



“The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child ... has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement.”

General Comment 12 of UN Economic and Social Council

Hunger: Major Threat in 33 Countries

THE 2008 GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX (GHI) report comes at a time of dramatic changes in world food markets, with high food prices threatening the food security of millions of vulnerable households. Hunger and malnutrition are back in the headlines.

This is the third year that the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has calculated this multidimensional measure of global hunger. The 2006 and 2007 GHI reports received a great deal of public attention and were the subject of extensive debate. By stimulating discussion, the GHI reports have served as an important tool to highlight the countries and regions where action is most needed. They are important ways of recording the state of hunger worldwide and country by country and of supporting lobby work and advocacy on both national and international platforms.

It is important to remember that this report offers a picture of the past, not the present. The calculation of the GHI is limited by the collection of data by various governments and international agencies. The 2008 GHI incorporates data only until 2006 – the most recent available. This GHI report therefore does not reflect recent increases in food and energy prices.

The report does, however, highlight the countries and regions facing the greatest risk in the current context of high food prices. 33 countries have levels of hunger that are alarming or extremely alarming. The index shows that South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa continue to suffer from high levels of hunger, and whereas South Asia has made rapid progress in combating hunger, Sub-Saharan Africa has made only marginal progress. For hungry and malnourished people in these regions, rising food prices pose serious threats. People who already had too little food for a healthy life are now finding that they can afford even less.

Hunger is one of the most important problems the world faces, and rapid progress in overcoming it is long overdue. IFPRI is working to produce analysis of the status of hunger and policy options to combat it. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe and Concern offer direct support to undernourished people in hunger crisis zones and work with partners on short- and long-term solutions to chronic malnutrition. We hope that this report stimulates much-needed discussion among other actors over precisely what actions should be taken to overcome hunger worldwide, and who should take them, so that all people can live free of hunger and malnutrition.



*Dr. Hans-Joachim Preuss,
Secretary General of
Welthungerhilfe*



*Prof. Joachim von Braun,
Director General of the
International Food Policy
Research Institute*



*Tom Arnold,
Chief Executive of
Concern Worldwide*

Table of Contents

SUMMARY	5
1 THE CONCEPT OF THE GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX.....	7
2 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS	11
3 THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF HUNGER AND POVERTY.....	19
4 RISING FOOD PRICES INTENSIFY THE HUNGER CRISIS.....	23
5 CHILDREN SUFFER MOST FROM MALNUTRITION	27
6 ACTION PLANS AGAINST HUNGER	29
APPENDIX	34
A DATA SOURCES AND CALCULATION OF THE GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX.....	34
B BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	35
C DATA UNDERLYING THE CALCULATION OF THE GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX.....	36