



# Voices of Faith: Statements from religious leaders and actors

**Inter-religious engagement for Zero Hunger**

13 June 2016 at WFP HQ, Rome





# A call to action

**Foreword by Ertharin Cousin,  
Executive Director, World Food Programme**

Eliminating hunger in our lifetimes is both ambitious and achievable. In the last 15 years alone, some 200 million people lifted themselves out of hunger.

Recognizing that it is within our collective means to end hunger, the world's leaders made a firm commitment to do so by agreeing to reach the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Yet no single individual, agency or nation can achieve this ambitious agenda alone. Doing so requires fully harnessing strategic partnerships, including with religious communities, faith-inspired organisations, governments, international organisations, and other stakeholders.

It is for this reason I invited religious scholars and leaders to join us in Rome for a dialogue with the World Food Programme's membership on inter-religious engagement for Zero Hunger.

The moral imperative of feeding the hungry and caring for the poor lies at the heart of the world's major religions. We share a common focus on and concern about the 800 million hungry people in the world.

As a global community we maintain the tools required to achieve the goal of Zero Hunger, what we lack is the requisite global public will. Religious leaders and communities offer enormous potential to galvanize global political will, catalyse local action and achieve lasting change in the lives of vulnerable people. By working together, we will broaden and strengthen our collective reach.

The dialogue on 13 June represents a next step in a continuous effort by the World Food Programme to mobilize support for Zero Hunger. In support of this discussion we asked a number of religious leaders representing various faiths and geographic regions to provide us with their thoughts.

This unique set of statements not only provide ideas and concerns, they ultimately inspire our dialogue and our shared work lying ahead.

Please read and reflect upon each of these thoughtful, faith-inspired statements as we consider how working together we will realize the world we want, a world without hunger and malnutrition.

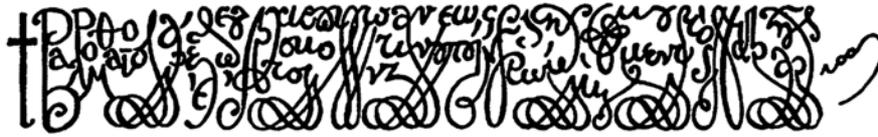
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ertharin Cousin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Ertharin Cousin**

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# 1 Bartholomew I of Constantinople



## Statement on World Hunger

Hunger is not primarily a problem of underdeveloped nations, but of overdeveloped nations. The problem of hunger is a deeply spiritual challenge. It has more than merely financial, agricultural, or social dimensions. And it is not a matter of emptiness, but of excess. Unfortunately, however, our discernment and vision have become blunted and blurred by our insensitivity and greed. We must recall and realize that, when one person is hungry in our world, in our nation and in our neighborhood, there is an emptiness that spreads in our own heart.

At the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the 13th of June, 2016

✠ **BARTHOLOMEW** of Constantinople

*Bartholomew I is the Archbishop of Constantinople  
and Ecumenical Patriarch*

## 2 Cardinal Peter K. A. Turkson: Fight Hunger, Not the Hungry

Hunger is too real in this world. We either experience it or we know about it. We know that there are millions of human beings without enough nourishment for body, mind and spirit.

As long as hunger is not overcome, humanity will not live in peace. We will not have peace so long as some banquet daily while others are starving at their doorstep or on the other side of the planet. For ours is one common home, and we eat at one common table.

Let us work together for sustainable food, nutrition and food-security. Let us overcome food insecurity, not eliminate the hungry!

Many different approaches are needed. The key is to turn global hunger into a *human issue*: hunger comes from a lack of solidarity, hunger comes from failing to feel, relate and behave as brothers and sisters. And like every great human issue, it is also a *moral issue*. It involves the exercise of human freedom. We are free to show disinterest and indifference. We are free to exercise good will. The choice is no one else's – it is our own free moral choice.

Pope Francis gives this example in *Laudato si'*: “When cooperatives of small producers adopt less polluting means of production, and opt for a non-consumerist model of life, recreation and community,” then “another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral” really does seem possible. “Will the promise last, in spite of everything, with all that is authentic rising up in stubborn resistance?” (§ 112).

The better alternatives may appear very small compared to the magnitude of the challenges we face. But it was also a little thing, those five loaves and two fish that, one day, an anonymous boy made available to Jesus facing thousands of hungry people. Not only was there enough to feed a crowd of five thousand: the left-overs filled twelve baskets. When food becomes Eucharist, when bread, recognized as a gift of God, is blessed, broken, given and shared, paradoxes are overcome and fraternity becomes reality. Joy fills our common home.

*Cardinal Peter K. A. Turkson is the President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace*



### 3 Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayyah

وجهة نظر الإسلام عن الجوع وجهة نظر الإسلام عن الجوع

الجوع يُعتبر من وجهة النظر الإسلامية نوعاً من أنواع العذاب، وهو رديف الخوف وهو من أعظم الابتلاءات للإنسان. فقال الله سبحانه وتعالى في القرآن الكريم "الذي أطعمهم من جوع وآمنهم من خوف".

وإطعام الجياع من أعظم أنواع الثواب وفيه أجر عظيم. وإطعام الجائع مؤمناً وغيره منة عظيمة وعليه حث الإسلام على إطعام الجياع حثاً كثيراً كما روي في الحديث: "يا أيها الناس أفسحوا السلام، وأطعموا الطعام، وصلوا الأرحام، وصلوا والناس نيام، تدخلوا الجنة بسلام".

شيخ عبد الله بن بيه

رئيس منتدى تعزيز السلم في المجتمعات المسلمة في أبو ظبي

Hunger signifies, from the Islamic perspective, a form of torture. For it is equivalent to fear and it is one of the greatest tests for human beings; according to the Qu'ran, where Allah (peace be upon him) is he: "Who provides them with food against hunger and with security against fear of danger." (106:4)

Feeding hungry people is one of the greatest rewards a person can receive. Feeding a hungry person, believer or non-believer, is a significant gift from Allah. Therefore Islam commands and recommends to feed hungry people constantly, as narrated in the sayings of the Prophet: "Oh people, exchange greetings of peace, feed people, and you will enter Jannah (paradise) in peace."

