



UNITED NATIONS



WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE

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Item 9 of the Agenda

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES OF ACTION

International Confederation of Catholic Charities (Caritas Internationalis): statement

The Secretary-General has received the following statement dated 15 November 1974 which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

FOOD FOR LIFE: AN APPEAL AND PLEDGE*

Peace:

We invite you to consider these words of concern and hope as one expression of global public opinion.

We realize that words will not feed the millions of our brothers and sisters who are starving, hungry or hard-pressed. Nonetheless, we hope that this appeal may encourage you in your momentous task.

We commit ourselves to work for the policies and practices advocated here.

* FOOD FOR LIFE is a citizens' response to the food crisis. It was initiated by concerned citizens from a number of countries. This appeal was submitted to the Secretary-General and participants at the World Food Conference with 4 439 North American signatures.

Perspective

We believe that responsible stewardship of the finite Earth is a moral imperative, and now also necessary for common survival. The achievement of self-reliance by all peoples is possible only within an interdependent global community.

We subscribe to "planetary citizenship" recognized by the various faiths that took part in the recent 2nd World Conference on Religion and Peace. Planetary citizenship envisages a "just sharing of the food, the energy and all the material necessities of existence.

Crisis

The worsening food problem condemns a half billion members of the human family to permanent hunger. Millions more are threatened by famine or pressured by inflating food costs. This is largely a man-made disaster - one that is all the more scandalous because billions are spent annually on unnecessary consumption, wars and armaments.

Opportunity: New Policies

A new economic order must be fashioned. Hence we actively support some of the policy proposals coming before the World Food Conference:

- Stockpiling of foodstuffs under international control;
- Expanded food aid without strings;
- Increased food production by small farms, and various land reforms;
- Just trading arrangements that increase the developing nations' purchasing power;
- An emergency fund to offset losses from inflation in developing countries;
- Increased international and domestic assistance for self-development programs;
- A World Food Authority that adequately represents the interests of poor countries.

More food for the fast-growing world family depends primarily on farm families throughout the Earth.

In order that malnutrition, unemployment and environmental abuse may be avoided, production and consumption patterns will have to change in many countries.

Opportunity: New Life-Styles

We believe that the comparatively affluent should practise restraint in consuming food, water, energy and other resource products. Such moderation is not only a visible commitment to social justice but will slow inflationary trends, conserve limited resources and make possible a wider sharing of the Earth's bounty.

In our own lives we pledge to:

- Resist social pressures to increase consumption and pollution;
- Eat moderately and avoid waste;
- Practise simplicity in other ways;
- Share time, talent and treasure with others;
- Take active care of the natural environment.

Hope

We look to you as leaders at the World Food Conference for vision and the moral courage to initiate bold policies and new economic-political structures. We hope that you will hear the cries of the hungry and find the inner strength to act now!