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UN: Hunger kills 6m children a year

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24 November, 2005

THE ARTICLE

UN: Hunger kills 6m children a year

Despite it being the twenty-first century, hunger and malnutrition still kill six million children a year, according to a newly published report by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. More disturbing is the startling fact that there are more malnourished children in sub-Saharan Africa today than in the 1990s. The UN agency says there were 170.4 million people on the verge of starvation in 1992, a number that grew to 203.5 million in 2002. The report states that hunger and malnutrition are the primary causes of poverty, illiteracy, disease and deaths in developing countries. It also highlights how lacking the developed world has been in providing adequate aid to the poverty-stricken. Many children die from easily preventable diseases such as diarrhea, malaria and measles.

The UN food agency's goal of halving the number of the world's hungry by 2015, set by the World Food Summit in 1996, now looks unattainable. Although the initial goals were consolidated on and reinforced by the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, signatories to both programs have dragged their heels somewhat in delivering on their promises of aid. The only bright spot amid the gloomy reading was for South America and perhaps Asia, which has a good chance of reaching targets "if it can accelerate progress slightly over the next few years." The agency's Jacques Diouf stated: "Most, if not all of the ... targets can be reached, but only if efforts are redoubled and refocused.... priority must be given to...agriculture as the mainstay of rural livelihoods."

Source: <http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2005/1000151/index.html>

WARM-UPS

1. FOOD: In pairs / groups, talk about quantities of food. Do you overeat? Do you waste food or throw it away? Do you see any excesses regarding food in your daily life? Why do you think we have so much food but most of the world has too little or none?

2. THE HUNGRY: Discuss the following groups of people. How would you like to help them? What should world governments and organizations do to help them?

- The hungry
- The malnourished
- The sick
- The unemployed
- The homeless
- The aged
- The dying
- The poverty-stricken

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

21st Century / hunger and malnutrition / agriculture / sub-Saharan Africa / starvation / poverty / illiteracy / developing countries / aid / malaria / heels

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. HUNGRY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "hungry". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. MY COUNTRY: Do any of the curses that afflict sub-Saharan Africa also affect your country? Talk about whether the following exist where you come from and to what degree:

- Poverty
- AIDS
- Illiteracy
- Preventable diseases
- Corruption
- Homelessness
- War
- Hunger

6. HUNGER OPINIONS: What do you think of these opinions on world hunger? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. The developed world only offers token aid to the hungry.
- b. Globalization is creating greater hunger.
- c. Any CEO who does not donate huge money to the poor is a criminal.
- d. Man cannot beat the power of nature. The hungry cannot be helped.
- e. Strong economies are needed in poor countries to raise living standards.
- f. The fact that 6 million children die every year is a sin.
- g. How many millions of children could the USA's spending on weapons feed?
- h. Rich countries are always too slow to act to help poor people.
- i. Companies like McDonalds have a responsibility to help the hungry.
- j. Rich countries care more about domestic issues than millions of dying kids.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Malnutrition is responsible for killing six million children a year. | T / F |
| b. There are fewer malnourished children today than a decade ago. | T / F |
| c. War and corruption are the primary causes of poverty and illiteracy. | T / F |
| d. The developed world has been quick to provide aid to the needy. | T / F |
| e. There are goals to cut hunger by 50 percent by 2015. | T / F |
| f. Signatories to aid programs dragged their heels over aid provision. | T / F |
| g. South America and Asia have no chance of reaching targets. | T / F |
| h. The UN said agriculture is the mainstay of rural livelihoods. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| a. disturbing | linchpin |
| b. startling | sufficient |
| c. verge | alarming |
| d. adequate | reacted slowly |
| e. preventable | grim |
| f. unattainable | perturbing |
| g. dragged their heels | concern |
| h. gloomy | avoidable |
| i. priority | out of reach |
| j. mainstay | brink |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| a. hunger and malnutrition | dragged their heels somewhat |
| b. the startling fact that there are | developed world has been |
| c. 170.4 million people on the | on and reinforced |
| d. highlights how lacking the | of the world's hungry |
| e. Many children die | but only if efforts are redoubled |
| f. goal of halving the number | more malnourished children |
| g. initial goals were consolidated | verge of starvation |
| h. signatories to both programs have | amid the gloomy reading |
| i. bright spot | from easily preventable diseases |
| j. targets can be reached, | still kill six million children a year |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

UN: Hunger kills 6m children a year

Despite it being the twenty-first century, hunger and malnutrition _____ kill six million children a year, according to a newly published report by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. More disturbing is the _____ fact that there are more malnourished children in _____ - Saharan Africa today than in the 1990s. The UN agency says there were 170.4 million people on the _____ of starvation in 1992, a number that grew to 203.5 million in 2002. The report states that hunger and malnutrition are the _____ causes of poverty, _____, disease and deaths in developing countries. It also highlights how _____ the developed world has been in providing _____ aid to the poverty-stricken. Many children die from easily preventable diseases such as diarrhea, malaria and measles.

The UN food agency's goal of _____ the number of the world's hungry by 2015, set by the World Food Summit in 1996, now looks _____. Although the initial goals were _____ on and reinforced by the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, signatories to both programs have _____ their heels somewhat in delivering on their promises of aid. The only bright spot _____ the gloomy reading was for South America and perhaps Asia, which has a good chance of reaching targets "if it can accelerate _____ slightly over the next few years." The agency's Jacques Diouf stated: "Most, if not all of the ... targets can be reached, but only if efforts are redoubled and _____.... priority must be given to...agriculture as the mainstay of _____ livelihoods."

primary
sub
lacking
still
verge
adequate
startling
illiteracy

progress
dragged
unattainable
rural
consolidated
amid
halving
refocused

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

UN: Hunger kills 6m children a year

Despite it being the twenty-first century, hunger and _____ still kill six million children a year, according to a newly published report by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. More _____ is the startling fact that there are more malnourished children in sub-Saharan Africa today than in the 1990s. The UN agency says there were 170.4 million people on _____ starvation in 1992, a number that grew to 203.5 million in 2002. The report states that hunger and malnutrition are the primary causes of poverty, _____, disease and deaths in developing countries. It also highlights how lacking the developed world has been in providing _____ aid to the poverty-_____. Many children die from easily preventable diseases such as diarrhea, malaria and measles.

