

Japan
Fisheries
Association



NO.43 Dec. 2004

Sankaido Bldg.,
9-13 Akasaka 1, Minato-ku,
Tokyo, Japan 107-0052
tel: 81-3-3585-6683
<http://www.suisankai.or.jp>

Views and Opinions of Japan's Fisheries Industry



FAO/18306/P. Cecini

FISH FOR PEOPLE

--IN THE DECADE OF INCREASING
POVERTY, HUNGER AND DESPAIR--



Do they know it's Christmas?

There have been a series of events highlighting the issue of food security in the last few months. The seafood industry has long been contributing to food security, bringing nutrient-rich food of the sea to people. The Japan Fisheries Association (JFA), as the umbrella organization of the Japanese fishing industry, and as a contributor to the TeleFood campaign launched by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (refer to Item 4 on Page 3), is featuring in this edition of Isaribi the latest developments on the issue of global food security. (Emphasis in bold type for the quotations has been added by the editor.)

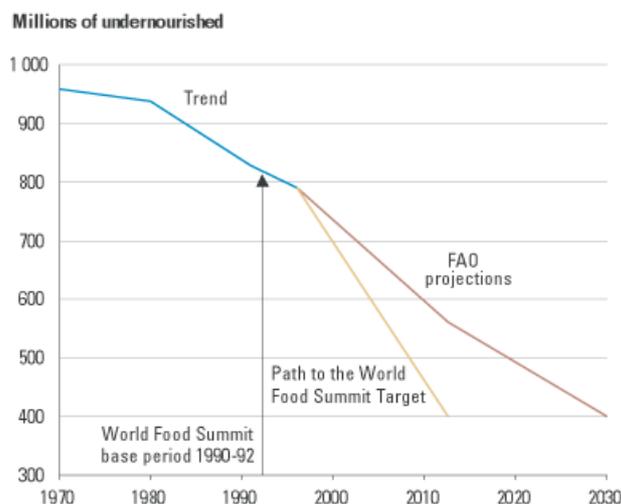
1. 842 MILLION PEOPLE WORLDWIDE REMAINED HUNGRY - 106 COUNTRIES SHARED THEIR CONCERN AT THE COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY -

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) held its Thirtieth Session from 20 to 23 September 2004 at FAO Headquarters in Rome. The Committee re-iterated its concern that the progress in reducing the number of the undernourished remained very slow at the global level. It recognized that the ongoing efforts to fight hunger were important but insufficient. It also called for an adequate response to the challenges of poverty and hunger reduction and display of strong political will so as to ensure the achievement of the goals of the World Food Summit (WFS) and Millennium Declaration.

THE PROGRESS HAS BEEN DISAPPOINTING AND SLOW

The opening statement by Mr David Harcharik, Deputy Director-General, best summarizes the global situation of food insecurity as follows; "Regrettably, this progress (towards the primary objective of the World Food Summit, to reduce the number of undernourished people by half by 2015) has been

Progress towards the World Food Summit target



FAO projections of attainment of the World Summit food security goal are clearly at odds with the targeted goal. According to FAO estimates, the World Summit goal would not be achieved before 2030, fifteen years behind schedule.

Source: FAO, 2002.

disappointing and slow. **FAO estimates that some 842 million people worldwide remained hungry by the end of the 1990s (1999-2001).** This includes 798 million in developing countries, 34 million in the countries in transition, and 10 million people in industrialized countries. Sadly, the number of undernourished people in developing countries declined by only 9 million from the WFS baseline period (1990-1992). **The current slowdown in the pace of hunger reduction suggests that the WFS goal will only be reached if annual reductions accelerate to 26 million per year. This is more than 12 times the pace of 2.1 million per year achieved to date.**...for most developing countries, the 1990s was actually a decade of increasing poverty, hunger and despair. Global progress in reducing hunger slowed. After falling by 37 million during the first half of the 1990s, the total number of hungry people in developing countries actually increased by 18 million in the second half of the decade. Regionally, the number of undernourished people increased in sub-Saharan Africa, the Near East and North Africa. In fact, **hunger worsened considerably in 49 countries,** while the number of undernourished increased by 60 million in another 26 countries over the same period.

