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TO SLASH HUNGER, UN LAUNCHES EDUCATION CAMPAIGN FOR LATIN AMERICAN RURAL POOR

In an effort to improve agricultural productivity and reduce hunger and poverty in Latin America, United Nations agencies launched an international campaign on education for the tens of millions of rural people throughout the continent.

"Expanding and improving education can be one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty, hunger and malnutrition," Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) expert Lavinia Gasperini said. "Malnutrition rates decline with increased literacy, especially female literacy."

Research shows that a farmer with four years of elementary education is almost 9 % more productive than a farmer with no education. When materials such as fertilizers, new seeds or farm machinery are available, the productivity increase rises to 13 %.

The campaign was launched at a three-day regional workshop on "Food Security and Education for Rural People" in Santiago de Chile. Organized by FAO and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the workshop also involves the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture, the World Bank and the Italian Development Cooperation.

The campaign is part of the global education for rural people partnership initiative, led by FAO in

collaboration with UNESCO and more than 100 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), universities and other partners. It is a follow-up to the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Globally, 1 billion people are illiterate, about 130 million of them children. Most live in less developed regions where the majority of the 840 million of undernourished people are also concentrated.

In Guatemala, for example, the country with the highest percentage of rural population in the region, adults in cities had an average of six and a half years of schooling in 1998, while the same age group in rural areas had under two years of school attendance.

News from August 2, 2004 UN News Digest

1 IN 8 ETHIOPIANS FACING HUNGER THIS YEAR, DONOR AID NEEDED - UN New York, August 13, 2004

With the food situation in Ethiopia deteriorating significantly due to rain failure in some areas and poor rain in many others, international aid is needed to feed a growing number of hungry that this year will reach 1 in 8 of the population, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported.

OCHA said 1.65 million of the 2004 beneficiaries who were expected to move off assistance after July would continue to need aid until the end of the year and a further 1.35 million new beneficiaries had been added, resulting in 3 million more beneficiaries and an increase of the 2004 total to about 8.5 million from 7.1 million.

Meanwhile, there is currently a shortfall of approximately 100,000 tons of cereals, for which donor response is required. (Visit <http://www.ochaonline.un.org>) Less than half of basic supply needs are funded, and an additional \$7 million is needed for new malaria drugs as the malaria season proceeds in the Horn of Africa country.

The latest figures are based on the Ethiopian Government's Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission, which presented the

findings of a recent multi-agency needs assessment to a meeting of humanitarian partners.

In early August UN aid coordinators opened an office in the Somali region of Ethiopia to provide assistance in the areas devastated by drought.

Mohiuddin Ahmad a member of Jubilee South Reports about the Situation in Bangladesh: Dhaka Killing (August 24, 2004)



নির্মম, ভয়াবহ! এরা কি বেঁচে আছে না মরে গেছে? -জিয়া ইসলাম
Aug 21, 2004 Grenade attack on peaceful opposition rally and police atrocity in Dhaka, 19 dead so far, 300 + injured

There has been a series of bomb and grenade attack during the last five years. Peaceful rallies, cultural gatherings, even mosques, shrines and churches are targeted. This is perceived in many ways including:

- a systematic attempt to discredit the “democratization” process in the country ;
- an attempt to portray Bangladesh a “failed” or an “ineffective” state ;
- an attempt to make common people feel more comfortable to invite men in uniform who can “maintain” law and order with an “iron hand”

Bangladesh is unique in a sense, it is the only country with a Muslim majority population that had been trying to pursue political pluralism where communist parties could function legally (since 1972). Some religious fundamentalist groups are active. They do participate in national elections, but hardly command one-tenth of the popular vote. So they may benefit if the society is “destabilized”. US is frantically trying to win over the “moderate Muslim nation” and at the same time vulnerable to “aid regime” led by the US and the World Bank.

The need of the hour is to allow the civilian democratic constitutional process to take root, which is being threatened by other power aspirants at home

and brokers abroad. The people of Bangladesh need sympathy and solidarity.

Last night, Women Affairs Secretary of the main opposition Party, Ms Ivy Rahman succumbed to injury. People are observing a 2-day complete general strike (hartal).

ANNOUNCING 57th Annual UN-DPI/NGO Conference: MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS: CIVIL SOCIETY TAKES ACTION

The conference will take place from 8-10 September 2004. It focuses on the worldwide efforts of NGOs to support the United Nations campaigns to dramatically reduce indices of extreme poverty by 2015.

The new web site aims to increase the number of participants outside UN Headquarters, especially NGO activists, the media and citizens from around the world. Viewers can access the plenary sessions live at <http://www.undpingoconference.org>. The interactive web site will broadcast in English, French and Spanish and include an on-line discussion area for comments, questions and answers before, during, and after the plenary sessions.

The Conference is designed to raise awareness of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) among civil society organizations, especially NGOs. At the Millennium Summit in 2000, 189 Member States adopted a Declaration that synthesized the priorities of the international agenda and reflected the commitments that had been painstakingly negotiated during the previous decade of world conferences.

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***New:
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