

Why Is It?



Why is it?
They have to travel for days,
Just to get a little food.
When we can just pick something up,
Whenever we are in the mood.
Why is it?
They can get only small portions,
That barely help them get by,
When we have feasts and banquets,
And meals with food piled high.
Why is it?
Everything is so unfair!



The Impact: Protests from thousands of hungry Somalis on their capital's streets were met with gunfire and at least five people were killed.

Thousands of people are lining up for free food handouts in Nigeria where bakeries have gone on strike to protest at rising flour costs. For a country rich in commodities, poor city-dwellers often don't eat more than a small loaf during the day.

In Dhaka, Bangladesh a group of widowed women who have been part of their local community's social justice campaign for years, are now queuing up with small bowls to receive a meagre rice handout from the military and don't know how long this will last.

In Mexico and Haiti the local maize and rice farmers have increasingly given up in the last decade because of cheap staple, subsidized, USA imports. These prices are now above local purchasing power, whilst affordable local produce has dwindled.



Food for thought... Most of the world's hungry live in **developing countries**. According to the latest Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) 2008 statistics, there are 963 million hungry people in the world and 907 million of them are in developing countries. They are distributed like this:

565 million in Asia and the Pacific
230 million in Sub-Saharan Africa
58.4 million in Latin America and the Caribbean
41.6 million in the Near East and North Africa

Abundance, not scarcity, best describes the world's food supply. Enough wheat, rice and other grains are produced to provide every human being with 3,500 calories a day. That doesn't even count many other commonly eaten foods-vegetables, beans, nuts, root crops, fruits, grass-fed meats, and fish. Enough food is available to provide at least 4.3 pounds of food per person a day worldwide: two and half pounds of grain, beans and nuts, about a pound of fruits and vegetables, and nearly another pound of meat, milk and eggs-enough to make most people fat! The problem is that many people are too poor to buy readily available food.



Food crisis: reasons why

1. rising oil prices
2. a push towards biofuel production
3. the neglect of the small-holder food producers over years in favour of transnational food producers
4. changing and growing food demand from emerging economies
5. the failure to develop a just global trade system
6. failure of rich countries to fulfill their 0.7% commitment of GNI in aid which would have lifted more people out of poverty and left them less vulnerable to fluctuating food prices
7. failure of many governments to legalize land and succession rights for women.
8. insufficient literacy, agricultural and micro-finance input to lift (women's) subsistence farming and local trade to a sustainable level.
9. failure of governments in some poor countries to monitor prices in a transparent way and support food production and storage before the crisis reached this level
10. speculative investment which has exacerbated the crisis.

However, there is sufficient food in the world to feed everyone.



The food crisis in numbers

800 million people (over 70% women) already affected by chronic hunger are suffering severe hardship

The price of vegetable oils is up 97 percent in the first three months of 2008

The price of wheat is up 87 percent and that of dairy products are up 58 percent

Rice is up 46 percent

There is a recognized food crisis in at least 37 countries

Of the 2.13bn tonnes of food produced only 1.01bn is grown for feeding people

Developing countries could face an increase of 33% in aggregate food import bills this year if trends persist – this is too much too quick

The Mitchell report to the World Bank says up to 65 percent of the rise in prices is related to biofuels factors



More aspects to think about.....food for thought

NATURE

Natural disasters such as floods, tropical storms and long periods of drought are on the increase -- with calamitous consequences for food security in poor, developing countries. Drought is now the single most common cause of food shortages in the world. In 2006, recurrent drought caused crop failures and heavy livestock losses in parts of Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya. In many countries, climate change is exacerbating already adverse natural conditions. For example, poor farmers in Ethiopia or Guatemala traditionally deal with rain failure by selling off livestock to cover their losses and pay for food. But successive years of drought, increasingly common in the Horn of Africa and Central America, are exhausting their resources.

AGRICULTURAL

In the long-term, improved agricultural output offers the quickest fix for poverty and hunger. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) 2004 Food Insecurity Report, all the countries that are on track to reach the first Millennium Development Goal have something in common -- significantly better than average agricultural growth. Yet too many developing countries lack key agricultural infrastructure, such as enough roads, warehouses and irrigation. The results are high transport costs, lack of storage facilities and unreliable water supplies.

INFRASTRUCTURE



OVER-EXPLOITATION OF ENVIRONMENT

Poor farming practices, deforestation, overcropping and overgrazing are exhausting the Earth's fertility and spreading the roots of hunger. Increasingly, the world's fertile farmland is under threat from erosion, salination and desertification

POVERTY TRAP

In developing countries, farmers often cannot afford seed to plant the crops that would provide for their families. Craftsmen lack the means to pay for the tools to ply their trade. Others have no land or water or education to lay the foundations for a secure future.

Food is always available for those who can afford it—starvation during hard times hits only the poorest. Millions live on the brink of disaster in south Asia, Africa and elsewhere, because they are deprived of land by a powerful few, trapped in the unremitting grip of debt, or miserably paid.



WAR

Since 1992, the proportion of short and long-term food crises that can be attributed to human causes has more than doubled, rising from 15 percent to more than 35 percent. All too often, these emergencies are triggered by conflict.

From Asia to Africa to Latin America, fighting displaces millions of people from their homes, leading to some of the world's worst hunger emergencies. Since 2004, conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan has uprooted more than a million people, precipitating a major food crisis -- in an area that had generally enjoyed good rains and crops.

In war, food sometimes becomes a weapon. Soldiers will starve opponents into submission by seizing or destroying food and livestock and systematically wrecking local markets. Fields and water wells are often mined or contaminated, forcing farmers to abandon their land