2. WORLD FOOD DAY HIGHLIGHTS BIODIVERSITY FOR FOOD SAFETY

- DIVERSITY OF LIFE - BEST PROTECTION AGAINST STARVATION -

Each year on 16 October, FAO celebrates World Food Day in commemoration of its founding in 1945 at Quebec City, Canada. The theme for World Food Day and the TeleFood campaign for 2004 is "Biodiversity for Food Security". It highlights biodiversity's role in ensuring that people have sustainable access to enough high-quality food to lead active and healthy lives. The biodiversity's role is elucidated on the World Food Day web site as follows;

Biological diversity is fundamental to agriculture and food production. People rely on the variety of food, shelter, and goods for their livelihood. Yet, humans put increasing pressure on species and their environments. As a result, many plants and animals are at risk, as well as essential natural processes such as pollination by insects and the regeneration of soils by micro-organisms.

To feed a growing population, agriculture must

provide more food. It will also be essential to increase its resilience by protecting a wide array of life forms with unique traits, such as plants that survive drought or livestock that reproduce in harsh conditions. Sustainable agricultural practices can both feed people and protect the oceans, forests, prairies and other ecosystems that harbour biological diversity.

A rich variety of cultivated plants and domesticated animals are the foundation for agricultural biodiversity. **Yet people depend on just 14 mammal and bird species for 90 percent of their food supply from animals.** And just four species - wheat, maize, rice and potato - provide half of our energy from plants.

Rather than a single crop variety that guarantees a high yield, farmers in developing countries are more likely to need an assortment of crops that grow well in harsh climates or animals with resistance to disease. For the poorest farmers, the diversity of life may be their best protection against starvation. Consumers also benefit from diversity through a wide choice of plants and animals. This contributes to a nutritious diet, particularly important for rural communities with limited access to markets.

3. HIDDEN HUNGER

- MICRONUTRIENT DEFICIENCIES -

Is it enough to secure the supply of good quantity of food? The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2002 issued by the FAO warns against the fear of hidden hunger and underlines the necessity of great diversity of nutrient-rich foods as follows;

Over 2 billion people world wide suffer from micronutrient mal nutrition, often called "hidden hunger". Their diets supply inadequate amounts of vitamins and minerals such as vitamin A, iron, iodine, zinc, folate, selenium and vitamin C. Deficiencies usually occur when the habitual diet lacks diversity and does not include sufficient quantities of the fruits, vegetables, dairy products, meat and fish that are the best sources of many micronutrients.

Micronutrients are essential for human growth and development as well as normal functioning. The three most common forms of micronutrient malnutrition are deficiencies of vitamin A, iodine and iron. In developing countries, deficiencies of micronutrients often are not present in isolation but exist in combination.

Children and women are the most vulnerable to micronutrient deficiencies - children because of the critical importance of micronutrients for normal growth

and development, women because of their higher need for iron, especially during child-bearing years and pregnancy.

The most devastating consequence of iodine deficiency is reduced mental capacity. Some 20 million people worldwide are mentally handicapped as a result of iodine deficiency, including 100000 born each year with irreversible brain damage because their mothers lacked iodine prior to and during pregnancy. **Most micronutrient deficiencies could be eliminated by modifying diets to include a greater diversity of nutrient-rich foods.** Promoting home gardens, community fish ponds, and livestock and poultry production can contribute to increasing dietary diversity, while improving food supplies and incomes at the same time.



FAO/17095/M. Marzot

4. FOOD FOR ALL

- FAO TELEFOOD CAMPAIGN HELPS SMALL BUT SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS -

As the problem of food security is enormous and our pace of progress is 12 times slower than it should be, we need greater commitment to reduce hunger and poverty. As part of such a commitment, the TeleFood campaign, since its inception in 1991, has generated more than US\$12 million in donations. Money raised through TeleFood pays for small, sustainable projects that help small-scale farmers produce more food for their families and communities. The following are two of the plenty of success stories of the campaign introduced on the FAO web site.

