



Celebrate with UNA-Canada

UN's World Food Day

♦♦ 16 October ♦♦

FOOD SECURITY

Almost one billion people in the world live with constant hunger. At the same time, another billion people, primarily those living in developed nations, consume on average over 60% more than they require to live an active and healthy life.



UN Photo: Marco Dormino (Haiti)

Hunger is a daily, appalling reality in our world. We currently grow enough food to feed the world. Hunger today is not due to the limits of our planet, but to the ways we have chosen to produce, store, share, buy and sell food.

Food insecurity exists when people lack sustainable access to sufficient amounts of safe, nutritious food and clean water for a healthy and productive life. It may be chronic, seasonal or temporary, and it may occur at the household, regional, national or global level.

If the world produces enough food for all, why are almost a billion people chronically hungry? Food insecurity is not the consequence of poor harvests, but is rooted in the world economy. In times of economic recession and crisis, food insecurity escalates proportionately. Other complex and interconnected factors also contribute to food insecurity. They include poverty, war and civil conflict, corruption, national policies that have preverse consequences of limiting access to arable land or food for all, barriers to trade, insufficient or unequal agricultural development, population growth, social and gender inequality, poor health and levels of education.

The environment is also a key factor. Many countries have short seasons to produce their crops and lack equipment or storage facilities to prolong the life of produce. Environmental degradation, drought and floods impact production short-term and the amount of arable land long-term. Pollution and over-fishing have radically reduced ocean stocks. Climate change is a hunger risk multiplier. Unless considerable efforts are made to improve the resilience of vulnerable populations, millions more people will be at risk of hunger as a direct result of the changing climate.



UN Photo: Olivier Chassot (Sudan)

Food availability does not ensure food accessibility. Government policies must ensure equal distribution of food. Food must be properly handled, prepared and stored to maximize value. In many countries, lack of proper storage results in spoilage, wastage and contamination. Perhaps

most importantly, families must be able to afford the food. Escalating food prices expose people barely getting by to poverty, deepen levels of poverty for the already vulnerable, and contribute to social distress and political unrest.

The spiking prices and availability of food played a central role in sparking the uprisings that engulfed the Arab world in 2010-2011. Their provision of food to those without contributed to the local credibility of the Muslim Brotherhood in Tunisia and Egypt aiding significantly to their electoral success. Food security is not just an issue in the developing nations. Ongoing drought conditions across North America are resulting in higher food prices and driving more and more families to seek help. From 2008 to 2011, food bank use in Canada skyrocketed by 26%.

UN agencies put committed staff at risk around the world to provide humanitarian aid to populations in crisis, and to improve the complex and often competing factors that contribute to hunger and poverty.

UN agencies also improve agricultural productivity; raise levels of nutrition; foster economic and technological cooperation among nations; share and oversee evidence-based initiatives for long term sustainable development; and strengthen good governance and capacity-building – perhaps the most important factors in eradicating poverty. The UN helps communities and nations to better help themselves.



Food security is about more than just survival. It is a key determinant of dignity, and of freedom. It is a basic right, not a charity. Do we have the courage to change our own lives and our own societies to create a reality and future that ensures that everyone, everywhere, has enough food to live in dignity?

Food Security Facts

- In the past 20 years, food production grew by 50%, compared to a population growth of 40%. Yet world hunger is increasing. In the past 10 years, the number of hungry people has increased by 9% from 840 to 925 million
- In just one year, from 2010 to 2011, the overall food price index rose by 37%. Cereals, the staple food for the poor, were hardest hit. The world price of wheat and corn increased by 85% and 90% respectively
- World trade in agricultural, fisheries and forestry products amount to US\$552 billion annually
- In 2010, the World Food Programme supported 24.3 million people with ‘food for work’ projects that improved community infrastructure, and implemented sustainability-oriented initiatives like soil and water conservation, planting trees and setting up gardening businesses

Source: United Nations

Join our movement of “*We the Peoples...*” and help us to transform lives and build hopeful futures. A better world starts with YOU.

Become a member of United Nations Association in Canada at: www.unac.org/supportus or subscribe to our e-newsletter at: www.unac.org/subscribe

Together, we will look beyond what is, to what could be, and take positive action toward a peaceful, prosperous and just future for all.