

## **I. Hunger & Poverty Alleviation Program Goal**

To assist rural populations to escape hunger and poverty, and build better lives for themselves through access to a range of opportunities including improved agricultural production, skills training, and rural capital; with particular attention to the education, resource, and equality needs of women; and capacity building of ecumenical and church-related civil society organizations.

## **II. Background**

Chronic hunger affects nearly 840 million people worldwide. No other condition can be more damaging to individual dignity nor cause more dependence on others than persistent deprivation of food which, along with water, is the most essential ingredient of a healthy and fulfilling life. Hunger afflicts one in five of the developing world's people, with a particular assault on children and rural populations. Hunger is both a violation of dignity and an obstacle to social, political, and economic progress, as chronic hunger increases one's susceptibility to disease, hinders learning, and leaves one weak, thus unable to work and meet family needs. This break in self-reliance inhibits developing economies and contributes to the devastating downward spiral of hunger and poverty.

Hunger is as much a cause as an effect of poverty. Failure to address problems of hunger and undernourishment frustrates and retards achievement of poverty alleviation goals. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest proportion of people living in poverty -- nearly half of the population lives below the international poverty line of \$1 a day. Some 300 million people face a daily struggle for survival, with thousands of them -- especially children -- losing the fight.<sup>1</sup>

There are many factors which hinder Africa's hunger and poverty alleviation effort, disrupting agricultural productivity, sustainable livelihoods, and effective development initiatives. These factors of impoverishment need to be addressed simultaneously, and include:

- The threat to peace. Conflicts across Africa stem from as well as create poverty, income inequality, and competition over resources, while also contributing to the displacement and disruption of sustainable activities for over 15 million people.
- Lack of employment opportunities. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest proportion of people unemployed and underemployed in the world with approximately 300 million people living on less than \$1 a day.
- Ill health and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Poor nutrition and poor health increase people's vulnerability to HIV infection, and shorten the HIV incubation period causing people to become ill sooner. Family expenditures increase while ability to generate income is reduced.
- Unfair trade policies and the negative impacts of globalization. Subsidies in developed countries, unsustainable world prices, and international dumping in developing markets cripple opportunities for African farmers.
- Unsustainable natural resource management. Increased deforestation, expansion of arable land, poor soil protection and irrigation methods, over-use of mineral fertilizers, pollution of ground water sources, and the loss of genetic diversity that is effecting weather patterns and destroying the balance of Africa's natural ecosystem.
- Gender discrimination. Despite research that demonstrates the correlation between women's development and household well being, women in many parts of Africa are still denied access to education, inheritance rights, and essential resources such as land and investment inputs.
- Repeated natural and man-made emergencies. Chronic drought, flooding, conflict and food stock management lead to repeated situations of food insecurity resulting in the need for international crisis interventions.

The cost to Africa, both today as well as for future generations, of not eradicating hunger and poverty -- in terms of recurrent conflicts and emergencies, widening inequality, depleted resources, ill health, and premature death -- is enormous. There currently exists more food than is required to provide everyone with an adequate diet. The persistence of widespread hunger in a world of plenty defies logic and provides striking evidence of the ineptitude in the management of a global system that would truly work for the good of all.

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP & UNICEF, *The Millennium Development Goals in Africa: promises & progress*. New York. June 2002.

### III. Context

International law recognizes that everyone has the fundamental right to be free from hunger. Realization of this right depends upon the respect and participation of all nations. Developed nations must be committed to fair trade and the allocation of resources (encouraged at 0.7% GDP) toward international assistance programs. Developing nations must improve and redirect policies that bring help to the rural areas. Additionally, the rural poor themselves have a central role in seeking sustainable methods of self-development that respect equality and education.

Governments around the world have confirmed their commitment to the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger through the United Nations' eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Among these goals is the target of halving by 2015 the proportion of the world's population whose income is less than one dollar a day, and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. Another goal specifically targets the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education in efforts to draw international attention to gender equality and the role of women in development.

