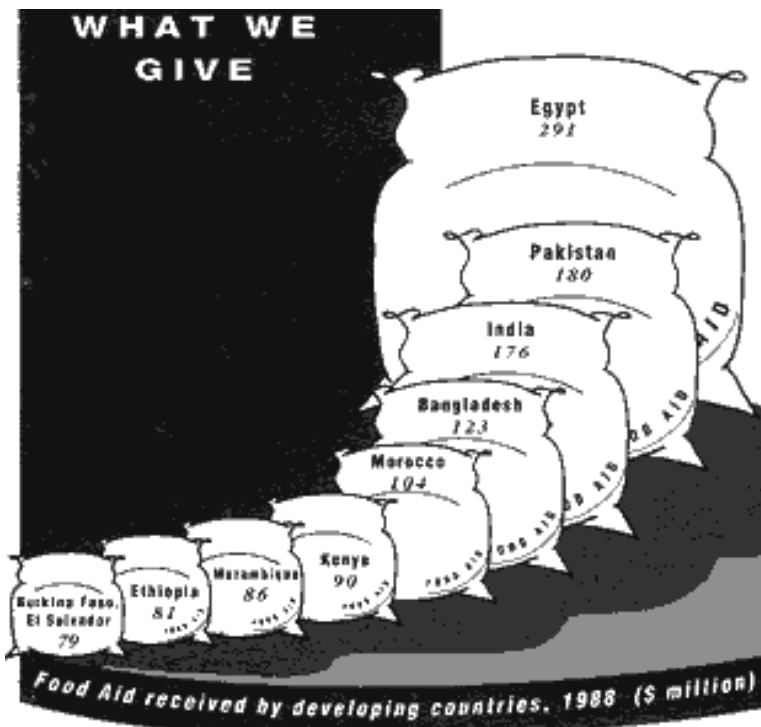




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Food Aid



This house would support Canadian Food Banks before International Food Aid.

SEDA receives funding from



Research prepared by Janessa Weir
Winter 2009

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The Saskatchewan Elocution and Debate Association (SEDA) is a non-profit organization that promotes speech and debate activities in English and French. The Association is active throughout the province from grade 5 through grade 12, and at the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan. The Association coordinates an annual program of speech and debate tournaments and other special activities, including a model legislature.

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Saskatchewan Elocution
and Debate Association
1860 Lorne Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 2L7

Telephone: (306) 780-9243
Fax: (306) 781-6021
E-Mail: info@saskdebate.com
Web: www.saskdebate.com

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Title: Use of food banks in Ontario hits record

Author: Laurie Monsebraaten

Source: Toronto Star

Date: Dec 1, 2009

Web site: <http://www.thestar.com/news/ontario/article/732987--use-of-food-banks-in-ontario-hits-record?bn=1>

More Ontarians turned to food banks in the past year than ever before, says the Ontario Association of Food Banks in a report released today.

It's a sobering counterpoint to economic indicators that suggest the recession is technically over, says the report based on data collected in September.

More than 375,000 Ontarians – a population size comparable to the city of London – relied on food banks that month, an increase of 19 per cent over September 2008, the report says.

Previously, the largest year-over-year increase was from 2007 to 2008 when food bank use rose by 11 per cent after two years of slight decreases, said the association's executive director Adam Spence.

"We've never seen anything like this before ... and it shows that the experience of many people is markedly different than what economic forecasters are saying," he said in an interview Monday.

Toronto saw an increase in demand of 14 per cent this year while food bank use in Oshawa and Mississauga shot up by 18 per cent and 29 per cent respectively.

In the GTA, 120,000 people per month are using food banks, an increase of 20 per cent over last fall.

The report blames this year's spike on rising unemployment, increased costs of basics and inadequate government supports, notes that one-third of households turning to food banks were headed by someone employed full-time, part-time or employed in the last six months.

The report paints "an uncomfortable and distressing picture" of Ontario where tens of thousands live on meagre incomes in poor housing with chronic health conditions.

With a median age of 28.7, food bank users are about 10 years younger than the Ontario median, live in households where the average income is well below Statistics Canada's low-income cut off and spend an average of 65 per cent of their income on rent and utilities.

One-third of all food bank users are recent immigrants and more than half of those immigrants have post-secondary education.

