



FOOD AND HUNGER

What we see: The role of large financial institutions in farming and food security is a constant balancing act between help and harm. The two-thirds of developing countries dependent on food and energy imports are heavily affected by financial speculation in the agriculture and energy markets, and these are the people most affected when prices skyrocket.

- As of June 2009, it was reported that the number of malnourished people in the world exceeded 1 billion people, or approximately a sixth of the world's total population. An estimated 36 million people die from hunger each year.
- Companies worth billions of dollars, such as the Monsanto Company, genetically modify seeds for life-sustaining crops with little oversight. This control over the market poses a danger to those who already cannot find the amount of food necessary to stay alive.
- Between 37 million and 49 million acres of farmland in poorer countries has been seized by private corporations and richer countries in the last four years. These larger bodies, including China, Saudi Arabia and Goldman Sachs, use the land to farm food for their own benefit, with little to no thought given to the farmers being forced off their land.

What our faith tells us: According to our Catholic Social Teachings, human dignity can only be achieved when human rights—food, shelter and the opportunity to participate in and contribute to society—are protected. In his 2009 Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI states that “the elimination of world hunger has also, in the

global era, become a requirement for safeguarding the peace and stability of the planet.”

What we hope for: More oversight needs to be put into place to stop large institutions from controlling the financial markets that impact food security worldwide. This includes position limits on agricultural soft commodities. We call for restrictions on private ownership of overseas land and rejection of genetically modified organisms and gene patenting. Additionally, we are asking for more transparency in decisions made by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in regards to food security.

Legislation: We call on Congress to enact legislation on food that includes:

- Passage of S.384, with the removal of language requiring research into the use of genetically modified organisms.
- Support for agricultural systems that support healthy environmental practices both domestically and abroad including support for efforts to have food produced locally.
- Transparency in decisions regarding the food industry.
- Improvements in U.S. and global regulation of food and energy commodity futures markets.
- Rejection of intellectual property rights restrictions that involve patents on seeds.