Africa has made some progress in tackling these development goals, but unfortunately, many countries are still far from reaching the 2015 targets. Food insecurity, malnutrition, and poor diet diversification continue to fall below acceptable levels. According to a recent MDG report, in 18 out of 40 sub-Saharan countries, the problem of undernourishment still affects one-third or more of their populations.<sup>2</sup> Children remain particularly vulnerable, and malnutrition remains one of the leading causes of death among children under the age of five. These deaths signify the inadequacy of current policies which emphasize policies and investments in support of economic growth as the primary means to bring development.

Church World Service's *Hunger & Poverty Alleviation* programming recognizes that a country's economic growth alone will not be enough to eliminate hunger and poverty from rural areas. CWS hunger and poverty objectives focus on integrated approaches to development, transformation of policy environments, the advancement of rural infrastructure (health, education, and markets), and improved access to rural livelihood opportunities (agriculture, skills training, small-business capital).

CWS's support for partner-based programming stresses the critical role that the rural sector has to play in their own development. Interventions target rural agricultural and livelihood growth with a particular focus on women's empowerment. CWS seeks identifiable improvements in nutrition, education, literacy, vocational skills, and financial planning (including home savings plans) as integrated components of rural development programs. Additionally, CWS seeks to build the capacities of our ecumenical partners and local populations in speaking out for economic justice, and in leading rural growth, with a particular attention to improved local responses to emergencies and disaster mitigation.

### IV. CWS Programming Directions

#### a) Public Policy Advocacy Objectives

CWS advocates for trade policies and practices that work for people – particularly the poor and the vulnerable. The global integration of economies and societies is a complex process with varying results. Trade is one of the key features of globalization that has brought improvements in peoples lives through technology and communications. Yet this is not the complete story. Anxieties about rising inequality and disastrous impacts on the poor and the environment are frequent concerns of advocacy and education efforts. How would a poor farmer in Africa benefit from CWS advocacy on trade? According to UNCTAD studies, trade rules and restrictions on poor countries, including the poorest in Africa, cost these countries around U.S.\$100 billion a year – twice as much as the entire developing world receives in aid. Prevailing and proposed trade policies cannot address poverty and hunger as they persist in Africa today. Studies demonstrate that even a one percent increase in world exports from Africa would result in gains in income and livelihoods that could lift 40 million Africans out of poverty and help promote sustainable development.

CWS works to bring the voices of the poor and the oppressed to the table where decisions affecting their lives and livelihoods are made; to influence policymakers to put the needs of the hungry and the poor first; and to allocate resources to address the basic needs of those who live on less than a dollar a day. Specific advocacy activities of CWS and partner organizations include:

#### 1) Just Trade:

As heavy agricultural subsidies in the U.S. and Europe lead to “dumping” of food and other agricultural commodities in Africa's markets, the demand and prices for locally-produced foods decreases. CWS works to educate and raise

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<sup>2</sup> UNDP & UNICEF, *The Millennium Development Goals in Africa: promises & progress*. New York. June 2002.

awareness of the need for Just Trade rules that put people first. Additionally, CWS participates in global ecumenical Just Trade networks.

- 2) **Impact of Unjust Trade Policies on Women as Care Providers:** Almost 70 percent of economically active women in low-income food-deficit countries work in the agricultural sector. But in spite of their crucial roles in assuring food security, rural women battle hunger and poverty on increasingly marginal land with meager resources. Their voices are seldom heard among those of the decision makers. CWS works to raise their voices and expand their choices — action is needed to ensure that women have equal access to resources, such as land, water, credit, and technology, and that they can participate fully in policymaking.
- 4) **Bio-Diversity Protection – Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS):** CWS advocates to resist knowledge monopolies that take away the right of indigenous people's and communities' traditional rights to grow, cultivate, and market their traditional goods.
- 5) **NEPAD:** CWS supports workshops that increase awareness among church leaders about NEPAD and its processes. These discussions serve to develop action plans to engage the faith-based community in united advocacy for economic and social justice to reduce poverty and promote democracy.
- 6) **Debt:** CWS advocates for increased financial resource transfer to the least developed countries through the Financing for Development processes at the UN.
- 7) **Global Good for All:** CWS advocates for an assurance of an adequate supply of global public goods to safeguard long-term global food security and to ensure sustainable use of natural resources. Policies must provide for future global food demand in a sustainable manner and be accountable to the needs of future generations.
- 8) **Right to Food:** The right to be free from hunger is the most fundamental human right, proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed in various international treaties. Governments must respect, protect, and fulfill this right – dealing with issues of accountability, nondiscrimination, good governance, and attention to the poorest and the most marginalized. CWS participates in ecumenical global alliances against hunger.

