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THE FOOD PROBLEM AND WAYS OF ITS SOLUTION

Eliminating hunger and malnutrition, and achieving wider global food security are among the most intractable problems humanity faces. While many once-poor countries are now developing rapidly, the world as a whole is unlikely to meet the first Millennium Development Goal target of halving, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of the world's population who suffer from hunger. Though the proportion of undernourished people in the world has fallen, the pace of reduction has slowed and the absolute numbers remain stubbornly high. And a number of countries mostly in Africa and South Asia have seen no improvement at all.

Main reasons for a global food problem

➤ Food waste. Food waste is getting a lot of attention lately, and for good reason. No matter how you slice it, the statistics are downright alarming. The world produces 17% more food than it did 30 years ago, yet almost half of it never reaches our bellies. In a way, it is a testament to the incredible progress we have achieved as a species by producing an overabundance of food to ensure survival. And while we continue to make progress through technology nearly a billion people still do not have enough to eat.

➤ Poverty of the population of Third World countries. The fundamental problem remains poverty and inadequate incomes. Even in this period of tighter world food markets, there is enough food available. Many people are just too poor to afford it. Broad based income growth is essential to reduce global hunger in a sustainable way.

➤ Demographic picture. Not long ago it seemed as if the rate of population growth was slowing everywhere except in Africa and parts of southern Asia. Today, the situation looks less promising since progress made toward reducing birth rates has been slower than expected. Over the next ten years, the population of the industrialized world will grow by 56 million, while the number of people living in developing countries will expand to over 900 million. Worldwide, enough food is produced to feed everyone, yet this food and the technology to produce it do not always reach those in need. As a result of food deficits, nearly 1 000 million people do not get enough to eat and over 400 million are chronically malnourished.

Solution

➤ Food Policy. A depressing amount of food is thrown away because it is not pretty enough. In addition, establishing policies that create uniform standards that reduce confusion around sell-by /expiration dates would help too. We also process way too much food each year. We simply can not eat that much. Installing portion-control laws and tackling the cronyism that leads to ineffective food policy would help a great deal.

➤ Consumer Behavior. Of all the available solutions to address food waste, changing our eating habits seems to hold the most promise. It turns out that by simply eating certain foods and avoiding others, we can cut down on a significant amount of waste.

➤ Agricultural development has a key role to play in generating the incomes needed to ensure food security. A range of policies can improve the opportunities of poor households, both within and outside agriculture. Improvements in education and primary healthcare can strengthen income growth.

So, when faced with a challenge, one must utilize every tool . Efforts to reduce food waste through technology and better food policies should be combined with agricultural development. Collectively, this would mean overcoming a food problem.