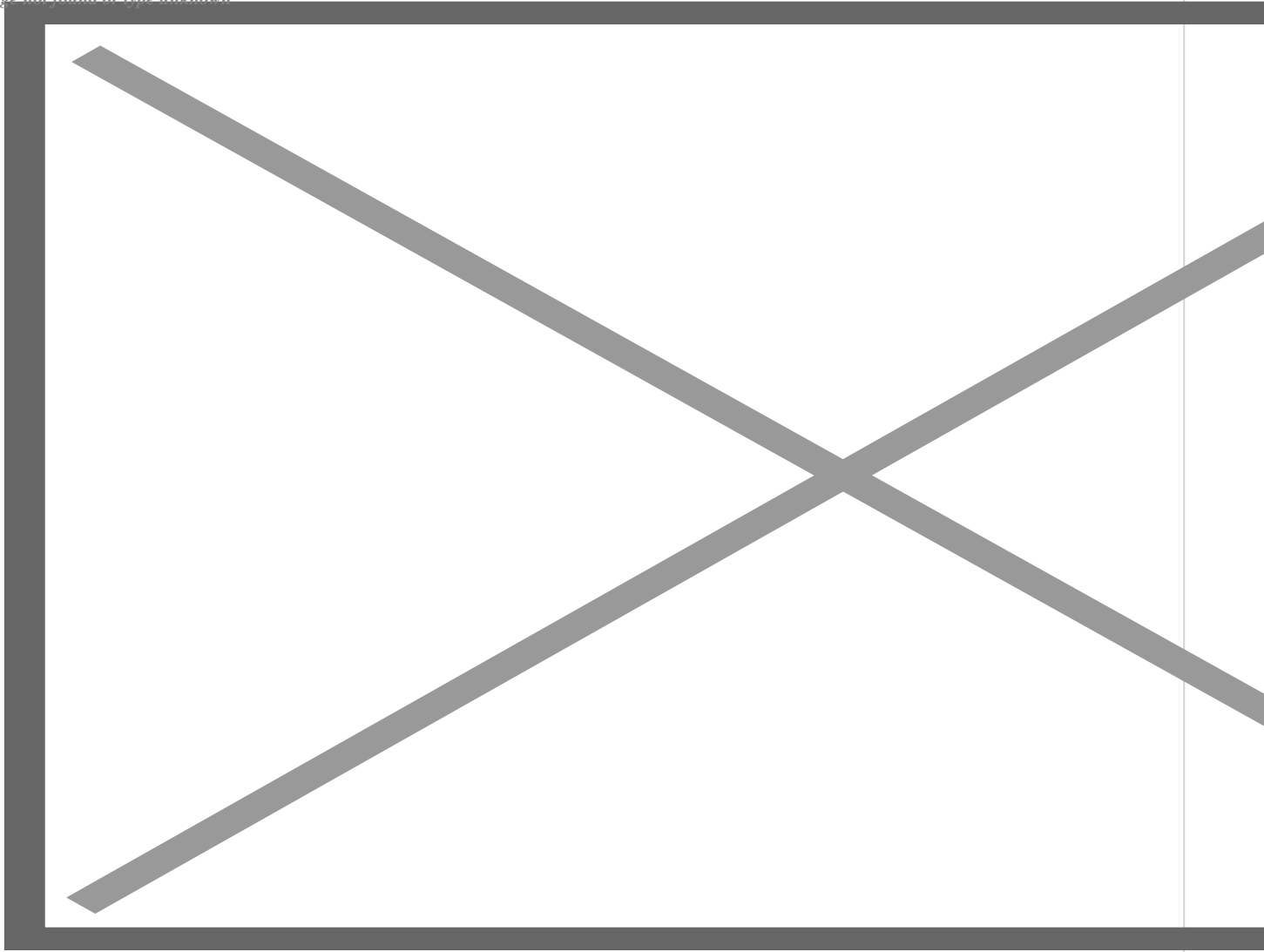


World Food Program head warns of global chaos amid food crisis

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UN Food Program Executive Director David Beasley speaks during an interview at the WFP headquarters in Rome, Tuesday, Nov. 2, 2021. (File Photo by AP)

Rome, September 24 (RHC)-- The UN food program chief has warned that the world is facing "a perfect storm on top of a perfect storm", urging donors to give a few days of profits to prevent widespread food shortages next year. David Beasley, World Food Program (WFP) Executive Director, in an interview with

AP, said if the donors, particularly Persian Gulf nations and billionaires, don't step forward right now, there will be "chaos all over the world."

Beasley said when he took over at the WFP almost five and a half years ago, only 80 million people worldwide were hurtling toward starvation. "And I'm thinking, 'Well, I can put the World Food Program out of business,'" he said in the interview.

From 80 million, the number surged to 135 million due to climate problems, followed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which doubled it to 276 million people not knowing where their next meal was coming from.

Finally, the Russian military operation in Ukraine that began on February 24th, fueled a food, fertilizer, and energy crisis around the world, pushing the number further to 345 million. "Within that are 50 million people in 45 countries knocking on famine's door," Beasley said. "If we don't reach these people, you will have famine, starvation, destabilization of nations unlike anything we saw in 2007-2008 and 2011, and you will have mass migration."

The WFP chief has held a series of meetings with world leaders during this week's UN General Assembly session, warning them about the unfolding food crisis. "We're not talking about asking for a trillion dollars here," Beasley said. "We're just talking about asking for a few days' worth of your profits to stabilize the world," he stressed in the interview.

He said the world produces enough food to feed 7.7 billion people, but half of the production is because of the use of fertilizers that China has stopped exporting and Russia is struggling to export. This year, he noted, the raging war in Ukraine shut down grain shipments from that country, which produces enough food to feed 400 million people — and sharply curtailed shipments from Russia, the world's second-largest exporter of fertilizer and a major food producer.

"It's a perfect storm on top of a perfect storm," Beasley said. "And with the fertilizer crisis we're facing right now, with droughts, we're facing a food pricing problem in 2022. This created havoc around the world." "If we don't get on top of this quickly — and I don't mean next year, I mean this year — you will have a food availability problem in 2023," he said. "And that's gonna be hell."

In Africa, the WFP chief said 33 million small farms feed over 70 percent of the population, and right now "we're several billion dollars short of what we need for fertilizers." Beasley hastened to add that Central and South America also faced drought and India was buffeted by heat and drought. "It could go on and on," he said.

The World Food Program chief said he also met with a group of billionaires on Wednesday night, telling them they had "a moral obligation" and "need to care." "Even if you don't give it to me, even if you don't give it to the World Food Program, get in the game. Get in the game of loving your neighbor and helping your neighbor," Beasley said.

"People are suffering and dying around the world. When a child dies every five seconds from hunger, shame on us."

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