Hunger in households forced to rely on food banks is palpable, says the report. In a quarter of these households, children miss breakfast at least once a week. In one-third, at least one family member misses three or more meals a week. And almost three-quarters of people in these households don't eat enough fruits and vegetables.

In almost half of these households, at least one member has a chronic health condition including diabetes, asthma, cancer, cerebral palsy or HIV/AIDS. And in more than half, at least one household member couldn't afford glasses, drugs or a visit to the dentist.

"In the face of an increase in hunger and significant deprivation amongst families living in poverty, we believe that the provincial government cannot abandon its resolve in the fight against poverty, and the federal government must join the cause," the report concludes.

Title: Food Bank Usage Sky Rockets

Author:

Source: Local News

Date: November 17, 2009

Web site: <http://www.saskatoonhomepage.ca>

A new report says the recession is forcing more Canadians to turn to food banks, many for the first time.

Food Banks Canada, a national umbrella group, says visits to food banks in March this year were up 20% from the previous March, the largest year-over-year increase on record.

Almost 800,000 people went to food banks across the country in March and one person in 10 was making a first visit.

The organization's annual HungerCount report says food-bank visits are up 61% in Alberta, 20% in Nova Scotia and 19% in Ontario.

Paul Merriman, with the Saskatoon Food Bank says there are 13,500 people using the Saskatoon Food Bank every month, that's an increase of 12% year over year.

Provincially, there were 6% more people going to the 23 Saskatchewan Food Banks year over year.

Merriman says 56% of the Saskatoon Food Bank users are on social assistance, 21% are working poor and the rest are on a pension, including disability, employment insurance, or have no income at all. (sv nov 17-09)

Title: More families use food bank

Author: Peter Walsh

Source: Telegraph-Journal

Date: December 08, 2009

Web site: <http://telegraphjournal.canadaeast.com/city/article/882369>

QUISPAMSIS - The Kennebecasis Valley Food Basket has seen the need for its services almost double since the summer and has watched the community respond.

With the Christmas season in full swing, the KV Food Basket has 46 families on its list, up from the mid to high 20s in the summer months.

"Our clientele numbers are increasing week by week compared to last year," said Ralph Wood, one of the volunteers who make the organization a reality.

"Donations have been pretty good, the valley in general supports us well. We can't complain too much."

While the organization has benefited from strong community support, Wood said it gets donations from "businesses, girl guides, boy scouts, church groups and everyone and their brother." But he added the group can always use more support.

"In general, we're pretty well supplied, but we're always in need of box cereal, pasta products, canned goods like soup and stews, and cookies," Wood said.

Wood said the increase in need has to do with people returning to the area from Western Canada.

"We've noticed a lot of people who have been out West in the Alberta oil patch who've been laid off, come home or just found it too expensive to live out there," Wood said. "Other than that, our clientele is a fair mixture of single mothers going to school, seniors, people who for some reason are unable to work be it medical or otherwise; and people who are unemployed."

As Christmas approaches, the food basket is extending its hours for people to drop off cash and food donations. The KV Food Basket is located in a green house beside the Quispamsis Arena on the Hampton Road.

The building is usually open Monday and Tuesday from 9 a.m. to noon, but the week of Dec. 14-18 will extend its hours from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

As for special items needed for the holiday season, Wood said the increase in donations and contributions from the community had allowed the group to make special Christmas baskets complete with stocking stuffers and other items as well as getting extra help from the KV Fire Department.

"We take names for people who need turkeys and the fire department looks after getting that for us," Wood said.

Area firefighters aren't the only ones pitching in as the food basket received a donation of \$9,000 during the grand opening celebrations of the newly renovated Sobeys store on Hampton Road. The gift was made possible through a \$5,000 donation from the Miller family and \$4,000 raised by customers of the store. The KV Santa Claus Parade also pitched with volunteers collecting food donations from valley residents during the event.

Title: Poor Going Hungry in Recession

Author: Stefan Epp

Source: The Manitoban

Date: November 30th 2009

Web site: <http://www.themanitoban.com/articles/23472>

Addressing Canada's hunger crisis

This week, Food Banks Canada, the association of food banks across Canada, released its annual survey on food bank use in Canada. [*Hunger Count 2009*](#) reveals, not surprisingly, that it is the poor that have borne the brunt of the economic crisis. There are now nearly 800,000 people a month in Canada who are using the food bank. This is one of the world's wealthiest nations that tends to pride itself in the vitality of our social structures, yet it has so many people needing emergency food aid.

