



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

STATEMENT

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World Food Day: Joint statement by Commissioners Andris Piebalgs (Development aid) and Kristalina Georgieva (Humanitarian aid)

Today's World Food Day is an opportunity to reflect on how European Union aid is alleviating the world's greatest solvable problem: hunger. As we are about to pass on the work on humanitarian aid and development to the next European Commission, it is time to take stock of what we have achieved and what remains to be done.

Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger is the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG). With the MDG deadline now less than 500 days away, we have to up our game.

Back in 2009 the number of hungry people in the world hit the critical one billion mark. Since then, this number has fallen to 805 million, or one in nine people worldwide. That's still 805 million people too many. But the numbers show that the international community - including the EU - is going in the right direction.

Europe is helping feed the world's hungry and helping them feed themselves: through the generosity of our citizens; through building stronger links between our relief, rehabilitation and development assistance; through our partnerships with organisations like UNICEF, the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organisation and others whose mission is to end hunger.

We are taking action on the policy front, making sure the EU speaks with a single and decisive voice on the international scene, and working to maximise the value of every Euro we spend on our fight against hunger.

The European Union will continue to play a leading role in food and nutrition security. For the millions of children under the age of five threatened by malnutrition, for those affected by the conflicts in Syria, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Mali or Somalia, for those whose livelihoods are taken away from them by the growing impact of climate change.

We must do more, and we will. In the next seven years, food and nutrition security and agriculture will be a priority in our cooperation with more than 60 of our partner countries.

This will mean focusing on the most off-track countries and using the most effective financing mechanisms to reduce mortality related to hunger and undernutrition, such as the EU Food facility from which almost 60 million people have already benefited. We will also need to promote sustainable agricultural development, and increase the resilience of the most vulnerable ones in the long run building on the great work so far of the SHARE and AGIR initiatives.

Eradicating hunger is a fight we can and must win.

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