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Key Articles

Obama to Pick Tom Vilsack To Lead USDA, *Philip Rucker and Dan Morgan, The Washington Post, December 17*

Former Iowa governor Tom Vilsack, a strong proponent of ethanol who made a brief bid for the presidency in 2007, will be named today as President-elect Barack Obama's nominee for agriculture secretary, a senior Democratic official said. Both environmentalists and food industry leaders reacted positively to the choice of Vilsack, a political centrist.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/16/AR2008121602672.html?hpid=topnews>

The petroleum and poverty paradox, *Dick Lugar, Christian Science Monitor, December 11*

Logic says that petroleum-rich countries should be rich. The oil-producing, less-developed nations that reaped a bonanza during the past few years of sky-high oil prices ought to be sitting pretty even as crude prices experience free-fall today. However, things aren't that simple. A classic case is Nigeria, the eighth-largest oil exporter. Despite half a trillion dollars in revenues since the 1960s, poverty has increased, corruption is rife, and violence roils the oil-rich Niger Delta.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/1211/p09s01-coop.html>

Vilsack set to bring pragmatic approach, *Javier Blas and Andrew Ward, Financial Times, December 18, 2008*

Barack Obama's choice yesterday of Tom Vilsack as the next US agriculture secretary is said to bring a pragmatic approach to the "food versus fuel" debate. [Vilsack] has been pressing for a shift to so-called second-generation biofuels, which will use non-food crops, such as grass, and for the phasing out of subsidies to corn-based ethanol. [President-elect Obama] singled out development of "advanced biofuels" as part of his strategy to make US energy independent.

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b7f4b126-cca2-11dd-acbd-000077b07658.html?nclink_check=1

Hunger Afflicts Nearly 1 Billion: Water Scarcity Adds to Woes, *Betsy Pisik, The Washington Times, December 10*

Climate change is shrinking arable lands, thirst is displacing people and creating widespread insecurity, and costs of seeds and fertilizer are likely to increase. Water scarcity is exacerbating the food shortages,

as aquifers, freshwater lakes and other sources of potable water become depleted. Diseases related to dirty water such as cholera, dysentery and the resulting dehydration claim more children's lives than war or AIDS.

<http://washingtontimes.com/news/2008/dec/10/hunger-afflicts-nearly-1-billion/>

\$19 Million Grant to Improve Quality of Household Data on Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa, Merrell Primdahl, *The World Bank, December 11*

In Sub-Saharan Africa knowledge about the farm sector is limited due to a lack of available data on rural households. The World Bank and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are filling this gap by launching the Living Standards Measurement Study that will set up systems of household panel surveys in six African countries. Using a \$19 million grant from the foundation, the Bank's Research Group will carry out the surveys, collecting information about agricultural activities, incomes, food consumption and nonfood expenditures, labor supply, and health and nutrition.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:22003518~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>

Agricultural Development Needed to Quell the Mounting Food Crisis, Leslie Pariseau, *Media Global, December 12*

Today's investment in agriculture only heightens the tension felt throughout the global food system. Though 75% of the world's poor live in rural areas in developing countries, only 4% of development aid is dedicated to agriculture. A report by IFPRI recommended three policy actions: (1) promote pro-poor agricultural growth, (2) reduce market volatility, and (3) expand social protection and child nutrition action. Also, Catherine Ann Bertini, current agricultural advisor to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, asserts the most effective way to combat hunger is to invest in female farmers.

<http://mediaglobal.org/article/2008-12-12/agricultural-investment-needed-to-quell-the-mounting-food-crisis>

Irrigation Key for Africa's Food Security-Diouf, *FAO, December 15*

A conference organized by the FAO entitled, *Water for Agriculture and Energy in Africa: the Challenges of Climate Change*, opened yesterday (Dec. 15) brought together ministers from 53 African countries. Its task is to consider a "Blue Revolution" program designed to harness Africa's largely untapped water resources to its development. The \$65 billion, 20-year program details the irrigation and hydro-energy investments required in each country. The continent needs to triple its food production by 2050 to feed a population that will reach two billion.

<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/8954/icode/>

Can Africa Trade Its Way to Peace?, Herman J. Cohen (Op-ed), *The New York Times, December 15* (Herman J. Cohen was the assistant secretary of state for Africa from 1989 to 1993)

Promotes the creation of a common market in East Africa to end the wars in Rwanda and Congo.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/16/opinion/16cohen.html?ref=opinion>

Financial Crisis Pushing Hungry to the Wall, WFP says, *Simon Deyner, Reuters, December 16*

The U.N.'s World Food Program is pushing to obtain \$5.2 billion in its effort to feed the world's hungry in 2009. Without additional funds more people will go hungry. The rising food and energy prices have hit the poor the hardest: in June the Food and Agriculture Organization said that a total of 75 million people were in hunger but last week they added 40 million more people to that list, meaning that there is over one billion people currently in hunger—a total which amounts to nearly one sixth of humanity.