Often we are quick to describe things as a crisis: the H1N1 crisis, the economic crisis and so on. It seems you label something a crisis and there is government money aplenty for it. Have an economic crisis? Quickly, there are billions for bailouts and infrastructure projects. H1N1? Let's shell out hundreds of millions for vaccines, nurses and healthcare. Personally, I don't see a whole lot wrong with either of these things. However, governments have been more reluctant to put money into ensuring Canadians have enough food to eat.

Perhaps it's time that we start talking about food issues in terms of a "hunger crisis." Maybe this is what it will take to open the wallets of policy makers. The year 2009 saw the largest year-over-year increase ever recorded by Hunger Count — an 18 per cent increase in food bank use over last year. The rise was particularly sharp in provinces hardest hit by the recession. Alberta saw a food bank use increase of 61 per cent in one year. Ontario, B.C. and Nova Scotia all had increases around 20 per cent. Interestingly, though, the two provinces arguably least affected by the recession, also saw food bank use increases. Saskatchewan, which seems poised to take over from Alberta as the leading centre of wealth in the country, experienced a six per cent increase. Meanwhile, Manitoba, whose economy suffered less than many other provinces, still saw an increase of 18 per cent over last year.

It should come as no surprise that the vulnerable are suffering the most from an economic downturn. This is nothing new. But *Hunger Count* does serve as an important wake-up call to Canadians that there is hunger in our midst — that we do in fact have a hunger crisis. In fact, if you were to put all the food bank users in one city, it would be the fifth largest in Canada — bigger than cities like Edmonton or Winnipeg.

Canadian governments at all levels have done a lot to address the economic crisis. On an average day, I see five or more signs toting Canada's Economic Action Plan. Across the country architects are making plans, shovels are plunging into the dirt and buildings are rising. Nothing wrong with this — lots of useful things are being built and jobs provided. Before that, governments poured money to prop up dying companies. I'm less sure what to do with this — in general I would be opposed to such corporate welfare, yet, realistically, the people that would have suffered most had those industries failed would have been the thousands of people who worked in them.

But while the auto industry has been temporarily saved and construction industries boom, what have governments done for those most vulnerable to the economic collapse? What has been done to support those working low-wage jobs? What has been done for those on income assistance, particularly in provinces where the cost of living has soared (I'm thinking of Alberta in particular here) in recent years? What has been done for our Aboriginal communities? What has been done for the single mother, or those with mental illness? Many governments have forgotten the least of these, the most vulnerable in our society.

In times of economic hardship, there is often significant pressure on our governments to tighten their belts and reduce spending. However, it is important that our governments take to heart the numbers that have been revealed by *Hunger Count*. The hunger crisis won't be solved by budget cuts or tax breaks. It requires poverty reduction strategies and investment. It requires both a sense of urgency and a long term commitment. It is not always easy and straightforward. But when there are 800,000 hungry people in our communities it is pretty essential that we get started somewhere. Across the country, communities are ready to act. It's time to invest in "shovel-ready" hunger projects to solve our nations hunger crisis before more Canadians have to experience the pain of hunger.

Stefan Epp is a researcher at the University of Manitoba.

Title: Feeding the World. Is international food aid working?

Author: Daniel Lak

Source: CBC News

Date: May 3, 2007

Web site: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/international-aid/food-aid.html>

Every year, more than 800 million people around the globe go hungry. Tens of millions die from malnutrition. Yet the world produces more food than it needs — waste, obesity and spurious use of food products are rampant in well-off societies.

Since the late 1960s, wealthy countries have been obligated by international law to feed the hungry. The Food Aid Convention (FAC) is the only global treaty that spells out how much signatories must do to help the needy.

It acts as a "food safety net for the world, according to Stuart Clark of the Winnipeg-based Canadian Foodgrains Bank, the country's largest non-governmental collector and distributor of food aid.

