



World Food  
Programme

Programme  
Alimentaire  
Mondial

Programa  
Mundial de  
Alimentos

برنامج  
الأغذية  
العالمي

The Food Aid Organization of the United Nations

## WFP News Release

---

19 January 2007

### **FOOD AID FOR CHILDREN, AIDS AND TB PATIENTS IN CAMBODIA SLASHED DUE TO FUNDING SHORTAGE**

**ROME** – The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) warned today that beginning next month more than 700,000 hungry Cambodians – mostly young children and HIV/AIDS and TB patients – will not receive essential food. The situation is likely to worsen unless new donations are received soon.

“We are very grateful to donors for generously supporting this operation thus far, but the money is now running out. Cambodia is one of the world’s poorest countries, and these people rely on WFP’s help to keep them coming to school and getting HIV and TB treatment,” said James Morris, Executive Director of the World Food Programme.

Those affected include some 650,000 children on school feeding programmes, as well as 70,000 people affected by HIV/AIDS and 18,000 TB patients.

“There is a chronic and persistent food insecurity situation in Cambodia,” said Dr Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS. “Food and nutrition are an essential part of the package of care for people receiving treatment for AIDS and efforts must be made to ensure that all people living with HIV have access to the food and nutrition they need.”

What is especially dangerous from a health perspective is the development of drug-resistant variants of TB among patients who do not complete their treatment. Food aid is a major incentive to draw patients to health posts and clinics and receive a full course of treatment. Those who fail to complete the course may well become incubators for new types of TB that threaten society at large. Treatment of such cases, moreover, can cost up to 100 times as much as the original medication.

Since October 2006, a funding shortage has forced WFP to progressively reduce rations to beneficiaries, cutting the number of Cambodians eligible for assistance, and delaying the distribution of food to those who need it the most.

WFP now needs at least US\$10 million to distribute some 18,000 metric tons of food aid to 1.1 million Cambodians until July 2007. Donor support for the agency’s relief programme in Cambodia has diminished alarmingly since 2005.



“Hundreds of thousands of children in Cambodia count on the nutritious meal provided to them by the World Food Programme,” said Thomas Keusters, WFP Country Director in Cambodia. “We want to restore this needed food assistance for children, for the very sick, and for the desperately poor, but we can only do this with the immediate and valued support of the international community.”

According to recent studies, progress towards food security has been made in Cambodia but this is measured against continuing widespread food insecurity and past famine and human catastrophe in the 1970s. According to the 2006 Global Hunger Index of the International Food Policy Research Institute, Cambodia is one of the 12 “hunger hot spot” countries listed as “extremely alarming”.

With nearly 35 percent of Cambodians living below the poverty line, Cambodia is classified as a least developed and low-income, food-deficit country. High population growth, low agricultural productivity and poor access to health services continue to hamper progress in human development. The country ranks 129<sup>th</sup> out of 177 countries in the 2006 UNDP Human Development Index.

Donations have been previously received from Australia (US\$10.9 million), Canada (US\$774,000), Japan (US\$7.7 million), Saudi Arabia (US\$440,000), private donors (US\$1.2 million) and multilateral funding (US\$3 million),

# # #

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency: each year, we give food to an average of 90 million poor people to meet their nutritional needs, including 58 million hungry children, in at least 80 of the world's poorest countries. **WFP -- We Feed People.**

**WFP Global School Feeding Campaign** – For just 19 US cents a day, you can help WFP give children in poor countries a healthy meal at school – a gift of hope for a brighter future. Visit our website: [www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)

WFP now provides RSS feeds to help journalists keep up with the latest press releases, videos and photos as they are published on WFP.org. For more details see: <http://www.wfp.org/english/?n=999>.

*WFP now has a dedicated ISDN line in Italy for quality two-way interviews with WFP officials.*

**For more information please contact (email address: [firstname.lastname@wfp.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@wfp.org)):**

Brenda Barton, Deputy Director of Communications, WFP/Rome, Tel. +39-06-65132602, Cell. +39-3472582217 (*ISDN line available*)

Paul Risley, WFP/Bangkok, Tel +66-2-6554115, Cell +66-1-7019208

Gregory Barrow, WFP/London, Tel. +44-20-72409001, Cell. +44-7968-008474

Christiane Berthiaume, WFP/Geneva, Tel. +41-22-9178564, Cell. +41-792857304

Cécile Sportis, WFP/Paris, Tel. +33-1-70385330, Cell. +33-6161-68266

Jennifer Parmelee, WFP/Washington, Tel. +1-202-6530010 ext. 1149, Mob. +1-202-4223383

Bettina Luescher, WFP/New York, Tel. +1-212-9635196, Cell. +1-646-8241112, [luescher@un.org](mailto:luescher@un.org)