



FACTS - The impact of global crisis on hunger and malnutrition

- From FAO estimates, 40 million more people became undernourished in 2008 as a consequence of the food price crisis, raising the number to **963 million hungry people**.
- The current financial and economic crisis is increasing poverty and unemployment, reducing foreign aid and investment in developing countries, thereby creating new challenges for the achievement of the first **Millennium Development Goal** (MDG1 - Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger).
- The financial and economic crisis, adding on the food price crisis, is driving millions of people into food insecurity, worsening living conditions for many who were already food-insecure, forcing them to sell their assets and threatening long-term global food security.
- The **poor** (urban poor, landless, female-headed households) are the hardest hit: their first reaction to the crisis is usually to reduce food expenses and cut down on diversity and quality. Cutbacks on health expenditures further jeopardize the nutritional situation of vulnerable families.
- **Women and small children** are particularly at risk: they have special nutritional needs which increase their vulnerability in times of crisis. In many cultures women have a lower social status, are often the last to benefit from increased household income but are usually the first to make sacrifices when the financial situation deteriorates.
- **Hidden hunger** is flaring: soaring food prices bring families to reduce drastically the quality and variety of foods they consume, causing deficiencies in micronutrients (vitamins, iron, etc) that have long-term effects on child growth and adult health.
- Strategies and approaches carried out so far by different stakeholders have had limited impact. In order to address the challenges of the current crisis, Governments, donors, the United Nations, nongovernmental organizations, civil society and the private sector must **join forces** and launch an integrated initiative to protect and improve nutrition. This requires a combination of food security and livelihoods support to the most at risk households on the one hand, and appropriate nutrition supplementation and rehabilitation interventions and related preventive health programmes on the other.

For more information:

FAO: [State of Food Insecurity in the World, 2008](#)

IFPRI: [Facts on Hunger, Poverty, and Education](#)

[SCN advocacy brief](#)