The Food Aid Convention: By the numbers

Country	Metric Tonnes of food
Argentina	35,000
Australia	250,000
Canada	420,000
European Union	1,320,000
Japan	300,000
Norway	30,000
Switzerland	40,000
United States	2,500,000

Why hunger persists in the face of surplus production and sustained food aid is a vexing and complex question — controversial, too.

It's an issue that policy-makers, humanitarian workers and politicians need to resolve if widespread world hunger is ever to be alleviated — especially now, as the world's remaining arable farmland comes under increasing pressure from climate change and the development of biofuels.

Expensive delivery exacerbates hunger

Part of the problem is the nature of food aid itself.

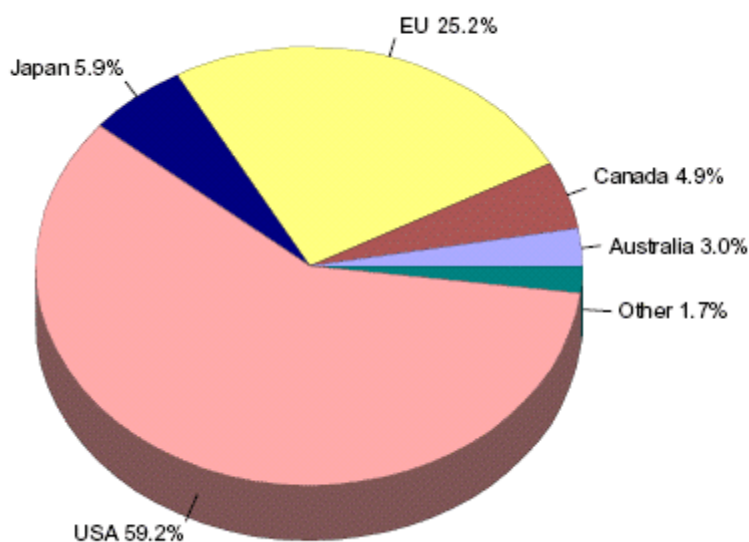
Different countries approach their FAC obligations in different ways.

Europe and Japan send cash to the United Nations World Food Program and other agencies, to help them buy food to feed the hungry.

Canada divides its aid between cash and food bought in this country.

The United States has traditionally bought vast amounts of its own surplus production for use as food aid.

Food Aid by Major Donors, 1995-2005



Source: Food Aid Shipments 2004/05. International Grains Council Food Aid Committee.

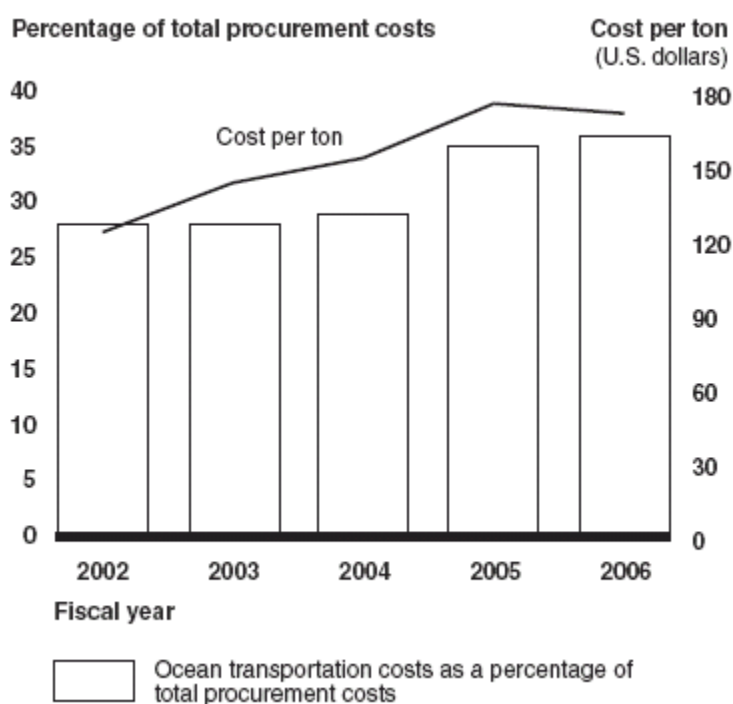
Americans also take as gospel the idea that U.S. farms feed the world. After all, the country provides 60 per cent of the world's food aid — more than twice what Europe gives.

