

Josette Sheeran, Executive Director, WFP, 2008

“If we do not act quickly, the bottom billion will become the bottom two billion virtually overnight as their purchasing power is cut in half due to a doubling in food and fuel prices”

Josette Sheeran, Executive Director, WFP, 2008

How Concern responds to rising food prices

Concern operates in many of the countries that have been affected by rising food prices. Based on evidence from field offices, Concern has intensified its monitoring of this crisis to provide an early warning system. Concern's nutrition programme is operational in 13 countries and is responding to an increasing number of people with additional food, cash, farm equipment and inputs. In all 29 countries where Concern works, communities are being assisted to grow more and better crops and all programmes addressing health, nutrition, food security and income generation are responding to the crisis. Concern's response to this crisis takes account of local situations and is designed accordingly, while at the same time, all responses link with global initiatives in this area.

International agricultural policy

It is widely agreed that the potential benefits of trade far outweigh those of aid and yet, the terms of global trade are, for the most part, stacked against poor countries. Put simply, reform of global agricultural trade and increased international aid must go together if we are to get serious about ending hunger and poverty.

The current food crisis is not sudden or unexpected

According to Jacques Diouf, the current crisis is a “chronicle of disaster foretold”. Despite the world's commitment to end hunger, support and funding for agriculture in developing countries has declined significantly. From 1980 to 2005 aid to agriculture fell from US\$8 billion in 1984 to US\$3.4 billion in 2004, representing a reduction in real terms of 58 percent”. Agriculture's share of Official Development Assistance (ODA) fell from 17 percent in 1980 to 3 percent in 2006.

“Regrettably the international community only reacts when the media beam the distressing spectacle of world suffering into the homes of the wealthy countries”

Jacques Diouf, Director of FAO, 2008



Farmer Mekonnen Shumbulo holds arid soil in the Kebele of Sadoye, Ethiopia, 2008. Julien Behal PA.



Hametin Mota group (one of Concern's partners) with Concern staff in Matorek, Turiscai, Timor Leste. Photo by Joao Vas 2006

International trade

Since the end of the Second World War, the world's governments attempted to move away from protectionist trade policies toward more open or 'free' trade between countries. In 1945, an organisation was established to set the 'rules' for international trade – it was known as the General Agreements on Trade and Tariffs (GATT). This move toward easier trade between countries is known as 'trade liberalisation'. Shifts towards trade liberalisation have not been easy with many countries strongly opposing any attempt to reduce tariffs or quotas that would affect their national industries while at the same time, many governments pay subsidies, mainly in the form of agricultural subsidies to farmers, to compensate for any loss of income due to decreasing prices for their produce. The GATT became the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 1995 and countries can take cases against other governments for breaches of international trade rules.



Types of barrier to trade:

Tariffs: A tax on goods imported from foreign countries. This protects national industry by increasing the price of imported goods above prices for nationally produced goods.

Quotas: A restriction on the amount of a certain good that can be imported before tariffs are applied. Quotas can also be applied to types of goods – raw materials or processed goods.

Subsidies: A grant or tax break given by governments to encourage continued production of a certain good, even if it is no longer competitive or sustainable to do so.

Agricultural policy and trade

An important component of international trade is agriculture – how food and raw commodities are produced, sold, traded and distributed. The majority of people living in developing countries depend on the land for their livelihood. International trade and agricultural policies have a direct effect on their ability to compete in global markets, secure a sustainable livelihood and to feed their families either through the production or purchase of food.

The effect of subsidies on poor farmers

Farmers in the US and EU are subsidized by their governments to encourage agricultural production, ensure the availability of supplies and to stabilize markets. While benefitting farmers, producers and consumers in developed countries the consequences of these subsidies in the developing world has been to undermine local farmers and their capacity to compete in a global market. Farmers in poor countries can do little to protect themselves against low cost imports from industrial countries and as such their livelihoods remain vulnerable. Current World Trade Organisation talks have been dubbed the 'development round' and seek to address the barriers to fair and open trade between the 'developed' and developing world.

“Hunger does not exist because the world does not produce enough food. We have the experience and technology right now to end the problem. The challenge we face is not production of food and wealth, but more equitable distribution”
www.bread.org

According to the World Bank, if agricultural subsidies were removed, the number of people worldwide living on less than \$2 per day would fall by 144 million, 67 million of them in Africa.

This example highlights the effect of agricultural subsidies on farmers in developing countries.

Cotton

Cotton is produced in both the US and West Africa. US farmers are paid a subsidy for producing their cotton which means they can cover their costs, make a profit while selling or “dumping” their cotton for a very low price on international markets. West African farmers, on the other hand, receive no such subsidies and although their costs of production are lower, they are unable to compete with the US farmer on international markets. According to the Bread for the World Institute, 25,000 cotton farmers in the US receive more in subsidies than the entire Gross Domestic Product of Burkina Faso, where two million people depend on the sale of cotton for their livelihoods.

EU farm subsidies

The average European cow receives \$2.50 per day in subsidies while 75% of Africans live on less than \$2 per day. The most heavily subsidised cows are Japanese cows – farmers receive \$7.50 per cow!

“I have never mastered EU agricultural policy, because I figured if I did so it would drive me into such a surrealistic world that I would never climb out of that twilight zone again”

Jeffrey Sachs

One of the EU's main policies is known as CAP – the Common Agricultural Policy. Under this policy EU farmers receive payments or subsidies which are intended to ‘protect’ farmers and allow them to compete on international markets. The CAP was originally set up in 1958 during the post World War II period. During this time it was important to guarantee food supplies at affordable prices and to ensure that European farmers had a fair standard of living. In the early 1960's one person in five worked ‘on the land’ today that figure has reduced to less than one person in fifteen.

CAP policy is complex and decisions about it, including how it should be reformed, are hotly contested. Various reforms to the CAP have taken place since Ireland entered the EEC (now EU) in 1973. Under the latest series of CAP reforms farmers are no longer paid just to produce food. Today's CAP is demand driven. In the past, the more farmers produced the more they were subsidized. However

under the new system the link to production has been ‘decoupled’ or severed. Today the CAP takes roughly 40% of the EU budget (about €5 billion per year) compared with 66% of the budget 20 years ago. Further discussions on reforms to the CAP will occur in 2009.

Tariffs

As well as providing subsidies, industrialised countries and regions also impose tariffs, duties or taxes on the import of goods from developing countries. These ‘duties’ are low on unprocessed raw materials but extremely high for manufactured or processed goods. Once these raw materials are processed, they are worth much more but developing countries do not process their own raw materials because of the high tariffs, instead they export materials in their raw form. This means that the ‘added value’ is gained by rich countries and regions instead of developing countries. For example, the US tariff on fresh tomatoes from Chile is two per cent; the tariff on tomato sauce is 12%. The former World Bank Chief Economist called these tariffs ‘taxes on development’.

Both the US and EU have systems of subsidies and tariffs and both are extremely critical of each other's agricultural policy. Most of their disagreements are argued out at the WTO but while they fail to agree, more and more poor farmers in the developing world are unable to feed their families.

“When two elephants jostle, it is the grass that gets hurt”

Swahili Proverb

WTO trade talks

For the last number of years, the WTO has attempted to reach agreement on how world trade will operate in the future. These talks, which are called 'rounds', have been characterised by large disagreements between countries, especially over agricultural policy.

- In 2001, at the Doha round, the EU and US agreed to eliminate agricultural export subsidies.
- In 2003, ahead of the WTO meeting in Cancun, it was clear that the EU and US have not kept their 2001 agreement. Before the meeting, the two sides reached an agreement – it changed the nature of payments but did not demand the end of export subsidies. On the first day of talks, a leaked EU document exposed that all mention of the elimination of subsidies had been removed from the agreements. On the fourth day, powerful developing countries such as Brazil and India walked out and the talks collapsed.
- The target set for the conclusion of the Doha round or 'Development Round' as it is also called, was 2005. This target was missed.
- In the absence of a global agreement, many regional institutions have entered into bi-lateral (country to country) agreements on trade. The EU is currently in the process of finalising agreements with many African countries. These are known as Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). Many NGOs are critical of these agreements, arguing that they do not represent a fair deal for poor countries.
- In July 2008, the WTO trade talks collapsed again with disagreement between developed and developing countries over trade barriers and subsidies. NGOs and observers are disappointed by the collapse of the talks, which are not expected to resume until at least 2009.