<http://africa.reuters.com/wire/news/usnDEL347128.html>

News Reports/Policy Briefs

The State of Food Insecurity in the World, *FAO, December 2008*

FAO estimates that between 2003–2005 and 2007 food prices contributed to an increase of 75 million undernourished people, bringing the total to 923 million. Soaring food prices resulted in the highest single increase in hunger since 1990–92. This sharp increase in hunger has also thrown into reverse earlier progress towards achieving the first Millennium Development Goal in that the proportion of undernourished in all major developing regions in the world has risen. The vast majority of poor households are net buyers of food, making them the hardest hit by the sharp increase in food prices. Among the poor, landless and female-headed households are the most vulnerable. NEWS REPORT <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/011/i0291e/i0291e00.pdf>

Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook, *International Fund of Agricultural Development, 2009*

This Sourcebook provides an up-to-date understanding of gender issues and a rich compilation of compelling evidence of good practices and lessons learned to guide practitioners in integrating gender dimensions into agricultural projects and programs. Women play vital roles as agricultural producers yet, relative to men, they have less access to productive assets such as land and financial services. Gender inequalities result in less food being grown, less income being earned, and higher levels of poverty and food insecurity.

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENAGRLIVSOUBOOK/Resources/CompleteBook.pdf>

In Search of Sustainable Security: Linking National Security, Human Security, and Collective Security to Protect America and Our World, *Gayle Smith, Center for American Progress, June 2008*

The pursuit of sustainable security requires more than a reliance on our conventional power to deflect threats to the United States, but also that we maintain the moral authority to lead a global effort to overcome threats to our common security... Among the major challenges that the United States will face over the coming decades are climate change, water scarcity, food insecurity, and environmental degradation. These are challenges that will threaten the economic well-being and security of all countries on earth, and their effects cannot be overcome unless we adopt a global perspective ... A national security approach seeks to prevent or reduce the effects of these trends and threats to the United States; a collective security approach, in contrast, assumes that the United States must act globally—to prevent or manage them.

Three Steps: (1) Prioritize, integrate, and coordinate the global development policies; (2) Modernize our foreign aid system; (3) Re-enter the international arena and create new institutions to manage our collective security

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/06/pdf/sustainable_security1.pdf

The Price of Prevention: Getting Ahead of Global Crises, *Gayle Smith, David Sullivan, and Andrew Sweet, Center for American Progress, November 2008*

Merely reacting to global crises is a costly strategy in terms of both human lives and direct financial costs. In order to get out ahead and prepare itself to face the challenges of the 21st century, the United States should:

- (1) Integrate prevention into the national strategies that guide foreign policy formulation
- (2) Build an integrated, interagency mechanism for strategic planning tied directly to the allocation of resources

- (3) Organize the government to support prevention and ensure coherence across the executive branch
 - (4) Invest intelligence, diplomatic, and economic resources in the most vulnerable areas and regions
 - (5) Re-engage with the international community, and improve and then support international treaties and norms
 - (6) Develop new tools and capabilities for crisis management
 - (7) Address the resource and staff shortages of civilian agencies
- http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/11/pdf/sustainable_security4.pdf

Partnership for Progress: Advancing a New Strategy for Prosperity and Stability in Pakistan and the Region, *Caroline Wadhams, Brian Katulis, Lawrence J. Korb, and Colin Cookman, Center for American Progress, November 2008*

The report argues that Pakistan is one of the most important countries the new administration will have to face and that a new approach must be devised. They name a number of goals and recommendations.

Goals:

Weaken Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and affiliated militant groups; Secure borders between Pakistan and its neighbors; Foster a stable internal political system; improve and integrate its economy with the global economy

Recommendations:

Organize integrated international support to assist Pakistan; Be long term and proactive; Implement policies that recognize the regional dimension of Pakistan's security challenge; deepen the strategic relationship between the United States and Pakistan; etc.

<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/11/pdf/pakistan.pdf>

Transitioning to a New U.S. International Economic Policy: Toward a “Global Deal” to Revive and Broaden the Benefits of Growth, *Richard Samans, Center for American Progress, December 2008*

Instead of expending scarce political capital on economically marginal free trade agreements, the new administration should focus on retooling and realigning the full spectrum of international aid, trade, and monetary policies so that they collectively serve to strengthen aggregate demand worldwide by building a larger, more prosperous global middle class. This Global Deal should mobilize advanced and emerging economies to take coordinated, mutually reinforcing actions in two respects: measures to stabilize the world economy; and structural reforms that diversify the foundations of global growth and broaden its benefits.