But the U.S. Congress has also insisted that all American food aid must come from American farmers or — increasingly — American-owned agribusinesses, and must be shipped on U.S. vessels to recipients.

Nearly half of the costs of U.S. food aid was eaten up by transportation, according to a recent report by the General Accounting Office (GAO) of the U.S. Congress. Obviously that reduces the amount of badly needed food that gets to the world's hungry.

Often better to buy food locally

But even more worrisome for those who directly battle famine and malnutrition, sending food from a donor country — rather than giving cash to buy it locally — is rarely the quickest or the most appropriate way to feed starving people.



"Let's say we have hunger in Malawi or Zimbabwe, do we send them corn from North America that takes months to get there by sea, and happens to be something that they haven't eaten before?" Clark of Winnipeg's Foodgrains Bank told CBC News Online.

"Or do we buy African white corn from South Africa — a few days away by road, cheaper, and culturally appropriate."

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization says all food aid should be supplied as cash.

About a third of all global food aid — some \$600 million US — is wasted because of excess shipping and purchases costs in home markets, according to a recent report from the UN organization.

Bush proposal blocked by special interest lobbying

Those pushing for more cash, and less surplus grain, to feed the world's hungry have recently acquired an unlikely ally — the U.S. government.

President George W. Bush's administration has proposed changes to agricultural policy that would allow 25 per cent of U.S. food aid to be sent as cash.

In April 2006, Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns told a conference of agricultural experts and industry representatives in Kansas City, Mo., that the change would save money and lives.

But the Bush administration has been struggling to get the cash quota into U.S. food aid for three years.

It has already failed twice as Congressional representatives from farm states and lobbying from the shipping industry managed to kill proposed changes to legislation.

"It's up to Congress: the government is proposing a solid step in the right direction," said Laura Rusu of Oxfam America, a charity and anti-poverty organization.

"Now Congress has to ask itself whether it wants to feed the hungry or cater to special interest groups."



Workers unload cans of cooking oil, as part of a food ration that the UN World Food Program is distributing to Iraqis. Global food aid needs are expected to grow, not diminish, in the coming years. (Samir Mezban/Associated Press)

The 'monetization' of food aid

Another controversy revolves around a process known as "monetization," whereby charities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) sell food aid — mostly supplies donated by the U.S. government — in developing countries to raise money for the needy.

Most of these organizations defend the procedure as a pragmatic necessity, saying they're forced to do it because they cannot get the funds they need from cash-strapped government budgets.

Economists and food policy advocates say this is the worst possible use of food aid.

Selling large quantities of donated food can distort local markets, lower prices and discourage farmers in developing countries from growing the crops needed in future.

"It also means teaching new skills to food-aid providers," said Clark of the Foodgrains Bank.

"Instead of directly battling hunger, they have to become merchants and traders, learn how to sell things. It doesn't work."

Different uses for food aid

Most Canadians probably think the food aid that their country sends, for example, to Darfur or southern Africa's drought-stricken lands is given straight to hungry people — but that's not always the case.

Often, famine has more to do with disease, low birth weights or war than with actual food shortages. So the judicious use of food aid and other supports can help communities avoid the worst impacts of conflict or natural catastrophe.

For example, it can assist populations where disease has decimated income-earning strata of society — young adults affected by HIV/AIDS who are too ill to earn a living.

In countries where malnutrition is rife but there's just enough to eat to avoid starvation, pregnant women can be given supplemental food to ensure viable birth weights. That way, babies don't start life already set back by a previous generation's hunger.

Food aid can also be used to encourage school attendance by providing free lunches to students. That helps parents choose to send their children to classes rather than making them work on the farm.



Children from Darfur in a refugee camp depend on donated food aid for their daily meals. They are just a few of the more than 2.5 million refugees driven from their homes by the crisis in the region. (Stephanie Jenzer/CBC)

The looming impact of climate change, biofuels

Two relatively new issues could have a major impact on the world's food supply in coming years.

As concern grows over greenhouse-gas emissions and dwindling petroleum supplies, plant-derived fuels like biodiesel and ethanol are capturing international attention.

But environment and food security campaigners warn that the expected switch from food crops to biofuel crops could have a devastating effect for the world's hungry population.