*His Eminence Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah is the President of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Abu Dhabi and Co-Moderator of Religions for Peace*

### 4 Khushwant Singh

Healthy and natural food is a human right. Today there is enough global wealth and food. Yet many people are starving. It is a false notion that material affluence leads to justice, and a meaningful and dignified life. Rather the sacrifice of affluence does. Timeless spiritual wisdom, which is at the heart of the Sikh Religion, inspires us to live a modest and natural life in harmony with the Creator and creation, spreading unity and well-being amongst all sentient beings. Spiritual wisdom reminds us that justice and peace of mind can only be accomplished if accepted attitudes as well as political, educational and economic models are questioned. The wisdom of the Sikh Religion supports this process of deconditioning.

If we want to make sure, that no new-born has to face malnutrition, we need to reconsider our life style. Because the outer condition of the world is the collective expression of our inner state of mind. Focusing primarily on political, financial and technical solutions or treaties will never save the lives of those who are starving. We as human beings need to change. We have to overcome the misconception that natural resources that the all-inherent, nameless and formless Creator unconditionally provides for all beings belong to individuals, companies or man-made entities such as nations. We have to understand that a person is prosperous who is wise, and lives a conscious, ethical and virtuous life and not who lives a luxurious life at the expense of others. We have to surmount the selfishness and shorttermism that leads to exploitation, injustice and environmental destruction and look beyond our current physical life. We have to understand: We are one human family with a common spiritual origin and a spiritual mission. We are one body. Good development is like good medicine: it has no side-effects on the whole body.

The Sikh tradition of Langar reminds us of three things: Our soul needs spiritual wisdom. Our body needs pure food. The needy once need access to food free of cost regardless of their background. The moment we accept that we eat and work to live, and do not live to eat and work, we are able to distinguish between necessities and unquenchable desires that lead to exploitation. We will then conform to our role of guests on Mother Earth. Let us join as brothers and sisters and make this world a place free of hunger!

*Khushwant Singh is a representative of the Sikh Religion & Head of the Council of Religions in Frankfurt, Germany*

## 5 Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit

Few issues are as vital as the challenge of hunger. The commitment to Zero Hunger set out in the Sustainable Development Goals that the United Nations has endorsed, echoes ancient and modern commitments of faith traditions the world over. Feeding the hunger is a central part of Christian commitments.

If we view food through the lens of justice, every plate of food reminds us of certain challenges and opportunities. It is important that we acknowledge the efforts, investments and very lives of living plants and creatures sacrificed to provide food on our tables.

I suggest that we commit ourselves to Ten Commandments of Food:

1. Eat food grown as close as possible to where you live.
2. Give thanks for the food you eat.
3. Strive for all people to have knowledge about and access to affordable, nutritious food.
4. Eat mindfully and in moderation.
5. Do not waste food.
6. Be grateful to those who grow and prepare food for your table.
7. Support fair wages for farm workers, farmers and food workers.
8. Reduce the environmental damage of land, water and air from food production and the food system.

9. Protect the biodiversity of seeds, soils, ecosystems and the cultures of food producers
10. Rejoice and share the sacred gift of food with all.

Food is sacred, as it is a gift of God to sustain our lives through sharing, celebration, gratitude, sacrifice and renewal. In our common home — the Earth — we have to work together to limit climate change and other barriers to food security, so that food can be made available to all today and in the years to come. Food is essential for life. Almost one out of every nine people in the world are chronically undernourished, while about one out of every 12 suffers the ill health consequences of obesity. This cannot and it need not continue.

The member churches of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and its Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (WCC-EAA) have embarked on a global campaign "Food for Life" whose goal is to eradicate hunger, promote adequate nutrition, and strive toward just and sustainable food systems.

*Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit is General Secretary, World Council of Churches*

## 6 K.H. Husein Muhammad

"*Al Faqr huwa al maut al Akbar*", ke fakiran adalah kematian besar, kata pepatah Arab. Sementara Nabi Muhammad saw mengatakan: "*Kaada al Faqr an yakuna Kufra*", ke fakiran/kemiskinan merupakan kondisi rentan yang menjebakny pada situasi dan perangkap kekufuran. Kekufuran tidak hanya berarti pengingkaran terhadap Tuhan tetapi juga terhadap nilai-nilai moral yang dijunjung tinggi oleh agama dan oleh norma-norma masyarakat. Seseorang yang dilanda kemiskinan memiliki potensi yang kuat dan besar untuk melakukan tindakan-tindakan kejahatan atau kriminalitas atau asusila dalam berbagai bentuknya. Kekuatan moral personal seringkali runtuh menghadapi sakitnya penderitaan akibat kemiskinan. Para tokoh agama seharusnya lebih peka dan peduli terhadap soal ini dibanding yang lain.

*Poverty is a great death, says the Arab proverb. While the Prophet Muhammad said: "Kaada al Faqr an yakuna Kufra", that poverty is close to kufr or disbelief. It leads to a condition that traps vulnerable situations and pitfalls of disbelief. Kufr does not just mean a denial of God but also a denial of the moral values upheld by religion and by the norms of society. Someone plagued by poverty has a great potential to commit crimes and immoral actions in various forms. The strength of personal morality often collapses in facing the scourge of poverty. Religious leaders should be more sensitive and concerned about this issue than about many others.*

*K.H. Husein Muhammad, Fahmina Institute, Indonesia*

## 7 Ambassador Tony P. Hall

My first life-changing encounter with the plague of hunger was as a U.S. Congressman visiting Ethiopia during the famine of the 1980s. During a visit to an IDP [Internally Displaced Persons) camp I witnessed the deaths of dozens of children. These children, whose entire lives were in front of them, had their lives suddenly cut short by a tragically simple and preventable malady—hunger. The experience disturbed me to the very core of my body and soul. However, in the places where tragedy seems to perforate into each being, community, or nation, the efforts of the faithful provide hope and encouragement. While visiting Calcutta, I asked Mother Teresa how she could possibly feel like she is making a difference in such desperate situations. She told me, quite simply, to do the thing that is in front of me.

