

IFRC celebrates

World Food Day

16 October 2010 • Linking hunger and climate change



Key messages

Hunger

- Hunger and malnutrition constitute major risks to health globally.¹
- Hunger exists when people do not have access to sufficient, nutritious food.
- Reducing hunger requires a multifaceted approach as the underlying causes include:
 - climate change and environmental stress
 - poverty and inequality
 - natural disasters and conflict
 - economic crises.
- The causes of malnutrition include insufficient consumption of nutritious food as well as:
 - poor child feeding practices
 - limited access to health services
 - lack of clean water and good hygiene practices.
- Renewed efforts are required to meet the Millennium Development Goal of halving hunger and malnutrition by 2015.

Facts and figures

Hunger

- Approximately one billion people are undernourished and do not have access to sufficient food.
- Seventy-five per cent of the world's food-insecure reside in rural areas.²
- One out of four children, an estimated 146 million, in developing countries is underweight.
- Malnutrition causes one-third of the nearly ten million deaths annually of children under five years of age, in developing countries.
- Women account for over 60 per cent of the world's hungry.
- Women produce 60-80 per cent of the food consumed in developing countries;³ but they are often marginalized and have less access to land, water, agricultural extension, credit and markets.⁴

¹ Allen, L., Bhutta, Z, Black R., et al. 'Maternal and child undernutrition: global and regional exposures and health consequences' In Lancet. Vol.371 (9608), pp. 243-60, 2008. WHO. Protecting Health from Climate Change: World Health Day 2008.

² Oxfam Briefing Paper 139 – September 2010

³ IFPRI (2000) 'Women: The Key to Food Security'. Issue Brief No. 3, Washington D.C.: IFPRI. UN Department of Public Information, 'Women Farmers: the "Invisible" Producers.' Africa Recovery, www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol11no2/women.htm (last accessed July 2010).

⁴ IFPRI (2008) 'Promising Approaches to Address the Needs of Poor Female Farmers', Discussion Paper, Washington D.C.: IFPRI.



Key messages

Linking hunger and climate change

- Hunger is exacerbated in times of crisis.
- Climate change increases the risk of droughts, floods and storms, including uncertainty about where and when they will hit.
- Climate change will multiply existing threats to food security, including making land and water more scarce and difficult to access.
- Communities that are food secure are less vulnerable and cope better with environmental stress.
- With the reality of a changing climate, more effort is needed now, to ensure food security for an increasing global population.



A young girl returns from the mill where her family's corn has been ground into maize meal. In Niger, the Red Cross will distribute food to some 23 400 children below the age of five over the coming weeks.

Facts and figures

Food security in a changing climate

- By 2050, the risk of hunger is projected to increase by 10-20 per cent, and child malnutrition is anticipated to be 20 per cent higher compared to a no-climate change scenario.⁵
- By 2020, impact on food production may include:
 - significant decreases in crop yields in some rain-fed African systems
 - decline of 40-90 per cent of grassland productivity and reduced access to water in semi-arid and arid regions,
 - agricultural production reduced by increases in coastal erosion, salination, flooding or other impacts on coastal or inland farming areas and water resources⁶
 - decline of fish stocks as a result of reduction in fresh-water levels in some areas.
- Achieving food security under a changing climate requires:
 - substantial increases in food production
 - improving access to adequate and nutritious food
 - reducing the impact of extreme events on food security through investments in disaster risk reduction
 - stronger capacities to cope with increased disease risks such as dengue fever, malaria, and cholera.⁷

5 Climate Change, Food Insecurity and Hunger – Key Messages for UNFCCC Negotiators Submitted by WFP, FAO, IFRC and OXFAM, as well as WHO, WVI, CARE, CARITAS and Save the Children – November 2009.

6 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Climate Change, Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability: Work Group II Contributions to the IPCC, 2007.

7 Climate Change, Food Insecurity and Hunger – Key Messages for UNFCCC Negotiators Submitted by WFP, FAO, IFRC and OXFAM, as well as WHO, WVI, CARE, CARITAS and Save the Children – November 2009.

What can **National Societies** do?

1. Raise awareness of staff and volunteers on the links between hunger, malnutrition, food security and climate change.
2. Encourage and engage in cross-sectoral dialogue at the national-level to raise awareness and identify appropriate activities.
3. Expand and link programming across these sectors.
4. Strengthen livelihoods during non-disaster times and asset protection during crises.
5. Improve disaster risk management plans.

Online resources

<http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/recovering/food-security.asp>
<http://www.wfp.org/hunger>
http://www.fao.org/hunger/hunger_home/hunger_at_glance/en/
<http://www.oxfam.org/en/category/freetags/hunger>
http://www.unscn.org/files/Publications/SCN_News/SCN_NEWS_38_03_06_10.pdf
<http://search.webfactional.com/ifpri-report-climate-change-impact-on-agriculture-and-costs-of-adaptation>

For more information, please contact: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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