

Stop Gambling on Food & Hunger

Call for Immediate Action on Financial Speculation on Food Commodities

Over the past few years, price hikes in basic foods have created dramatic shortages in many of the world's poorest countries. In 2008, the world saw a major crisis with skyrocketing prices over a short time span for crops like rice, wheat and corn. Food riots erupted in 25 countries and more than 100 million people were added to the world's undernourished and starving.

Now, with food prices rising again, a similar crisis could be just around the corner. We urge political leaders and heads of government in the European Union, United States and elsewhere to act immediately to avoid the repetition of such a scenario.

While developing solutions to hunger and malnourishment in the world is a huge challenge, reining in financial speculation on agricultural commodities is of paramount importance. With global financial markets still in turmoil, agricultural commodity 'futures' have become increasingly attractive to financial investors and speculators. Enormous amounts of capital are flooding these markets, causing sudden food price spikes that can be lethal for low-income families in developing countries. Increased volatility caused by the influx of 'hot money' into and out of commodity markets is also causing havoc for farmers, who cannot predict what price their crops will command from one month to the next.

At the moment, action to crack down on excessive speculation in commodity markets is being considered in the US and EU, and in both places there are opportunities to implement reforms that would stabilise food prices. The G20 governments have also identified it as a top priority. This political context represents an historic opportunity to secure a sustainable relationship between financial markets and agricultural markets.

The financial services industry has already spent billions of Euros trying to persuade governments not to limit speculation. These lobbyists represent a small but powerful group of vested interests who are profiting from an activity that is fundamentally harmful to the vast majority of people.

We call on governments and parliamentarians to listen instead to the millions of consumers, workers, farmers, businesses, religious groups, academics, international development activists and others who believe effective controls over financial speculation on agricultural commodities is necessary to defend the world's poorest people and the world's food producers from exposure to sudden food price hikes and extreme price volatility.

Rules are needed in several key areas. These include ensuring full transparency and supervision of financial markets in food commodities, imposing strict limits on the level of participation by purely financial actors in commodity futures markets, and banning financial institutions from buying up physical stocks in food and farmland.

This is an urgent matter. Not only because of the live discussions in the US, EU and G20, but mostly because prices in agricultural and food markets are becoming more volatile with each passing month. Unless steps are taken to stop excessive speculation, it is only a matter of time until a disastrous new chapter in the global food crisis begins.

Signatories

Action Consommation (France)
Africa Development Interchange Network – ADIN (Cameroon)
Africa Europe Faith & Justice Network – AEFJN (Brussels)
Agricultural Christian Fellowship (UK)
Alianza Mexicana por la Autodeterminación de los Pueblos - AMAP (Mexico)
Antenne Italienne – AEFJN (Italy)
Arthur Rank Centre, the Churches' Rural Resources Unit for England (UK)
Association of Forest Schools (Hungary)
Association of Local Communities, World Tree (Hungary)
Associazione di promozione sociale – Association of social promotion -ARCI (Italy)
Associazione di solidarietà e cooperazione internazionale- LIVA (Italy)
Associazione Michele Mancino (Italy)
Associazione Rurale Italiana - A.R.I. (Italy)
Associazioni cristiane lavoratori italiani – ACLI (Italy)
Attac Austria (Austria)
Attac Finland (Finland)
Attac France (France)
Attac Norway (Norway)
Attac Spain (Spain)
ATTAC Spain (Spain)
Campagna per la Riforma della Banca Mondiale Campaign for the reform of the World Bank-
CRBM (Italy)
CCFD-Terre solidaire (France)
Center for Women's Global Leadership
Centro Nuovo Modello di Sviluppo – New Center Model of Development (Italy)
Civil Watch Association of Financial Institutions (Hungary)
Clear Water Society (Hungary)
Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul
Concord Denmark (Denmark)
Congregation of Saint Josphe (USA)
Consorzio Ctm altromercato (Italy)
Consumers Association (India)
Consumers International
Corporate Europe Observatory (Belguim)
Cultural and Environmental Association of Keresztur (Hungary)
Dominican Leadership Conference
ECA Watch Austria (Austria)
Ecologistas en Acción (Spain)
ELTE Environmental Sciences Club (Hungary)
E-misszió Environmental Association (Hungary)
Eurodad - European Network on Debt and Development
European Attac Network
Fair, Fair Trade Organization in Italy (Italy)
Fairtrade Foundation (UK)
Federazione Italiana Bancari e Assicurativi - Italian Federation of Bankers and Insurance
FIBA- CISL (Italy)
Focus on the Global South
Food & Water Europe
Food Ethics Council (UK)

