

World Food Day with more food crisis



**World Food Day draws attention to those nations suffering the most from the food crisis.
Image/PL**

Every October 16, humanity celebrates World Food Day with the risk of suffering another year of record hunger due to the global food crisis, which pushes more people to become victims of this scourge.

During the first months of 2022, the number of hungry people in the world grew from 282 million to 345 million, so the operational plan of the World Food Program (WFP) for 2022 is the most ambitious in its history and prioritizes actions aimed at preventing millions from dying of hunger.

It is precisely today that the world's food problems are becoming increasingly serious, the result of a confluence of crises caused by climate change, conflict and economic pressures. On that basis, WFP expanded its food assistance targets this year to reach a record 153 million people; by mid-year it had already assisted 111.2 million individuals.

We are facing an unprecedented global food crisis and all indications are that we have not yet seen the worst, with hunger numbers repeatedly reaching new peaks over the past three years, WFP Executive Director David Beasley said this week.

"Let me be clear: things can and will get worse unless there is a large-scale, coordinated effort to address the root causes of this crisis. We cannot afford another year of record hunger numbers," he said.

WFP and its humanitarian partners are battling famine in five countries: Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen.

It is worth remembering that all too often conflict pushes the most vulnerable into famine of considerable proportions, and the war in Ukraine disrupted global trade, increasing transport costs and delivery times and leaving farmers without access to the inputs they need.

Those affected by the frequency and intensity of climate disruptions are also increasing, with insufficient time to recover between disasters, and the unprecedented drought in the Horn of Africa is pushing more people into alarming levels of food insecurity, while a famine is expected in Somalia.

At the same time, the response capacity of governments is limited by each country's own economic problems - currency depreciation, inflation, debt problems - while the threat of global recession grows.

Against this backdrop, WFP's operational plan for 2022 is the most ambitious in its history and prioritizes actions to prevent millions of people from dying of hunger, while working to stabilize and, as far as possible, build resilient national food systems and supply chains. Among its actions, it increased assistance in Sri Lanka six-fold in response to the economic crisis, expanded operations to record levels in Somalia in the face of the threat of famine, and provided food assistance to two out of every five Afghans.

Faced with the rising costs of humanitarian assistance and increasing delivery times, WFP is diversifying its network of suppliers to encourage local and regional procurement.

For example, so far in 2022, 47 percent of food came from the countries in which it operates, for a total value of 1.2 billion dollars.

The UN agency also expanded the delivery of cash transfers, which currently account for 35 percent of emergency food assistance.

However, these efforts to help some of the most vulnerable are taking place in the midst of a difficult global context in which the number of those suffering from extreme hunger is on the rise, calling for concerted global action in favor of peace, economic stability and humanitarian support.

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