



**Assistance with University Projects? Research Reports? Writing Skills?**

**We have got you covered!**

**[www.assignmentstudio.net](http://www.assignmentstudio.net)**

**WhatsApp: +61-424-295050**

**Toll Free: 1-800-794-425**

**Email: [contact@assignmentstudio.net](mailto:contact@assignmentstudio.net)**

### **Follow us on Social Media**

**Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/AssignmentStudio>

**Twitter:**

<https://twitter.com/AssignmentStudi>

**LinkedIn:**

<https://au.linkedin.com/company/assignment-studio>

**Pinterest:**

<http://pinterest.com/assignmentstudi>

# Global Food Security: An Analysis

---

## Food security

As our living becomes more and more globalized, the problems regarding human life sustainability also become more complex. Among these, one very prominent and much-discussed issue is that of global food security. In 1996, WHO's World Food Summit defined 'food security' as a situation where everyone has access to enough safe and nutritious food to be able to lead a healthy and active lifestyle (Food Security, WHO). Global food security pans across every sector of our economy: agriculture, industry, and also services. Moreover, it covers social, environmental, and political aspects (Rastegari Henneberry & Díaz Carrasco, 2014). Many countries, especially developing countries are food insecure. They do not have consistent food availability or access to sustainable resources. Their population increases, but not food production. Of the many challenges to global food production, some are: slow agricultural productivity, climate change, growing competition for resources like land, water, fertilisers, etc. (Moir & Morris, 2011). Food security is also affected by food distribution. Many people believe that there are enough food in the world to feed everyone and the problem lies in equal distribution.

## What Ensures Justice or the Common Good?

When we are talking of food production and agriculture, we are, in a way, talking of farmers. They comprise 60% of the world's population (A.P. Central). But worldwide food production is not uniform or in sync with this number. Also, as per the 2013 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) statistics, there are 842 million hungry people in the world, of which, 98% are in developing countries (*Who are the Hungry?* UNWFP). That brings us to the issue of justice and common good. Why should food be available to only a lucky few in developed countries, leaving the developing country population food-deficient? Why are the people having food production skills and capacities, the most food insecure? Why are the production systems often governed by structural limits and political strategies that further relegate the population to the margins of the development process? As Pope Benedict XVI rightly observed at an FAO conference, we need "to globalize not only economic and commercial interests, but also the expectations of solidarity, with respect for and valuing the contribution of each component of society." Only that will serve the common good.

## Perspectives: Parties Who Affect Food Security for Better or Worse

There are primarily 6 social groups, who have a stake, directly or indirectly, on the issue of global food security. They are the:

- Scientific Research & Development Bodies
- Food-producing Farmers
- International Aid and Development Agencies
- Privately-owned Multinational Companies
- Proponents of Change in Diet Habits and Attitudes
- Christian Churches

**Scientific R&D:** From fisheries to food crop production -- everything that provides sustenance to a hungry and needy population -- is facing a grim threat from urbanization, food inflation, climate change, soil degradation and much more. Unless immediate action is taken by policymakers and researchers, the world food system will continue to face increased risk (CGIAR). Therefore, scientific and research bodies like the CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research), UN's FAO, Australia's CSIRO and America's National Institute of Food and Agriculture have resolved to orient science and their research in enhancing food production and changing farming practices. While R&D is naturally often focused nationally, such bodies must share their breakthroughs with other countries to effectuate synergies in enabling global food security. Developed nations should help their developing counterparts in food production and distribution.

**Farmers:** Global food production is largely dependent on this category of people -- the farmers. So, the local conditions must be conducive to farming. Global economic and population growth, and industrialization have increased the demand for water, arable land and forest products; this problem has been heightened by urbanization as it exhausts agricultural land and leads to competition for water (CGIAR). While small-scale farms are more attentive to the well-being of their lands, they do not have sufficient resources, technology or control to maintain soil fertility. Also, they cannot adapt to price rises. For poor families who spend most of their income on food, even small price increases can have detrimental effects (Aabø & Kring, 2012). So to safeguard food produce, many large-scale farms have set up shop in such under-developed areas to boost agricultural produce and earn huge profits. They produce genetically modified (GM) crops and livestock to cater to food demands. However, research bodies like the CGIAR still believes that better technology to many small-scale producers can improve food security situations on a global level. Ironically, the food producers are the most food insecure (Aabø & Kring, 2012). So they give in to GM crops that hold more promise, like it happened in Uganda. Uganda's subsistence

farming improved to a feasible commercial level, and it also fed the local population (Gridneff).

**International Agencies:** The world helps those who help themselves. That's the way most international bodies, serving the cause of food security, see the farmers. Knowledge, education and technology are some of the things the farmers lack. The agencies propagate the idea of equipping the farming community with enough favorable conditions so that they can feed themselves. They do not encourage GM crops, rather promote organic and sustainable food production. The best yields that can be obtained locally depend on the capacity of farmers to access and use seeds, water, nutrients, pest management, soils, biodiversity, and knowledge (H. Charles, 2010). The agencies contribute to this capacity, like the Australian International Food Security Centre or the FAO's guide to sustainable intensification of small-scale production (*Save and Grow*, 2011).