Foundation Oyugis Integrated Project (Netherlands)
Friends of the Earth (Europe)
Friends of the Earth (France)
Friends of the Earth (US)
Gender Action (US)
Green Action Association (Hungary)
Green Answer (Hungary)
Green Island Circle (Hungary)
Green Umbrella Project (Hungary)
Hungarian Climate Alliance (Hungary)
Hungarian Union for Climate Protection (Hungary)
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy - IATP
Institute for Policy Studies, Global Economy Project (USA)
International Grail Movement (Netherlands)
JNM, jeugdbond voor natuur en milieu - youth movement for nature and environment (Belgium)
Jubilee Debt Campaign (UK)
Kairos Europe (Belgium)
Kenya Debt Relief Network – KENDREN (Kenya)
La Gabbianella Coordinamento per il Sostegno a distanza onlus (Italy)
Leadership Conference of Women Religious (USA)
Living Houses (Hungary)
M.A.I.S. Ngo (Italy)
Magosfa Foundation for Environmental Education and Ecotourism (Hungary)
Mani Tese (Italy)
Marianists International (USA)
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (USA)
Medical Mission Sisters (USA)
Mexican Action Network on Free Trade (Mexico)
Mill Hiill Missionary (Netherlands)
Missionaries of Africa (Netherlands)
Missionaries of the Society of the Divine Word in Teteringen (Netherlands)
Missionary Holy Ghost Sisters (Netherlands)
Moccantó Society (Hungary)
New Economics Foundation (UK)
New Rules for Global Finance Coalition (USA)
ÖBV - Via Campesina Austria (Austria)
People & Planet (UK)
PLANT - Partners for the Land & Agricultural Needs of Traditional Peoples (USA)
Platform Aarde Boer Consument - Earth, Farmer, Consumer (Netherlands)
Red Mexicana de Acción frente al Libre Comercio - RMALC (Mexico)
Religious Sisters of Charity (UK)
Savona Province Administration (Italy)
Second Chance Foundation, NYC (USA)
Share The World's Resources
Silvavitae Conservation society (Hungary)
Sisters of Charity (Netherlands)
Soil Association (UK)
SoL Hungary (Hungary)
SOMO – Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (Netherlands)

SWISSAID (Switzerland)
SZIKE Environmental & Health Association (Hungary)
Terra Nuova centro per il Volontariato - New earth center for the Voluntary service (Italy)
The Affording Hope Project (USA)
The Corner House (UK)
The Seed Institute (Kenya)
The Spiritan Province Congregation of the Holy Spirit (USA)
ThuzeuszFoundation (Hungary)
Traidcraft Exchange (UK)
Védegylet - Protect the Future (Hungary)
War on Want (UK)
Waste Reduction Alliance (Hungary)
Welthaus Diocese Graz-Seckau (Austria)
WhyHunger (USA)
WIDE Network (Belgium)
World Development Movement (UK)
World Economy, Ecology & Development (Germany)
WOWS - Wide Open World Security, Open Society (Hungary)
Xarxa de l'Observatori del Deute en la Globalització (ODG, Spanish State)
Zoldtars Environmental Foundation (Hungary)