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## Helping world's hungry also promotes peace and stability – Ban



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (right) speaks with President Barack Obama at the working breakfast of the G8 leaders

10 July 2009 – By helping the world's hungry, who now number one billion, the international community can also secure a more peaceful and stable future for all, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon **told** the leaders of the Group of Eight (G8) industrialized nations today in L'Aquila, Italy. The annual G8 meeting, which wraps up today, has reportedly agreed to mobilize \$20 billion over three years for a comprehensive strategy focusing on sustainable agriculture development to ensure global food security.

Addressing the summit's session of food security, Mr. Ban said that last year's major spike in food and energy prices affected hundreds of millions of people.

"It amplified suffering, hardship and political unrest. We lost ground in our race to reach the first Millennium Development Goal," he stated, referring to the globally agreed target of halving poverty by 2015.

Governments, regional agencies, civil society groups and international organizations responded by joining forces to feed the hungry and prepare for a better future, and while global food prices have come down, they are still high in many developing countries, he noted.

The Secretary-General added that the situation is only getting worse with today's volatile markets, breakdown in world trade, climate change effects and falling income from job losses.

"We need to do more, faster. The food crisis is permanently harming millions of children. They need our help. This is about even more than alleviating human suffering; it is about global peace and stability."

Mr. Ban outlined four areas in need of concrete action, beginning with need to combine new initiatives to maximize their impact and avoid duplication. He also cited the need to commit to a comprehensive approach that tackles both the immediate and long-term dimensions of the problem. Also crucial is to support national food security strategies, working through regional institutions, as well as to ensure that countries have the financial support they need for immediate assistance and longer-term actions.

While in L'Aquila, the Secretary-General met today with Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, with whom he discussed climate change and food security. Last night, he met with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, and they talked about the H1N1 pandemic and Somalia, and also touched on the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

UN agencies are welcoming the G8's food security initiative, with the head of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) saying it signals an "encouraging shift of policy" in favour of helping the poor and hungry to produce their own food.

Director-General Jacques Diouf voiced confidence that G8 leaders will translate their pledge into concrete action. "I am convinced that you will 'walk the talk' not only for natural ethical considerations but also for sound economic reasons and, last but not least, to ensure peace and security in the world," he told the summit.

In addition, the President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development ([IFAD](#)), Kanayo Nwanze, noted that the G8 leaders had recognized that food security has two dimensions: food aid for critical situations and sustained investment in agriculture to break the poverty cycle. Investing in smallholder agriculture is the corner stone of this new push for development because it is the key to boosting economic growth and reducing poverty, he added.

Meanwhile, the independent UN expert on the right to food [said](#) heads of State will have to do more if they want to help the billion people now suffering from hunger.

While welcoming the pledges announced today, Special Rapporteur Olivier De Schutter highlighted a number of issues that need to be tackled, including food price volatility, social protection, and protection of the rights of agricultural workers.

"Only then will real progress be made to ensure greater enjoyment of the right to food now denied to so many," said the expert, who reports to the Geneva-based Human Rights Council.

Mr. De Schutter called for a global action plan on food security, firmly based on human rights, focusing on five areas: reducing volatility in global agricultural markets; encouraging States to build social protection schemes; channelling resources to scale up sustainable agriculture systems; protecting agricultural worker rights; and reforming global governance for food and agriculture.

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