In Guinea, a women's group gets new fish ovens

Women in fishing communities living along the coast of Guinea, West Africa, are responsible for preserving the local catch by smoking it over open fires. It is a long, hot job and the result is often of poor quality

because the fish dries unevenly or becomes charred. In the villages of Temenetaye and Bonfi, TeleFood funds have been used to support local cooperatives of fish-smoking women. About 150 women in the two villages have been able to replace their ovens with an improved type, which conserves scarce wood and reduces smoke by concentrating the heat. The processed fish is therefore of better quality and fetches a higher price.

The new smoking ovens have now been built, using locally available mud bricks and stone. The women were also given basic literacy training to enable them to manage the modest resources available to them.

The impact of the project has been significant: a reduction in production costs thanks to more efficient use of wood for smoking; less damage to the environment as a result of the reduced consumption of fuelwood; and, most important of all, an improvement in the health of the women doing the smoking, some of whom are among the poorest in the community

In Mauritania, a new way to preserve the catch

Mauritania - located between Morocco and Senegal - is a desert land with 2 million people and 1 percent arable land. The country's marine fisheries are one of its few resources. But getting fish from the Atlantic coast to the vast hinterland is a problem because of spoilage.

The TeleFood Fund has donated US\$7,878 to a fishing cooperative in the capital Nouakchott so that it can improve a fish drying operation.

In January, the project started with the identification of the site for the new drying plant and of experts who could teach 50 women how to process the fish. In March, drying tables were constructed and equipment such as tubs, knives, aprons and gloves were purchased. A tonne of salt was acquired for US\$180.

By April, production got under way at the beachfront plant, a step towards improving the lives of the women workers and their families, and towards getting a good source of protein to citizens faraway from the coast.



5. SO, FEED THE WORLD !

- CONTRIBUTION OF SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES TO FOOD SECURITY-

What can fishermen do to help fight hunger? The greatest contribution that the fishing industry can make is to make every effort toward the conservation and sustainable utilization of aquatic resources, catering the riches of the sea to those who are in need. There are civil movements dedicated to turning the world's oceans into an aquarium. Such movements pursue intrinsic values of the ecosystem at the expense of its contribution to global food security. But we should not forget that there are always people who desperately need to feed on such resources. We should help them diversify their source of income, their source of nutrition and enhance the

resilience of their production, making the most out of the ocean. We should spare no effort to advance this cause because if we mishandle the situation, the victims are quite often the most vulnerable people such as the people in the least developed countries, the aged, women and children. So let's feed the world!



FAO/17013/G. Bizzarri

EXCERPT FROM THE KYOTO DECLARATION AND PLAN OF ACTION ON THE SUSTAINABLE CONTRIBUTION OF FISHERIES TO FOOD SECURITY

We, the 95 States which met in Kyoto from 4 to 9 December 1995 on the occasion of the International Conference on the Sustainable Contribution of Fisheries to Food Security...

Declare that we should, without prejudice to the rights and obligations of States under international law;

Recognize and appreciate the significant role which marine fisheries, inland fisheries and aquaculture play in providing food security for the world, both through food supplies and through economic and social well-being;

Recognize and appreciate the important economic and social role of subsistence, artisanal and commercial fishers and other fishers throughout the world, and seek to provide an environment in which they can make an optimum contribution to economic and social welfare;

Recognize that FAO projects a potential substantial shortfall by 2010 of the supply of fish and fishery products to meet demands from an increased human population, which in turn will adversely affect world food security;

Call for an increase in the respect and understanding of social, economic and cultural differences among States and regions in the use of living aquatic resources, especially cultural diversity in dietary habits, consistent with management objectives;

Conserve and sustainably use biological diversity and its components in the aquatic environment and, in particular, prevent practices leading to irreversible changes, such as extinction of genes and species, genetic erosion and/or large-scale destruction of habitats;

Increase the available supply of fish and fishery products for human consumption, nationally and internationally, through: (i) making optimum use of harvests and reducing post-harvest losses; (ii) developing, improving and sharing appropriate storage, processing and distribution technology; and (iii) developing and promoting effective systems ensuring the safety of food of aquatic origin, including harmonization of international regulations; and

Enhance public awareness of the nutritional and health values of fish and fishery products.