Ending Hunger in Africa

Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for about 65 percent of Africans. It represents 30–40 percent of Africa's GDP and accounts for almost 60 percent of Africa's export income.

Since small-scale farms account for more than 90 percent of Africa's agricultural production and are dominated by the poor, this growth must be centered on the small farmer.

By reducing their trade barriers in both the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, African countries can increase agricultural trade by more than 50 percent. In turn, intraregional trade can increase food security by facilitating the transfer of foods grown in higher-potential agricultural zones to areas with lower farm productivity.

Establishing a uniform system for controlling the quality of agricultural products would go a long way toward sharpening Africa's competitive edge in global markets.

Reducing transportation and marketing margins would lower food costs and raise producer incomes. Improvements in road and transportation networks; increased access to market information systems; and better coordination among farmers, traders, and buyers are critical to reducing these margins.

Source: Ending Hunger in Africa, IFPRI, 2004

Pastoralist Gabbra women carry home their monthly supplies which they had just received at a food aid distribution in Maikona, organised by the Kenyan organisation CIFA (supported by Concern Worldwide). Like many of the Gabbra pastoralists in this region they have lost most of their animals in a devastating three-year drought so they would face starvation without this aid. The long-awaited rains, in the form of a torrential downpour, finally arrived shortly after this picture was taken, too late to be of help to the many who have lost their herds. The challenge for the future is how to end their dependence on this donated food. This semi-arid region is one of the parts of the world suffering from the effects of global climate change, with increasingly extreme swings in climatic conditions. Gideon Mendel, Kenya 2006



Need for more open and genuine discussion...

A 2,500-page report by the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) released in April 2008 is not convinced that GM technology, as it is currently practised, could help in the battle against hunger. "Assessment of the technology lags behind its development, information is anecdotal and contradictory, and uncertainty about possible benefits and damage is unavoidable," the report added. The GM debate is one many scientists and development experts believe will intensify as the world searches for possible solutions to the food crisis.

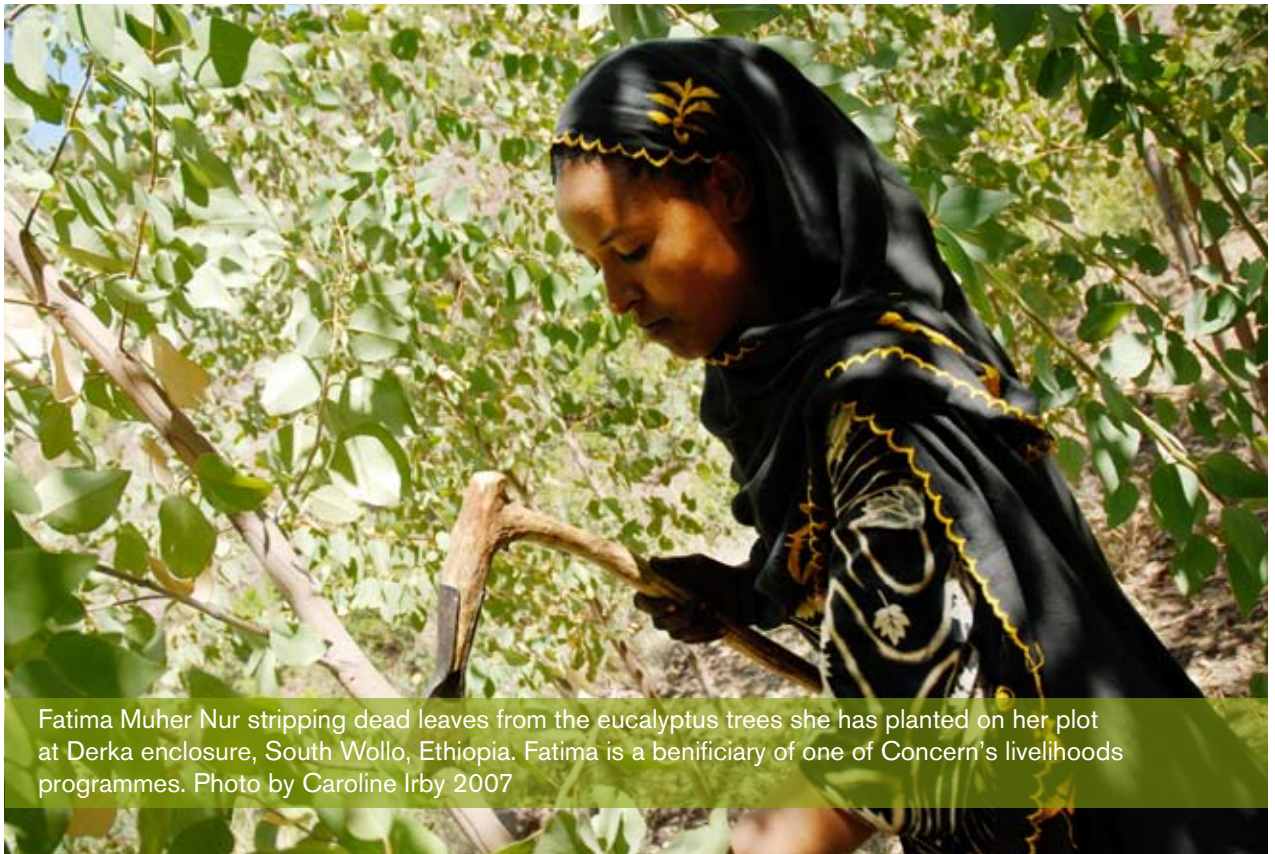
Tom Arnold, chief executive of Concern and chairman of the European Food Security Group, acknowledged GM technology may form part of future strategies to combat hunger. "You can't rule out the possibility of GM foods, in the longer term, having an increasing role to play in food security," he said. "There has to be a potential in some of this gene technology to breed shorter cycle or drought resistant plants, for example." Mr. Arnold said a "much more open and genuine" discussion about the possibilities, risks and concerns was required.

Above all, he stressed, the issue of political will and leadership was crucial in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. "The combination of the energy crisis and the food crisis means we have now moved onto a new plateau. There's going to have to be a clear focus on more food security and more investment in agriculture. That demands a policy shift."

Mr Arnold, who sits on the Hunger Task Force set up last year to recommend ways in which the Irish Government can best contribute to tackle food insecurity, noted how the work of the taskforce had become even more relevant in recent months.

"We are facing an objectively different food situation in the world than we were when the taskforce was set up a year ago. The urgency of dealing with the food crisis in terms of short-term safety nets for the poor and the beginnings of much more focused attention on food security has become very relevant." He said the decision of the taskforce to focus on increasing agricultural productivity as well as improving nutrition, reflected current thinking on battling hunger.

This is an abbreviated article written by Mary Fitzgerald from the Irish Times, April 18th, 2008.



Fatima Muher Nur stripping dead leaves from the eucalyptus trees she has planted on her plot at Derka enclosure, South Wollo, Ethiopia. Fatima is a beneficiary of one of Concern's livelihoods programmes. Photo by Caroline Irby 2007

Is GM food the solution to world hunger?

The issue of genetically modified foods is hotly debated and contested.

What are GM foods?

Genetic modification involves the scientific process of merging or 'splicing' genes from two different organisms (in this case, plants and/or animals) that would otherwise not come together under normal natural circumstances. Foods obtained through this process are called genetically modified foods or GM foods.

GM plants are developed to include three main traits:

1. Insect resistant
2. Virus resistant
3. Herbicide tolerance

The main global GM crops are soybean (63% of total GM crops), Corn (19%), Cotton (13%) and Canola (5%).

The argument for:

Those arguing in favour of the distribution and use of GM food believe that it has the potential to save the environment and solve hunger around the world.

They also argue that GM will:

1. Increase the length of time a crop can be stored
2. Make plants unappealing to harmful pests and insects, thus increasing yields
3. Delay ripening, making transportation easier and less time-dependent
4. Add flavour to food
5. Enhance the nutritional value of crops making them healthier.

