

Why we are going hunger

Proceeding

It is predicted that there will be 9 billion people in the world by 2050, and huge increase in the food production is required to feed them. According to FAO, there are nearly 1 billion people in the world today who are hungry and another billion who are malnourished, lacking the essential micro-nutrients they need to lead healthy lives (2011). We are often asked about the food production system and achieving food security. But only increasing the food production and productivity doesn't solve the problem of food insecurity. There are more dimension that we have to think and consider to solve the problem of hunger. Rather than food security we should more think on the nutrient security and bring change in food habit of the people.

The recent increase in food prices has pushed yet more people into hunger in the developing countries, who are reliant on food imports and spend a large proportion of their income on food. Small countries that are dependent on imports especially in Africa and South Asia are deeply affected by the food and economic crises. The causes of this price hike include bio-fuel policies that have diverted grain away from the food supply, harvest failures and commodity speculation. The majority of the people who are hungry live in developing countries, in poor rural areas, and are often directly involved in producing food. Many do not have land of their own and work for others, often in seasonal jobs, to earn money to survive. In poor food-deficit countries production levels must be increased where appropriate, but agriculture also needs to play a role in reducing hunger through growing farmer and household incomes, building infrastructure and markets, and protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

If population increases in same rate by 2050 population of the world will be more than 9 billion. If the condition of food security today is like this what about the feeding all those extra people in 2050?

It has been frequently argued that a massive increase in food production, of 70–100%, will be needed to feed them all. This is not just due to more people, but reflects the assumptions made by the authors of the modeling study about the diet we will all be eating. In making and using these predictions, policy-makers are assuming that many more people in countries in the South will be eating a 'Western' diet with more intensively produced meat, dairy products, sugar and vegetable oils, following the shift in eating habits. The model also adopted by the publication *World Agriculture: Towards 2030/2050* (FAO, 2006) assumes that there will be no reduction in the amounts eaten in developed countries, and in fact that there will be further 14% increase in the consumption of such foods per person, despite growing recognition of the negative health impacts of such diets in both low and high income countries. FAO document also says that a 70% increase or doubling in the production of food would not solve the hunger problem with 290 million people predicted to still be malnourished in 2050. It all due to food habit of people and food losses and waste.

How to 'feed the world' is of course a massive issue concerning questions not only about how food is produced, but what is produced, where and by whom, as well as who has access to the land, technology and knowledge to produce it, how it is traded, as well as who can

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afford to buy it are to be more concerned if we really want hunger free world. It is about big changes to how we produce and consume food. It is about investing in the development of smallholder agriculture and local markets in the South Asia, but it also means action to end food waste, estimated at one-third of all food produced globally. Critically, it is also about changing diets of people to make them healthier and more sustainable. Changing food habit and reducing food waste is important for food security.

An UNEP study argues that at least 35-40% of all cereals produced worldwide are fed to livestock, and this could rise to 50% by 2050 if meat consumption increases as has been predicted. Using cereal crops to feed animals is a highly inefficient use of calories and is very resource intensive. It also says that the loss of calories by feeding the cereals to animals instead of using the cereals directly as human food represents the annual calorie need for more than 3.5 billion people. Animals should be grazed on pasture land and those cereals should be fed to human. Grass-reared meat can also be the best option if grazed on land that would not be suitable for any other type of agriculture, thus converting grass - something we cannot eat, into something we can. Animal proteins should come primarily from grazing and not from confinement systems based on cultivated grains. But, of course, we need to increase the sustainability of grass-reared systems, in particular in dry and drought-prone areas.

Food has never before existed in such abundance. There is enough food in the world today for everyone to have the nourishment they need, and yet there are nearly 1 billion people in the world today who are hungry and another billion who are malnourished, lacking the essential micro-nutrients they need to lead healthy lives (FAO-OECD, 2011). At the same time, more than 1 billion are overweight, of which 300 million are obese, posing a major risk for diet-related illnesses such as type-2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease (WHO, 2010). There are clearly huge global inequalities in the distribution of food. We should not only give emphasis in production and increasing productivity but also have sight on food distribution system. People continue to go hungry because they cannot afford to buy food, or access it in other ways such as growing it themselves. This arises directly because of poverty, but natural disasters, conflict, poor agricultural practices and infrastructure and over-exploitation of the environment are all common contributory factors. Our current food system produces a lot of waste. On a global scale it is estimated that about one third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted, about 1.3 billion tons per year which can feed more than 1

billion people annually (FAO, 2011). Much more food, about 280-300kg per person per year is wasted in Europe and North America, compared to the 125–165kg in low income countries in Southeast Asia. In developed countries, most of the waste occurs at the consumption stage due to a lack of co-ordination between different actors in the food chain, sales agreements between farmers and buyers leading to farm crops being wasted, quality standards which reject food items not uniform in shape or appearance, as well as lack of purchase planning by consumers, expiring ‘best-before-date’ labels and the attitudes of those who can afford to waste food.

In developing countries, the cause of food losses and waste are mainly due to limitations (financial, managerial and technical) in harvesting techniques, storage and cooling facilities and

infrastructure, packaging and marketing systems. For smallholder farmers in developing countries, many of whom suffer food shortages, a reduction in food losses could have an immediate and significant impact. Eliminating food losses opens up a new supply of food to feed the growing population.

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Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.