



The Violence of Hunger: Making the Rights Connection

Of those experiencing hunger in the world, 80% are farmers and farm workers who make their living off the land. There is an overabundance of food in the world, but more than 850 million people are still hungry. This is often referred to as a paradox. More fundamentally, it is a violation of the human right to food. The right to food is guaranteed under numerous United Nations documents including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. It affirms the right of every human being to access safe and nutritious food sufficient in both quality and quantity to ensure a life of dignity free from the violence of hunger.

The Right to Food is a Matter of Life or Death

- ◆ Someone dies of starvation every 3.6 seconds.
- ◆ Undernourishment diminishes people's productivity, sense of hope and well-being. A lack of food can stunt growth, hinder fetal development and contribute to mental retardation.
- ◆ More people die every week of hunger and starvation than were killed instantly by the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- ◆ Small farmers and farm workers face violations of their human rights. Those struggling for access to land are persecuted politically and often murdered.

Who are the Hungry?

- ◆ 95% of the people experiencing hunger live in developing countries.
- ◆ 300 million children go to bed hungry every night.
- ◆ Although women are the key producers of food, due to gender inequities they are often bypassed by agricultural development programs and suffer from hunger more than men.
- ◆ More than 1.2 billion people earn less than \$1 per day and are unable to purchase adequate food.
- ◆ 70% of the grain produced in the U.S. and 40% of the world's grain supply is fed to livestock. Our cattle eat better than the citizens of many poor countries.

What is the Value of Land?

- ◆ Lack of access to resources like land and water to grow food is often a direct cause of hunger.
- ◆ Land distribution is highly unequal throughout the world. In Brazil, 3% of the population owns two-thirds of the land. Even in the "egalitarian" U.S., 4% of landowners now own 47% of U.S. farmland.
- ◆ Small farmers and indigenous people often lose their land to plantations and factory farms and mines and hydroelectric dams because profit takes precedence over food production.



Building the Global Movement for Social Justice

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Selling Our Future Short: Environmental Impacts of Misguided Agriculture and Trade Policies

- ◆ In Central and South America millions of acres of rainforest have been cleared for pastureland and cash crops, resulting in loss of biodiversity. Deforestation also causes drought, floods, mudslides and soil degradation.
- ◆ Due to industrial agriculture production, more than 90% of crop varieties have disappeared from farmers' fields and half the breeds of many domestic animals have been lost.

There is Enough Food to Feed the World

- ◆ The United Nations defines hunger as consuming less than 1,960 calories per day. If all of the food produced world wide were distributed equally, everyone would get 2,760 calories per day.

There are Viable Policy Solutions to World Hunger

- ◆ In the U.S., the National Family Farm Coalition advocates for an alternative Farm Bill that calls for a fair price to cover farmers' production costs and earn an adequate income for sustaining rural livelihoods.
- ◆ Internationally, the Via Campesina, the world's largest movement of small farmers and fisher peoples, advocates removing agriculture from the World Trade Organization rules and international trade agreements.
- ◆ The Food and Agriculture Organization adopted a legal instrument: "Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Adequate Food" which is a tool for national governments on how to implement the right to food.
- ◆ Grassroots International supports community-led development projects around the world—like reforestation in Haiti and income diversification on coffee cooperatives in Mexico—to solve the problem from the bottom up.

