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UN: One in Nine People in the World Goes Hungry

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Those were the conclusions of the report on the State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI 2014) released Tuesday by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and two other UN agencies, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

“In recent years, we have made great progress in the fight against global hunger, but many people are still suffering from malnutrition,” FAO director-general Jose Graziano da Silva said during the presentation of the report.

In his opinion, there is enough food in the world to feed everyone, so it is important that governments, institutions, corporations and companies work to eliminate hunger.

The document notes that “the number of hungry people (has) declined globally by more than 100 million over the last decade and by more than 200 million since 1990-92.”

It claims that less hunger in developing countries is a sign that the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving the number of undernourished people by 2015 can be achieved “if appropriate and immediate efforts are stepped up,”

“It is important to continue efforts to end hunger in the world. Together we can do it,” said FMA executive director Ertharin Cousin.

To date, 63 developing countries have achieved the MDG and six more are on track to meet it

by 2015.

“This is proof that we can win the war against hunger and should inspire countries to move forward, with the assistance of the international community,” according to the report by Cousin, Graziano da Silva and IFAD president Kanayo F. Nwanze.

The study also explains that “access to food has improved rapidly and significantly in countries that have experienced overall economic progress, notably in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia,” in addition to south Asia and Latin America.

The core countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are further behind, but the southern countries and Peru have achieved a remarkable reduction in the number of malnourished people, said Da Silva.

In its in-depth analysis the paper examines countries like Bolivia and Brazil, and gives them as examples in the fight against hunger.

The main lesson these two countries give to the world is that the policies they put in place over the last decade are achieving very positive results, said Da Silva.

However, the document stresses that in sub-Saharan Africa “more than one in four people remain chronically undernourished,” and Asia, “the world’s most populous region, is also home to the majority of the hungry – 526 million people.”

“South Sudan has been a very fertile region and very prone to conflicts in which it has been involved, and so has become unproductive and dependent on humanitarian assistance. We are very pessimistic with the road it is taking” confessed da Silva.

The three organizations emphasized the need for renewed, “political commitment to tackle hunger and to transform it into concrete actions,” according to Assistant IFAD Vice President John McIntire.

Finally, the report emphasizes the importance of specific nutrition programs, particularly micronutrient deficiencies of mothers and children under five.

The conclusions and recommendations of the report will be analyzed by governments, civil society and private sector representatives at the meeting of the Committee on World Food Security, to be held from October 13 to 18 at FAO headquarters in Rome.

They will also be studied at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), to be held in Rome from November 19 to 21, organized by the FAO and the World Health Organization.

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