The definition of what is in front of us is changing as our world continues to get smaller. We see the challenges this presents in an international political landscape, but it also presents an incredible opportunity. The potential impact of partnerships is greater than ever. We are seeing this as collaborations are forged between countries, civil society, the private sector, universities, and others. Imagine the impact we can have as our faith leaders worldwide—those who are providing real hope and assistance to our most vulnerable populations—can increase their cooperation. Imagine if we combine the passion that has driven us to act on our various faiths. Let us start that today, and finish our journey to end hunger and poverty for all.

*Ambassador Tony Hall is the Executive Director Emeritus, The Alliance to End Hunger*

## 8 Bahá'í International Community

### Statement in Support of the Zero Hunger Challenge

The Bahá'í International Community welcomes all efforts to address the age-old scourge of hunger and deprivation. That some members of the human family should live in great luxury and comfort while others lack the most basic necessities for existence flouts all standards of fairness and justice.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identifies “eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions” as “the greatest global challenge.” Re-visioning systems for the production, transportation and distribution of food are clearly necessary. But more normative changes of heart and soul will also be required. There is an increasing awareness that a more fundamental challenge is the fact that hunger and poverty is allowed to persist when food, water, and other resources are available in sufficient quantities to sustain all on our common planet.

In this light, hunger reflects not simply a scarcity of material resources, but a deficiency in the way human beings perceive, relate to, and value one another. “Hunger”, in other words, is not the problem. Human relationships and consciousness are the problem; so, we can also be the solution. And in this, those of faith have an indispensable role to play in building new patterns of interaction and relationships.

Leaders of religion bear particular responsibility in such a process of transformation. Theirs is the task of calling humanity to embody the exalted standards of equity, compassion, and selflessness enjoined by the Founders of the world's great faith traditions.

Only as these teachings increasingly become reflected in daily decisions and social structures will lasting progress become possible. As the holy writings of the Bahá'í Faith state: *You must consider all [God's] servants as your own family and relations. Direct your whole effort toward the happiness of those who are despondent, bestow food upon the hungry, clothe the needy, and glorify the humble.*

*Submitted by Bani Dugal, Principal Representative United Nations, New York*

## 9 Swami Agnivesh: Ending Hunger

WFP deserves all of our support for launching Zero Tolerance to Hunger.

But it would be a matter of Global shame if we religious leaders, for whom God is nothing other than Truth, Love, Compassion and Justice, and for whom the face of a child is the face of God, the face of little Buddha, baby Jesus in Mary's arms, a Ram lala or Krishna and so on so forth, wait till 2030 to end this diabolic man made Hunger.

The picture of three year old, Aylan Kurdi washed ashore drowned and dead, only last Sept. shook human conscience.

Each one of us felt guilty and we all responded.

WFP's website begins by quoting the UN'S latest report that the world produces more than enough food grains to feed world's population. And yet 21000 children die of hunger EVERY DAY - one child every four seconds. What else is Global Systematic Terrorism – a genocide on a daily basis?

Let's feel challenged to End Hunger. Here and Now! If only we could jointly commit and give a call to stop diverting precious life sustaining food grains to overfeed and fatten Cows and Pigs for more meat and more profit for Animal Farm Industry and to produce Alcohol and to produce bio fuels etc. etc. for profiteering and satiating Greed.

We have the means to do it if only we have an iron resolve. I, a Hindu Board member of KAICIID, proudly representing the world's ancientmost Vaidic Spiritual Heritage, volunteer.

I am ready to work under the spiritual guidance of Pope Francis who is the voice of Global conscience, and then we have a Dalai Lama, a Desmond Tutu, the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques and Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei and hundreds of kindred souls.

### **What are we waiting for?**

*Swami Agnivesh is a social activist and member of the board of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue*

# 10 Rabbi Arwaham Soetendorp

It is to be done

When my wife and I were born during the Second World War in occupied Holland, our chances of ever becoming parents and grandparents were zero.

But we are because of the compassionate power of ordinary people who risked their lives for us.

And in their simple, extraordinary act there is a universal lesson.

God has created us in such a way that in our first three or four years our survival depends on the care and love of others.

And it is therefore the task of the human being to ensure that the basic needs of the child wherever and wherever born, are being fulfilled.

Paramount amongst these needs is food security.

We can only realize this universal commandment when we are truly conscious of the fact that humanity constitutes one body. When one part of the body aches the other parts of the body feel it. When pain is not felt throughout the body and remains isolated, this condition constitutes the beginning of death.

We are reminded by our various religious traditions again and again that the saving of one human life is the saving of the whole world and that the destruction of one human being is the destruction of the whole world.

As long as we have not reached zero hunger we are at the brink of destruction.

However, we are gathering moral strength. An unprecedented readiness to break down passivity and indifference is emerging. The universal commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and the containment of Climate Change radiate hope.

We the faith communities who realize that we desperately need each other to reach the common goal of peace and justice must play a crucial role.

The challenge of the very recently held Humanitarian Summit must be taken up. No one must be left behind.

Consider an extra contribution by every citizen of at least a thousandth of income

It is not in the heaven or on the other side of the sea. No, it is very in close to you, in your mouth and in your heart.