**Multinational Companies:** Unfortunately, there are many parties related to the issue of food security, who do not want the situation to improve because this helps them make money. One such party are the multinational companies who try to reap benefits out of the food insecurity. They invest millions in ensuring volume food production that they can trade globally. They take recourse to biotechnology and GM crops to meet the food demands of people nationally and internationally. Companies like Monsanto and BASF Agro are geared towards boosting food production by innovating technologies and improved chemicals that ensure robust crops. However, while the US government considers these crops safe, the European counterpart believes that risks of GM crops to health and environment outweigh its benefits (*Are Biotech Foods Safe to Eat?*). Moreover, farmers cannot afford the expensive seeds, chemicals and technologies. So the companies continue to have corporate control on agriculture, pushing the farming community to the margins.

But boosting production does not help food distribution and consequently, cannot fully address global food security. According to notable economist Amartya Sen (1982), "Starvation is the characteristic of some people not having enough food to eat. It is not the characteristic of there being not enough food to eat."

**Proponents of Change in Diet & Attitude:** Increased wealth of consumers worldwide has led to an increased demand for meat and dairy products that has led, over the past 50 years, to a ~1.5-fold increase in the global numbers of cattle, sheep, and goats, with corresponding increases of ~2.5- and ~4.5-fold for pigs and chickens, respectively (H. Charles, 2010). Many groups call for a change in these dietary habits as more people can be fed from the same piece of land if global consumption was more 'green'. Most of America's

population is obese. But this dietary habit can be fatal to developing countries. With this high-protein food consumption, along with sugar and fatty foods, they may find themselves at the hard end of obesity before they overcome under-nutrition, leading to increased health costs which could have been used otherwise to improve their living conditions (H. Charles, 2010).

Also, according to FAO, more than one third of the food produced today is lost or wasted. In the developing world, this wastage mainly stems from lack of food-chain infrastructure and inadequate knowledge in storage technologies; but in the developed countries, waste is mainly at the retail, food service and home consumption stages (H. Charles, 2010). This food wastage means a missed chance to ensure food security and comes at a high environmental price (*Food Wastage Footprint*, FAO). The proponents of change desire a change in these practices and food habits.

**Christian Churches:** In the eyes of The Christ, all men are equal. The Christian churches strongly propagate the idea of equitable rights in terms of food security. They inspire organizations to fight against hunger and poverty, especially in developing countries. In a high-level conference, the Pope Benedict XVI urged FAO to continue with structural reforms that, on a national level, are indispensable to successfully confront the problems of underdevelopment, of which hunger and malnutrition are direct consequences (*Message of His Holiness Benedict XVI*, 2008). The US Bishops also places the life and dignity of the human person at the center of the discussions and decisions on agriculture (*For I Was Hungry & You Gave Me Food*).

## **The Common Good**

Generally speaking, common good refers to a 'good' that is beneficial to all. In the context of global security, there are many stakeholders who have similar or conflicting interests and views on the issue: while one thing benefits one group, the same may not favor the other. Therefore, it does not serve a 'common good' or matters of justice. Ideals of the 'common good' motivate many people of goodwill to take action in their communities and in public debates to develop social wellbeing (Beech, 2013).

For now, let's look deep into each stakeholder positioning in order to find out to what extent they serve the common good.

**Scientific research & development** to enhance agricultural productivity is sure a practical approach to end food insecurity. However, if localized research is only used to the economic interests of a national government, they only partially address global food security. Their

efforts may well be useful to their countrymen, but other countries will not be able to derive any benefit out of it, except only importing the food, making the producing nation richer. So, if nations can go beyond self-interests and endorse a cross-national collaborative culture, sharing knowledge and helping poorer countries in agricultural production, the common good will be served more and equitable food security will be established gradually.

The **farmers** are not active agents to achieving common good on a global level, but they sure play significant roles in improving food production on a regional level. They need to upskill themselves with the aid provided by international agencies, so that they have adequate knowledge about the environment and technology to drive sustainable agriculture. They need to focus on regional specialization of producing the most appropriate local food, to impact a larger efficiency on the global front.

The **international aid and development agencies** aim to provide just the thing the farmers need: *knowledge*. They work towards empowering the food-producing community with techniques and technology that can enhance organic food crop production and supply food to a hungry population on a continuous basis. Their approach indirectly serves the common good as better farmers lead to more production and plentiful produce leads to food security.

The **multinational companies** are corporate entities who are business-driven and do not really care for the common good much. It is by their sheer design of functions and objectives that they can only serve their own good, by making money. However, they generate employment opportunities and address poverty to some extent.

