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THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE  
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Agenda item 5

THE WORLD FOOD PROBLEM: PROPOSALS FOR NATIONAL AND  
INTERNATIONAL ACTION

United Kingdom Standing Conference on the Second United Nations  
Development Decade: statement

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, dated 27 September 1974, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

PROPOSALS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

1. This memorandum is submitted by the United Kingdom Standing Conference on the Second United Nations Development Decade; a body of which one hundred and twenty-six voluntary organizations are members, including all the major United Kingdom fund raising agencies.
2. We have studied the Assessment of the World Food Situation from which it is clear that unless developing countries increase their food production substantially there can be no solution to the world food crisis. Furthermore, since in most of these countries subsistence farmers form the majority of the population and produce most of the food, maximum resources must be provided to the subsistence farming sector.
3. Therefore:
  - a. Developing countries must be helped to give top priority to maximising food production; and
  - b. Developed countries, in spite of current economic difficulties, must seek ways to provide more resources for this purpose even if this means reducing their demands for the same resources.

4. This Standing Conference asks the World Food Conference, and the developed countries in particular, to consider these proposals:

- i. All donor countries traditional or potential and international agencies should urgently consider the possibility of a MORATORIUM, for five years in the first instance, on all interest and capital repayments due to them from the developing countries; on the understanding that funds so released will be used wholly for programmes to increase food production. Funds released by such a moratorium would be additional to those provided through normal aid programmes.
- ii. Developing countries, or at least those listed by the World Bank as in greatest need, should be invited and assisted to prepare urgently, country by country, programmes specifically designed to increase production by subsistence farmers, and to achieve more effective and equitable distribution.
- iii. Programmes under (ii) above should be examined and discussed by working parties consisting of representatives of the developing country concerned; of the countries providing funds and technical assistance; of relevant United Nations Agencies; and of major voluntary funding agencies prepared to offer help. The possibilities and value of discussions with commercial firms which could offer help with fertilizers, marketing, credit, etc., should also be considered.
- iv. All new aid for programmes to increase food production at the subsistence farming level should be in the form of outright grants.
- v. All aid for such programmes should be untied.
- vi. Technical assistance should be made freely available.
- vii. Adequate supplies of fertilizers and other inputs should be provided at concessionary prices.

5. We have proposed above a combined effort to solve the problem of chronic world food shortages. We recognize that planned increases in food production in developed countries and more equitable distribution will also be necessary. Since governments alone can provide resources on the scale needed, we, and many people in other countries, are now challenging them to find ways by which generous and practical action can be taken quickly on the scale demanded by the crisis.