“Global Deal” Institution Building: Three Areas

- (1) Help developing countries institute the labor, investor, environmental, and consumer protections
- (2) Update international financial institutions to enhance stability and economic activity
- (3) Improve the management coherence of the international economic system

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/12/pdf/global_deal.pdf

Putting Aid and Trade to Work, *Sabina Dewan and Reuben Briget, Center for American Progress, December 2008*

The time is ripe to examine how aid and trade can both be leveraged as tools for development, not as substitutes for one another, and how development can be leveraged toward securing sustainable security for the United States and its global partners.

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/12/pdf/aid_and_trade.pdf

Obama's Africa Opportunity, *Laura Conley, Center for American Progress, December 2008*

Barack Obama's immense popularity on the African continent is more than a feel good story - it's of vital strategic utility to the United States. As an underdeveloped and unstable continent hangs in the balance, Obama has a unique ability to leverage his influence to root out terrorism and strengthen African states.

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/12/africa_opportunity.html

The Impact of Climate Change and Adaption on Food Production in Low-Income Countries: Evidence from the Nile Basin, Ethiopia, *Mahmud Yesuf, Salvatore Di Falco, Claudia Ringler, and Gunnar Kohlin, IFPRI, December 2008*

This paper presents an empirical analysis of the impact of climate change on food production in Ethiopia. It provides an estimation of the determinants of adaptation to climate change and the implications of these strategies on farm productivity. It found that extension services, as well as access to credit and information on future climate changes, affect adaptation positively and significantly. Farm households with larger access to social capital are more likely to adopt yield-related adaptation strategies.

<http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/dp/IFPRIDP00828.pdf>

The Child Development Index, *Save the Children, December 2008*

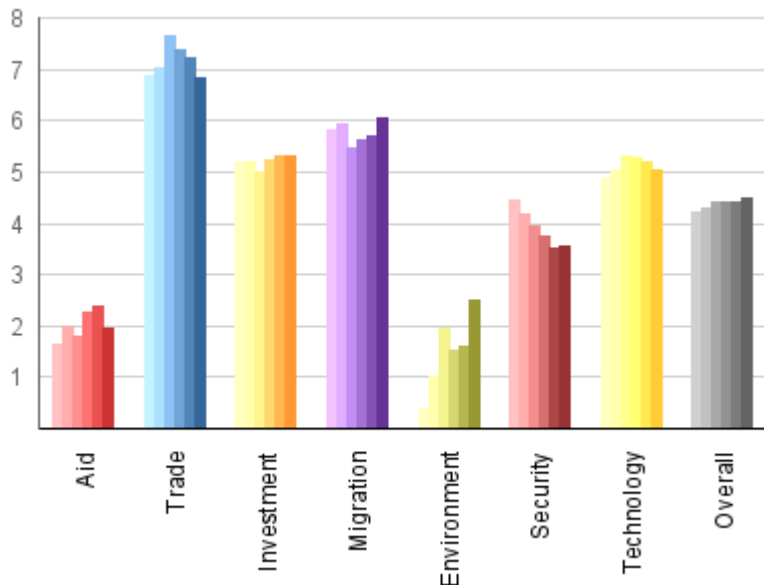
Children are doing worse in Sub-Saharan Africa than any other region. Africa scores 35 in the Index, reflecting the high level of deprivation in primary schooling, child health and child nutrition. It is also making the slowest progress, improving child well-being by only 20% over 1990-2006. Slow progress in reducing child mortality and malnutrition is a particular problem; one in six babies born in Africa will not live to see their fifth birthday.

<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/docs/child-development-index.pdf>

Commitment to Development Index: United States, *David Roodman and Cindy Prieto, Center for Global Development, December 2008*

The United States ranks 17th overall in 2008. U.S. barriers against developing country agricultural exports are lower than those of most CDI countries, and some U.S. policies promote healthy investment in poor countries. But the United States finishes near the bottom of the rankings in both the foreign aid and environment components.

United States Scores 2003-2008



Global Economic Prospects 2009: Commodity Markets at a Cross-roads, *The World Bank, December 10*

The release of this year's global economic prospects finds the world economy at a crossroads. Markets all over the world are engulfed in a global economic crisis, with stock markets sharply down and volatile, almost all currencies having depreciated substantially against the dollar. The report begins by examining the medium-term implications of this crisis for developing-country growth, inflation, and world trade.

