

Hunger threatens the world



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By María Josefina Arce

Today marks the start of the seventy-seventh session of the UN, which during the highest level segment will seek to focus attention on a pressing problem: world hunger.

Martin Griffiths, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, said the threat of famine must galvanize everyone into action.

The more than two years of the Covid-19 pandemic that brought the planet to a standstill, coupled with high food prices, more intense meteorological phenomena and armed conflicts have worsened the situation.

According to the international body, after remaining relatively unchanged since 2015, the percentage of citizens affected by this scourge shot up in 2020 and continued to rise last year to reach 9.8% of the world's population.

Statistics show that in 2021 the number of people suffering from hunger on the planet rose to 828 million, representing an increase of 150 million since the appearance of Covid-19.

In Latin America, the situation is not at all encouraging, about 9% of its inhabitants are affected by this problem. Julio Berdegué, representative of FAO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, warned that the region has lost 20 years of the fight against hunger.

He pointed out that this is a worsening of a condition that was already quite disastrous, which shows that the post-pandemic recovery has not reached households.

The figures also show that the gender gap has widened. Women were the hardest hit by this scenario. Nearly 32% of the world's female population had nothing to feed themselves, compared to 27.6% of men.

Children are also the hardest hit. Some 45 million infants under the age of five suffer from very severe acute malnutrition, which increases the risk of infant mortality by a factor of 12.

In addition, 149 million children suffer from stunted growth and development due to poor nutrition.

The reality is that the world is moving further and further away from its goal of ending hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. If differences and positions of strength are not overcome and efforts are not united, according to forecasts, there will be some 670 million hungry people in the world by 2030.

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