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Food Justice Network UPDATE

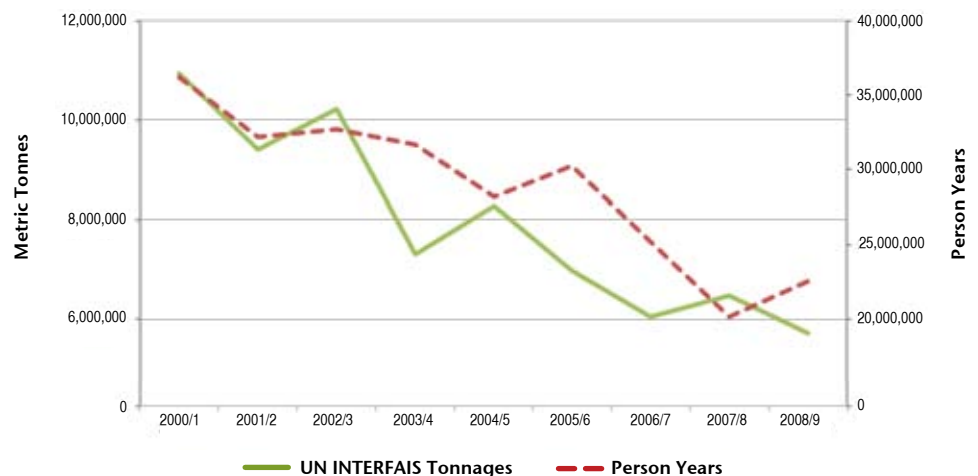
The Food Justice Network is a community of supporters, staff and members of Canadian Foodgrains Bank engaging in issues of hunger and injustice. We invite you to join us.



Photo credit: Jeda Villa Bai

Food Aid Down Despite Increasing Need

It doesn't make sense. At a time when the need for food to respond to emergencies and chronic hunger is increasing, the amount of food aid available is falling. According to the World Food Programme, quantity of global food aid has halved over the past decade. Most of the world's food aid is contributed by the members of the Food Aid Convention, an international agreement which guarantees a minimum amount of food aid each year. According to the reports of this convention, the food aid provided has gone from being sufficient for 36 million people for a year to enough for only 22 million. Last month the UN Food and Agriculture Organization announced that 925 million people are food insecure (a slight drop from the previous year). Food aid isn't the answer for most of them but it is essential for the most vulnerable 10-15% (100-150 million). Even when help is given for less than a full year, there simply isn't enough food to meet the need.



This will become an important question early in 2011. The Food Aid Convention formal negotiations are to begin then and it is widely feared that the member states of the convention will be 'tightening their belts' after the 2008/9 financial crisis. Canada will be leading those negotiations and, as the largest donor to the Convention on a per-capita basis, speaks from a strong position. However, like other rich countries which spent money to halt the financial crisis, Canada too may be inclined to cut its commitment. We currently provide enough food for 1.3 million people for a year, a number which Canada has largely maintained while the other countries reduced their food aid. This reflects the historical support by Canadians for our food aid program. But will we maintain that support? The Foodgrains Bank may be calling on its supporters at Christmas to send a message to Ottawa – keep our promise to the world's hungry people.

—Stu Clark, Senior Public Policy Advisor at Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Youth Interns have an impact in Canada



Each year Foodgrains Bank invites a youth intern to come and speak to Canadians across the country from a Southern perspective on issues related to hunger and food security. This is done through the International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP) coordinated by Mennonite Central Committee. Juan Raul Junay,

a student from Guatemala, spent last year researching the impact of Canadian mining activities on food security in his country. His passion for justice led him through a year of engaging the Canadian public, especially his focus on Bill C-300 (Private member's bill on Corporate Social Responsibility), which is scheduled for its third reading on October 27th. We reached Juan Raul in Guatemala City for an update.

FJU: How was the adjustment moving back to Guatemala after spending a year in Canada?

JR: The first days I was with my family, and they had a celebration, because my mother was happy to see her son again. I felt like a stranger in certain places. I saw my bosses and I haven't seen them in a year; I could hardly recognize them. I also miss using the bus pass. Here you have to climb on the side of the bus because there are so many people trying to get on. It is always raining too, so it's hard to get my clothes dry because we have no machines here. After coming back I wanted to finish my studies. I went to university for two weeks, but then a group called Students for Autonomy took the university and closed it down in protest, so I couldn't go to my classes. Recently, they gave up their protest, so our classes have started again.

FJU: Tell us about meeting with Foodgrains Bank supporters and the public across Canada, sharing about the impacts of mining operations and the role of Canadian companies. Were people interested in this issue?

JR: Some of them, yes. I tried to talk about mining and how corporations are taking over lands to extract metals, but I often had trouble finding the right words. I am shy, but I am now less shy because of that experience. Some of them asked "What can we do?" so I would talk about supporting Bill C-300.

FJU: Do you think it made a difference?

JR: I hope so. I talked to a lot of people. I don't know if they sent postcards to their Members of Parliament, but I did what I could to show something that is real. For me, it's enough that in Canada people now know about it. Maybe the impact won't be right now, but it could come later. I'm also not the only one who was working on this. There are people working on this in El Salvador, Mexico, Argentina, and other places.

FJU: What difference could Bill C-300 make to people in communities, especially farmers, where these mining companies operate?