#### **b) Program Intervention Objectives**

Based on the challenges laid down in the Millennium Development, the specific activities of CWS and partner organizations will focus on an integration of the following objectives:

- 1) **Achieving Food Security:**  
Efforts to eradicate hunger will focus on empowering families, groups, and communities to achieve inclusive food security by supporting nutrition education, food diversification, food preparation, and conservation, integration of new technology, protection of land rights, and the provision of production inputs. CWS places an emphasis on programs that support poverty alleviation by achieving food security through the improved availability, access, and utilization of a diversity of nutritious foods.
- 2) **Supporting Rural Livelihoods:**  
Agriculture has traditionally been the backbone of sub-Saharan Africa's livelihoods. Research demonstrates that improvements in rural agricultural production and livelihoods spill over into improved quality of life in urban areas. CWS will support programs to increase opportunities for rural livelihood growth through improvements in agro-pastoral production, establishment of rural cooperatives and the creation of gainful employment through skill-building programs for the rural poor.
- 3) **Improving Natural Resource Management:**  
Africa is the continent most seriously affected by desertification, which threatens more than one-third of its land area. Escalating problems of soil erosion, deforestation, inequitable land distribution, and poor farming methods exacerbate declining soil fertility, groundwater contamination, and persistent drought. CWS encourages an ecosystem approach to agro-pastoral activities for protective and effective resource management, and for the restoration of an ecological balance both for today and for the good of future generations.
- 4) **Promoting Women's Empowerment:**  
In African society women support an overwhelming number of household responsibilities and account for 75 percent of household food production. Greater gender equality is a prerequisite for the eradication of poverty and hunger. CWS recognizes the immediate benefits of women's empowerment through support of programs which provide women with the resources, the education, and the information they need to make the best decisions regarding the care and well-being of their families, and to ultimately have a greater voice in the development of their communities and nations.
- 5) **Training in Disaster Management and Mitigation:**  
Throughout Africa, the massive human suffering caused by weather-related disasters, violent civil conflict, and complex emergency situations requires an ever-increasing capacity within local disaster relief agencies to effectively provide a broad spectrum of humanitarian assistance. As such, CWS emphasizes community-level emergency management training to build local capacities for emergency response and proactive disaster mitigation.

## V. Target Groups

Poverty in developing countries is overwhelmingly concentrated in rural areas. Urban poverty is often a consequence of rural migration. Among rural populations, small farmers are most susceptible to weather and price fluctuations, thus destabilizing their household security and increasing chronic malnourishment. CWS will therefore target rural populations. CWS will also target women in general and women heads of households in particular. Geographical targets include the 17 countries where CWS is currently active, with particular attention to several of the most food insecure countries of Africa, which include: Angola, Sudan, Tanzania, and the Mano River Union (Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea). Additional focus will be given to countries that repeatedly experience environmental disasters in the form of chronic droughts and/or floods, including: Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique.

## VI. Hunger & Poverty Alleviation Programming Guidelines

CWS *Hunger & Poverty Alleviation* programming is based on 12 interrelated values. The intent is to provide consistency and coherence to CWS programs, and to serve as the basis of sound practices to be promoted by CWS regional field offices and partners.