"The impact on global food supply will be catastrophic: [it will be] big enough to tip the global balance from net surplus to net deficit," British activist George Monbiot wrote of biofuel development.

"If, as some environmentalists demand, it is to happen worldwide, then most of the arable surface of the planet will be deployed to produce food for cars, not people."

Crop losses due to climate changes are also expected to increase in coming years, especially in already arid agricultural regions.

The violence in Sudan's Darfur region and neighbouring areas is generally blamed on food shortages exacerbated by endemic drought.

Scientists are predicting more Darfur-type situations as greenhouse gases make the world warmer and drier.

In short, it's likely the coming years will bring more mouths to feed, and less land to grow the food.

Title: Food donations down as global need soars

Author: Don Cayo

Source: The Vancouver Sun

Date: September 21, 2009

Web site:

<http://communities.canada.com/vancouversun/blogs/globalization/archive/2009/09/21/food-donations-down-as-global-need-soars.aspx>

Canada has topped up its food aid budget by \$30 million to address the growing famine in parts of Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya and Uganda.

This donation brings Canada's annual total to about \$145 million — roughly \$5 per Canadian. That's well down from the \$275 million Canada gave last year, and in line with the level of giving in the two previous years.

Most countries' donations have dipped in this recession year, and Canada's donation is still considered a large commitment by the standards of what others give. But it's a drop in the bucket when measured against need.

For example, CIDA minister Bev Oda said in her announcement that \$10 million of Canada's extra \$30 million will be earmarked for Kenya, where many parts of the country have seen a near-total failure of annual rains and where famine is already settling in. Yet the UN's World Food Program is seeking \$230 million US to meet the needs of the 3.8 million Kenyans it expects it will have to feed.

And those 3.8 million are slightly less than a quarter of the 17 million at risk of starvation in the eastern Africa region.

The WFP has said that, following discussions with donor countries, it expects to get about \$3.7 billion US in donations this year. Yet it needs \$6.7 billion to meet the needs not only in Africa, but also countries as diverse as Bangladesh, Haiti, and many more in almost every part of the world

Title: Canada to make significant food aid donation

Author: James McCarten

Source: The Canadian Press

Date: April 26, 2008

Web site:

http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20080426/cda_food_080426/20080426

Canada to make 'significant' food aid donation

OTTAWA — Canada could double the food aid money it has provided so far this year to the World Food Program in response to an urgent plea from the United Nations.

Bev Oda, the minister responsible for the Canadian International Development Agency, will make a "significant" announcement early next week in light of the appeal, a Canadian government source told The Canadian Press on Friday.

A sharp rise in food prices has developed into a global crisis, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said in Vienna.

Ban said the UN and all members of the international community were concerned and immediate action was needed.

Canada spent \$180 million on international food aid in 2007 and has already pledged \$100 million in aid so far this year, making it the second-largest contributor to the program behind the United States.

It's expected that next week's announcement will catapult Canada's total food-aid contributions in 2008 beyond last year's level.

"It will be substantial," said the source, who did not want to be identified.

"I can't give specifics, but it will go past what we had before, yes,"

The announcement was expected early next week, likely in Ottawa, as the UN set a deadline of May 1 for receiving emergency food-aid pledges.

Under the 1999 Food Aid Convention, Canada is committed to providing the United Nations World Food Program with the dollar equivalent of 420,000 metric tonnes of wheat annually.

However, Ottawa failed to keep that commitment in four of the past eight years, particularly in 2000-01, when contribution levels fell 113,133 metric tonnes short.

Aid contributions exceeded convention requirements during the last two fiscal years.

Ban launched the appeal as he spoke to reporters at UN offices in Austria, where he was meeting with the country's top leaders for talks on how the UN and the European Union can forge closer ties.

"This steeply rising price of food - it has developed into a real global crisis," Ban said, adding that the World Food Program has made an urgent appeal for additional \$755 million.

"The United Nations is very much concerned, as (are) all other members of the international community," Ban said. "We must take immediate action in a concerted way."

Ban urged leaders of the international community to sit down together on an "urgent basis" to discuss how to improve economic distribution systems and promote the production of agricultural products.

An estimated 40 per cent increase in food prices since last year has sparked violent protests in the Caribbean, Africa and South Asia.

