

# **Global hunger index still very high** *Over 1 billion people go to bed hungry*



With over 1 billion people going to bed hungry, the United Nations has warned that the hunger index is rising and appealed to governments and civil societies to “leverage every tool” to combat it. Announcing a partnership between the UN World Food Programme and the Millenia Villages Project, WFP chief Josette Sheeran said, “Hunger is on the march and is right now the most threatening Millennium Development Goal”.

“Today, one out of every six human beings wakes up hungry and is not sure how to find food for himself. When over 1 billion people go to bed hungry and wake up hungry, it requires an urgent action,” she added. Stressing on the need to buy food supplies from farmers, she said “when food is bought from farmers that are often completely cut off from markets and don’t have a chance to sell what they produce, it is a powerful solution to breaking the cycle of hunger”.

She said that WFP had transformed itself to help nations solve the problem of hunger as it uses the money to buy 80% of food supplies from farmers of developing world. Talking about the WFP and Millenia Villages Project partnership, she said, “Under this new partnership WFP’s best practices will be applied in buying food from the farmers that live in the Millenia Development Villages”.



The WFP chief also stressed that 70% of farmers in the developing world are women and MVP targeted women and children in “hunger hotspots” to make them into “malnutrition free zones”. “Science has shown that if a child under two is deprived of adequate nutrition it will never recover from the loss caused to their brain and body,” Sheeran said.

On the sidelines of the opening session of UN General Assembly, US secretary of state Hillary Clinton had announced on Saturday that fighting hunger was the chief goal of the Obama administration’s foreign policy with a focus on farmers with small holding. In his speech to the UNGA, President Barack Obama declared that the US would come to the MDG Summit in 2010 with an agreed global plan of action.

At the G-8 summit at L’Aquila in Italy, the member nations pledged \$20 billion to work in the direction of food security. Last week, the G-20 decided in Pittsburgh that the L’Aquila money would go through a multi-dollar trust fund at the World Bank, which will disburse money to small-holder farmers. A renowned economist Jeffery Sachs, who is steering the MVP, said to achieve its goals “the WFP uses a range of very powerful tools like school meal programmes, emergency nutritional fortification and helping impoverished households to understand to achieve food security”. (PTI 30 September, 2009).