1. Nutrition education component: A basic cause of malnutrition in Africa lies not only in the quantity of food but also the quality of food consumed. A balanced intake of 40 different nutrients is needed for good health, yet in many parts of Africa diets are built around one staple food – most often rich in carbohydrates but poor in nutrients. As such, projects should include components of nutrition education and food diversification, designed in accordance with the norms and strategies determined by national and local nutrition policies.
2. Support for subsistence farming: Traditionally, poverty alleviation programs have encouraged small farmers to enter into cash-crop production at the expense of household food security. Horticulture and cash-crop programs should give appropriate attention to the distribution of small farmers' resources (land, time, labor) to ensure that household food security is not compromised, but rather reinforced by additional agricultural production activities.
3. Organic production techniques: The challenge is to support sustainable livelihoods and increase agricultural production within a fragile natural environment. Alternative and organic ways of maintaining soil productivity, land use, and integrated crop-livestock systems can be promoted to decrease the use of environmentally harmful, externally purchased inputs.
4. From production to marketing: Rural farmers seek improvements in production. CWS programs should build local knowledge of not only improved agricultural production techniques but also the economic links to national and international markets. Specifically, interventions should provide farmers with training and education that covers the full agricultural production chain from planting and harvesting, to storage, transformation, processing, and marketing.
5. Indigenous knowledge & cost-effective technology: New technologies should be cost effective, and environmentally-appropriate to the local context, incorporating indigenous knowledge and building upon indigenous food resources whenever possible. Operation and repairs of equipment should be accessible in terms of proximity and cost and maintainable by local communities.
6. Support for non-farm enterprises: While agriculture is the principle activity of the rural poor, CWS also recognizes the importance of diversification and investment in building human capital through skills training. These efforts should consider local needs regarding both technical and financial support for the start-up of cooperatives and/or locally-managed credit associations.
7. Girl-child education: UNICEF reports that there are over 50 million out-of-school children in sub-Saharan Africa – over half are girls. Too often traditional societies and customs expect less of the girl child, leading girls to in turn expect less of themselves. Programs should encourage education for all, with a particular attention to addressing the formal and informal education of girls, thus ensuring a future where educated females have greater opportunities and life choices.
8. Community participation: Programs should be built upon local (community) management structures. Programs should strengthen these local structures and ensure that the community can maintain the infrastructure and tools put in place. Benefiting populations should actively participate in the design and implementation of all program activities. Additionally, benefiting populations should contribute to program implementation through the provision of locally available materials and unskilled labor.
9. Transitions from relief to development: Once the spotlight has shifted away from the harrowing scenes of an emergency or a conflict situation, it becomes increasingly difficult for communities to mobilize resources for the continuation of interventions that will restore levels of food security and restart economic growth. International attention too often makes dramatic distinctions between emergency response and sustainable development, whereas in practice this requires a continuum of support and a long-term commitment from international partners for communities to truly rebuild.

10. Development towards mitigation: Populations should be mobilized to explore the causes of chronic disasters such as flooding and/or drought, and thus be strengthened in their resilience and ability to intervene and minimize the pending disasters through proactively addressing land, water and other mitigation management issues.
11. Policy involvement addressing root causes: Relevant to the design of effective hunger and poverty alleviation strategies is a growing understanding of the nature of the problems and their underlying causes. Poverty alleviation interventions should constantly ask, "Why are these populations poor?"; and CWS field offices should support the participation of local partners (civil society) within policy discussions, both locally and nationally in their efforts to influence the policies of their local and national governments.
12. Partner development: CWS field offices should support the development of program expertise of in-country partner organizations (e.g. ecumenical organizations, church-related and non-governmental organizations), which may include the dissemination of sound practices, peer learning activities, staff training, organizational assessments and/or program evaluations.