The argument against:

Many arguing against GM foods see them as 'Frankenfoods' and believe they will increase the use of harmful pesticides, endanger health and put power into the hand of large agri-business.

They also argue that:

1. GM uses 2-5 times more herbicides than conventional crops
2. GM could lead to an increase in global hunger as many GM crops leave seeds sterile i.e. seeds cannot be saved for replanting the year after a harvest
3. GM is risky and at the moment, these risks outweigh the benefits.
4. GM will increase private sector control over food supply and distribution and this will have a negative effect on poor people in poor countries.
5. GM could have health risks such as hidden allergens, increased plant toxins and spread resistance to antibiotics.

Community gardens in Zimbabwe

Concern established a community garden in the Kaitano village in 2006. Originally, the garden was 50 metre by 40 meters and had a membership of 20 women and five men. Following its success, the garden is now 155 metres by 69 metres and its membership has expanded to 20 women and eight men. The members were selected to ensure that those more vulnerable and most in need could access the garden. In particular, the selection of members aimed to support those in the community who are affected by HIV & AIDS such as child-headed households and poor families. Members cultivate the garden and can use the vegetables to feed their households. The variety of plants also ensures that members can access well balanced and nutritious diet.



Concern made a contribution towards the establishment of the garden by providing tools, pumps, seeds, saplings and materials for fencing. The local community contributed tools, labour, poles for the fences and manure.

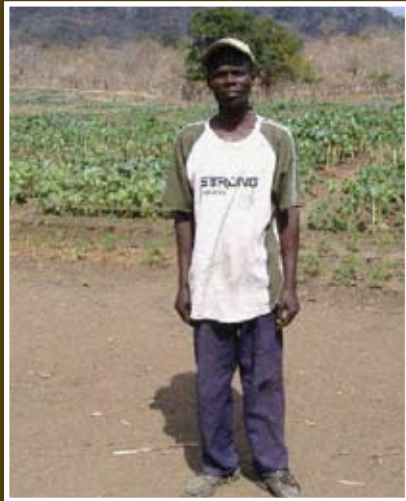
Concern and the local community worked together to build and maintain the garden and it has become one of the most successful garden projects.

This garden has been successful for a number of reasons including:

- Close cooperation and communication between Concern and the community with regular meetings and updates.
- Committed members and a positive team spirit.
- Sharing of knowledge and experience between team members.
- Availability of good quality seeds and tools.

To illustrate how Kaitano garden has changed the lives of the members in the community, Isaac Maniche, the chairman of the garden, gave the following account.





Isaac Maniche – Chair of Kaitano Community Garden

“I used to own an individual garden along the river. The garden had a fence but it was weak and animals used to break through and destroy the garden. It was difficult to repair the fence and repair the garden. There was also a problem with pests and I had little knowledge of gardening. In 2006, I became involved with the community garden established by Concern. I was selected to be a part of the garden project because I look after a number of orphans in my household. Concern advised us on how to select members and together, the village selected the households that were most in need. I was selected to be the chairperson of the garden committee and I still hold this position. I received training from Concern on how to establish and manage the garden, how to control pests and plant disease and how to keep records”

“I am working hard to lead the garden project as I do not want to disappoint the other members. My old garden did not produce enough to feed my family but now, we produce a variety of vegetable and all the members have enough food from the garden to feed their families and often, there are enough left-over vegetables to sell at the local market. Some people even travel to our village to buy our good quality vegetables!”

“As the garden chairperson, I spend most of my time planning and organising the future of the garden. For example, it is important to ensure that a cropping plan is in place and we source seeds in time for planting”

“I am recognised in the community for my achievements with the garden - even the Concern office in Harare knows about our successful garden! I am very proud of the garden and I am motivated to keep working hard. I must lead by example. We are now planning to extend the garden and we hope to grow more crops such as potatoes and wheat. I hope we can also build an irrigation scheme for the garden as this will increase yields and quality. With income from the garden, children from poor families and orphans can attend school. I would like to see more disadvantaged families becoming members and benefiting from the garden”.

The privatisation of food and the growth of agri-business

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of large-scale international agricultural businesses (agri-business). Small family-run farms are giving way to large industrial farming activities, run by large corporations. These are involved in the production of food as well as biotechnology, science, nutrition, and extensive research. Their role in the global food system is hotly debated – some argue that their extensive expertise, scale and resources could lead to innovation that will increase production, lower prices, improve distribution and could potentially end world hunger. On the other side of the debate, critics argue that agri-business has led to the privatisation of food, with a focus on profit over people; that poor and marginalised people will not benefit from any advancements and that the environmental impact of these large operations are extremely damaging. As world hunger continues to persist it remains to be seen if agri-business can provide the solution.

The private sector and food fortification

Iodine deficiency affects 50 million children around the world and is the most common cause of preventable mental retardation. To address this problem UNICEF and the Government of Ghana developed a partnership with Unilever to develop iodized salt and promote its use. Following extensive awareness-raising and education programmes, iodized salt consumption increased from 28 to 50% and this partnership has now been extended to cover vitamin A, zinc and protein and is extending to Mozambique, Malawi and Kenya.



Section Three

The International Response to Hunger

The right to adequate food is indivisibly linked to the inherent dignity of the human person and is indispensable for the fulfilment of other human rights....it is inseparable from social justice”

UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Introduction

The governments of the UN committed to halving hunger at:

1. The World Food Summits in 1996 and 2002
2. The Millennium Summit of 2000
3. The 2002 Summit on Sustainable Development
4. The 2002 Monterrey Summit on Development Finance

There is no lack of commitment – what is needed is action.

“There have been many plans for ending hunger, but implementation has often been ineffective or incomplete”

UN Hunger Task Force, 2005

1. The Right to Food

In 1948, the international community recognised the right to food in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for their health and well-being..... **food**, clothing, housing and medical care...”

Article 25

20 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights went further to declare that:

“State parties recognise the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, housing and clothing. State parties recognise the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger”

Article 11 also commits states to:

- (a) Improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition and by developing or reforming agrarian systems in such a way as to achieve the most efficient development and utilisation of natural resources.
- (b) Taking into account the problems of both food-importing and food-exporting countries, to ensure an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need.

One hundred and fifty seven countries have ratified this International Covenant. The right to food is considered to be one of the most basic human rights. It is noted as a right in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 24 and 27) and in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Article 14.2). There is also a range of treaties, declarations, guidelines, covenants and codes that constitutes the international legal framework on the right to food.

Concern's partner Matak works with Buka Maluk group, planting vegetables. Lutem district, Iliomar sub-district, Timor Leste. Photo by Joao Vas 2006



By ratifying these treaties, states are duty bound to move progressively toward the realisation of this right. They are also required to report to a committee on their progress towards **respecting, protecting** and **fulfilling** their citizens' rights to adequate food.

- **Respect:** states must refrain from violating the right to food, e.g. through discrimination against women or forced displacement from land. Governments of developed nations should also not knowingly violate this right through trade rules, domestic subsidies and dumping.
- **Protect:** third parties, such as corporations or armies, must refrain from food rights violations, and governments have a duty to regulate these third parties.
- **Fulfil:** states must take positive action to realise the right to food for all.

Despite this, the committee has noted that only a few states have provided sufficient information and therefore, it is difficult to establish how much, if any, progress has been made and also, to identify the barriers that impede the realisation of this right.

In essence, the right to food means that every person, everywhere, should have enough food and water, all of the time. Without access to adequate nutrition, all other rights are compromised. It is also noted that the right to food must be understood primarily as the right to feed oneself rather than the right to be fed and **the right to be free from hunger is the minimum essential level of this right.**

As part of the realisation of this right, people should be supported to organise themselves to stand up for their right to food. People must feel empowered and their voices must be heard. Rural marginalised farmers must also be involved in the development of rural agricultural policy.

