

# FOOD FOR PEACE: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON 2020 PEACE NOBEL FOR THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

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[Alfred Nobel's willed legacy](#) to reward exceptional work that furthers fraternity among nations, eliminates or reduces armies and promotes congresses of peace has brought the Nobel Peace Prize to a variety of causes — from abolition of landmines, nuclear and chemical weapons to addressing climate change, besides conflict resolution. This year's prize [has been awarded to the World Food Programme](#) (WFP), of the UN system, for its contribution to combating hunger in conflict and disaster-struck sites. The [Norwegian Nobel Committee took note of the WFP's life-saving role](#) in the year of the pandemic, staving off catastrophes of hunger in Yemen, Congo, Nigeria, South Sudan and Burkina Faso. The Prize is a fitting tribute to the aid workers who brave hazardous conditions to reach starving people in theatres of war, civil strife and natural disasters, moving food on aircraft, trucks and even all-terrain amphibious vehicles. The decision to honour the WFP echoes the advice of another peace laureate from 1949, Lord John Boyd Orr, the first head of the FAO, that peace cannot be built on empty stomachs. That counsel must resonate even more with all countries and foster greater cooperation to close the WFP's funding gap of \$4.1 billion, as the world's hunger map presents a depressing picture with more than a quarter of the population facing undernourishment in many countries; in strife-ridden Syria, an estimated 4.6 million people survive on food aid. Clearly, without stronger commitment from the big powers, the challenge to feed the millions who suffer acute hunger due to conflict and failed agriculture can never be met.

The recognition that the WFP has received can help the humanitarian organisation prepare for a decade of ambition and help meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Of central importance is SDG 2 — achieving zero hunger by 2030 — a target that requires determination to resolve festering armed conflict, and more fundamentally, to mitigate carbon emissions early and avert effects on agriculture from disastrous climate events. As the Norwegian committee has pointed out, the need for international solidarity and multilateral cooperation is more conspicuous than ever. Democracy also needs strengthening to help achieve equitable food distribution and end hunger, a salutary outcome experienced by free societies that also have unfettered media. Several poor countries have suffered a severe setback to their developmental aspirations due to the pandemic, and lack strong institutional governance to manage the crisis. This is a time for the world's big powers to strengthen the UN system, espousing fraternity, shunning militarism, greening economies and resolving conflicts in the true spirit of the Peace Prize.

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