Zero Hunger: overcoming the odds

As conflicts rage, mass hunger is staging a harrowing comeback. Through escalating emergencies and tight finances, we hold fast to the dream of a hunger-free future.

A deep field organization, we continue to save lives and change lives. We lead the world in frontline food assistance; fight for better nutrition; and strengthen communities to brave shock and disaster.

In 2017, we remained true to our role: a robust humanitarian arm of the United Nations and the main agency combating hunger around the globe. Our reach, expertise and the trust of our donors allowed us to:

- provide food assistance to 91.4 million people in 83 nations
- have a daily 5,000 trucks, 92 planes and 20 ships on the move to keep hunger at bay
- battle emergencies in 15 countries and regions
- help avert famine across vast swathes of sub-Saharan Africa
- offer school meals and take-home food to 18.3 million children
- distribute cash assistance to 19.2 million people – including refugees, the displaced and the furthest behind
- train 60,000 government officials to meet their citizens’ food and nutrition needs
- bring in US$6 billion in funding – a record amount, but still nearly US$4 billion short of requirements

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A race against time

The fight against hunger is coming to a head. There are 12 short years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), an ambitious agenda that seeks to leave no woman, girl, man or boy behind. The emphasis is on reaching those furthest behind first.

Sustainable Development Goal 2 seeks to “end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”. This involves ensuring access to nutritious food for the most vulnerable; increasing agricultural production through sustainable and resilient food systems; and tackling the multiple causes of malnutrition.

We are devoted to fulfilling these aims. But success will slip from our grasp unless the international community creates the premises for durable peace – and commits critical levels of funding to match its resolve.

HUNGER IN NUMBERS

821 million people are chronically undernourished.

This means that roughly one-ninth of humanity has insufficient food to lead a healthy life – with many on the brink of starvation.

Zero Hunger by 2030 remains achievable – but we must not waste a second.

- Six out of 10 hungry people live in countries affected by conflict
- Four-fifths of all hungry people live in countries prone to degradation and disaster
- Nearly two-thirds of all hungry people live in Asia
- One in four people in sub-Saharan Africa is undernourished
- Nearly half of all deaths of children under five are linked to undernutrition
- 151 million under-fives are thought to be stunted – too small for their age
- Two billion people lack micronutrients such as iron, zinc, vitamin A and iodine – a lifelong, debilitating “hidden hunger”
- Nearly 2 billion people are overweight or obese
- 57 nations face the double burden of obesity and hunger
- The annual cost of malnutrition is estimated at US$3.5 trillion – US$500 for each person alive