The UN food agency's goal of _____ the number of the world's hungry by 2015, set by the World Food Summit in 1996, now looks _____. Although the initial goals were consolidated on and reinforced by the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, _____ to both programs have dragged their heels somewhat in delivering on their promises of aid. The only bright spot amid the _____ reading was for South America and perhaps Asia, which has a good chance of reaching targets "if it can _____ progress slightly over the next few years." The agency's Jacques Diouf stated: "Most, if not all of the ... targets can be reached, but only if efforts are _____ and refocused.... priority must be given to...agriculture as the _____ of rural livelihoods."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**primary**' and '**cause**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "WORLD HUNGER" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about world hunger and why so many children are still dying in the 21st Century.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| • despite | • set |
| • startling | • reinforced |
| • verge | • heels |
| • primary | • gloomy |
| • lacking | • accelerate |
| • preventable | • mainstay |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think of hunger existing in the 21st Century?
- c. Do you do anything to help the world's poor and starving?
- d. Does your government have a good record of providing aid to countries in need?
- e. Whose responsibility do you think it is to help the world's starving children?
- f. Do you think world hunger will ever be eliminated?
- g. Do you think globalization is helping or adding to the problem of world hunger?
- h. Why do you think the number of starving children has increased rather than decreased in the past decade?
- i. What are the biggest social or humanitarian problems in your country?
- j. Do you think UN aid programs are needed in your country?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you think the USA should do more for the developing world?
- d. What do you think of the fact that developed countries spend trillions of dollars on weapons but six million children starve to death each year?
- e. The leaders of rich nations often say fair trade and strengthening economies are the keys to eliminating poverty. What do you think?
- f. Why do you think man sends people to the moon and space probes to Mars but cannot feed children?
- g. Why do you think signatories to the World Food Summit and Millennium Development Goals have dragged their heels so much?
- h. How do you think sub-Saharan Africa can accelerate progress and move quicker to reach aid targets?
- i. Have you ever dragged your heels in doing something that was asked of you?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

ELIMINATE WANT: In pairs / groups, discuss ways how your government(s) can reduce or eliminate the scourges that afflict much of the world's population. Put your suggestions in the right hand column.

SCOURGES	SUGGESTIONS
Hunger	
AIDS	
Disease	
Lack of water	
Illiteracy	
Corruption	
Homelessness	
Civil war	
Other	

- Change partners and compare and share your ideas.
- Decide on the best idea for each of the points in the table.
- Return to your original partner(s) and discuss the ideas you talked about with your previous partner.
- Make presentations of your ideas to other groups.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's report. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. MY GOVERNMENT: Create a poster outlining the efforts of your government in providing aid to the needy either in your own country or in others. Include a section that has your recommendations for your government's future actions. Explain what you wrote to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all have similar ideas?

4. DIARY / JOURNAL: Imagine you live with the constant threat of starvation. Every day is a struggle to find enough food to survive. Write your diary / journal entry for a day spent in poverty and need. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. F d. F e. T f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| a. disturbing | perturbing |
| b. startling | alarming |
| c. verge | brink |
| d. adequate | sufficient |
| e. preventable | avoidable |
| f. unattainable | out of reach |
| g. dragged their heels | reacted slowly |
| h. gloomy | grim |
| i. priority | concern |
| j. mainstay | linchpin |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| a. hunger and malnutrition | still kill six million children a year |
| b. the startling fact that there are | more malnourished children |
| c. 170.4 million people on the | verge of starvation |
| d. highlights how lacking the | developed world has been |
| e. Many children die | from easily preventable diseases |
| f. goal of halving the number | of the world's hungry |
| g. initial goals were consolidated | on and reinforced |
| h. signatories to both programs have | dragged their heels somewhat |
| i. bright spot | amid the gloomy reading |
| j. targets can be reached, | but only if efforts are redoubled |

GAP FILL:

UN: Hunger kills 6m children a year

Despite it being the twenty-first century, hunger and malnutrition **still** kill six million children a year, according to a newly published report by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. More disturbing is the **startling** fact that there are more malnourished children in **sub**-Saharan Africa today than in the 1990s. The UN agency says there were 170.4 million people on the **verge** of starvation in 1992, a number that grew to 203.5 million in 2002. The report states that hunger and malnutrition are the **primary** causes of poverty, **illiteracy**, disease and deaths in developing countries. It also highlights how **lacking** the developed world has been in providing **adequate** aid to the poverty-stricken. Many children die from easily preventable diseases such as diarrhea, malaria and measles.

The UN food agency's goal of **halving** the number of the world's hungry by 2015, set by the World Food Summit in 1996, now looks **unattainable**. Although the initial goals were **consolidated** on and reinforced by the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, signatories to both programs have **dragged** their heels somewhat in delivering on their promises of aid. The only bright spot **amid** the gloomy reading was for South America and perhaps Asia, which has a good chance of reaching targets "if it can accelerate **progress** slightly over the next few years." The agency's Jacques Diouf stated: "Most, if not all of the ... targets can be reached, but only if efforts are redoubled and **refocused**.... priority must be given to...agriculture as the mainstay of **rural** livelihoods."