

Media Update

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WFP

STATEMENT

10 December 2020

WFP CHIEF URGES WORLD TO USE ITS WEALTH TO PREVENT FAMINE IN NOBEL ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Transcript as delivered of the speech given by UN World Food Programme Executive Director David Beasley during today's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance ceremony.

ROME:

Waking up this morning in the beautiful city of Rome, it is hard to imagine that in about 400 AD this city experienced a massive famine, that ended up killing almost 90% of its population. Students of history associate something else with that ancient date: the beginning of the Fall of the Roman Empire. Now, did the famine cause the fall? Or did the fall cause the famine? I think the answer is yes — both.

Waking up in this wealthy, modern, technologically advanced world, it's hard to imagine us going through a famine like that. But my tragic duty today is to tell you: famine is at humanity's doorstep. For millions and millions of people on earth.

Failure to prevent famine in our day will destroy so many lives and cause the fall of much we hold dear.

On behalf of Secretary-General Guterres of the United Nations, our Board, our sister agencies, our incredible partners and donors and most importantly on behalf of 19,000 peacemakers at the World Food Programme, and for all those who came before us, especially those who died in the line of duty and their families who carry on, and on behalf of the 100 million hungry people we serve, to the Norwegian Nobel Committee, thank you, for this great honour.

Also, thank you for acknowledging our work of using food to combat hunger, to mitigate against destabilization of nations, to prevent mass migration, to end conflict and... to create stability and peace.

We believe food is the pathway to peace.

I wish today that I could speak of how working together we could end world hunger for all the 690 million people who go to bed hungry every night. But, today we have a crisis at hand.

This Nobel Peace Prize is more than a thank you. It is a call to action. Because of so many wars, climate change, the widespread use of hunger as a political and military weapon, and a global health pandemic that makes all of that exponentially worse —270 million people are marching toward starvation. Failure to address their needs will cause a hunger pandemic which will dwarf the impact of COVID.

And if that's not bad enough, out of that 270 million, 30 million depend on us 100% for their survival.

How will humanity respond?

Let me tell you why what we do at the World Food Programme works.

First, food is sacred. Anyone who has sat down to a Thanksgiving or a holiday meal, or taken communion, attended a Seder, fasted for Ramadan or made a food offering at a Buddhist temple knows that.

And every human, whether they are people of faith or not, knows the power of food not only to sustain us, but bring us together in our common humanity.

Here's the second reason the World Food Programme works: because what the 19,000 of us are doing is an act of love. Dr. King, Nobel Laureate in 1964 said, "Love is the most durable power in the world."

And, like Dr. King, from a very young age, I learned this teaching from Jesus of Nazareth, as he taught from the Torah: "Love your neighbour as yourself." I have come to understand that a better translation of what Jesus actually said was "Love your neighbour as your equal." Think for a moment what that really means.

Imagine every woman, man, girl and boy we share this planet with is our equal ... and if we would just love them as such. Imagine what that would do to war, to conflict, to racism, to division, and to discrimination of every kind.

What warms my heart is this: 100 million of my equals – my neighbours - received food from the World Food Programme this last year and we averted famine.

What tears me up inside is this: this coming year, millions and millions and millions of my equals – my neighbours, your neighbours - are marching to the brink of starvation.

We stand at what may be the most ironic moment in modern history. On the one hand — after a century of massive strides in eliminating extreme poverty, today those 270 million of our neighbours are on the brink of starvation. That's more than the entire population of Western Europe.

On the other hand, there is \$400 trillion dollars of wealth in our world today. Even at the height of the COVID pandemic, in just 90 days, an additional \$2.7 trillion dollars of wealth was created. And we only need \$5 billion dollars to save 30 million lives from famine.

What am I missing here?

A lot of my friends and leaders around the world have said to me, “You’ve got the greatest job in the world, saving the lives of millions of people.”

Well, here is what I tell them: “I don’t go to bed at night thinking about the children we saved, I go to bed weeping over the children we could not save. And, when we don’t have enough money, nor the access we need, we have to decide which children eat and which children do not eat, which children live, which children die. How would you like that job?”

Please don’t ask us to choose who lives and who dies.

In the spirit of Alfred Nobel, as inscribed on this medal - “peace and brotherhood” - let’s feed them all.

Food is the pathway to peace.

For journalists:

Broadcast quality footage of the ceremony and speech will be released later this afternoon. Please contact jonathan.dumont@wfp.org or wfp.media@wfp.org for more details.

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The United Nations World Food Programme is the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. We are the world's largest humanitarian organization, saving lives in emergencies and using food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability and prosperity for people recovering from conflict, disasters and the impact of climate change.

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UNDP

PRESS RELEASE

UNDP and JAZZ to work together for promoting youth-led social innovation in Pakistan

Islamabad, 10 December 2020: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan and JAZZ, the country's number one 4G operator and the largest internet and broadband service provider, signed a funding agreement worth USD 400,000 to promote youth-led social innovation in Pakistan through a series of SDG Bootcamps all across Pakistan.

The training bootcamps engage 800 social entrepreneurs in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and ICT/GB/AJK. Given the current COVID-19 crisis, one of the key focuses would be to find innovative solutions

to address the challenges posed by the pandemic. The most promising social ventures ideas will be provided seed money to start their initiatives.

During the event, Amir Goraya, Assistant Resident Representative of Crisis Prevention and Recovery Unit, UNDP Pakistan said, “There is a need to enhance the ecosystem of social entrepreneurship in Pakistan as it creates employment, addresses societal issues and contributes towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. The partnership between UNDP and Jazz presents an exciting opportunity to promote economic empowerment of vulnerable youth. Together, UNDP and Jazz will facilitate young entrepreneurs to enter this space and launch their creative ideas.”

According to Syed Fakhar Syed, Chief Corporate & Regulatory Affairs Officer at Jazz, “Jazz supports various sustainable initiatives to strengthen the digital ecosystem and empower young people to make a positive difference through increased access to education, digital skills and social entrepreneurship. This partnership is aligned with Pakistan’s 2025 Vision with Jazz continuing its commitment to developing digital skills and literacy among the youth. Through this initiative, we are aiming to further strengthen the startup ecosystem and provide young people with opportunities to lead societal change and increase employment avenues.”

UNDP, through its Kamyab Jawan – Youth Empowerment Programme, is supporting the Government of Pakistan in developing innovative and sustainable entry points for social engagement and economic empowerment of young Pakistanis. One of the key components of the Programme is to support youth entrepreneurship which not only empowers young people economically, but also spurs change and ensures inclusive development of the country.

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