It is to be done (Dt 30)

*Rabbi Arwaham Soetendorp, President and Founder Jacob Soetendorp Institute for Human Values*

## 11 Sulak Sivaraksa: Buddhism and Hunger

Hunger stemming from poverty is the result of massive inequality and the state of our economic system and institutions (both public and private). The affluent, driven by unchecked, insatiable greed, have shaped laws, governments, and other institutions for their own gain without regard for environmental concern or social justice. Increasingly, smaller and smaller numbers of people control greater portions of the world's wealth leaving the world's poor with less and less. The immense concentration of wealth at the top leads to undue influence on institutions and people in power who, beholden to the wealthiest, pass laws that further increase their riches while shifting the costs of society onto the middle and lower classes. Structural violence, increasing poverty and hunger are inevitable in such a system.

From a Buddhist perspective, the cause of these problems begins with individual greed, hatred and delusion that is then projected out into society and then becomes institutionalized. For Buddhists, overcoming these poisons requires internal transformation coupled with work towards outer transformation. Through the use of a variety of meditation techniques grounded in an ethic of non-harming and concern for others, greed can be transformed into generosity, hatred into compassion, and delusion into clarity and wisdom. The global elimination of poverty and hunger can be achieved but personal transformation alone is not enough to accomplish this undertaking. We must come together in solidarity and work towards reforming our institutions and toward a more just, equitable, global economic system that is free of structural violence. Through inner cultivation, education, organizing, inter-faith cooperation and the establishment of new mass democratic movements, change is possible.

*Sulak Sivaraksa is a father of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists*

## 12 Rev. David Beckmann

In our time, the world is making unprecedented progress against hunger, poverty, and disease. It is possible to end the widespread hunger that the world has long taken for granted.

This great liberation has spiritual, ethical, and political implications. The escape of hundreds of millions of people from hunger and poverty is an experience of God's love in our time – like the biblical exodus. As we pray for our daily bread, we are now invited and required to pray for the end of hunger. God calls us not only to share our bread, but also to push for political commitment to the legal and structural changes needed to end hunger.

As a Christian, my life is grounded in the love and mercy of God in Jesus Christ. One way to share this inner joy is to work for reforms that make the world more consistent with the fact that God loves everybody. God's grace leads directly to advocacy to end hunger.

*Rev. David Beckman is President of Bread for the World and the Alliance to End Hunger*

## 13 Dr. Vinya S. Ariyaratne

Zero Hunger is a powerful moral call. It reminds us to care about the pain of the hungry. It demands that we employ our gifts and our hearts to respond to those who are in need. As long as one child anywhere is hungry, we cannot rest. Zero Hunger is also a practical call. We know what can be achieved when will and compassion are linked: with remarkable progress behind us across many regions of the world, we know that ending

hunger is a practical and realistic goal. The call thus demands our focus and our action.

The term Sarvodaya (the name of the Sri Lankan organization I lead) means *'Awakening of All'*. It echoes Buddhist ideals of caring and compassion. It also points to the practical ways in which a community can, its strengths unleashed, improve the lives of all its members. Mahatma Gandhi used the term to highlight the power of the community. Our movement also takes inspiration from the living example of what communities can accomplish.

Zero hunger at one level is a simple call to feed those in need. But the demands go well beyond. The farmer who produces food in a sustainable manner, the family that ensures that children learn about healthy diets, the community that ensures that the unseen poor join in the welfare of the whole, the far away wealthy who understand the common good – we all are involved. We are all called to act.

*Dr. Vinya Ariaryatne is General Secretary of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement*

## 14 Commissioner Christine MacMillan,

The World Evangelical Alliance recognizes that addressing 'zero hunger' is not merely achieved through visualizing the abundance of food. Values of co-operation and opportunity highlight food systems of inclusive, safe, sustainable and resilient societies. Compassion is the motivation which acts on our God given responses to hunger with a commitment which looks beyond line ups of food handouts. Our WEA constituency of 600 million plants its resources and mandate in addressing the challenge of 'zero hunger' when hungry people are the central participants of agricultural and distribution development. In collaboration with our global partners, United Nations Teams, faith communities and our grassroots National Alliances with local churches, we progress together in dialogue for long term solutions. In the midst of progression we continue to address daily hunger needs in the short term. We acknowledge the potential of local economies to build infrastructure of access to food, employment and reduction of import costs. Dignity and respect for food choices, food tables of socialization and sacred celebration builds societies in the hope of achieving health, peace and well being.

*Commissioner Christine MacMillan is Director of Public Engagement, The World Evangelical Alliance*

## 15 His Holiness Swami Chidanand Saraswati

A fundamental tenet of traditional Indian spiritual culture is, “*Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam.*” It means “*The World is a Family.*” Regardless of country, culture, color or creed, all of creation is one global family. It is, therefore, our sacred responsibility to ensure that all of our brothers and sisters across the world have food in their bellies and that no one sleeps hungry.

Just as we care for the members of our immediate family, tending their needs and ensuring their health and safety, so we must tend to the needs of the Earth family, particularly our sisters and brothers who sleep hungry each night, and our children who perish of starvation and malnutrition.

There is so much talk about a global food shortage but actually what we have is a global consciousness shortage! The Earth is abundant, and if those who have the luxury to choose make choices for a fair distribution of resources, of grain, of water, of land, there is plenty to go around. As Mahatma Gandhi said so beautifully, “*There is more than enough for everyone’s need, but never enough for even one man’s greed.*”

Now is the time to shift from a greed-based culture to one based on sharing and giving so that everyone’s needs may be met. This is the power that our faith leaders have – to catalyze a paradigm shift in priorities and values from “*me*” to “*we*.” I have full confidence that the Zero Hunger Project of the World Food Program will truly be able to unearth the root causes of hunger and bring about implementable solutions to them. I am honored and excited to be part of such an initiative and give my deepest blessings for its success.

