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World Food Prize Laureates Urge G20 To Back Brazil's Effort To End Global Hunger As Famine Warnings Rise

G20 leaders must show political will to support the G20 Presidency's global plan to tackle hunger and poverty, say world's pre-eminent experts on food security.

March 26, 2024 (Washington, D.C) – G20 leaders have been urged to commit to Brazil's agenda for ending global hunger and poverty by some of the world's most distinguished food security experts amid rising levels of hunger and climate vulnerability.

As the UN warns of imminent famine and extreme hunger in Gaza, Haiti and Sudan, 27 World Food Prize Laureates made the plea for the G20 to agree to a new global plan to tackle the food crisis in an open letter.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who won the World Food Prize in 2011, immediately made hunger and poverty key priorities when the country assumed the G20 presidency in December. His recently launched Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty taskforce met for the second time in Brasília last week.

Among the World Food Prize Laureates to sign the urgent call to the G20 were **Sir David Nabarro, co-lead of the UN's Global Crisis Response Group, Professor Gebisa Ejeta**, who recently received the National Medal of Science at the White House and NASA climate scientist **Dr. Cynthia Rosenzweig**.

In a letter to leaders of the world's most important economies, the signatories welcomed President Lula's "focus on addressing hunger and poverty in the G20 Presidency" and paid tribute to the achievements of his first administration, which saw poverty [reduced by half](#) thanks to social welfare reforms, anti-hunger programs and economic growth.

However, the signatories warned that "in the 21st century, it is primarily the lack of political will and leadership that allow hunger and malnutrition to persist and to rise."

"We urge all leaders to follow his example and champion bold action to tackle the global food crisis and put us on a path to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, our shared global goal to end hunger in all its forms," the Laureates said.

"This is urgent. Right now, 735 million people are hungry. A quarter of a billion people face acute food insecurity, with women and children disproportionately affected."

The Laureates called for a plan that includes measures to:

- Save lives by fully funding the UN's humanitarian appeals for food and nutrition assistance.
- Build resilience by investing in smallholder farmers and those on the frontline of the food crisis.
- Secure the future through reform of the multilateral financial system, including fixing the unsustainable debt of low-income countries.
- Enhancing cooperation across UN agencies, development banks and financial institutions, donors, civil society and farmer organizations.

The letter was released to coincide with the 110th birthday of Dr. Norman Borlaug, whose pioneering work to breed improved crops helped avert famine in the mid-20th century. The call to action is also supported by the Hungry for Action campaign, bringing together civil society organizations and campaigners to raise the global food crisis to the top of the agenda and to secure the action needed to break the cycle of crises.

“In our work, we are inspired every day by examples of individuals, communities and organizations leading the charge against hunger and malnutrition, helped by innovation and technology,” the letter said.

“As World Food Prize Laureates who have dedicated decades of our careers to ending hunger, we ask the leaders of the G20 to help secure an updated global plan, backed by evidence and sustained investment, to get the world back on track toward the end of hunger.”

The Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty taskforce is due to meet next in May ahead of a ministerial meeting in Rio de Janeiro in July.

1. **Akinwumi A. Adesina** | President, African Development Bank; 2017 Laureate
2. **Maria Andrade** | Principal Scientist, International Potato Center; 2016 Laureate
3. **David Beckmann** | President Emeritus, Bread for the World; 2010 Laureate
4. **Howarth Bouis** | Emeritus Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute; 2016 Laureate
5. **Mary-Dell Chilton** | Distinguished Science Fellow, Syngenta; 2023 National Medal of Technology & Innovation Recipient; 2013 Laureate
6. **Gebisa Ejeta** | Director, Purdue Center for Global Food Security; 2023 National Medal of Science Recipient; 2009 Laureate
7. **Robert T. Fraley** | Former Executive VP & CTO, Monsanto; 2013 Laureate
8. **Simon N. Groot** | Founder/Honorary Chairman, East-West Seed Group; 2019 Laureate
9. **Modadugu V. Gupta** | Senior Research Fellow, WorldFish; 2005 Laureate
10. **Lawrence Haddad** | Executive Director, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition; 2018 Laureate
11. **Hans R. Herren** | President, Millennium Institute & Biovision Foundation; 1995 Laureate
12. **Gurdev S. Khush** | Professor Emeritus, University of California, Davis; 1996 Laureate
13. **John Agyekum Kufuor** | President of Ghana 2001-2009; 2011 Laureate
14. **Heidi Kühn** | Founder and CEO, Roots of Peace; 2023 Laureate
15. **Rattan Lal** | Director, CFAES Rattan Lal Center for Carbon Management and Sequestration; 2020 Laureate
16. **Jan W. Low** | Managing Director, JWLOW Limited; 2016 Laureate
17. **Jo Luck** | Former President, Heifer International; 2010 Laureate
18. **Robert Mwangi** | Former Sweet Potato Breeder, International Potato Center; 2016 Laureate
19. **David Nabarro** | Co-lead, UN Global Crisis Response Group; 2018 Laureate
20. **Philip E. Nelson** | Professor Emeritus, Purdue University; 2007 Laureate
21. **Per Pinstrup-Andersen** | Professor Emeritus, Cornell University; 2001 Laureate
22. **Cynthia Rosenzweig** | Senior Research Scientist, NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies; 2022 Laureate
23. **Pedro Sanchez** | Professor, Tropical Soils, University of Florida; 2002 Laureate
24. **Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted** | Global Lead for Nutrition and Public Health, WorldFish; 2021 Laureate
25. **Marc Van Montagu** | Chairman, VIB - International Plant Biotechnology Outreach, Belgium; 2013 Laureate
26. **Surinder Vasal** | Former Maize Breeder, CIMMYT; 2000 Laureate
27. **Muhammad Yunus** | Founder, Grameen Bank; Chairman, Yunus Centre; 1994 Laureate

Notes to Editors:

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STATEMENTS FROM LAUREATES:

"It is urgent that the world get back on track to achieving SDG 2, our shared global goal to end hunger in all its forms by 2030. I am glad to join my fellow World Food Prize Laureates in urging the world's leaders to take immediate action that can save millions of lives." - Gebisa Ejeta

"No one is more aware than our G20 leaders that peace and hunger are intimately related. As leaders of the wealthiest nations, we call on them to re-commit to ending hunger—saving lives immediately, while also investing in sustainable farming and delivery systems to ensure a food-secure future for all." - Jan Low

"Hunger and hidden hunger are human-made tragedies being aggravated by poverty, political turmoil, social inequity, poor governance, waste, climate change, soil degradation and the attitude of taking food for granted." - Rattan Lal

About the World Food Prize: The World Food Prize is an international award that honors individuals who have improved the quality, quantity or availability of food worldwide. The Prize was founded by Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, recipient of the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize, for his work that contributed to increases in agricultural outputs which was termed the Green Revolution. Since then, the Prize has been awarded to 53 distinguished individuals during the Norman E. Borlaug International Dialogue. The Dialogue, also known as the Borlaug Dialogue, is a week of events dedicated to an issue surrounding food insecurity or hunger each year.

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