On Thursday, UN Food and Agricultural Organization chief Jacques Diouf said immediate efforts should focus on helping farmers in developing countries grow more crops.

Josette Sheeran, the WFP's executive director, has likened the price increases to a "silent tsunami," and said requests for food aid are coming in from countries unable to cope with the rising prices.

She noted that the price of rice has more than doubled since March. The World Bank estimates that food prices have increased by 83 per cent in three years.

1. Summary

The shortcomings of programme food aid and the increased need for relief food aid is increasingly recognised by the large majority of countries and reflected in the patterns of international food aid flows. International institutions, however, have so far failed to reflect these developments appropriately. This paper aims to assess the role international food aid plays in the promotion of the right to food. The different types of food aid, recipients, practices of major donors and international institutions are presented and the evidence regarding the impacts and experiences with the provision of food aid are reviewed.

In theory, food aid should ensure people's food rights but in practice it often undermines the right to food. The paradox here is that food aid often becomes a factor contributing to regular lack of access to food. Besides providing food in emergencies and saving the life of the sufferer, in some cases the nature and process of current food aid practices have violated the right to food. For the last two decades the provision of food aid to developing countries has been controversial. This paper examines in particular the mechanisms that have resulted in such. It is intended as a background briefing paper on food aid and the institutions that govern food aid.

2. Food as a fundamental right

The right to food and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948

Access to food and control over it is recognised as a fundamental human right. Article 25.1 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights focuses on food rights of every individual.

The committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights affirms the linkages between the right to food and other development concerns. The right to adequate food is realised when every man, woman and child, alone or in a community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its production. The state has a core obligation to take the necessary action to mitigate and alleviate hunger even in times of natural or other disasters, as provided for in Para 2, of article 11 of the United Nations International Covenant on Economic Social Cultural Rights.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948

Article 25.1

'Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control'.

Rights based concerns on food aid:

In line with humanitarian principles the right to food is a fundamental right and the provision of food is the obligation of the Government. The humanitarian charter reaffirms the fundamental importance of three key principles, one of which is the right to dignity of life. This is directly related to the right to food.

The right to food as central to globalisation and trade.

The Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action 1996 laid the foundations for diverse paths to a common objective of food security, at individual, household, national, regional, and global levels

3. Definitions of food aid: categories, types and purpose

Food aid is governed by activities of bilateral development co-operations agencies, multilateral institutions, and NGOs. It is used to support food assistance in countries eligible for aid. It is also

used to fund general development through the balance of payment support by substituting for commercial imports or budgetary support from the revenue generated by selling food received from donor communities.

3.1 Categories

Food aid transactions can be divided into three broad categories

- **Relief food aid**, which is targeted and freely distributed to victims of natural and manmade disasters. This aid is also variously called emergencies or humanitarian food aid.
- **Programme food aid**, which involves commodities provided directly to a recipient government or its agent for sale on local markets to generate local-currency counterpart fund, usually under the control of the recipient government but in some form of agreement with the donor about their management and use.
- **Project food aid** provided on a grant basis to targeted groups to support specific development activities.

The World Food Summit 1996

The International Community declared: *'we....reaffirm the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger'*.

'Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.'

(WFS, 1996)

3.2 Types

Food aid usually targets vulnerable groups and is executed in three different ways:

- **General ration** (provided a complete basket of food commodities in quantities sufficient to meet requirement to targeted population)
- **Supplementary feeding** (specially targeted groups at risk of malnutrition, such as pregnant women and small children)
- **Therapeutic feeding** (usually in feeding centres or clinics, to people suffering from malnutrition)
- **Food for Work** (when a wage is paid in food in the food deficit area on a self-selection basis)

3.3 Purpose

The underlying purpose of food aid is based on the needs of the recipients.

- To provide a **short-term income transfer** or income substitution to people to allow household resources to be invested in recovery and longer-term development.
- To provide sufficient **food resources to eliminate the need for survival** strategies, which may result in long-term negative consequences for human dignity, household viability, livelihood security, and the environment.
- To sustain life by ensuring **adequate availability and access** to food by people affected by disaster.

4. Principle donors

The USA and the EU together provide about two thirds of global food aid deliveries. The global impacts of food aid and the management of specific programmes are therefore largely determined by the practices of these major donors.