*His Holiness Swami Chidanand Saraswati is President of Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh, India, and Co-Founder/Co-Chair of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance*

## 16 Haruhisa Handa

神道の伝説にみる貧困と飢餓の撲滅の道

半田晴久

飢餓と貧困の苦しみや屈辱は、民俗神道における多くの伝統や説話に反映されてきた。

一例を挙げると、『貧乏神』の伝説がある。貧乏神は、貧困をもたらす神または霊である。この神が人間や家にとりつくと、悲惨と貧困が起きるといわれている。貧乏神は、焼き味噌のにおいと味を好むといわれていた。ある村で、商人たちが味噌を皿の形に焼いて売っていた。ある役人が通りかかり、その味噌を買って手にして歩いてきた。おいしそうな味噌のにおいが辺りに充満して、その味噌のにおいが

貧乏神を家から追い出し、貧乏神はついに捕えられたという。味噌は川に捨てられ、その匂いも消えていった。

神道の信仰は、このように苦しむ人々を導き、悪神を追い払い、幸せをもたらす神や霊に出会わせてくれるものであった。

今日、私たちの世界を悩ませている構造的また組織的な不正義は、悪い神に力をあたえており、その数も増えているため、人々が自分一人でそれを克服することは極めて難しい状況になっている。

この点において、神道を擁するアジアの文化では、コミュニティが、人々を苦しめる飢餓や貧困を克服しなければならないという責任を担ってきた。そしてこの精神は、上に述べた物語で明らかのように、貧困の神である貧乏神を家や生活から追い出す資源をもつコミュニティで、いまなお語り継がれている。

このようにして、アジアの人々は、そして私たちだれもが、貧困と飢餓を家庭や生活から根絶させることができるのである。

*The pain and shame of hunger and poverty are reflected in many FOLK Shinto traditions and stories.*

*For one such tradition, take the story of the binbōgami. They were kamis or spirits linked to poverty. When these kamis took over a human being or his house there was misery and poverty. The binbōgami, however, liked the smell and taste of baked miso. In one town, merchants used to bake miso in the shape of a plate. An official then walked around the town with this miso in his hands. The appetizing smell filled the air. The smell of miso drew the binbōgamis out of the houses and they were trapped. The miso was thrown into a river, and the smell was washed away.*

*The Shinto faith thus guided the afflicted, helping to draw out the negative kami and realign with the kami or spirits that help them along the path of good fortune.*

*Today, it seems that that structural and systemic injustices that afflict our world give evil kami strength and numbers too great for any single being to overcome alone.*

*It is a blessing, therefore, that in the Asian culture in which Shinto came into being, we have a strong sense of community that imbues us with a sense of responsibility to defeat hunger and poverty collectively. This spirit is evident in the story that is told often, even today, about those in the community who have resources who can undertake great efforts to draw out binbogami, the kami of poverty, and banish them from our homes and our lives.*

*Haruhisa Handa if Founder and Leader of Worldmate*

## 17 Bishop Katharine Jefferts-Schori

Together with people of myriad faith traditions, Episcopalians firmly believe that freedom from hunger is one of the most basic signs of decent and dignified human life. The Hebrew Bible offers repeated images of a land filled with plenty of rich food, accessible to all, as a vision of heaven. The biblical prophets enjoin all, particularly those charged with the welfare of the wider community, to care for the hungry, thirsty, homeless, and those with no other family to supply their needs. This ancient biblical vision is about a world healed and put to rights, in which God reigns, rather than weak or selfish human beings. Nor is this merely about providing basic caloric needs. We will not live in right relationship until all humanity has enough to eat, and enough left over to celebrate, i.e., to give thanks with a measure of abandon, without worry about where to find tomorrow's rations. We cannot call any society truly just that does not answer the anxiety over daily bread – or rice, maize, taro, meat, fish...

The most urgent and familiar Christian prayer is the bread we need to sustain life this day, and the most frequent religious observance is a sacred meal enacting an abundant feast spread for all.

May your work bless the hungry with what they need for this day – and tomorrow. May the nations of this world remember their own histories of hunger, and help to construct a more permanent answer to the empty bellies and stunted hopes of so many. We have made immense progress through the work of the Millennium Goals; we must press on with the Sustainable Development Goals and beyond until no child born into want, no mother unable to feed her children, no community anxious about today's or tomorrow's table.

*Bishop Katharine Jefferts-Schori, Former Presiding Bishop, Episcopal Church*

## 18 Rev. Nicta Lubaale

We are at an unprecedented moment in the fight against hunger. Global progress indicates that we can end hunger and extreme poverty by 2030. This forecast gives us new impetus to focus even more clearly on the most effective strategies toward a shared vision for Zero Hunger. Drawing on lessons from the Millennium Development Goals, we must now ask and answer critical questions: How do we collectively accelerate progress toward Zero Hunger; and, where are the gaps?

It is clear that real work lies ahead for everyone, especially in a period of the world's largest humanitarian and refugee crisis, conflict and fragility, high youth unemployment, and the growing impact of climate change-which threatens to undo the steady global progress we have made against hunger.

A shared vision for Zero Hunger must recognize that most of the progress of the past 15 years is due to the hard work of hungry and poor people themselves, in every country. Efforts on our shared global vision should therefore focus more directly on collaborating with local actors—the faith community, governments, and non-governmental organizations.

Hunger is also directly linked to power relations. Power imbalances result in gender inequality, unfair trade policies that persistently impoverish poor communities, and structural barriers such as corruption and tax avoidance. We call for the transformation of power relations to ensure that “the least of these” have a seat at the policy-making table. Relations between rich and poor countries should foster, rather than strip poor and hungry communities of their right to dignity.

Today, more than ever, we have a real opportunity to make hunger history.

Given the resources on our hands in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and a universally agreed framework of SDGs, we are in a better position to define an improved financing framework to harness not only the financial but also the human resourcefulness of communities, including communities impacted by hunger. Faith is a powerful resource in and of itself. Faith offers communities the resilience to withstand shocks and stresses associated with hunger and poverty. Faith provides platforms for a prophetic voice, with the power to transform the socio-cultural, political and economic relations that can move us closer to ending hunger.

