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The Food Crisis We Can Still Avert

Agriculture losses in 2022 could make the current food crisis grow 4x larger in the next six months. It's not too late to stop this.

As of September of 2022, the global food crisis has gotten so extreme that over 205 million people urgently need humanitarian food assistance just to survive. This is the crisis we cannot prevent; it is already upon us. Congress has been rising to the challenge with emergency funding, most recently including \$1.3 billion in humanitarian support in the Continuing Resolution in September.

However, a far worse crisis, one that is four times bigger than the one we currently face, is looming.

A recent report from [Gro Intelligence and CRU Group](#) estimates that the impacts from the Ukraine crisis on nitrogen fertilizer availability in the global agriculture system will lead to a total loss of 72 trillion calories of food produced in 2022 alone. CARE's [analysis](#) shows that this loss would cause 620.9 million MORE people who are already struggling to meet their basic food needs to lose at least one more meal a day for the next 6 months. **If we invest right now in food production, increasing resilience, and functioning markets, we can stave off this new crisis.**

Why Is This Happening?

Around the globe, farmers – especially women farmers – were already facing constant barriers to planting, growing, harvesting, and selling next year's food. In many cases, they can't access or afford fuel, seeds, or other key inputs. Or conflict prevents them from reaching their fields or bringing their crops to market. Or climate change-induced drought has decimated their yields. Or they face all of the above, and more.

The global fertilizer shortage is now set to turbocharge these vast, systemic challenges. Half the world's food production depends upon synthetic fertilizer. Quite simply, under current conditions and without further support, the world's farmers cannot grow sufficient food for the coming months.

Gender Inequality at the Root

Gender inequality plays a significant role in this crisis. Women farmers are frequently denied access to quality seeds and other agricultural supplies and resources. They are shut out of training opportunities, and often denied access to land rights. As a result, their productivity is slashed by 30%. This disparity alone accounts for up to 150 million hungry people worldwide.

Women and girls also bear the brunt of food crises. They often eat last and least when food is scarce and are at higher risk of experiencing gender-based violence and other forms of exploitation and abuse. They are consistently shut out of the crisis response and denied the chance to apply their deep community knowledge to the solutions.

If we allow 621 million more hungry people in the coming six months, women and girls will once again feel the worst impacts. Based on current trends in gender equality and food security, 332.8 million of these people will be women. That means 44.7 million more women than men could miss one meal a day for the next 6 months amounting to women missing 8.5 billion more meals than men.

We Must Act Now

621 million more hungry people is not a foregone conclusion. We can still act to prevent the worst of the crisis. We must:

- **Move fast.** Ensure that all emergency investments in food security are implemented with speed, transparency, and flexibility.
- **Grow more food now.** All investments must prioritize resilience efforts alongside traditional emergency food assistance, supporting small-scale farmers to produce sufficient, nutritious food for their local communities.
- **Invest in gender equality in the food system.** Women not only eat last and least, but they also farm last and least. This damages the whole food system and lowers food production around the world. Investing in gender equality will increase food production and reduce the number of people who face food crisis.
- **Invest in the future.** These investments must also include support for sustainable agriculture practices that support healthy communities and are less dependent upon chemical inputs and global supply chains.
- **Act across sectors.** No one actor can meet the incredible crisis we are facing. All actors—from governments to multi-lateral organizations to private sector companies must invest resources in averting this crisis, or risk kicking off the worst famine we have seen globally.

Legislative Roadmap

1. Fully fund the food crisis response through FY 2023 SFOPS and Agriculture Appropriations bills, including at least
 - a. \$4.48 billion for the International Development Assistance, the Senate funding level
 - b. \$160 million for the Global Health-Nutrition Subaccount, the House and Senate funding level
 - c. \$1.8 billion for Food for Peace Title II, the House and Senate funding levels
 - d. \$265 million for McGovern-Dole Food for Education, the House funding level
2. Pass the Global Food Security Act and fully fund Feed the Future at a minimum level of \$1.23 billion (Amendment 5833 of the FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act).
3. Through the FY 2023 reauthorization of the Farm Bill ensure international food assistance is flexible and context-specific, so that the right support gets to the right place at the right time – whether that is cash, vouchers, locally sourced food, or in-kind US commodities.