4.1. European Union

The EU Commission's position is clear: food aid in kind is not an appropriate instrument to create long-term food security. The EU has stipulated that food aid should, where possible, be sourced locally. The EU has 16 separate food aid programmes, one for the EU as a whole and one each for the 15 member states. In addition there are extensive liaison and management arrangements

covering NGO involvement. This complexity has led to considerable operational problems (Clay, 2000).

The framework of the rules on humanitarian aid policy (European Parliament, 2002)

The framework governs food aid operations for humanitarian purposes.

In its resolution of 1996, the European Parliament insisted on coordination of development cooperation policies in relation to food aid and food security programmes of Member States and the different roles of women and men when it comes to preparing food security programmes.

In 1999, 55% (Euros 258.55 million) of the total aid budget was **direct aid** implemented.

Indirect aid implemented through international organisations and NGOs represented 45% of the EU budget (Euros 214.64 million).

4.2 USA

The USA is by far the most important donor of food aid both for bilateral programme aid and is the main contributor to the WFP. The US government structure involves a division of powers that requires the administration to have a detailed legislative basis for its actions, and thereafter to be able to account to Congress for every dollar spent.

Tied aid

The US government had been at the forefront of efforts to limit aid untying generally. It is the US government, which lobbied the strongest for food aid and technical cooperation exemptions within the current OECD aid untying policy.

The landmarks in US food aid are the intensively negotiated Farm Bills, which effectively tie all food aid to US exportable surpluses, require 75% of commodities (including that for relief purposes) to be shipped in US registered vessels, and allows NGOs to 'monetise' over only one third of commodities and use the proceeds for development projects (Clay, 2000).

Title II Emergency Food Aid is the preferred instrument of USAID. Under this title US food is donated to NGOs, the WFP and foreign governments. (Webb, 2000). Almost all the food donated consists of surplus stocks. (Garst and Barry; 1990). USDA's agenda has ensured that large amounts of food aid are supplied to potentially solvent markets such as South East Asia and transition economies such as Russia.

US imports of food aid have had huge impacts on local economies, particularly in Africa.

Imported food aid can flood markets, lower prices and put farmers out of business. The shipping of corn from the US, where it is heavily subsidised, to African nations can serve to increase poverty and dependence on aid by destroying domestic production. Regional purchasing of food aid was identified as best practice at the 1999 Food Aid Convention, but the US has so far ignored its responsibilities. Some maintain that by undermining recipient nations' domestic economies through food donations, the US has served to ensure market dominance for its own exports. Certainly, the dumping of subsidised surpluses on to Southern markets can no longer be viewed as "aid".

Problems and Impact of Food Aid

6.1 Impact of food aid

The main concerns about possible negative impacts of food aid arise with regard to its effect on domestic production. The four major disincentive effects are:

- (i) **lowering prices of the commodity supplied** or food in general on the domestic market, thus discouraging local production with the danger of prolonging the dependence on food aid deliveries
- (ii) adoption of policies of recipient countries which **neglect domestic food production** and the interests of small farmers and the rural population.
- (iii) **changing food habits** away from locally produced crops to those imported or provided as food aid

(iv) **the disruption of labour supply to agriculture** if “wages” in Food for Work programmes are higher than those on neighbouring farms. This might inhibit agricultural production in regions where the Food for Work programmes are carried out. Problems are most frequently the result of programme food aid, which at the same time is most inefficient in improving the nutritional status of those parts of the population most affected by food insecurity.

Project and relief food aid may, however, also have negative effects and it proves difficult in many cases to target the most affected groups effectively.

6.2 Practical problems with the provision of food aid

It is unquestionable that some form of assistance is needed in situations where a famine occurs or threatens to occur due to natural disasters like droughts or flood. Food aid in the form of direct deliveries to the affected regions is not always the most effective approach to deal with the problems (Dréze and Sen, 1989)

“Power over food aid lies with those people who never spend a single day on the agricultural field planting, rearing or harvesting food crops. Those who spend dawn to dusk all year round in the agriculture fields are increasingly facing starvation. These peoples are hardly ever consulted about what types food aid they need and nor are they involved in decision making processes. Due to a lack of access to information and a lack of community participation in the decision making process, the victims of disaster lose their rights.” (Khemraj Uphadhaja, ActionAid Nepal)