We can end hunger by 2030

*Rev. Nicta M. Lubaale is the General Secretary, Organization of African Instituted Churches*

## 19 Luis Ugalde, S.J.: Hambre en Venezuela

Hace 10 años era impensable que en Venezuela la tercera parte de la población hiciera dos comidas o menos al día. Como era impensable ver en todas las ciudades del país largas colas en los supermercados y abastos desde antes del amanecer y durante muchas horas de gente tratando de conseguir alimentos básicos para su familia. Hoy por una combinación de carestía de alimentos y la inflación mayor del mundo de más del 600% anual. Con lo que el salario de la mayoría no alcanza para cubrir las necesidades alimenticias básicas. Es dramática la falta de leche, harina de maíz, pan (harina 100% importada), aceite, arroz, azúcar, café, pollo, huevos, carne y queso, cuya producción nacional cubría más del 70% de las necesidades.

Llevábamos una década de disminución de la pobreza al amparo de los altos precios petroleros y subsidios gubernamentales, pero con la inflación de los últimos 3 años la pobreza ha subido rápidamente al 74% de la población, de acuerdo a un reciente estudio de la Universidad Católica de Caracas.

No sólo ha disminuido la cantidad de comida que se consume, sino también la calidad. Los programas de alimentación escolar que tenía el gobierno han colapsado y en los sectores de bajos ingresos es alarmante el crecimiento del ausentismo escolar de los niños a causa de la falta de alimentación en la familia y en la escuela.

Lamentablemente en los últimos diez años ha habido un fuerte desestímulo a la producción de alimentos en el país a causa fundamentalmente de que los precios fueron regulados por debajo del costo de producción y al mismo tiempo se estatizaron cuatro millones de hectáreas de tierras y luego en ellas la producción ha colapsado. El gobierno pensó que esto no era tan grave porque tenía dólares petroleros abundantes para

importar alimentos, pues contaba con un precio que superó los USA \$100,00 por barril. Se desestimularon las otras exportaciones y el 96% de los dólares provienen de la exportación petrolera y son ingresos del Estado. Se desestimuló la producción alimenticia nacional y se crearon "empresas de maletín", es decir empresas ficticias para hacer enormes ganancias en el negocio cambiario en la importación de manera corrupta: el gobierno otorgaba a esas empresas amigas dólares baratos y subsidiados y estos importaban productos con sobreprecio y el negocio continuaba con las redes monopolizadas de distribución gubernamental. En los últimos tres años ha disminuido el precio del petróleo al 30% aproximadamente y ahora Venezuela se encuentra con que no tiene dólares para importar alimentos y la producción nacional está en ruinas.

La Iglesia ha ofrecido al Gobierno hacer un esfuerzo nacional e internacional de solidaridad a través de Cáritas para traer y distribuir alimentos y medicinas (otra grave necesidad), pero hasta ahora el Gobierno se ha negado.

### **Hunger in Venezuela**

Ten years ago it was unthinkable that in Venezuela a third of the population would have two meals a day or fewer. It was also unthinkable that we would see in every city in the country before dawn long queues in front of supermarkets and supply stores, for many hours as people try to get basic food for their family. Today there is a combination of food shortages and the world's highest inflation at over 600 percent annually. The wages of most people do not suffice to meet basic nutritional needs. Shortages are dramatic for milk, cornmeal, bread (flour is 100 percent imported), oil, rice, sugar, coffee, chicken, eggs, meat and cheese, where domestic production covered more than 70 percent of needs.

For a decade we saw poverty reduction, with high oil prices and government subsidies, but with inflation over the past three years poverty has risen rapidly, to 74 percent of the population, according to a recent study by the Catholic University of Caracas.

Not only has the amount of food consumed declined; so has the quality. Government school feeding programs have collapsed and in low-income communities there is an alarming growth in children out of school because of the lack of food in the family and at school.

Sadly in the last ten years there have been strong disincentives to food production in the country, primarily because prices were regulated below the cost of production while four million hectares of land were nationalized. Production there has collapsed. The government was less concerned, considering that there were abundant oil dollars to import food when the price of oil was more than US\$100 a barrel. This depressed other exports with 96 percent of state revenues coming from oil exports. National food production is discouraged and "briefcase companies" were created, that is, fictitious companies that make huge profits in the foreign exchange business by importing corruptly: the government gives these friendly companies cheap, subsidized dollars. The result is overpricing of imported products and government monopolized business and distribution networks. But over the past three years the price of oil has decreased by about 30% and now Venezuela has no dollars to import food and domestic production is in ruins.

The Church has offered the Government national and international solidarity and support through Caritas to bring and distribute food and medicine (other grave need), but so far the government has refused.

*Padre Luis Ugalde S.J., former President, Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Venezuela*

## 20 Sheikh Saliou Mbacke

La faim est pratiquement toujours présente dans la région sahélienne de l'Afrique. Quand le corps a faim, l'esprit a faim. Cheikh Amadou Bamba, fondateur de la confrérie mouride et son inspiration spirituelle, nous a laissé cette prière qui évoque l'essence des enseignements islamiques :

« Protège-nous de l'humiliation, de la carence, de l'avilissement, de la domination de nos ennemis, de la misère, de la soif et de la faim, Ô SEIGNEUR ! »

Mais il a aussi appelé à l'action pour cultiver la terre et a enseigné à ses disciples les compétences de l'agriculture.