JR: I think this bill is small. John McKay (the MP who introduced the bill) even said so, but it has a lot of power and can make changes within institutions in Canada. A lot of companies will resist this bill. Developers and prospectors are saying that the bill is unnecessary and it has a lot of flaws which will damage Canada's economy. People in Guatemala are saying that the changes necessary need to happen in Canada, like the way their companies behave in other countries. But we also have a lot of responsibility here too as Guatemalan citizens. We just talk about it, but maybe we can speak up against the mining companies and demand that taxes be made more beneficial for all Guatemalans. It would mean a lot for our country – our environment, our water, our food security – if Canadians support this bill.

Learn more about Bill C-300, which is coming up for debate and another vote in the House of Commons as soon as October 27th, 2010.

To support Bill C-300, send a letter, message or phone your MP and ask him/her to support it at this critical time (before October 27th). Find your MP's contact number [here](#).





Introducing... Terence Sibanda

Terence is from Zimbabwe and will spend a year as our IVEP youth intern, speaking with Canadians about his country, causes of food insecurity, and ways to respond. He brings experience with Foodgrains Bank programming in Conservation Agriculture and as a monitor of food aid and school feeding programs.

To invite Terence to speak to your school, church, or community, you can send an email to foodjustice@foodgrainsbank.ca or phone 1-800-665-0377.

Report Card on Hunger

The world just got a report card for its efforts in reducing hunger. This happened at the United Nations Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in September. MDG#1 is to cut poverty and hunger in half between 1990 and 2015. With the “end of term” only five years away, it was time for a report card on progress.

Mid-Term Report Card

Student Name: The World

Subject

Comments

Reducing poverty

Good work. Global poverty has come down from 46% to 27%. You are on track to meet the target.

Reducing Hunger

Definite progress in some areas, but more work needed to meet your goal!

Child malnutrition

Already reduced from 31% to 26%. Keep working.

Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Vietnam

Congratulations: you have already cut hunger in half in your countries.

South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa

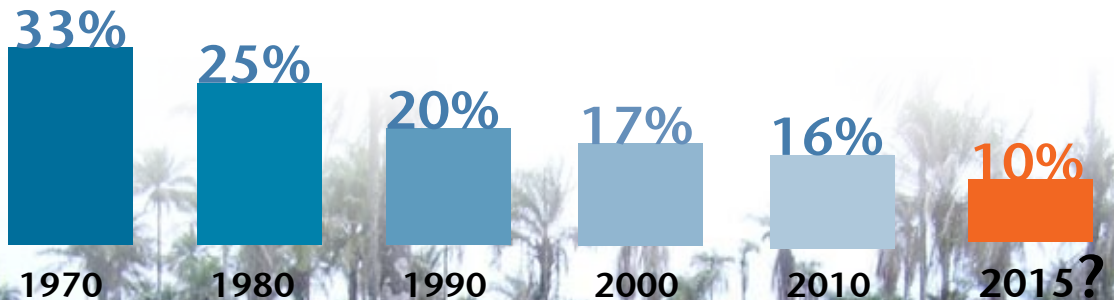
Progress is disappointing, more resources needed.

Governments

More money needed to fight hunger. Invest in agriculture and food security. Keep your promises.

Learn more about the MDGs at www.un.org/millenniumgoals or read the outcome document from the MDG Summit [here](#). —Paul Hagerman, *Public Policy Manager, Canadian Foodgrains Bank*

Percentage of hungry people in the world



Climate Change Financing Disappoints

The Canadian government recently released details on where its 2010 climate change financing allotment will go. Unfortunately, the news is disappointing.

A few months ago, we applauded the federal government for their announcement that Canada would invest \$400 million to help developing countries deal with climate change. We hoped these investments would help those most vulnerable—especially smallholder farmers—adapt to climate change.

Unfortunately, almost three-quarters of the money will go out as loans to encourage clean energy projects in developing countries. While these investments are necessary to help slow climate change they don't help those most vulnerable adapt to changes already occurring. Nor is it fair to claim the full amount of these loans—which will need to be repaid—as climate change funding.

Meanwhile, only 11 percent will be given in grants to help poor countries deal with climate impacts. This includes \$20 million on urgent adaptation needs in the poorest countries, and \$10 million on an IDRC (International Development Research Centre) program to boost research on adaptation in Africa. There are also specific funds for adaptation work in Haiti, Ethiopia and Vietnam.

It is also concerning that some of the money comes from Canada's aid budget, which means that less money is available for other international development projects, such as schools, health or food security.

—**Carol Thiessen**, *Public Policy Advisor, Canadian Foodgrains Bank*

Click [here](#) for more details on Canada's climate change financing.

Take action on climate change

Now is a critical time to influence the Canadian government's decisions and help make climate change financing best serve hungry people. Personal letters are most effective. Write one to **your MP**. You can get guidance on this from our **online postcard**.



Photo credit: CIAT



Nejabat Khan

Nejabat, pictured above at right, is from Church World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan, and is scheduled to visit the prairie provinces for the Foodgrains Bank Fall Information Meetings ([click here for more information](#).)



Just Food Art Exhibit

Official Winnipeg opening of this exhibit is on Saturday, November 20, 2010 at 7pm at the Mennonite Heritage Gallery, Canadian Mennonite University. The exhibit runs until January 15, 2011. Click here for the [poster](#).

Youth Discovery Tour

There are still several spots available on the Youth Discovery Tour to Guatemala, which is from January 17th – 29th. Can't afford it? You may qualify for assistance – write us at foodjustice@foodgrainsbank.ca or phone Dave Colvinson, 1-800-665-0377.



Photo credit: Magnus Franklin

To join the Food Justice Network send an email to foodjustice@foodgrainsbank.ca.