Now, the **people who advocate changes in dietary habits and food wastage**, address the common good differently. Out of the 1.6 billion tonnes of global food wastage, edible food waste constitutes 1.3 billion tonnes (Food Wastage, FAO). These groups advise against food wastages, particularly in developed countries where consumers and retailers carelessly waste food, disregarding the fact that 842 million starve in the world. This attitude needs a conscious effort to change, along with a change in dietary habits. Increased demands for livestock products among consumers affect global food security. These groups cannot actively establish common good, they can only generate consciousness and motivate people around.

The **Christian churches** raise awareness on food security for purposes of the common good. In Catholic Social Teaching, working for the common good calls each person to work for the good of each person and of all people (Beech, 2013). So, the churches urge that everyone be fair to their actions so that the world reaches food-sustainability soon. Food distribution is often unfair in the gridlock of politics and economic interests. Raising

donations of food from developed countries to provide to developing nations is not social justice, nor does it ensure human value, dignity and equitable rights.

### **How to Best Serve the Common Good?**

A discussion on the perspectives of the six major stakeholders above, brings us to the point of analyzing what best serves the bigger purpose -- the purpose of serving the common, or the maximum number of people in the world? As rightly concluded by Rastegari Henneberry & Díaz Carrasco (2014), "*food security is everyone's business*". Each one of us, in our individual roles, need to do our part to make the world food secure. Rather than focusing on poverty eradication and decrease in undernourishment, achieving global food security would also mean an increase in the households' ability to buy food, improved market access, and may be even demand redefining the food production system (Rastegari Henneberry & Díaz Carrasco, 2014). Most stakeholders have a significant contribution and they need to work together with integrity. We need to change ourselves and our attitudes towards food in all fairness to change the world.

\*\*\*\*\*

## References

- "Are Biotech Foods Safe to Eat?", WebMD. Available at:  
<http://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/features/are-biotech-foods-safe-to-eat>  
[Accessed September 21, 2014]
- "Changing Agricultural Research in a Changing World", CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research). Available at:  
[http://library.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10947/5224/CGIAR-SRF-March\\_2011\\_BROCHURE.pdf?sequence=1](http://library.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10947/5224/CGIAR-SRF-March_2011_BROCHURE.pdf?sequence=1) [Accessed September 20, 2014]
- "Food Security", *World Health Organization (WHO)*. Available at:  
<http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story028/en/> [Accessed on: 20 September 2014]
- "Food Wastage Footprint", FAO. Available at:  
<http://www.fao.org/nr/sustainability/food-loss-and-waste/en/> [Accessed September 21, 2014]
- "For I Was Hungry & You Gave Me Food: Pastoral Reflection - Part 2", US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Available at: <http://origin.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/agriculture-nutrition-rural-issues/for-i-was-hungry-pastoral-reflection-part-2.cfm> [Accessed September 21, 2014]
- "Who are the Hungry?" *United Nations World Food Program*, Available at:  
<http://www.wfp.org/hunger/who-are> [Accessed September 20, 2014]
- A.P. Central, "V Farming Facts," Available at:  
[http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/courses/teachers\\_corner/8655.html](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/courses/teachers_corner/8655.html)  
[Accessed September 20, 2014]
- Aabø, Ellen and Kring, Thomas (2012). "The Political Economy of Large-Scale Agricultural Land Acquisitions: Implications for Food Security and Livelihoods/Employment Creation in Rural Mozambique", *UNDP: Regional Bureau of Africa*, WP 2012-004
- Beech, Lisa (2013). "WORKING FOR THE COMMON GOOD: WHERE PRACTICE MEETS THEORY", *Victoria University of Wellington Law Review*. Vol. 44 Issue 2, p365-381. 17p.
- Food wastage: Key facts and figures, FAO. Available at:  
<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/196402/icode/> [Accessed September 21, 2014]
- Gridneff, Ilya. "Feeding the Hungry, Or the Greedy?", *The Global Mail*. Available at:  
<http://gmo-food.theglobalmail.org/ugandas-choice> [Accessed September 20, 2014]

- H. Charles J. Godfray et al. (2010) "Food Security: The Challenge of Feeding 9 Billion People", *Science* 327, 812; DOI: 10.1126/science.1185383
- Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI (2008), Available at: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/messages/pont-messages/2008/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20080602\\_fao\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/pont-messages/2008/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20080602_fao_en.html) [Accessed September 21, 2014]
- Moir, Brian and Morris, Paul (2011). "Global food security: facts, issues and implications", *Science and Economic Insights*, Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Issue 1, p.1
- Pope Benedict XVI, (2008). *Address to the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation*.
- Rastegari Henneberry, Shida; Díaz Carrasco, Claudia P. (2014), *Journal of Food Distribution Research*. Vol. 45 Issue 1, p29-34. 6p.
- Save and Grow (2011). FAO, Available at: [http://www.fao.org/ag/save-and-grow/index\\_en.html](http://www.fao.org/ag/save-and-grow/index_en.html) [Accessed September 21, 2014]
- Sen, Amartya K. (1982). *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.