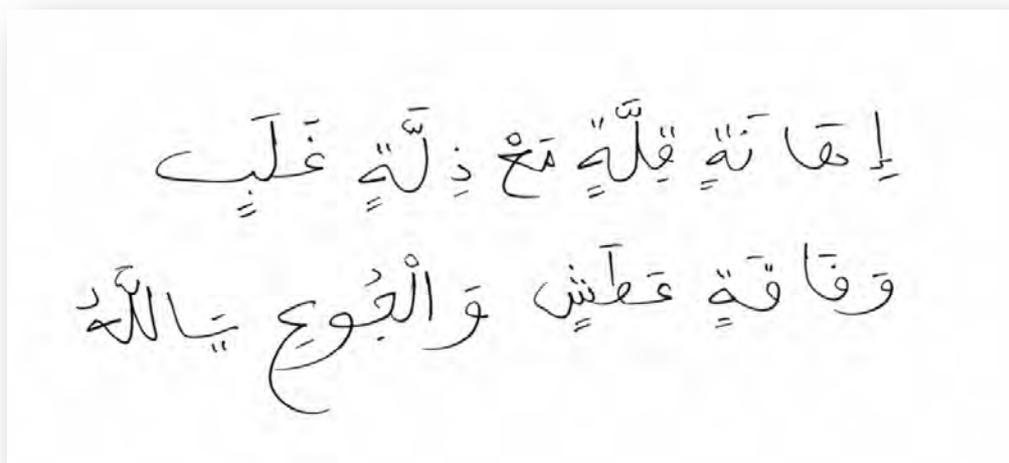
Rendre le rêve de zéro Faim (d'éradiquer la faim) une réalité dans notre vie résonne comme la passion Mouride pour la communauté, une passion qui lie la quête spirituelle à l'action quotidienne et au souci du bien-être de tous.

Hunger is a constant companion in Africa's Sahel region. Hunger of the body walks alongside hunger of the spirit. Sheikh Amadou Bamba, founder of the Mouride confrérie and its spiritual inspiration, left us with this prayer that evokes the essence of Islamic teachings:

"Preserve us from degradation, from penuries, from defeats, from misery, from hunger, and thirst. Oh Allah!"

But he also demanded action, bringing the land under cultivation and teaching his followers the skills of farming.

Making the dream of Zero Hunger a reality in our lifetime echoes the Mouride passion for community, a passion that links the spiritual quest with daily action and concern for the welfare of all.



*Sheikh Saliou Mbacke is a Mouride leader and President, Cadre des Religieux pour la Santé et le Développement*

## 21 Rev. Victor H. Kazanjian Jr.

To create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings - this statement of purpose is the goal expressed by grassroots people of all religions, spiritual expressions, and Indigenous traditions in 95 countries throughout the world who are part of the global grassroots interfaith movement known as the United Religions Initiative. The creative actions necessary for the realization of such a vision assume that human beings are nourished adequately in body, so that they might be fully empowered to express the yearning of their spirits by working together to better their communities and for a better world.

The United Religions Initiative supports the global campaign for Zero Hunger and works to realize Goal 2 of the Sustainable Development Goals because to ensure food security for all people is the most basic responsibility that we have for one another as members of the human family. We begin our lives dependent on the nourishment offered to us by others who provide the sustenance necessary for life to flourish. All religious, spiritual and Indigenous traditions speak of this nurturing of life as a sacred responsibility as well as an act of love and compassion. We recognize that to deprive others of the food essential for their lives or to witness such deprivation without action is a failure to fulfill the moral mandate of our beliefs.

Hunger is the root of so many human problems: infant and child mortality, malnutrition related illness that disproportionately impacts children, women and elders, mass dislocation, violence and war. Alleviating hunger by ensuring access to adequate food and promoting healthy nutrition is an act of love and compassion that leads to healing, justice and peace. To do so through sustainable agricultural practices honors our sacred relationship with the Earth so that she will continue to provide sustenance for generations to come. May we, people of diverse religions, spiritual expression and Indigenous traditions throughout the world, join together to end hunger, eliminate all forms of malnutrition, and build inclusive and sustainable food systems as part of our sacred responsibility for one another and for our mother Earth.

*The Rev. Victor H. Kazanjian Jr., is the Executive Director of the United Religions Initiative*

## 22 Kosho Niwano

京都に龍安寺という禅寺があります。その庭の片隅にある手水鉢には「吾唯足るを知る」という言葉が刻まれています。釈尊は「足る事を知る人は心穏やかであり、足る事を知らない人の心はいつも乱れている」と説かれましたが、私たち人間が幸せになるその根源は、満足する心であるということ。満足する心がなければ、どんなに金銭的、物質的、そして環境的に恵まれていても、本当の幸せはないのだという事を表しています。

また、仏教には「諸法無我」という教えがあります。これは自分が自分以外の全ての存在によって生かされているかを実感すること。私たちが相互共存している、「ともにある」ということを教えています。

私たちがこのまま欲望を増大させていけば、私たちはもう加害者と被害者どちらかであることはできません。この地球上に生きている限り、誰もが加害者であり、誰もが被害者です。今や食糧問題が自分の問題であるということを一人一人が実感することが重要です。

私たち立正佼成会では、約40年前に「一食（いちじき）を捧げる運動」をスタートしました。これは「世界のみんなが幸せになってほしい」という祈りと共に、貧困や紛争にあえぐ人々の空腹のつらさを自分の痛みとするために、自らの食事を抜き、抜いた食事の代金を募金箱に入れます。

"いつでも、どこでも、誰にでも、いつまでも"できる わかちあいの運動です。

「余分」をあげるのではなく、あえて自分にとって「必要な分」である食事を「捧げ」ことを大切にしています。ひとの痛みを知り、ひとの幸せを祈り、ひとのために行動する心を育て、同時に少しでも少欲知足の生活が出来るようになることを目指す信仰的实践でもあるのです。

経済大国は栄養過多の人びとであふれ、一方その同じ地球上の発展途上国の国々では、12億の人びとが、飢えと貧困に苦しんでいます。宗教者に限らず、同じ人類の一人として、みなこの現実を目をつむるべきではありません。

「一食を捧げる」のは、なにも食事に限らなくてもいいのです。月に一度でもよい、一杯のコーヒー、一片のパンを抜くことによって、飢えた人びとの痛みを多少とも知り、その気持ちを救援資金として「捧げ」てもらいたいのです。

