

grandmothers
Advocacy Network



Mouvement de soutien des
grands-mères

Advocating for the human rights of older women
Défense des droits de la personne des femmes âgées

The Global Hunger Crisis: Paths to Food Justice

Around the world the hunger crisis is deepening, with the World Food Programme reporting that as many as 783 million people are facing chronic hunger. To address the crisis, Canada and other wealthy nations must invest in building sustainability and resilience into our food systems.

Investments in food security and sustainable food systems would create many benefits, including poverty alleviation, economic security, decreased conflict, reduced displacement and migration, women's full participation, and greater resilience in the face of a rapidly changing climate.

Our Ask: Funding that Responds to Needs

We look to the Government of Canada to renew its promise to increase Official Development Assistance year over year to 2030 (while also making up for the reduction in Federal Budget 2023) and to invest an additional (new) \$2 billion between now and 2030 to respond to the intersecting food and climate crises.

Canada needs to channel funds to marginalized people in the Global South who are living with severe hunger. Government also needs to improve the quality of its funding in response to the expressed needs and priorities of affected communities. This can be done through:

- **Flexible and longer-term funding** -- Provided directly to local community-led groups or via Canadian development NGOs that work closely with them.
- **Support for small-scale farmers** -- Increase emphasis on small-scale farmers who produce and distribute food, and on farmer-led solutions.
- **Nature-based approaches** – Support for local organizations working with nature-based solutions to restore soil health and biodiversity.
- **Re-purposed subsidies** -- Towards sustainable farming practices rather than further investments in industrial agriculture.
- **Putting a priority on Africa** – The area of greatest need.
- **Removing barriers to women's leadership** – By supporting education and training, reducing gender-based violence, and improving access to credit, land ownership, and seeds.

Facts about Hunger and Food Justice

The Global Hunger Crisis

- As many as 783 million people around the world are facing chronic hunger. Recurrent shocks are driving up food insecurity.
- Primary drivers of acute food insecurity are conflict, weather extremes, migration, and economic shocks.

Small-Scale Farmers and Women's Rights

- Small-scale and family farms provide a third of the world's food and up to 80 percent of food in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, and yet they continue to receive little support from climate financing.
- Smallholder farmers maintain very high seed diversity, allowing for crop diversity on their farms. This is critical for building a resilient food production system in the face of climate change.
- Agroecology, currently practiced primarily by small-scale farmers, is scalable, with many projects in the Global South, demonstrating how this can be done.
- The COVID-19 pandemic and the related economic crisis reinforced gender inequalities in agri-food-system livelihoods.
- Ensuring that women have equal access to and control over resources is central to achieving gender equality and women's self-sufficiency in agrifood systems. Secure rights over land, water, and livestock can expand rural women's economic opportunities and increase their resilience to shocks, including global economic crises and climate-related impacts.
- Women produce 60-80% of all food grown in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean.
- Women's groups, including farmers' associations, have consistently been shown to improve women's economic empowerment and broader well-being.

Global Food Systems

- Production of staple grains for world consumption is concentrated in five countries (70% of global supply). These global staples, such as wheat, maize, and rice, provide calories but insufficient nutrition.
- With ownership of seeds in the hands of just a few large corporations, farmers are increasingly dependent on external and commercially controlled seeds, often not adapted to the local environment.
- Nearly 90% of annual \$540 billion in global subsidies to farmers "cause harm" to the food system. Subsidies routinely fund price incentives for monoculture of livestock and crops, involving intense use of fertilizers and pesticides and shutting out smallholder farmers and those practicing agroecology from the larger markets.
- Chemical fertilizers and those used to manage pests reduce soil health, which lowers agricultural resilience, and makes farms more vulnerable to climate shocks.
- Roughly 30% of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted.

Information Sources: UN World Food Programme | World Resources Institute | UN Food and Agriculture Organization | Dr. Elizabeth Vibert, Professor of History, UBC | UN Environment Programme/Status of Women in Agrifood Systems/Seed Change Canada