

Vinyl 2010 Essay Competition

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The current food and energy crisis has already begun to devastate communities and deepen the effects of poverty, hunger and malnutrition. The increasing scarcity of food and energy is the biggest crisis looming for the world", according to WFP officials. At the same time, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation have warned that rising prices have already triggered riots in more than 36 countries around the world, threatening political and social stability. The World Bank points out that global food prices have risen by 75% since 2000. If prices keep rising, more and more people around the globe will be unable to afford the food they need to stay alive, and without help they will become desperate. More food riots will flare up, governments will totter and millions could die. For the first time in history, say experts, the impact is spreading from the developing to the developed world, with the developing world being much more affected.

The development and causes of the current food and energy crisis are attributable to several factors; the most significant being the decreased production capacity in developing countries, resulting from several years of inappropriate support and investment in the agricultural sector by governments and stakeholders. Also, the bad agricultural policies of international organisations such as the World Bank policies in the 70s and 80s which advised developing countries to concentrate on primary resources. It caused developing countries to concentrate on the production of specific food like banana, etc. when the prices of those food stuffs fall, the national budget has problems. Moreover, difficult access to markets and trade unliberalisation are also accountable for the decreased production capacity in the developing world, especially with the low demand of food from developing countries by the European Countries. With that, Developing countries can't compete with the Europeans.

Another significant factor which has contributed to the current food and energy crisis is the increase use of food commodities for biofuel production, resulting from the high demand of energy and unavailable resources for production. But now experts are warning that this could all be a disastrous mistake. Converting large amounts of land to crops for biofuel is reducing food production just when the world needs to increase it.

Sources: Sunday herald

Other factors have also contributed to the crisis such as weather and natural disasters affecting crop yields, deforestation without reforestation, rising cost of inputs, traditional agricultural cultivation systems such as bush fallowing which destroys and reduces soil nutrient and therefore affecting future crop yield in that region.

"Faced with this food and energy crisis, how can society improve on its wellbeing?"

Addressing the crisis in a developmental context requires some key points.

Governments and stakeholders should take an urgent action and appropriately support and invest in the agricultural sector:

By sensitizing the people on the need to go on commercial farming and also train people who would teach other people ways to farm for a better crop yield. Government and Stake holders should promote the creation of associations that will help to the growth of this initiative.

Even thou not everyone supports the idea that global warming is really caused by humans and also doubt that any action will make a considerable change in the next several years, it is worth knowing that to an extend, human activities have influence the sudden climatic change. Governments and Stakeholders should apply measures to stop gas flaring which depletes our ozone layer, letting sun's ray into our environment thereby killing our crops.

Governments and stakeholders should provide credits and finance to producers, provide new and good seeds to farmers, lower cost of agricultural inputs, facilitate post harvest, and ease access to markets, open borders for international trade (trade liberisation), distribute fertilisers and pesticides to small farmers or make it available at affordable prices.

Governments and stakeholders should promote waste recycling and the promotion of green revolution as a means of increasing energy productivity.

In countries producers of biofuel, an immediate action should be taken by the government to stop the usage of food stuffs in the production of biofuel.

Government and stakeholders should equally provide fiscal supports, zero interest rates on loans for investment in the food production sector, zero tax of profit for first x years...

International organisations and Policymakers have an important role to play in the current situation since they can provide technical assistance and facilitate policy discussions among governments in order to foster common solutions. They could be of a great help in the organisation of educational program, aimed at encouraging and informing the public on the importance to go on commercial farming.

The WTO should focus more on trade liberalisation, international exchange of food or in general all commodities.

EU – open the borders to products from developing countries, whatever kind of products to stimulate international exchange and giving chance to developing countries to earn some money to spend them for food.

WB – The problem is that Zero interest rate is only for states, not for the investors! We need to support entrepreneurs and small investors, not state owned companies that are not efficient! Also, new policies should encourage countries to engage in the production of multiple food stuffs.

International organisations and policymakers should focus on Liberisation! Liberisation! Liberisation!

Civil society and Local communities also have an important part to play, especially as they have a special power to mobilise individuals into groups an associations so as to promote the agricultural sector.

Local communities should find local food and energy problems and try to solve them, for example, planting trees in deserted regions or deforested.

The effect of the energy and food crisis experienced globally represents a challenge for international security and economic and social progress.

The increasing price of food and energy reduces the purchasing power of the household, posing a threat to food security. An urgent action must be done!

Make international agreement on prioritisation of national expenditures. Take part of military budget to support entrepreneurship, economic development and food

production. Few bombs produced to kill few people can easily feed hundreds of people even in the same location☺.