

Attn: Governments, UN Bodies and International Financial Institutions

International Call for a Coordinated Approach to Food Reserves

We are writing to you to urge rapid and comprehensive action in the establishment of food reserves to end world hunger and help stabilize markets.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has referred to hunger as “a stain on humanity,” requiring international coordination and leadership at the highest level. During the High-Level Conference on World Food Security in 2008, then again in L’Aquila, Italy and at the World Food Summit in 2009, governments have recognized the potential of stockholding to deal with humanitarian food emergencies and to limit price volatility, calling for a review of this issue as part of the coordinated response to the global food crisis. Unfortunately, little has been done to realize the potential of these proposals.

In 2010, we, the undersigned civil society organizations, remain concerned with the lack of activity from governments and institutions in exploring a system of food reserves on the regional or global level. Specifically, we call upon governments to honor their commitments for a comprehensive review of food reserves, incorporating lessons learned and identifying potential models, also allocating appropriate resources and setting a firm deadline for varying levels of implementation by the end of 2010.

It is time to take decisive action to address the structural causes of food insecurity and to prevent a repeat of recent food price spikes. Food reserves are a valuable tool in improving access and distribution of food. They can strengthen the ability of governments to limit excessive price volatility for both farmers and consumers. They can support farmers by helping them to predict their markets, and by redressing concentrated market power. They can contribute to local, national and regional markets, where resources are lacking. Importantly, buffer stocks can also compensate for shortfalls in foreign currency, offset supply shocks or spikes in demand, and facilitate humanitarian response to food emergencies. National, regional and international food reserves are particularly needed due to the reality of climate change and its impact on food production and supply.

As the comprehensive review is carried out, we believe the below steps can be taken by governments immediately to adopt a multilateral plan.

Specifically, we request that governments take these critical steps:

1. **Increase foreign and domestic investment** to achieve culturally appropriate local and regional food security reserves. As donor governments seek to mobilize investment to strengthen national food security plans, food reserves should be a central plank of their foreign assistance and domestic agricultural policy agenda, taking special care that food reserve mechanisms do not undermine local food production systems.

2. **Lead efforts to establish an international commission on reserves**, such as one coordinated by the FAO Committee on Food Security, to make recommendations on the establishment of a coordinated global food reserve system.
3. **Support multilateral, regional and bilateral agricultural trade rules** that allow developing countries to invest in the production and infrastructure necessary to support food reserves.
4. **Renegotiate the Food Aid Convention**, ensuring that contributions towards food security reserves are counted as eligible to meet commitments in the Convention.

With the number of undernourished people in the world surpassing one billion we cannot afford a repeat of past mistakes that led to unprecedented price spikes in important food commodities. To address the multifaceted root causes of food insecurity, we ask that governments and institutions put the issue of reserves at the center of their policy considerations.

Sincerely,

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)

Asian Farmers Association (AFA)

Collectif Stratégies Alimentaires (CSA)

National Farmers Union (NFU), USA

Asociación Nacional de Empresas Comercializadoras de Productores del Campo (ANEC), Mexico

National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC), USA

Reseau des Organizations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA)

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

AAI-Latin America (Agribusiness Action Initiatives)

Action Aid International

Africa Europe Faith & Justice Network (AEFJN)

Agricultural Missions, Inc.

Asian Secretariat for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (AsiaDHRRA)

CCFD-Terre Solidaire, France

Center for Health Policy and Innovation, South Africa

Center of Concern, USA

Centre for Agriculture and Environment, The Netherlands

Centro Cultural Social y del Medio Ambiente Ceibo, Chile

Centro Ecoceanos, Chile

Church World Service

CIDSE

Community Alliance for Global Justice, USA

Compassion in World Farming, UK

Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance

Fair, Italy

FIAN International

FOCO Foro Ciudadano de Participación por la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos, Argentina
Food & Water Watch, USA
Food Democracy Now!, USA
Food Systems Integrity, USA
Ghana Trade and Livelihoods Coalition (GTLC)
Forschungs- und Dokumentationszentrum Chile-Lateinamerika /Centro de Investigación y Documentación Chile-América Latina (FDCL), Germany
Global Policy Forum
Grassroots International
IBON International
IDEAR/CONGCOOP (Instituto de Estudios Agrarios y Rurales/ Coordinación de ONG y Cooperativas), Guatemala
International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN)
ISDE Bangladesh
Jagrata Juba Shangha (JJS), Bangladesh
Kentucky Interfaith Taskforce on Latin America and the Caribbean, USA
Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Centre, Nigeria
Malcolm X Center for Self Determination, USA
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, USA
Red de Accion Ciudadana Frente al Libre Comercio e Inversion Sinti Techan, El Salvador
Mujer Rural y Seguridad Alimentaria de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia
Ngo M.A.I.S., Italy
Partners In Health, USA
Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian Church, USA
Pesticide Action Network North America (PANNA)
PLANT (Partners for the Land & Agricultural Needs of Traditional Peoples), USA
Platform ABC, The Netherlands
Red de Ambientalista en Accion de El Salvador
Red Mexicana de Accion frente al Libre Comercio, Mexico
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice & Human Rights, USA
Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural, USA/Mexico
Share The World's Resources, UK
Social Concerns/Rural Life Office—Diocese of Jefferson City, USA
Society Against Poverty and Hunger (SAPH), Nigeria
The Carbon Philter Institute, UK
The Corner House, UK
The Second Chance Foundation, USA
WhyHunger, USA
World Development Movement, UK

For any questions regarding this letter, please contact Alexandra Spielloch at the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy at (612) 870-3419 or aspielloch@iatp.org. To add your organization to this list, please write to Eleonore Wesserle at ewesserle@iatp.org.