



Speakers: Biographies

Christine van Nieuwenhuyze — Director of the WFP liaison office in Brussels

Christine van Nieuwenhuyze joined the Brussels office after working in the occupied Palestinian territory where she served as WFP Representative and Country Director since 2008. Prior to this post she served as the Deputy Regional Director in Dakar and was also posted at WFP Headquarters in Rome as a Senior Programme Advisor for the Policy Department and Nutrition Service, as Deputy Country Director in India advocating in the areas of nutrition and food security, in Rome in the emergency service, and in Burkina Faso as a field and Programme Officer in 1984. Ms Van Nieuwenhuyze has been with WFP for 28 years.

Valentin Thurn — Director

Valentin Thurn is a director of documentaries for German and international TV channels and has won various national and international journalism and film awards such as the Prix Leonardo, Green Vision and Oekome-dia. The documentary about Zacarias Moussaoui (“I Am Al Qaeda”) was nominated for the German TV Award 2006. Other films include: “Not with my daughter!” about female genital mutilation in Europe. “My Father Wants To Kill Me” about so-called honour killings in migrant families in Germany and France. Co-Founder of the International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ).

Roger Waite — Spokesperson for Agriculture & Rural Development, European Commission

Roger Waite has been the Commission Spokesman for Agriculture & Rural Development since March 2010. Before that he worked for nearly 20 years as a journalist in Brussels specialising on issues relating to EU agriculture policy, notably as the editor of the newsletters AGRA FACTS and AGRA FOCUS.

Michael Hansmann, Brot für die Welt

Hansmann worked for an NGO, which specializes in the prevention of blindness, for over 7 years in Africa, Asia and Latin America. For the last 3 years, he has been the representative of Brot für die Welt in Brussels. Brot für die Welt undertakes fundraising, lobbying and advocacy in Germany and on a European Level, and works worldwide with local partners from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
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MESSAGE ON WORLD FOOD DAY

16 October 2011

Today, in the Horn of Africa, more than 13 million people are affected by one of the region's worst droughts in 60 years. Famine grips swathes of southern Somalia. Yet, drought does not need to become famine – nor should it ever be allowed to, either through system failure or through the kind of deliberate deprivation we're seeing in areas controlled by Al-Shabaab.

The hunger in the Horn of Africa is but a fraction of a needless global menace. There is more than enough food on the planet to feed everyone, yet today nearly one billion people will go hungry. I urge world leaders in rich and poor countries alike to invest the energy and resources necessary to win the battle against hunger – a key pillar of our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Lasting solutions must cover the full spectrum of food security – from improving the resilience of smallholder farmers to deploying safety net programmes that help protect the most vulnerable.

This year's World Food Day highlights the issue of price volatility. For the world's poorest people, many of whom spend up to 80 per cent of their income on food, this can be devastating. In 2007-2008 food price inflation pushed some 80 million people into hunger. Recent food price hikes have propelled another 70 million people into extreme poverty.

We need to break the links between poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition. Families impoverished by price volatility risk seeing their babies' minds and bodies permanently damaged by malnutrition; their children being taken out of school and put to work, and their income-producing livestock slaughtered for food. The answer is to put in place policies, like those advocated by the Scale Up Nutrition movement, to ensure all people have access to sufficient nutrition.

This month the world's population will top seven billion people. The world has the knowledge and the resources to end hunger; we have the tools to ensure that the poorest are buffered from the impact of rising prices. Let us use them – now – to conquer hunger.

Food Facts:

Roughly one third of the food produced in the world for human consumption every year — approximately 1.3 billion tonnes — a third of the global production gets lost or wasted, according to an FAO-commissioned study on global food losses and food waste. A similar staggering number is the nearly 1 billion people going to bed hungry every day. With the continuous growth in the world population and increased urbanization more attention needs to be paid to these issues.

Food waste and food losses have a direct impact on global food security. Reducing waste and losses would not only help reduce the number of hungry people in the world, but it would save millions of euros and it would prevent that huge amounts of the resources and green house gas emissions used in food production would have been used in vain. Food waste must be reduced in developed countries through education and policies, and food losses in developing countries must be reduced by boosting investment in the entire value chain, especially post-harvest processing.

Making the world a better place starts with food. Food fuels education. Food fuels free choice. Food fuels economic independence. Food fuels peace.