

# Global Network For Justice

A Project of New Orleans Bread for the World at the Twomey Center for Peace Through Justice  
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## Water: Source of Food Security

In New York, Kofi Annan, UN-Secretary-General said, "if we are to prevent 2/3 of the world's population from facing serious water shortages in the decades ahead, we must learn to manage our water resources more effectively." At the ceremony in Rome, Pope John Paul II says, "Freeing people from hunger is an expression of the right to life and respect for human dignity. Water is a source of food security without which individuals and communities cannot live. It is necessary for the international community and its agencies to intervene effectively and visibly in this area. The primary objective of the international community must be the well-being of those people-- men, women, children, families, communities-- who live in the poorest parts of the world and therefore suffer most from any scarcity or misuse of water resources. The first step in this effort is to regain a sustainable balance between consumption and available resources." In a study of 93 developing countries, FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) found that they were withdrawing freshwater supplies faster



than they can be renewed. Ten countries are already in a critical state. FAO Director General Jacques Diouf said, "The combined vicious impact of poverty, rising demand for food and insufficient availability of water poses a serious challenge for food security and universal access to clean water."

"**Food Insecurity Atlas of Urban India**," a collaboration between World Food Program and the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, is the first publication to analyse food security in all urban India, from large cities such as Mumbai or Delhi to slum dwellings in smaller towns.



With a population of one billion, India has the highest absolute numbers of hungry people in the world. The Atlas used 17 indicators to measure food insecurity, among them daily intake of calories, housing, illiteracy rates, infant mortality rate and life expectancy. The survey also shows that child malnutrition is very high in urban areas. The Atlas recommends that priority be given to the provision of safe drinking water and garbage disposal. Another recommendation is to set up school feeding programmes in both rural and urban areas to promote school enrollment and retention.

## Arab Human Development Report:

NGO REPORTER, September 2002

For the first time, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has issued a regional report along with its regular report on human condition throughout the world. It was researched by a number of distinguished Arab scholars who presented their assessment of the conditions in 22 States of the Arab League. The report lumps the countries together and asks some

searching questions. Why, in a region with ample natural resources, increased life-expectancy, and a higher percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) spent on education than in any other developing region, is the area doing so poorly in comparison to comparable areas? Why do half the teen-agers want to emigrate, and many of the best educated people flee to better opportunity elsewhere? In a region where 38% of the inhabitants are under 14 years of age, it is imperative that answers be found quickly before the best minds are drained away.



The Arab States cannot compete globally. Worker productivity fell from 32% of the North American level in 1960, to 19% in 1990. The gross domestic product (GDP) of all 22 countries combined is less than that of Spain. One out of every 5

Arabs lives on less than \$2 a day, though they have a low level of dire poverty, defined as half that daily amount. Freedom ranges from severely limited to non-existent. The use of computers is the lowest in the world. Scientific expenditure for the entire group of States is less than that of Cuba. The authors of the report feel that the answers are to be found in 3 great deficits of Arab society: freedom, the empowerment of women, and the quality of education.

The area has some of the greatest constrictions on liberty in the world. There is little public participation in the political process. The media are muzzled. Civil society actors have great difficulty breaching the bureaucratic constraints imposed upon them. Voices of dissent are stifled.

The issue of women's rights plays a large part in the inability of Arab states to cope globally. The area has made great strides in reducing illiteracy but 2/3 of its

illiterates are women. One out of every 2 women can't read nor write. In some countries women cannot vote nor hold office, and in the more progressive countries they hold only 3.5% of the seats in parliaments, compared to 11% in sub-Saharan Africa. The region has discarded the potential of half of its inhabitants.

- Three great deficits of Arab society:
- **freedom**
  - **empowerment of women**
  - **quality of education**

Access to internet is the lowest in the world, exacerbated by the fact that most of the information is in English, not Arabic. The report suggests that the expertise of a million Arabs working in industrialized countries should be utilized to revamp the antiquated systems. Not much will be changed while Arab region continues with the lowest freedom scores in the world. Laws to protect liberties are few, and are disregarded. The authors of the report feel that good governance, the liberating of civil society movements, and free media are necessary if the region is not to stagnate. There must also be a greater effort to reconcile cultural and religious groups. A reduction of conflict and greater cohesion - perhaps through the creation of a customs union or a common market - would help to escort the region into the new era of globalization.

#### **What in the World?????**

The UN has been trying to raise money to feed the 250,000 starving in **Swaziland**. But the King of Swaziland just bought himself a shiny new personal jet that cost \$55m - which is twice the amount of money the UN is seeking to alleviate starvation.

The UN has warned that **China** faces an AIDS epidemic of untold proportions, estimating that as many as 1.5 million HIV infections were contracted there last year. The report calls China's AIDS risk "titanic" and says that ten million Chinese could be infected by the end of the decade. Ignorance of the causes of the disease, and discrimination against infected people are rife.

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[www.globalnetwork4justice.org](http://www.globalnetwork4justice.org)