

## Vinyl 2010 Essay Competition

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### Summary:

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A century back, man was on the highway of development and had never imagined to fall so weak in front of a food and energy crisis. Crippled in front of a crisis, fuelled by man's own greed, the situation is rapidly slipping out of our hands. Trying to break the link between energy and food is a long lost fight; therefore, today we are working to find alternative renewable resources to reduce our oil dependence and methods to increase food supply and adequate unbiased distribution of food. It is also important to work on fighting poverty and thus, increase the purchasing power of the most affected countries.

### Essay:

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The world is facing a fuel and food crisis like it has never before. The recent stir caused by food riots, extending from Mexico to Pakistan passing through West African nations, has been a real eye-opener. The energy crisis was almost predictable; oil is after all a finite resource. However, food has suddenly become an indispensable resource as critical for life as air. Be it for the industrialised world or the developing regions, we are all starting to learn the existential value of food; the era of overproduction and constant distribution is well behind. The worst is that, we are only at the onset. The energy crisis is yet to worsen according to forecasts, and along with it, the food crisis. The world thrives on energy: everything we need and do to survive uses energy. Conclusion, we just cannot dissociate the energy and food crisis.

Well-being has definitions varying from one being to another; summarising, well-being can be defined as happiness, prosperity. The world, despite the concept of globalisation, has not yet witnessed the merger of societies and therefore, attaining well-being will require different measures; where countries like America or Japan can invest up to millions of dollars in research on alternatives to the energy crisis and invest money to replenish their food stock, countries like the sub-Saharan Africa, crippled by debts, world record-breaking death tolls and scourges like aids, droughts and a totally different level of famine, are just trying to manage finding ways to survive. Finding solutions to the current energy and food crisis needs identifying the causes, which are mostly the same for all countries but the effect varies from the industrialised society to the struggling developing society. The solutions range from international and national macroeconomic policies to local-level administrative strategies, be it for a remedial or defensive effect.

Eliminate the energy crisis and eliminate the food crisis. Biofuel had from the start not been the solution. Not only is it a crime against humanity to feed fuel tanks with grain as millions of hungry people die, but there exists no substantial proof that biofuel is indeed pollution free. Alternatives vary from renewable resources – sun, water, wind to nuclear energy. Hydrogen cells provide a good perspective as well. The latest concept to extract energy from cow dung, in India, might bring a new revolution. It might be possible tomorrow, to derive energy from faecal matter of other animals. Furthermore, as much as forty percent of energy used in the food system goes towards the production of synthetic chemicals. Manure could be a more energy-efficient alternative. Sustainable farming could be a good way to save energy in food-processing. Farms could take

advantage of natural cycles: the animals feed themselves on grass and distribute their manure themselves, fertilising the fields. Making use of animals to fuel operations, tilling for example, could certainly reduce our oil dependence. Of course, it might sound archaic going back to time-consuming traditional methods, though this sacrifice could mean feeding many more people. Today, we need to beat the governments and corporations who control the pricing and supply of oil, and create a new renewable energy source before mass panic ensues and economies fail. In fact, it might now be necessary to create a global energy agency, similar to the United Nations organisations, to help countries run their energy services and help to speed the transfer of appropriate energy technology to poor countries and objectively advise them for an optimal energy mix that is safe, secure and environmentally sound. Unsurprisingly, we need huge investments all around the world, a proper distribution of resources and time. Consequently, solving the fuel crisis remains only the long-term solution. The food crisis is pressing for immediate solutions.

Higher food prices has its most adverse effects severely hurting the poorest. The immediate response has been emergency food aid. The world food programme helps approximately 90 million people in 80 countries. Nowadays, emergency supplies are falling short and redistribution is a must. The welfare states need to further bring down the cost of basic staples to the production price to help reduce hunger. Beyond the immediate situation, fighting the crisis requires fighting poverty. Achieving full and productive employment and decent work for everyone, women and youth inclusive, together with guaranteed job security, women empowerment and education remain essential. Distribution of milk, bread and cheese could be an incentive to attract children to school. Education equips people for a better life. Elites should not leave their country of origin. They should indulge in research to find specific crops adapted to their climate and techniques to improve land and plant species. The green revolution of the nineties-improved hybrid varieties of seeds, fertilizers, insecticides, pesticides, efficient irrigation system- is back with a new face, genetic engineering. But, as always, rich countries are highly sceptical about laboratory produced foodstuff.

Globalization meant a global integrated food market. We need to guarantee to the least developing countries preferential market rates for imports and assured markets for exports. Preferential trading schemes between developing and developed countries are important, particularly because while the latter have continued to invest in their own agricultural sectors, they have continuously discouraged poor countries to do so. Debt reliefs by the World Bank could also be a propelling factor to combat poverty; uptill now, the heavily indebted countries have received \$48.2 billion committed debt relief. This will undoubtedly provide more resources to fight hunger and invest in further development.

No nation remains today exempt from the food and energy crisis. None of the above is the real problem: we are! Our ancestors have managed to live in a era of abundance, how have we, today`s generation, being more powerful, more intelligent, with more resources, arrived at such a disastrous point. We are talking of the man, that genius who has come out of caves to conquer the stars, the man, who besides the five god-gifted senses, has dared to develop a sixth aesthetic sense, that same man has brought us to level of regression where our genius has become more than doubtful. It is more than urgent to remedy to our situation, and this time, it is a matter of survival! We know what to do; we have already lost much time, opportunities and have now to face additional challenges. With unswerving, collective and long-term effort together with responsibility, all countries need to work together towards sustainability, and not only solve the temporary obstacles.