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World Food Day, 1985

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

One of the most encouraging results of World Food Day, which the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations inaugurated in 1980, has been the rising tempo of public interest in the world food situation. Last year in the United States alone, millions of people in more than 3,000 communities participated in a wide variety of World Food Day activities.

Yet even this great outpouring paled before the American response to the terrible famine in Africa, especially in Ethiopia and Sudan.

For many years, the United States has shared its agricultural abundance and technical expertise with nations in need. We have led the effort to alleviate world hunger. Yet it is clear that charitable assistance in the form of emergency food deliveries, no matter how extensive, treats only the symptoms of malnourishment, not the causes.

The persistent problem of underfed people has deep roots that unfortunately are too often nourished by government policies that discourage economic growth and progress, put obstacles in the way of international trade, and inhibit a free market system. Governments dictate urban food prices at the expense of farmer income, and the farmer's judgement on the type of crops to plant and harvest is ignored.

Although some American farmers have recently suffered economic reverses, this Nation has not wavered in its commitment to aid the developing nations of the world to improve their agricultural methods and to provide food relief during emergencies. Our assistance has paid dividends to the recipient countries. Since 1954, when the Eisenhower Food For Peace program was adopted by the United States, food production per person has increased an average of 21 percent in the developing countries. Food consumption in the same areas has increased an average of 7.5 percent per person since 1963. We are especially proud that America has taken the lead in the promotion and distribution of oral rehydration therapy. This simple technology saved the lives of half a million children around the world last year.

In recognition of the continuing problem and of the need to continue focusing public awareness on means to alleviate world hunger, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 72, has designated October 16, 1985, as "World Food Day" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of that day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 16, 1985, as World Food Day, and I call upon the people of the United States to observe that day with appropriate activities to explore ways in which our Nation can further contribute to the elimination of hunger in the world.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

Ronald Reagan