



World Food
Programme

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Alimentos

برنامج
الأغذية
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The Food Aid Organization of the United Nations

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WORLD FOOD DAY IS “NO FOOD DAY” FOR MORE THAN ONE BILLION OF THE WORLD’S HUNGRY

CAIRO - As the number of hungry people shoots past record levels, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) today called on the world to remember the more than one billion urgently hungry people with inadequate access to food.

“World Food Day is actually ‘No Food Day’ for almost one out of every six people around the world this year,” said WFP Executive Director Josette Sheeran. “Let’s remember that more than one billion people won’t get enough nutritious food to eat today. We can change this - so our challenge is to turn ‘No Food Day’ back into ‘World Food Day’ for the hundreds of millions without food on their table tonight.”

The flow of food aid is at its lowest level in twenty years, while the number of hungry people is growing, due to the combined impact of high food prices, the global financial crisis and increasingly severe weather patterns.

This year, WFP set out to feed 108 million people in 74 countries around the world, but a severe budget shortfall has prompted a reduction of rations to hungry people in some countries, and programme suspensions in others. So far, donors have contributed some US\$2.9 billion towards WFP’s 2009 budget of US\$6.7 billion.

Sheeran added that for decades, WFP has been able to feed around ten per cent of the world’s hungriest men, women and children, but this year, for the first time, the agency is unlikely to reach that target. As an agency that responds to emergency needs, WFP has also had to meet many unforeseen demands in 2009, such as the response to the recent floods in the Philippines.

In the Middle East, WFP helps millions of the most vulnerable in countries that have been affected by high food prices, the global financial crisis, as well as natural disasters and conflicts that had its negative impact on a number of countries in the region.

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In the occupied Palestinian territory, WFP provides food assistance to nearly 600,000 of the most vulnerable non-refugee population in Gaza and the West Bank. Last April, the UN food agency launched its first food voucher programme in the Middle East benefiting some 30,000 people in urban areas of the West Bank where the price of basic food commodities increased by almost 70 percent in 2008. Voucher and cash transfer programmes allow WFP to address hunger when food is available but people are unable to afford it. This programme is being expanded to an additional 15,000 vulnerable families in the Gaza Strip.

In Iraq, WFP is providing assistance to up to 1.1 million vulnerable people, including pregnant and lactating women, malnourished children under five, tuberculosis patients, female-headed households, smallholder farmers, and primary school children, in addition to food-insecure internally displaced people (IDPs).

The UN's largest humanitarian agency has stepped up its operation in Yemen in the last two months to assist some 150,000 displaced persons in the north following the escalation of the five-year Sa'ada conflict. WFP has four other operations in Yemen providing assistance to nearly 1.5 million Yemenis including those who lost their homes and livelihoods during last year's floods in eastern Yemen; families pushed deeper into poverty as a result of high food prices; and refugees who have fled turmoil in Somalia.

"The silent hunger crisis - affecting one sixth of all of humanity – is also leaving a serious impact on this region. WFP is not only addressing hunger and mitigating the effects of natural disasters, but have a number of programmes aimed at improving access of children to education and especially girls, reducing malnutrition and helping local economies by purchasing needed food items locally" said Daly Belgasmi, WFP Regional Director in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. "Donor support is essential to maintain this level of assistance to the most vulnerable in this region."

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WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide. In 2009, WFP aims to feed 108 million people in 74 countries.

WFP now provides RSS feeds to help journalists keep up with the latest press releases, videos and photos as they are published on WFP.org. For more details see: <http://www.wfp.org/english/?n=999>.

WFP has a dedicated ISDN line in Italy for quality two-way interviews with WFP officials.

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