*Ryoanji is a Zen Temple in Kyoto, Japan. In one corner of its garden is a stone hand-washing basin, into which is carved "I only know satisfaction". According to Shakyamuni Buddha, "a person who knows satisfaction is calm in heart and mind, and a person who does not know satisfaction is confused in heart and mind." This phrase tells us that the source of human happiness is a mind that knows what it means to be satisfied. If our minds cannot grasp the deeper meaning of satisfaction, no amount of financial, material, or social reward can ever make us truly happy.*

*Buddhism also teaches us that, "All things are impermanent," that is, we should realize that we are all caused to live by everything existing outside of ourselves. We are all brothers and sisters, mutually coexisting.*

*If we continue to let our desire and greed grow larger, however, we will no longer have the choice of being either victimizers or victims. As long as we are living here on this earth, everyone is a victimizer and everyone is a victim. Therefore, it is crucial that every single person now realize that the problem of world hunger is her or his own problem.*

*Over forty years ago, Rissho Kosei-kai started the Donate-A-Meal Movement. We did so because we wish for the whole world to be happy. In order to ourselves feel and share the painful suffering of hunger experienced by people facing poverty and warfare, we go*

*without one meal and put the money we would have spent on that meal into the donation box.*

*This is a movement of sharing can be participated in "anytime, anywhere, and by anyone."*

*It is important that participants understand that they are not giving away their "leftovers," but rather, they are donating a necessary portion of their own food. This is because the Donate-A-Meal Movement is a practice of faith that aims to cultivate the mind that knows the suffering of other people, that prays for their happiness, and that takes action for the sake of other people, and at the same time, helps us lead lives that know satisfaction by curbing desire.*

*The economically powerful countries have too many overfed people, while on the same planet earth, there are 1.2 billion people in the developing nations who are suffering from malnutrition. Not only religious leaders, but every one of we fellow human beings must not close our eyes to this fact.*

*The Donate-A-Meal Movement need not be limited to any particular meal. Depending on your circumstances, you could donate one meal a month, or one cup of coffee, or even one slice of bread, as long as you come to know, even a little, the feeling of people who are suffering from hunger, and put that feeling to use by making a donation to the movement.*

*Kosho Niwano is the President Designate of Rissho Kosei-kai*

## **23 The First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**

Our hearts, along with those of millions of others of our brothers and sisters throughout the world, are filled with compassion for the many of God's children who suffer from lack of daily sustenance and who therefore cope with the devastating effects of hunger and malnutrition. In our efforts to follow the teachings and actions of Jesus Christ, we feel a keen responsibility to extend help as well as hope to the hungry and to the homeless, both at home and abroad. We invite people everywhere to open their hearts and minds to this growing need and make resources available to the effort of eliminating hunger where they live. This may include things as simple as growing a garden, supporting a school nutrition program, or donating to an organization that provides food assistance to those in need. In these ways and many others, we answer the Biblical charge to "open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy" (Deuteronomy 15:11). As so many of God's children across the globe are praying for relief, may we each seek ways in which we can help bring about the answers to those prayers.

*Latter-day Saint Charities Joins in Multi-Sector Partnerships to Address Hunger and Magnify Impact*

Fasting as a religious practice exists in some form in almost all world faiths. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints includes in its fasting practices a direct practical benefit for the poor. The question posed is this: Are you willing to forego two meals so

that others may eat? On the first Sabbath of each month, millions of church members all over the world go without food and water for two consecutive meals and contribute what would have been spent on those meals in order to feed hungry people. 30,000 local bishops are charged with seeking out hungry people and helping to provide for their needs. Small individual efforts aggregate for a large impact. The small amounts of money gathered from many places fund a network of farms, orchards, canneries, mills, and storehouses. Grocery store contracts are negotiated as well. Any person of any ability can participate in fasting to demonstrate a heart-felt commitment – expressed through personal sacrifice -- to help those who are hungry.

*The First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

## 24 William Vendley

Eradicating extreme poverty has been a priority for *Religions for Peace* and its regional and national interreligious councils, women of faith and youth networks in 90 countries around the world. We commit to the Zero Hunger Campaign to eradicate chronic hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity in 15 years.

The diverse religious communities represented in *Religions for Peace* have agreed that we have a shared moral obligation to support the unfolding of full human dignity and the advancement of the common good. All are to receive from the common good; all are obliged to work to build it up.

In the face of that shared vision, the facts are scandalous: Almost two and a half billion people are mired in poverty, living on less than \$2 a day. Almost a billion go hungry every day, in a world where about a third of all food is wasted. People in the richest countries live on average 20 years longer than people in the poorest countries. The chasm between rich and poor grows deeper. A mere 80 people now control as much wealth as half of the world's population. Soon, if trends continue, the richest 1 percent will own more than all the rest. Inequality within countries has become especially stark, including in the world's wealthiest nations.

As religious believers, we are particularly seized by the current food crisis. Fulfilling the vital food needs of persons is an irreplaceable condition for not only their survival but for their creative flourishing. Hunger is more than an empty stomach. It is the cruelest of thieves, robbing first the hungry ones, but also finally all of us of our humanity and its potential.

The capacity to act and moral responsibility go hand in hand. We have the capacity to end hunger at relatively low cost. Therefore, we have the moral responsibility to do so. Almost a billion hungry people is not a tragedy; it is a grotesque moral travesty.

*Religions for Peace* commits to working with governments, intergovernmental bodies and all stakeholders to take bold and transformative steps that are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path to solve the food crisis. This kind of multi-stakeholder partnership is essential for tackling the complex challenges of sustainable development and the fight against poverty and hunger.

While the success of the Zero Hunger campaign will clearly depend on the power of human ingenuity, we are convinced that the moral impulses that animate our respective traditions and communities are equally important. Each of our religious communities has its own way of understanding the call to support the integral development of the “other.” In *Religions for Peace*, we commit to uniting the best of the shared wisdom of our respective religious traditions to eradicate poverty and advance sustainable development that nurtures human dignity and the common good.

*William Vendley is the Secretary-General of Religions for Peace International*







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