Only 22 countries have enshrined the right to food in their constitutions either for all citizens or specifically for children. Unfortunately, no country has yet instituted specific legislative measures to implement this right. Laws will need to address common areas such as land tenure, access to water, minimum wage levels, social safety nets, credit, rural markets, food production and food quality. The list of countries is comprised almost exclusively from the developing world including Haiti, Cuba, Pakistan, Malawi, Ethiopia, Bolivia and Columbia. (Ireland, the UK and the USA are not among the 22)

“Freedom without bread has little meaning”


Eleanor Roosevelt

2. Hunger and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

In 2000, the governments of the United Nations set out a plan for the elimination of extreme poverty by 2015. The plan takes the form of eight goals – the Millennium Development Goals – which seek to move us all towards a more just, equal and sustainable world. These goals are a promise to the world's poorest people that their plight will no longer be ignored or neglected, that we are willing to redouble our efforts to reduce their suffering and a promise that we can all lead a life of dignity and respect with access to the opportunities and choices to reach our individual and collective potential.

“The MDGs are achievable if we act now”

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the UN, 2007

The eight goals are:		
	Goal 1:	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
	Goal 2:	Achieve universal primary education
	Goal 3:	Promote gender equality and empower women
	Goal 4:	Reduce child mortality
	Goal 5:	Improve maternal health
	Goal 6:	Combat HIV and AIDS other diseases
	Goal 7:	Ensure environmental sustainability
	Goal 8:	Develop a global partnership for development

While the first goal relates directly to poverty and hunger, the achievement of all of the goals are dependent on each other and without ending extreme poverty and hunger, there is little hope that the other goals will be realised. Similarly, the realisation of the other seven goals will significantly contribute to the achievement of the first goal.

At current rates, we are not on target to achieve the MDGs. However, just beyond the half-way mark, it is not too late to refocus our efforts to ensure that the eight promises are not broken.

It is estimated by the UN that the world's population will be 7.5 billion by 2015

It is estimated by WFP that the current food prices crisis could set achievement of the MDGs back by seven years

Focus on MDG 1

The first Millennium Development Goal (MDG) relates directly to poverty and hunger.

Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty

Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day

Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Indicators:

1. Proportion of population below \$1 (1993 PPP) per day (World Bank)
2. Poverty gap ratio [incidence x depth of poverty] (World Bank)
3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption (World Bank)

Indicators:

4. Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age (UNICEF-WHO)
5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption (FAO)

To develop a 'road-map' of how this goal could be achieved by the target date, the then Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan, established the 'Millennium Project'. The project was made up of ten task-forces who were asked to develop a practical and feasible plan for the realisation of the goals. The expert taskforce on hunger conducted research, consulted with a wide and diverse group of individuals and organisations all over the world and published their recommendations in a report in 2004. The report was entitled *Halving hunger: it can be done*.

The task force acknowledges that not all recommendations will be relevant for every country or region. National governments, in consultation with communities, need to identify priority activities that are appropriate for local conditions

The UN Millennium Hunger Task Force strategy for halving hunger by 2015:

- Mobilize political action to end hunger - at the global scale as well as the national and local scales in rich and poor countries.
- Align national policies that restore budgetary priority to agriculture as the engine of economic growth, build rural infrastructure, empower women, and build human capacity in all sectors involved in hunger-reduction actions.
- Implement and scale-up proven actions that improve the nutrition of vulnerable groups, raise agricultural productivity in smallholder farms, and improve market functions in ways that provide synergies and result in positive transformations.

All three elements of the strategy are necessary and together, they can end hunger. Taken separately each one will be insufficient if implemented alone.



The seven key recommendations from the UN Hunger task force:

1. Move from political commitment to action
2. Reform policies and create an enabling policy environment that assists countries to halve hunger
3. Increase the agricultural productivity of food-insecure farmers
4. Increase nutrition for chronically hungry and vulnerable people
5. Reduce vulnerability of the acutely hungry through productive safety nets
6. Increase incomes and make markets work for the poor
7. Restore and conserve the natural resources essential for food security

It is estimated by the UN Task Force on Hunger that activities to increase agricultural productivity and reduce chronic hunger will cost five to eight per cent of the total cost of achieving all of the MDGs.

Source: www.ifpri.org

Irish Hunger Task Force

Ireland's Hunger Task Force, made up of people with experience and expertise in the area of hunger, human development and agriculture, was set up by the Irish Government in September 2006 with the brief to identify the particular contribution that Ireland can make to tackling the root causes of hunger, especially in Africa.

The Report of the Task Force was published in September 2008 records some of the most successful experiences in the fight against hunger and identifies why, despite these achievements, over 860 million people remain undernourished. It outlines a detailed programme of actions to address the issue – it outlines three key priorities which the members of the Task Force argues can have the greatest impact in reducing, and ultimately eliminating, hunger.

3 Critical Areas

The Task Force argues that there are three critical areas which need priority to achieve the greatest and most lasting impact:

1. Increasing agricultural productivity in Africa – with a particular focus on women who account for up to 80% of food production in most developing countries
2. Targeting maternal and infant under-nutrition
3. Changes in governance and leadership priorities are needed at both national and international levels to hold both national governments and donors to their commitments, and address the needs of the hungry.

Introducing the Report, Taoiseach Brian Cowen outlines a rationale for Ireland's approach to the issue of hunger in the following terms:

"Ireland's history and experience of famine echoes through the generations and influences our approach

to helping those with whom we share our humanity in the fight against poverty and hunger."

Tellingly, the report notes that almost 10 million children below the age of five die every year, and that malnutrition is the underlying factor in one-third to one-half of such deaths – a denial of some of the most basic human rights outlined in the 1948 universal Declaration of Human Rights.

'Until now, international leadership and action to eradicate the scourge of world hunger have been inadequate.'

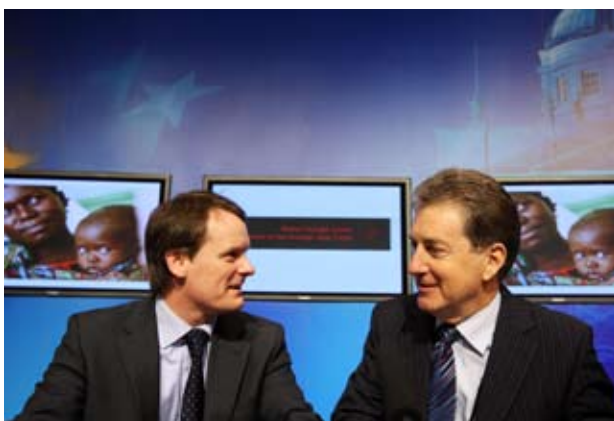
Irish Hunger Task Force

Conclusion

The report concludes by noting:

'While Government provides the lead, the proposed actions cannot be undertaken by a single agency in Ireland. The critical nature of the global hunger problem requires a response from all in Irish society. These include relevant branches of Government, NGOs, missionary organisations, higher education and research institutions, the private sector, and the citizens of Ireland who have so often responded with compassion to food crises in the developing world. The Hunger Task Force calls for creative and sustained efforts by all of these partners in Irish society, so that Ireland can show genuine leadership in making the global commitment to eradicate world hunger a reality. This is a shared task –dictated by present humanitarian imperatives, but also informed by our failures in the past to end the scourge of famine which has blighted the history of so many nations.'

Source: www.developmenteducation.ie



Minister of State Peter Power (Left) with Kevin Farrell, the newly appointed Special Envoy for Hunger

Irish Aid response to Hunger Task Force Report

On January 21st, 2009 Irish Aid officially endorsed the three priority recommendations of the Government's Hunger Task Force which are; increasing smallholder agricultural productivity in Africa; targeting maternal and infant under-nutrition and working to ensure that governments internationally fulfil their commitments to eradicate hunger. In a further endorsement of the Hunger Task Force Report Irish Aid announced the appointment of Mr Kevin Farrell the Special Envoy for Hunger.

Section Four

Concern Worldwide's Approach to Hunger

Introduction

Concern Worldwide has been responding to acute food crises and longer term food insecurity for over 40 years. The organisation is committed to improving access to basic nutrition and increasing livelihoods security and has developed a number of innovative approaches to these issues. Concern responds to poverty and hunger on a number of different levels.

