

Maximising food production - a challenge for the G8

The world population is set to increase from its current 7 billion to 9 billion by 2050. This exponential growth in world population comes with growing concerns about food security and the increase in the price of food. The challenges of making food available to all is more pronounced in third world countries where food shortage in ~~the~~ recent years had led to protests and the overthrow of some governments.

Food shortage has several implications for world peace, security and the economy. The International Institute for Environment and Development believes that mapping a way forward is important. While there is a rising demand for food, especially in third world countries, major producers such as the United States, are diverting their agricultural produce (corns and maize), to the production of bio fuels. climate change has led to floods in countries such as Pakistan and extreme weather has forced major producers of food such as Russia to ban food export. Water scarcity, soil erosion, resistance to pests and diseases ^{control} are all factors that pose a serious threat to global food security. Saudi Arabia, for instance, had to abandon its successful wheat production due to water scarcity.

The question worth asking is why has food production remained low compared to the amount of land that is being cultivated? The productivity of the 1.6 billion hectares of land currently under cultivation can be enhanced. The International Institute for Environment and Development calls on the G8 to move from commitments to action ^{by} ensuring more efficient use and management of the available food. this will tackle the problem of waste of food which currently accounts for more than 15% of food produced annually. Another area of concern that the G8 should pay attention to is the problem of an inequitable and unfair distribution of food. Given the fact that volatile market prices and price hikes will continue for the next 40 years, the International Institute for Environment and Development believes that opening up

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trade will allow food to spread out more efficiently. This will help curb the worrying trend in the cost of food.

Furthermore, the G8 should discourage private sectors from speculating on ~~part~~ commodities market and protect farmers in the third world who are often pushed out of their farmlands by their governments to make way for corporations. Land grabbing by corporation has meant a drastic reduction in food production in those countries thus increasing the volatility of food prices. The ability to grow more food is not caused by nature, but by man. The G8 should encourage third world countries with ~~tariffs~~ exemptions and subsidies especially for small scale farmers. This intervention will help such countries grow more food, especially those in Africa, where there is vast fertile lands and plenty of fresh water.

Finally, high cost of food can be an incentive for farmers in the third world to grow more. Therefore, not only should the G8 ensure that farmers in the third world are supported with tariff exemption and subsidies, but ~~we~~ are also paid a fair amount of money for the food they produce. ~~to~~ To this end, the G8 should ensure fair trade in food. Production, trade and consumption of food are important considerations that the G8 must make a priority.

You might have ended with a 'threat' to heighten the urgency of the situation - e.g. "if we are to avoid not only widening the gap between rich and poor countries but also the very security of the planet itself." 😊 I exaggerate, but an appeal to the G8, has to have weight. Otherwise an excellent article. Well done

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