

Vinyl 2010 Essay Competition Submission Template

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Summary:

Today the world faces difficult challenges, the society struggle with food and energy crisis, the biggest one in the world's modern history and causing about 2 billion people feel the scarcity of these commodities on their own skins. Therefore urgent action should be taken by the international community in order to turn the policies into agriculture and energy friendly. This action will require common efforts of the international community and only comprehensive approach consisting of various measures can lead to achieving the goal that is combating widespread hunger and reliance on traditional sources of energy.

Essay:

The life of nowadays' people has become increasingly full of hardships due to the soaring food and oil prices. Hunger and malnutrition are on the advance causing growing number of these who live on less than a dollar a day become even more devoid of their money's potential to buy any food, phenomenon seen for example in Bangladesh, where the food price rise results in common hunger. Today the global society is undoubtedly in a crisis, the more visible and severe in the developing countries. In 2008 riots against high food prices hit more than 20 nations. The general reason for this is widely known, these have been years of bad government policy in agriculture that have made the world's poor pay the price. Almost one billion humans worldwide are now hungry and malnourished, while for another one billion high food prices are a matter of daily struggle, sacrifice and survival. And the mankind still relies heavily on natural gas and oil, resources not only harmful to environment, but also known for their limited reservoirs and high prices.

The problem that affects agriculture today is that rich countries, such as the United States and Western Europe, heavily subsidize farms and then dump their surpluses into emerging markets, often by forcing them open. Another problem is underinvestment in agriculture in the developing world, rationalized on the mistaken assumption that imported food would forever remain cheap. Moreover, trade restrictions distort global trade in most agricultural commodities. While pouring the developing markets with subsidized products, rich countries retain high tariffs to keep out developing-world competition. The situation is worsened by the fact that many Asian countries are losing tens of thousands of

hectares of farmlands a year to urban and industrial sprawl, while it is essential that these countries achieve rice self-sufficiency. The other factors that contribute to the food crisis are America's cotton subsidies, Europe's opening of its sugar market, yet, only to cheap unrefined sugar, and the U.S. and European practice of tariff escalation on coffee, so does the boom in biofuels. The more grains goes for biofuels, the less comes to feed the people and at higher prices.

U.S. President Bush administration's decision in 2006 to begin feeding large amounts of American corn to automobiles in the form of ethanol led to run-up in corn prices, which made farmers plant more corn and less soy and wheat, leading to the surge in the price for all grains. The mankind is looking for practical measures to stop reliance only on oil for fuelling the automobiles, because the reservoirs of this black gold may be finished by the time of second or third generation, thus efforts to find substitutes, currently the most frequently used being biofuels. As seen, oil diminishing sources are the cause not only for the rise of its prices, but also indirectly they are responsible for the food crisis.

In order to improve the well-being of the world's society, its leaders should join their efforts and act in a concert. Only comprehensive approach to the crisis with broad range of measures is able to pay its way. Several solutions can be put into practice to sort the problem out. One is that the world establishes a special fund to help the world's poorest farmers to gain access to fertilizers, seeds and small-scale irrigation. The other provides that the United States stop subsidizing the diversion of corn to ethanol and Europe stops subsidizing the displacement of food crops by oil seeds used as biodiesels. Moreover, scientific experts around the world should be given increased budget in order to work out crops more resilient to climate shocks, eligible to be grown in tropical and dry-land regions. Financial insurance against crop failures should also be promoted. It is also necessary that the rich countries reduce distorting subsidies, export bans and trade barriers. Co-operation of the World Bank is essential, as its doubled lending for agriculture in Africa should be even more increased, to help fragile countries and create 'green revolution' for the continent, helping countries to boost productivity and break the poverty cycle.

The United Nation agencies such as FAO and World Food Program are also important international players in combating food and energy crisis, they should be supported so that they can bolster basic nutrition for people in extreme need, early-childhood, refugees, the elderly and the ill. In order to combat the energy crisis profound change is also needed in the ways of energy acquiring and a shift from natural gas use to nuclear energy has to be done. The use of natural gas in the extracting and processing of oil fields has to be shortened. With increased gas prices, decreasing supply and increased demand for natural gas and increased focus on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, of which the oil industry is a large contributor, the need to find an alternative to natural gas is pressing. Moreover, concerning the car technologies, scientists should work on replacing the petrol engines with hydrogen- and electricity-driven ones and technologies that will enable lowering the prices of such cars.

The current crisis can be compared to the one in 1974-75. Rising oil prices, natural disasters and bad government policies all made farming more

expensive. At the time of the Cold War, governments took up the measures to stabilize the markets. Today the newly wealthy middle-class contributes to the rise of food prices by its demand for more and better food. Agriculture is one of the most distorted industries and is in desperate need of repair. Alternative energy sources are the world's urgent need. If the world leaders act together to work out the solutions to the problem provided above, next generation will probably avoid suffering from widespread hunger and catastrophic lack of energy sources. This is why collective, comprehensive action of the world governments is necessary.