## **VII. Expected Outputs**

Reviewing the progress and impact of CWS's program initiatives depends on accurate and comprehensive documentation of target environments both pre- and post-project. CWS field offices will work with implementing partners to measure changes in food and household security, and other social indicators such as general health, participation in formal education, and diversity of income sources. CWS will be able to identify and measure the changes resulting from partners' hunger and alleviation programming as it relates to:

- Improved nutritional status of children, with an attention to the prevalence of underweight children under five years of age.
- Improved nutritional status of women, with an attention to lactating mothers and a reduction of maternal mortality rates.
- Increased food security, with an attention to increases in the availability and access to food and agricultural inputs.
- Improved food utilization/consumption patterns of rural families, with an attention to improvements in the type of food consumed as well as the quantity (number of meals per day).
- Increased practice of environmental restoration, with an attention to reforestation efforts and soil protection.
- Improved livelihood diversification, with an attention to household productivity, the emergence of cottage industries, diversification of household income sources, and the presence of home savings (financial management) plans.
- Improved school attendance, with an attention to the enrollment ratio of girls to boys.
- Improved literacy rates, with an attention to the ratio of females to males.
- Improved local responses and independent management of emergency and development intervention programs.

## VIII. Partners and Cooperating Institutions

African partner organizations currently engaged in hunger and poverty alleviation programming in accordance with CWS programming values include:

- Angolan Council of Christian Churches (CICA), Angola
- Evangelical Reformed Church in Angola (IERA), Angola
- Association for Peace and Solidarity (APS), Burkina Faso
- Promo-Femmes/Development Solidarity in Burkina Faso
- Ethiopian Orthodox Church – Development & Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC), Ethiopia
- Christian Relief & Development Agency (CRDA), Ethiopia
- Association of Horticulturalists – Struggle Against Hunger (APALCOF), Guinea Bissau
- Farming Systems Kenya (FSK), Kenya
- Christian Partners Development Association (CPDA), Kenya
- National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), Kenya
- Association of Farmers, Educators & Traders (AFET), The Gambia
- Najjawara Agricultural Training Center (NATC), The Gambia
- Christian Council of Lesotho (CCL), Lesotho
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi (ELC), Malawi
- Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), Malawi
- Church Action in Relief and Development (CARD), Malawi
- Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM), Mozambique
- Presbyterian Church of Mozambique (IPM), Mozambique
- Rwandan Union of Agriculturalists and Animal Breeders (INGABO), Rwanda
- New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), So. Sudan
- Church Ecumenical Action in Sudan (CEAS), So. Sudan
- Senegalese Association for Research, Study & Development Support (ASREAD), Senegal
- Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL), Sierra Leone
- South African Council of Churches (SACC), South Africa
- Lutheran Development Service, Swaziland
- Trust for Rural Food & Development (TRUFOOD), Tanzania
- Church of Uganda – Planning, Development & Rehabilitation (COU-PDR), Uganda
- Foundation for Development of Needy Communities (FDNC), Uganda
- Christian Council of Zambia (CCZ), Zambia
- Christian Care, Zimbabwe
- Lutheran Development Service, Zimbabwe

CWS works in coordination and cooperation in hunger and poverty alleviation development activities with:

- All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), Kenya
- Fellowship of Councils & Churches of West Africa (FECCIWA), Ghana
- Fellowship of Christian Councils & Churches in the Great Lakes & the Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA), Nairobi
- Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA), Zimbabwe
- Action by Churches Together (ACT)
- Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP) of the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA).
- The United Nations (UN)
- The UN Development Program (UNDP) & UNICEF – Millennium Development Goals
- E&A Just Trade networks, partners and coalitions
- E&A Gender Justice partners and coalitions
- E&A Alliance against hunger
- WFP – West Africa Moringa Programming
- Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- Concern Universal – In The Gambia
- National Nutrition Agency (NaNA), The Gambia

CWS gratefully acknowledges our current *Hunger and Poverty Alleviation* sponsors (providing >\$10,000):

- Foods Resource Bank – *Food Security Programming in West and Southern Africa.*
- Sandy River Foundation – *Africa Initiative*
- Watershed Foundation – *Agro-forestry Consultant in W. Africa.*
- St. Marys United Methodist Church Foundation (SMUMC) – *Agriculture & Natural Resource Management in E. Africa.*
- Week of Compassion Program (WOC) of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ – *Agriculture and Livelihood programming in E. Africa.*