

October 28, 2010

DPI/NGO Briefing
Partnering for Food Security to Fight Global
Hunger

Thursday, October 21, 2010, 10:15 AM - 12:15 PM

1. Background Information:

The 2009 estimates of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) indicate that due in part to soaring food prices and the global financial crisis, the number of undernourished people topped one billion for the first time. Despite an expected decline (the first in 15 years) the 2010 estimates remain unacceptably high at a total of 925 million or one out of every seven persons are suffering from chronic hunger.

Chronic hunger or undernourishment is defined by the FAO as the status of persons whose food intake provides less than their minimum energy requirements. This is not due to a lack of food. The world [produces enough food to feed everyone. Many people suffer from chronic hunger not because of poor global harvests but because of food insecurity. This is because they cannot afford to buy the food that is available nor do they have physical or social access to the food.

Food security as defined by the FAO exist when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to safe and nutritious food that meets their needs.

FAO is leading the international efforts to defeat hunger. In their view a world a vision of a without hunger is the first step to fighting global hunger. With this in mind, the FAO launched the "One Billion Hungry" project in May, 2010 to blow the whistle on hunger. A petition was presented to world leaders at the United Nations during the World Food Day observance on October 16.

FAO's hope is if both public and private sectors work together to alleviate poverty, end gender imbalance and improve access to food for all citizens, we can manage and improve food security.

2. Moderator:

Ms. Gail Bindley-Taylor Sainte, Information Officer, NGO Relations,
Department of Public Information

3. Speakers:

Ms. Lila Roastifandrihamananas, Director, Food and Agriculture
Organization of the United Nations New York Office

Dr. Glen Denning, Professor of Professional Practice, School
Of International and Public Affairs, The earth Institute,
Columbia University

Ms. June Kim, Executive Secretary, World Hunger/Poverty
and Sustainable Agriculture and Development for the
United Methodist Committee on Relief

Ms. Ciara Johnson, Regional Recruiter and Returned Peace
Corps Volunteer, Peace Corps

4. The moderator, Ms.. Gail Bindley-Taylor Sainte , welcomed everyone and introduced each of the speakers with their backgrounds. She indicated that in observance of World Food Day (16 October) this week's briefing will address the current state of food security and global hunger. Specifically how we

should address the current high numbers of undernourished people in the world in order to achieve food and nutritional security for all.

5. Significant points raised by each of the panel members included;

- Examples of the extent to which the international community is having some success in its efforts to address undernourishment and global hunger. These include initiatives that are available under FAO's Technical Cooperation Program and the L'Aquila Summit Initiative. They assist both member states and small business people that are involved in agriculture, fisheries or forestry.
- By underscoring the importance of placing food production and distribution in the hands of local communities and channeling investments to small-scale farmers to maximize utilization of the natural resources that they have and to help preserve the indigenous species of crops, as a means of ensuring lasting solutions to the problem of hunger.
- Placing emphasis on the need to focus more on education and cultural exchange to assist communities rather than simply giving aid or funding.
- An appeal was made to NGOs present to their part in improving food security by increasing the pressure on both governments and donors to invest in agriculture and comprehensive nutrition programs and to keep an open mind on the use of chemical fertilizers and genetically modified organisms.
- Everybody must address how subsidies can assist farmers to increase and improve food production. An example how subsidies can work is highlighted in Malawi where a successful subsidy program for small scale farmers was implemented.

PDC George Weinstein
National UN Chairman