- 1. Direct humanitarian response:** In times of crisis or in an emergency (conflict or natural disaster), Concern, along with its partners, will respond by distributing vital food and supplies to affected communities and families. In the past, Concern has responded to all of the major emergencies around the world.
- 2. Long-term development:** In partnership with local communities, Concern has established livelihood, education, nutrition and health programmes in a number of countries. These programmes equip beneficiaries with the skills they need to lead healthy and productive lives and reduce risk and vulnerability.
- 3. Policy:** Based on evidence from the field, Concern influences key decision makers at national, regional and international levels, to adopt pro-poor policies (including aid) that will assist marginalised and vulnerable families and communities.

In 2007, it is estimated that Concern's programmes overseas reached nine million people directly and approximately 29.5 million people indirectly. Concern programmes focus on five main areas – Health, Education, Livelihood Security, HIV and AIDS and Emergencies. The alleviation of extreme poverty and hunger cuts across all of these areas as Concern's overall goal. Through its advocacy and development education work in Ireland, Concern seeks to address and tackle the root causes of poverty.

Concern has been a leading advocate in the fight against hunger in the developing world. The organisation's Chief Executive Officer, Tom Arnold, was a member of both the United Nations Hunger Task Force and the Irish Hunger Task Force. He has argued that just as Norway has established an internationally recognized expertise in building peace so Ireland should become the global leader in the fight against hunger, stating that Ireland should in effect become "the Norway of Hunger".

In October 2008 as part of its programme of events to mark its 40th anniversary, Concern hosted an international conference on hunger in Dublin at which Kofi Annan was the keynote speaker. In addition Concern has established key relationships with other experts such as the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Valid International, Alliance 2015, African Smallholders Farmers Group, Kerry Group and other bodies in the food and agri-business sector.



Former President Mary Robinson, Kofi Annan and Concern CEO Tom Arnold at the International Hunger Conference hosted by Concern, Oct 2008. Photo: Maxwells

Concern Worldwide in operation

→ **Health** programmes in **17 countries**:

- These programmes include nutrition, mother and child health and water supply and sanitation.
- Activities include awareness raising, training and education; provision of equipment; construction of water and sanitation facilities; supplementary feeding and establishment and support of community management committees.
- These programmes reached over 1.6 million people directly in 2007

→ **Education** programmes in **12 countries**:

- These programmes include literacy training and support of basic education.
- Activities include community support for education; school construction; establishment and support of parent teacher committees; support for catch-up classes and advocacy to reduce barriers to education, especially for girls and poor families.
- These programmes reached over 700,000 people directly in 2007.

→ **Livelihood security** programmes in **29 countries**:

- These programmes include natural resource management, food production and processing, and access to markets.

- Activities include microfinance, support of decentralisation processes; vocational and small business training; water, crop and livestock management; disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness; distribution of seeds, tools and livestock; construction of roads, shelters, paths and bridges; support of marginalised rural farmers and advocacy.
- These programmes reached over 3.3 million people directly in 2007.

→ **HIV & AIDS** programmes in **14 countries**:

- These programmes include treatment, care and support and HIV and AIDS mainstreaming.
- Activities include HIV and AIDS information and awareness, support of national networks, advocacy, prevention education, research and voluntary counselling and testing.
- These programmes reached over 300,000 people directly in 2007.

→ **Emergencies** in **20 countries** to which Concern responded:

- These programmes include responding to droughts and floods and conflicts – immediate emergency response and rehabilitation.
- Activities include distribution of food and non-food items, flood awareness, cash transfers, water supply and sanitation, provision of shelter and refugee site management and livelihood recovery.



A teenage Kenyan Gabbra pastoralist herds his family's goats into the bleak rocky hillsides outside Kalacha seeking out fresh pasture. Due to the devastating three year drought in the region many of the Gabbra have lost most of their herds. They have had to take their animals long distances away from water sources to find pasture as the vegetation is increasingly over-grazed, and their animals died on the journey between pasture and water. Many of the Gabbra will remain dependent on food aid as the rains arrived too late to save their herds. This semi-arid region is one of the parts of the world suffering from the effects of global climate change, with increasingly extreme swings in climatic conditions. Photo: Gideon Mendel.

Concern Worldwide's innovative approach to tackling poverty and hunger

1. Food and Cash transfers: a new approach to predictable food crises

The Food and Cash Transfer (FACT) programme was established in three districts of Malawi as a new approach to acute food security crises. In response to a growing food crisis in 2005, this new approach of distributing a combination of food and cash allowed participants to maintain their food consumption, ensure diversity in their diets and purchase essential goods during the crisis period.

The objectives of the FACT programme:

1. To provide nutritional support to targeted households (not included in the Government's emergency response)
2. To provide a temporary safety net to minimise the need for households to resort to destructive coping strategies during the lean period
3. To explore the effectiveness of cash transfers in addressing food insecurity in humanitarian emergencies in Malawi.

From January to April 2006, the FACT project delivered food and cash each month to cover half of beneficiaries needs (25 per cent food, 25 per cent cash). The food package provided a balanced diet of protein, fat and staple cereals totalling 560 kilocalories, approximately 25 per cent of the required 2,100 per day. The amount of food and cash were adjusted for household size and were revised each month to take account of changes in food prices. Households were classified into three groups based on their size, facilitating equitable distribution of resources and bringing most households close to 100 per cent of their missing food entitlement. The food ensured that the subsistence needs of beneficiaries were met directly while the cash allowed for the purchase on non-food, yet essential, items. The cash transfers were used for a number of purposes, including the purchases of basic goods (health and hygiene, groceries, staple foods), investment (education, health, farming, business, assets) and other needs (repaying debts, family occasions and obligations).

The programme reduced the need for participants to sell their assets, borrow money at high interest rates and work on larger farms, leaving their own land uncultivated. This approach empowered beneficiaries by offering them choices. It was cost effective, avoided dependency on food aid and had a positive effect on local markets.

The FACT programme has a number of direct positive impacts:

- The immediate needs of vulnerable families were met.
- High and diverse food consumption.
- Children could attend school.
- Increase in well-being of participants.
- Avoids damaging coping strategies which would undermine future livelihoods.
- Protection and promotion of livelihoods.
- Empowerment of beneficiaries.

Overall, an evaluation of this programme found that the *combination of food plus cash appears to have provided all the benefits of both while avoiding the limitations of each.*

Concern continues to improve this approach, ensuring that it remains an equitable and effective form of relief for those in most need and it will be integrated into future livelihood programming.

2. Community-based management of acute malnutrition

From a research idea to a change in international policy

Concern and Valid International, along with their partners in Ethiopia, Sudan and Malawi, have pioneered an innovative approach to dealing with severe acute malnutrition. Traditionally, acute malnutrition was treated in large Therapeutic Feeding Centres (TFCs) and each patient was required to stay for 30 days of 24 hour care. While the centres are staffed by qualified and dedicated medical staff, they were often located centrally and far from remote rural villages and those in most need of treatment. The capacity and reach of these centres was also limited and large numbers of children could not be reached. For a child to access treatment at one of these centres, mothers would have to travel long distances, leaving the rest of their families behind.

