

Fight Against Hunger

by Bahá'í International Community

The Bahá'í International Community has a deep interest in the fight against hunger and in providing adequate food for all members of the human race, and is committed to it. Consequently, we have participated increasingly in the sessions and we continue to recognize the activities of the World Food Council aimed at developing, continuing and coordinating policies and tasks to take international constructive measures in relation to the production and distribution of foods. The goal set the previous year by the CMA for the international community to reiterate its commitment to eliminate hunger and malnutrition throughout the world during the next fifteen years is very welcome, and its realization would represent the fulfillment of a precious human dream.

Although there has been an encouraging reduction in the death rate from hunger in recent decades, the number of undernourished people in the world has never been as high as in the present. Studies have revealed that hunger remains a basic problem in most countries in the world that account for approximately half of the world's population [1]. Fifteen million annual deaths from hunger among children under 5 years of age exemplify the appalling magnitude of the problem. Since the total food supplies of the planet are sufficient to meet the nutritional needs of all, the human calamity of hunger manifests the need to reorient the economy of food production and distribution for the sake of human well-being. The universal conquest of hunger and the establishment of food security for all the world requires, therefore, that we move towards international human and economic solidarity. Failure to act in this way could cause serious damage in the fight against hunger.

However, in recent decades there have been notable advances in the kind of "global spirit of solidarity" envisioned in the Bahá'í Writings as "spontaneously arising from the tumult of a disorganized society," and as a process "that should attract every once more the attention of the guardians of the destinies of the peoples and the nations ». Perhaps this international solidarity can be seen more clearly in the various human rights instruments adopted by the governments of the world in the context of the United Nations, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Article 11 of the Covenant includes recognition of the "fundamental right of every person to be protected against hunger", and requires, among other things, that States parties recognize "the right of every person to a standard of living adequate for himself and his family, including adequate food", and that "they shall take appropriate measures to ensure the establishment of this right". Therefore, it can be concluded that the right to adequate food is a human right that has been firmly incorporated into international law, an achievement that clearly reflects an important evolution of the conscience of man in a relatively short period of time.

This growing awareness of the united character of humanity and its concomitant commitment to solidarity in action must be further promoted until it becomes a common value firmly embraced by all humanity, as it is of crucial importance for the fulfillment of global responsibility and for the successful administration of world affairs, including a coordinated offensive against the problem of food. The latter also requires a general vision of development, which must include not only factors related to economic growth, but also fundamental values such as justice, equity, equality of men and women, cooperation and respect for nature. Therefore, education for development in the deepest sense of the expression is urgently required, focused on human development as well as social and economic. This includes an educational orientation that helps man overcome and integrate the fragmented pieces of modern knowledge and knowledge and helps him to move towards the creation of authentic social well-being in which both the

needs of the body and the needs of the body are fulfilled. spirit. The Bahá'í concept of development is that every human being and, therefore, humanity as a whole, has unlimited potential for development and an inner spiritual need to realize that latent capacity for the purpose of serving humanity. . In the Bahá'í vision there is no "greater blessing conceivable for man than to become the cause of education, development, prosperity and the honor of his fellows."

The two main dimensions of the problem of food, that is, of production and distribution, must be viewed from the point of view of the principles mentioned above with respect to the global perspective and a thorough approach to development. The inadequate level of food production in some parts of the world, particularly in peasant agriculture in developing countries, must be fundamentally offset by giving greater social prestige to the agricultural sector and paying more attention to the needs and wishes of farmers . It should be noted that agriculture is in some sense the core and the foundations of the economy and that it must be fully taken into account both in formulating general policy and in its execution. From the Bahá'í point of view, In order to achieve equity and obtain for all members of society "the greatest prosperity and the greatest welfare ... we must begin with the peasants; there we will lay the foundations of a system and an order because the peasant class and the agricultural class outperform the other classes in the importance of their services. "

With this general system, which would provide social, economic and infrastructure support to agriculture, it would be important to stimulate and facilitate personal fulfillment, popular participation and cooperation at the local level. To achieve the desired effect, this process should result in people taking their own initiative and making efforts to organize themselves to strengthen their capacity to plan and execute activities aimed at achieving self-reliance, self-sufficiency and greater well-being for all. . The role of women in rural areas, which is so often neglected, is particularly important in this context. Women normally play a key role in both the production and distribution of food, and they must be given the necessary support and training,

In our opinion, the issue of food distribution must be considered in the context of the need to reduce the extremes of wealth and poverty at the national and international levels. The initial goal would be to ensure the right to food and other basic needs for all and, in the long run, well-being and universal prosperity. This will require the organization of the world's material resources for the benefit of all, free trade to stimulate economic development and a system of reserves of essential commodities to prevent shortages. In the fundamental area of storage and distribution, much importance must be given to communal measures of food security in the form of granaries for self-sufficiency at the local level.

It is widely recognized that humanity is going through a process of universal transformation, unprecedented both on its global scale and in its explosive rhythm. Never before has humanity been so much in need of renewing its thinking, of a philosophy of action to deal with the omnipresent social frictions that could destroy us as human beings. It is increasingly recognized that the eradication of hunger is both a moral imperative and an extremely important factor in the creation of social stability in an interdependent world. Only a global development strategy capable of mobilizing our spiritual and intellectual capacity, as well as all the elements of production, for the sake of the entire human race, can eliminate underdevelopment and hunger from the world.

The World Food Council has received a mandate and is in a good position to play an increasingly important role in the formulation and promotion of an effective and global food strategy. This strategy could include the benefit of an increase in information and education regarding food and, in parallel with a growing awareness of the unsustainable biological slavery that constitutes the scourge of hunger, the formulation of policies and measures of distribution capable of to face the challenge. United Nations agencies could conduct a global information and education campaign in collaboration with member governments and non-governmental organizations. This could foster a broader understanding of this great

challenging problem and result in sufficient commitment to lay the foundations for the realization of the laudable goal of eradicating hunger and malnutrition by the end of the century, as envisioned by the World Council. of Food. The Bahá'í International Community, with its centuries-old experience in fostering global solidarity and promoting the universal acceptance of the human rights of all the members of humanity, is ready to make its contribution to this process.

The Decline in Hunger-Related Deaths, The Hunger Project Papers, No. 2, May 1984, by Roy L. Prosterman.

* From the Bahá'í Writings.