

Copenhagen Symposium

Global Food Situation: Challenges for Humanitarian Assistance

11 November 2008

Venue: The 1001 Hall, Islands Brygge 89, Copenhagen S

CONCEPT NOTE

Hosted by the Danish Foreign Ministry and DanChurchAid
Events related to the revision of Denmark's Strategy for Humanitarian Assistance

Date and format

High-level Symposium on 11 November 2008, 09:00-16:45.

Key note speaker

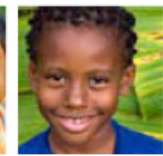
Mr. **John M. Powell**, Deputy Executive Director of United Nations World Food Programme.

Background

Worldwide food security is in crisis. Recent violent price fluctuations occur against a backdrop of continuing hunger and vulnerability for millions; persistent hunger affects 854 million people across the world, and according to WFP an additional 130 million people have been driven into food insecurity. The root causes are complex and multifaceted. Reduced access to food and deteriorating humanitarian space due to violent conflicts, rising production costs, increasing food demand, and an increase in climate-related disasters all play a role. What does this mean for humanitarian food assistance? Whilst the root causes must be addressed, the immediate impacts on food crisis response are already profound, with dramatic increases in both the number of emergencies demanding response and the number and locations of people that they are affecting.

This symposium will address these challenges in the humanitarian response to the global food crisis. The discussions will be drawing on the relevant conclusions from recent policy events such as the international Food Aid Conference in Berlin in May 2007 and the Copenhagen Early Recovery Forum in October this year, as well as recent research, and field practitioners' perspectives.





The topic will be introduced by WFP Deputy Executive Director **John M. Powell** and debated by a panel of experts, including:

- Ilse Hahn, German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ),
- Sara Pantuliano, Overseas Development Institute (ODI),
- Hermann Spitz, European Commission for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO),
- Chris Leather, Oxfam,
- Christina Bennett, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and
- Michael Windfuhr, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (DKH).

Key questions for the debate are:

- What are the implications of the global food crisis for the ability of the international community to respond to food insecurity in emergency situations?
- And what has WFP and other humanitarian actors done to adapt to the situation and respond to the increased demand?
- How can we strengthen the use of innovative approaches such as cash, micro-credit, seeds, tools and agricultural products and become better at linking relief and development? And has the global food crisis created a need for new innovative thinking?

Participants will continue the debate with experts in thematic workshops. The outcomes of the Symposium will provide input and recommendations to the revision of the Danish Humanitarian Strategy as pertains to emergency food assistance.