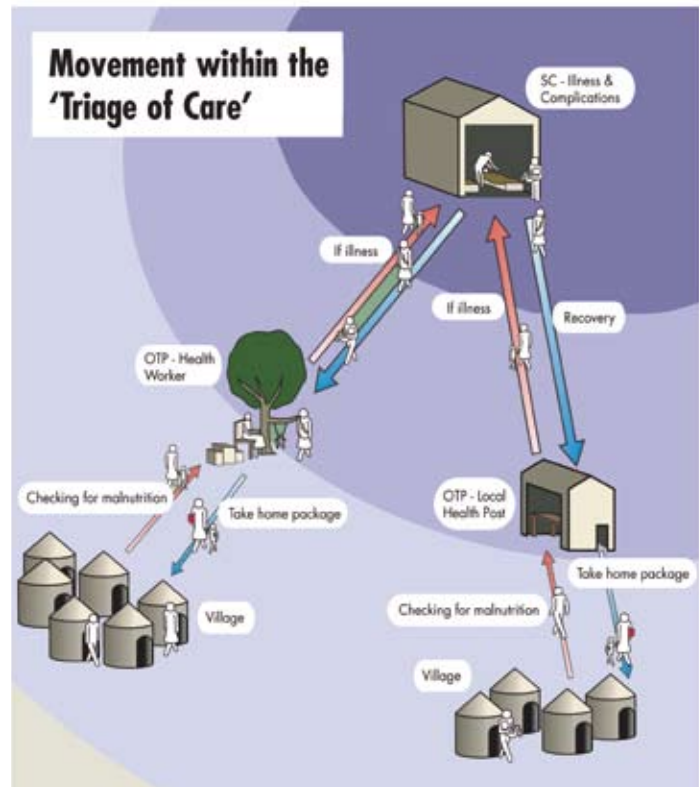
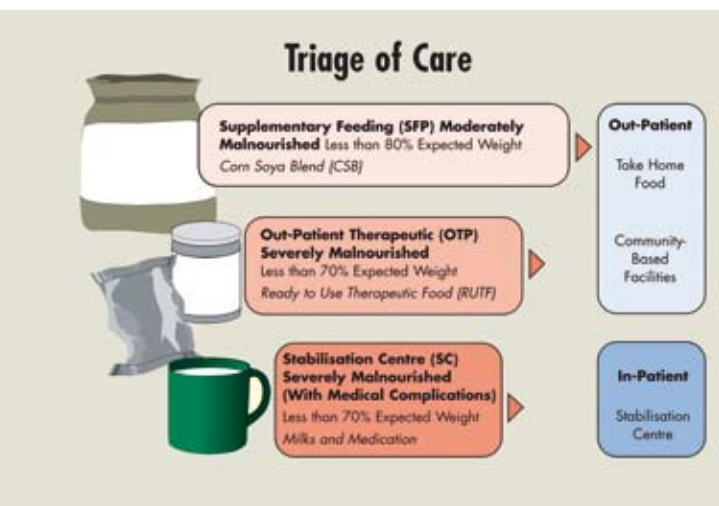
The concept of community-based management of acute malnutrition attempts to address the shortcomings of the traditional model. This approach places the treatment of acute malnutrition in wider health interventions.

The main components:

- This approach mobilises communities so that cases of malnutrition are caught early and support local health services to treat cases without long hospital stays away from home.
- The approach also uses specially produced foods known as Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) which families can access in their local communities and take home, if there are no medical complications.

- Those suffering from severe malnutrition and with medical complications attend local stabilisation centres for treatment and move home once they have been treated.
- All interventions remain close to the community and with numerous sites, community members can easily access take-home packages and/or medical treatment.
- Community health workers and volunteers raise awareness of the programme and communicate the time, place and location of the programme. This network can also be used to educate mothers and carers about health and nutrition and also act as an early warning system, monitoring those at risk and assisting them before illness becomes serious.
- The approach has the potential to save thousands of lives and is applicable beyond emergencies.

This evidence was presented at a number of international conferences, gatherings and to governments and it has now been adopted by UN agencies (UNICEF, WHO, WFP) and other large international non-governmental organisations as their preferred approach for tackling acute malnutrition. The challenge now is how to scale-up this approach while maintaining quality and ownership and also investing in systems and processes that prevent acute and chronic malnutrition in the first place.



Evidence from the pilot project for this approach shows that recovery from malnutrition, default and mortality rates exceeded internationally accepted minimum standards and many more children were reached and treated.

The approach was also widely accepted by local care-givers, households, communities and health-care workers. In essence, the programme was 'owned' by the community and this contributed significantly to its success. The treatment is also more cost-effective and efficient. In terms of reach, this new approach resulted in 80% coverage as apposed to 10-20% delivered in traditional TFCs. It also highlighted the importance of integrating health and nutrition with child health and HIV and AIDS interventions.

POT sites have been established in various settings to ensure greater proximity to the community. Here we see just two examples where firstly a health worker has simply set-up under a tree and secondly, an existing 'local health post' is utilised.

The aim is to ensure that communities can more easily access the provision of take-home packages as well as more rapid referral to the stabilisation centre if illness is seen. The more numerous the POT sites, the greater coverage the programme can provide.

Food Security in Timor Leste

In the Lautem district of Timor Leste, Concern is working with a local partner to support local villages to prepare for disasters and develop skills to overcome the main obstacles to food security. Initially, a few members of the community were involved in the project but now, many more people, as well as the local council, officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, other local NGOs and businesses are all engaged in this partnership.

After 2 years, it is clear that the partnership is yielding results - villages are now accessing services from many organisations and government agencies and the relationship between local communities, NGOs and the Government is growing in strength, mutual respect.

Daudere is one village involved in the project. It was selected to become a "model farm", established as a learning site for neighbouring villages. This project also focusing on promoting the role of women for women as project 'animators', encouraging other to get involved in the project. Some of these women also hold key positions in their local village councils or district Disaster Management Committee.

Helen Sampaio is one such villager. She is raising seven children in a small house made from palm leaves and bamboo poles with no running water. Food and other essentials are scarce. With support from Concern, residents in the village established a community garden and planted a variety of nutritious food including tomatoes, peanuts, bananas, lettuce, cucumbers, beans and leafy, dark green vegetables. Every day, Helen waters and weeds the crops and harvests whatever is ready. "Some we eat, some we sell", she notes.

"It improved the nutrition my household". Recently, Helen and other members picked 16 sacks of red onions! The community are very enthusiastic about the community garden and have worked hard to make it a success and a good example to other local villages.



Debate it!

Concern's Active Citizenship programme seeks to engage people here 'at home' in development issues. In 2008 the motion for the annual Concern Debates competition was on the vexed area of Genetically Modified Foods, while our annual Writing Competition invited participants to 'Imagine a world without Hunger'...here's a taste of what they said;

The motion for the 2008 Concern Debates final was: **“To end hunger the world must embrace bio-technology”**

Here, the captains from the two finalist debate teams outline their team's main argument.



Bronwyn Reid-McDermott
Captain
Transition Year



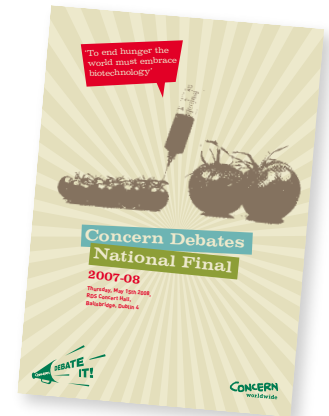
Ciarán O'Connor
Second Speaker
Transition Year



Caoimhe McManus
Third Speaker
Fifth Year



Thomas Keogh
Forth Speaker
Fifth Year



The proposition — arguments for the motion

Bronwyn from Athlone Community College

The world must embrace biotechnology to end world hunger because:

1. Conventional methods alone will not be enough to feed the world's growing population
2. Crops adapted by biotechnology can be grown in adverse climate conditions such as droughts and flooding, which are obstacles that many people in the developing world face.
3. Crops can be made resistant to pests and diseases, increasing yields for developing world farmers.
4. It can make contaminated water accessible which will be a major factor in ending hunger.
5. It helps provide vital vitamins and minerals in existing crops to help deficiencies from hunger.
6. Medical biotechnology can provide medicines and antibiotics to cure diseases associated with hunger and malnutrition.
7. Biotechnology provides new methods of immunisation and vaccines.
8. GM foods have so far been proved safe and are already being used in richer countries so they should be embraced in Africa.
9. Food is more easily transported and can be made more sustainable and costs can be eliminated.
10. Food charity alone will simply not be enough to end hunger. The lack of available land to produce this amount of food means we must embrace new methods like biotechnology.

“Biotechnology is not the total solution, we must deal with other factors of course, but it is a vital part of the solution. GM foods will not solve hunger alone, no one thing will, but we must embrace every aspect of the answer, including Biotechnology, if we are to end hunger”

“ This debate is not about the rights and wrongs of biotechnology instead it is about choice; we have a choice and there are logical alternatives..... we can end hunger without biotechnology”



Pierce Maguire
Captain
Fifth Year



Aidan Skehan
Second Speaker
Fifth Year



Daniel Ryan
Third Speaker
Fifth Year



John Cleary
Forth Speaker
Sixth Year

The opposition — arguments against the motion

Pierce from CBS Thurles

The world does not need to embrace biotechnology because:

1. There are many untried, mismanaged and ignored easier ways to deal with world hunger; the real ways of solving hunger are not new technology but old news.
2. The real solutions to world hunger are food crops instead of bio-fuels and cash crops. Better distribution and supply must be introduced and biased world trade must be ended.
3. We are, in fact, growing too little to feed the world.
4. Conflict is one of the main causes of hunger so without addressing the causes of conflict, hunger will never be eliminated.
5. Our western, developed world lifestyles are so extravagant and wasteful, that if we were to reduce our massive drain on the world's resources, we would stand a greater chance of ending hunger than biotechnology could ever hope to have.
6. In any case, biotechnology would not help the poorest people because they are unable to access high-yielding seeds, pesticides and fertilisers or money that are needed to make biotechnology useful.
7. GM crops are actually producing less, not more, yields than organically produced crops. We have enough land, we are just not using it to grow food.
8. It is not a good idea to invest in biotechnology – an inexact science that produces varying results – when we have the resources available to end hunger right now, what we do lack is the political will to do it.
9. Hunger is far too complex to solve by simply producing more food.
10. Instead, we must look at the foundations of the way the industry works, look at the waste, the unused land, the out of date bread, the grain in our SUV tank and the subsidies that divide our world.

**Concern
debates**



THE CECIL WOODHAM-SMITH

concern creative writing competition 2008

In 2008, young people were asked to imagine

"A WORLD WITHOUT HUNGER"



Young people were asked to imagine the year 2058 and to reflect on the greatest human achievement in their lifetime – ending world hunger.

Written by: Ryan Woolley, Dublin 24
First Place, Concern Creative Writing Competition, 2008
Junior category
A World without hunger

"What was the greatest achievement of your lifetime?" my grandson asked me. "That would have to be the year world hunger was finally eradicated, no contest". He looked at me curiously "I've read about famine in history books" he said just like a boy who had never experienced hunger more painful than a craving for a third helping of dessert. I sighed "you should count yourself lucky you live in this day and age. Not so long ago millions of people died from starvation or suffered malnutrition." "But why?" he asked innocently "was there not enough food to go around?" I gestured to him to sit beside me.

"Yes of course there was enough food, there were even such things as butter mountains, not literally obviously but surplus food that went to waste. The trouble was it wasn't fairly shared. It was a case of the haves and the have nots, the rich versus the poor, those with stomachs swollen from gluttony and those with bellies bloated from hunger."

"Greed and corruption overshadowed good intentions. We took longer to provide our population with the most basic human right to life than to put man on the moon. It was all a matter of priorities and power"

"So how did they do it?"

"By learning from their mistakes. Charities and governments had thrown money at the problem for years but it was always a quick fix, never a long term solution. Then someone coined a phrase that went something like, give a man a fish, he'll eat today, teach a man to fish and he'll eat everyday. In other words providing tools and education were more important if not more so than sending grain to famine stricken regions and of course not all the malnourished lived in third world countries. Poverty in rich countries such as America and Ireland meant children went hungry. This had to be addressed too, not swept under the carpet".

"It was only when the global government came to power that the ball started rolling. At last there was a collection of good men and women with the skills and knowledge who had the best interest of the people rather than their own pockets at heart. You see the global government controls the ethics of every country in the world equally, with no exception. It hits those who don't comply where it hurts, their wallets. High fines and sanctions are imposed. They don't waste time arguing over red tape or playing politics for the sake of it. They take action"

"They gathered the most brilliant scientists, dieticians and agriculturists and developed the technology we have today. They invented the daily nutrient pill you get every morning in school; this provides the basic dietary requirements for a human being to survive. It's based on how astronauts are supplemented in space. Free school meals are compulsory as is an education for every child. According to the regulations all children are registered and accounted for by iris recognition" Food stations distribute indigenous carbohydrate rations as well as the "Life pill." The clever thing is the additive incorporated into the food.

Giant self sustainable food farms with the sole purpose of providing ingredients for the pharmaceutical factories to manufacture the pill were built on waste lands using state of the art irrigation systems and solar energy. The drug companies sell to G.G. at cost price in return for lucrative tax incentives and each country pay a percentage of its tax income into a G.G account which pays for transportation and distribution costs etc.

Of course this wouldn't work on its own. The same idea of educating people how to put food on the table is still applied. And the Disaster Strategy was designed to aid refugees within 24hrs of natural disasters with the emphasis on rejuvenation. Many hands make light work, the more people committed to a singular goal the more likely it can be achieved. It's no longer somebody else's problem, it's everybody's!

Written by: Kate Nevin, Tuam, Co. Galway
First Place, Concern Creative Writing Competition, 2008
Senior category
A World without hunger

The time when almost half the world's population lived on less than \$2 a day is a distant memory. Yes, I know how far we've come, but I certainly know where we've been. Nearly 90 years ago the world's richest countries pledged to spend 0.7% of their national income on aid. As of 2004 only five countries had kept that promise. Many said extreme poverty was as much a part of the world as the sea or the mountains. The year 2015 proved them wrong, when over twenty five of the pledged countries spent at least 1% of their national income on aid. This was also the year when debt to all developing countries was cancelled, with no terms and conditions. This led to life changing results for the billions struggling to survive in extreme poverty. The huge surge of emergency and development aid steadily reduced the proportion of people living on a dollar a day, and with the sponsorship of hydrologists and engineers from Western countries, clean drinking water was made accessible to every person in the Third World. Social entrepreneurs proceeded to look at a longterm development plan for communities as a whole for effective social change.

I can see a time when equal education opportunities were not there for every child. Education in Third World countries was non-existent or depended on a child's gender or social status. Wealthy governments in the Western World sponsored teachers and educational infrastructure to help educate all children equally, and provide training in the future for school leavers. The students taught by the sponsored teachers went on to train and sustain the level of education without relying on aid. Strategies for decent, productive work for youth were put in place in cooperation with developing countries. Eight-day live-in workshops on peace-making were set up by voluntary organisations in villages and towns, giving youths the chance to become peace-makers in their communities. By the year 2030 children worldwide had access to primary and secondary education regardless of gender or social status.

In the year 2015, in cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, access was provided to affordable essential drugs in developing countries and from then on pharmaceutical facilities steadily improved along with infant mortality rates. As a result of good nutrition, equal education opportunities and access to essential drugs, pre and post natal care improved drastically. By the year 2015 the maternal mortality rate was reduced by three-quarters and by 2030 it had reached that of the Western countries.

I think back when millions of people infected with HIV and AIDs, malaria and other major diseases died helplessly. The diagnosis wasn't made early, treatment wasn't available and due to lack of education people did not know anything about their infection or how to prevent it. With the improvement in educational facilities and the availability of essential drugs and contraceptives, the spread of HIV and AIDs was halted in the year 2020. Mosquito nets were distributed in association with pharmaceutical companies, again halting the spread of malaria and major diseases. Health clinics were erected to aid in the early diagnosis and treatment of major diseases. School leavers were trained as nurses or doctors and by the year 2030 the spread of HIV and AIDs and malaria was reversed.

Voluntary organisations, the United Nations and Western governments sponsored highly-skilled and personnel to design, build and teach locals to use modern infrastructure in the Third World. Natives were employed alongside the sponsored workers to build and maintain an irrigation system. This insured communities all over the developing world had clean running water for sanitation, agriculture and cooking, alongside the already restored drinking water. Consequently this irrigation scheme along with rotation of crops, halted desertification, which is continuing to reverse steadily with every passing day. Engineers and technicians designed and implemented communication and electricity networks. This opened a whole new world to the local people. Engineers trained locals in community schools in the use and expansion of both networks. Through the skills of these trainees the networks spread from village to village, town to town, city to city and country to country. The networks expanded quickly due to the use of modern mobile equipment and by 2020 the developing world was connected by a strong communication network. Civil engineers worked to improve roads and railway lines along with bus and aviation services. Following this, with the help of the UN and international observers a democratic government was elected. Elections took place in every part of the Third World without violence.

Financial experts from the USA and Europe were employed to monitor budgets among developing countries. The need to balance trade fairly between import and export was addressed, and thus tariffs on importing goods from the Third World were reduced and encouraged by European and American governments. Sale of arms to the developing world was banned to encourage the spending of money on productive areas. This ban also reduced disputes and circulation of warfare

"What was the biggest human achievement in your lifetime?" my granddaughter asks suddenly, her face set in an inquisitive gaze. Without a moment's hesitation I answer one of the easiest questions one could ask. "The day world hunger ended" I reply with a smile, as I sit my grandchildren down to explain to their innocent faces what they know so little about. Gazing past my fresh bread, the children's schoolbags, my grandson's medicine, my computer and my telephone onto the thriving streets of Sierra Leone, I begin a story of duty, love, respect and the indestructable power when people join together as one.



Written by Ruth Keating, Dalkey, Co. Dublin
Second Place, Concern Creative Writing Competition, 2008
Senior category
"A World without Hunger"

One of the weaknesses of our age was our apparent inability to distinguish our need from our greed. Poverty for the many was, as always, the byproduct of wealth for the few. The year 2058 was the year that the disease of hunger crippling our world, finally found its cure, undoubtedly the single greatest achievement in human history. In its discovery the people of the world united in a common cause.

Each generation must face its own challenges and hunger was our calling. It shaped us as people, as nations and as one world. Its solution lay in our philosophy, that hunger is caused by decisions made by human beings, and can be ended by making different decisions.

The way people thought about poverty and hunger was the greatest obstacle to ending it. As millions of people starved, powerful myths blocked our understanding of the true causes of hunger and almost prevented us from taking effective action to end it. The true source of world hunger was not scarcity but policy, not inevitability but greed. The real culprits of hunger were economies that failed to offer everyone opportunities and societies that placed economic efficiency over compassion.

One of the major steps in solving world poverty was a true land reform. Good land was put in the hands of those who could sow it rather than those who could simply afford it. The solution to hunger was to allow farmers to sell first and foremost to their own people and fair rates were set. Cancelling world debt provided these countries with the ability to help themselves, such as being able to develop their economy in order to safeguard against future hunger.

If efforts were only directed at providing food, or improving food production or distribution, then the structural root that caused hunger, poverty and dependency would still have remained. And so while in the past continuous effort, resources and energies were deployed to relieve hunger through technical measures, the political causes required political solutions as well. People didn't want to hear how we were ignoring everything that we had been taught about democracy, rights, freedom, and justice. How we were systematically damaging others by our greed.

By solving our own greed, we solved world hunger. The existence of so much hunger in the world was a reality we could not deny. It was a reality that challenged us deeply: it asked us to become more fully human. Overcome with insatiable greed, however, society blindly pillaged the earth of valuable resources, and thus robbed billions of people in developing countries. Therefore, the solution to world hunger lay beyond the boundaries of expensive and exhausting humanitarian solutions at the root issue: individuals and nations had honestly to acknowledge and then end, their selfish gluttony.



Concern writing competition prize winners meet Kofi Annan. Photo: Maxwells

Written by: Culann Walsh, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin
Third Place, Concern Creative Writing Competition, 2008
Senior category
"A World without Hunger"

World Hunger is one of the greatest injustices which face our world today. This hunger is not only the result of natural problems, such as drought, it is a consequence of economic, social and political structures which are tainted with inequality.

It is clear that something needs to be done, but what is that something? Where does the problem lie and how can we solve it?

This is a problem which will be vastly more difficult to solve than any other. The solution will have to go beyond simply giving aid.

In order to make steps towards a world without hunger there are many simple actions we can take to be more generous and sensitive to the problems that exist.

We need to be prepared to pay more for fairly traded produce. We need to be more sensible in our spending too.

We have the responsibility and the power to help our fellow citizens of the world to stamp out this mass malnutrition. Although there might not be a short-term solution, very few good solutions are short term.

write on!

Written by Clíodhna Quirke, Tralee, Co. Kerry
Second Place, Concern Creative Writing Competition, 2008
Junior category
"A World without Hunger"

Recently my children asked me what was the biggest human achievement in my lifetime. Without hesitation I replied, "It was the year world hunger finally ended. The year people went to bed with full stomachs. The year nobody died from starvation."

"In 2015, the leaders of many powerful countries met in Brussels and cancelled world debt. Our country was now able to spend our money on more important things, like setting up farms. It wasn't a quick fix solution. If you gave people food you fed them for a day. If they were able to produce their own food they had food for a lifetime."

"Fairtrade, an organisation that promoted equal trade between poor countries and wealthy countries had a great impact on unreasonable trade. It allowed us to sell our goods at fair prices. If people were able to get good jobs they would be able to work their way out of poverty. When people understand the reasons why there is hunger and the solutions that can eradicate it, the problem can be solved easier and quicker."

"Peace negotiations began. Food was distributed equally and attempts were made to stop climate change."

"I hope we never let it happen again," said my daughter, Saada.

"It's up to you," I said. "You're the future generation."

As I watch them I think of how lucky they are to live hunger free. A great man, Kofi Annan once said "It can be done, but do not leave it to politicians alone. Each and everyone of you has a role to play".

° The world has enough
for everyone's **need**
but not for everyone's
MAHATMA GANDHI

greed



Conclusion

The world can end hunger. We have the wealth, the resources and the know-how. All that is missing is political will. Developed countries need to match their stated commitment to eliminate hunger and poverty with adequate and appropriate resources and support. The international community must refocus its attention on agriculture, especially for marginalised and vulnerable farmers. Global agricultural policy must change to focus on ending poverty and hunger. NGOs must continue to support local community-level initiatives while also advocating for pro-poor policies that will eliminate hunger once and for all. Donors must continue to support food aid efforts as they are an effective risk reducing safety net, especially in the light of recent food price increases. The governments of developing countries must support rural agriculture with investment in infrastructure, technology dissemination and essential services. In all cases, communities and families must participate and have their voices heard to ensure that all interventions will assist them to break free from the cycle of poverty and food insecurity.

“I call on you to take bold and urgent steps to address the root causes of this global food crisis. Nothing is more degrading than hunger. It breeds anger, social disintegration, ill-health and economic decline. In the name of the development goals we all set at the Millennium, the right to food and our common humanity, I urge you to act together now”

Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General of the UN, addressing a conference of world leaders in June 2008. 5,159 people attended this conference.

Outside their home, built from eucalyptus trees and corrugated iron sheeting. Clockwise, from left: Zeneba Muhia, 29, Ahamed, 2, Fatima, 11, Saïd, 32, Mohammed, 7, Abdu, 4 and Alganesh, 6. Before Saïd's involvement in the irrigation scheme, the family lived in a tukul – a mud hut. Photographer: Caroline Irby.



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Web Resources & Further Reading

To learn more about hunger and poverty, visit the following websites:

1. Concern: **www.concern.net**
2. The UN World Food Programme: **www.wfp.org**
3. The international Food And Agricultural Organisation: **www.fao.org**
4. For research and news on global hunger visit the International Food and Policy institute: **www.ifpri.org**
5. Bread for the World, an American NGO tackling global hunger: **www.bread.org**
6. To debate hunger and poverty visit **www.developmenteducation.ie/issues#4**
7. To learn more about the Millennium Development Goals visit **www.un.org/millenniumgoals**
8. For up to date news and analysis visit **www.bbc.co.uk** and search under 'food'.
9. To read more about the UN taskforce on Hunger visit **www.unmillenniumproject.org**





The MUAC band

In an emergency situation, it is important to assess the situation quickly and accurately so that those in most need are assisted. Children are also extremely vulnerable in these situations – they may have lost or become separated from their parents, they are prone to illness and disease and without adequate nutrition, their health deteriorates rapidly.

The MUAC (Middle-Upper Arm Circumference) band is designed to facilitate a rapid evaluation of a child's level of malnutrition. It is a small paper band that is wrapped around a child's arms and when closed it has a colour-coded indicator that shows if a child is healthy (green), slight malnourished (orange) or severely undernourished (red). By using the MUAC band, along with an assessment of their general appearance, those responding in an emergency situation can prioritise the children most at risk, saving many lives.

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