[http://www-](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/12/11/000333037_2008121100555/Rendered/PDF/468190ENGLISH01801WebPDF100Overview.pdf)

[wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/12/11/000333037_2008121100555/Rendered/PDF/468190ENGLISH01801WebPDF100Overview.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/12/11/000333037_2008121100555/Rendered/PDF/468190ENGLISH01801WebPDF100Overview.pdf) (Overview)

[http://www-](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/12/10/000333037_2008121024620/Rendered/PDF/468200PUB0Box3117799140Dec091020081.pdf)

[wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/12/10/000333037_2008121024620/Rendered/PDF/468200PUB0Box3117799140Dec091020081.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/12/10/000333037_2008121024620/Rendered/PDF/468200PUB0Box3117799140Dec091020081.pdf) (Full Report)

Global Economic Prospects: Commodities at the Crossroads, 2009, *World Bank, December 2008*

The report indicates that the global economy is transitioning from a period of strong developing-country led growth to one of uncertainty. GEP 2009 projects that world GDP growth will be 2.5% in 2008 and 0.9% for 2009. Developing countries will likely grow by 4.5% next year, down from 7.9% in 2007, while growth in high-income countries will turn negative. With world trade volumes projected to contract 2.1% in 2009, developing countries will see a big drop in their exports. Tighter credit conditions are expected to see investment growth in both developing and developed countries slow in 2009. The World Bank Group is increasing its support for developing countries to \$100 billion over the next three years.

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGEP2009/Resources/10363_WebPDF-w47.pdf

Accelerating Catch-up: Tertiary Education for Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, *The World Bank, 2009*

This report argues that if a growth surge is to stimulate higher and sustained growth rates in African countries, a significant increase in investment in physical and human capital is needed over an extended period. This report stresses that there is an urgent need for countries in Sub-Sahara Africa to acquire the capabilities that spawn new industries that create more productive jobs and a wider range of exports. This volume spells out the case for more knowledge-intensive growth, which demands increasing

attention to secondary and postsecondary education. Despite rising enrollment in tertiary-level institutions, the numbers of students graduating are pitifully small.

http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/10/29/000020953_20081029143038/Rendered/PDF/462750PUB0Box3101OFFICIALOUSE0ONLY1.pdf

Transition Team Documents

MFAN Strategy letter & Report, November 10

Letter announcing MFAN's recommendations for President-elect Obama's transition team; and a report which lays out a plan of action to advance development initiatives abroad.

http://www.modernizingforeignassistance.org/documents/MFAN_Letter_111108a.pdf

http://www.modernizingforeignassistance.org/documents/MFAN_Transition%20Strategy_111008c.pdf

Forging a New Shield, Project on National Security Reform, November 2008

The report provides a comprehensive historical analysis of the current U.S. national security system, an evaluation of the system's performance since its inception in 1947, and a detailed analysis of its current capabilities. On the basis of these assessments, it proposes a fully integrated program of reform and renewal.

<http://www.pnsr.org/data/files/pnsr%20forging%20a%20new%20shield.pdf>

President Transition Briefing : From Vision to Action, Recognizing the Potential for Development in an Obama Administration, David Lane, ONE, December 2008

This document offers a proposal for a series of short-term and urgent actions that could be taken within the first few months of the new Administration and a series of longer-term efforts that can be undertaken in 2009 and beyond. Many of these commitments mirror those already introduced by the campaign and, in total, all can be accomplished within the framework of doubling foreign assistance. The document focuses solely on investments in development and does not attempt to envelop policies on security or conflict that are equally critical to these countries' futures. Similarly, it does not address all related topics that may emerge, such as the effort to harness carbon financing to generate additional resources to help developing countries adapt to climate change.

<http://www.one.org/obamatransition/>

President-elect Obama Presented with Urgent Call to Action, U.S. Food Crisis Working Group, December 15, 2008

As food banks scramble to respond to a dramatic increase in demand this holiday season, while unemployment surges and farmers face plummeting crop prices, a broad sector of groups are calling on the incoming Obama administration to put hunger and the global food crisis front and center on its list of top priorities.

<http://www.tradeobservatory.org/library.cfm?refid=104845>

Upcoming Events

Is It Inevitable That Foreign Aid Can No Longer Reduce Overall Poverty Levels? Commentary from 55 Years of Experience

Presenter: John Mellor

Location: International Food Policy Research Institute, Tuesday, 13 January 2009, 3:30-5:00 pm

In most Asian countries, the proportion of the population in poverty has declined dramatically. Poverty reduction was most rapid in the 1970s and 1980s during the Green Revolution, and was greatly assisted by foreign aid. Sub-Saharan Africa also experienced a decade of declining poverty levels – primarily in the 1960s. In the past several decades, however, low-income countries have not experienced any measurable improvement in poverty or food security, and their agricultural sectors have generally not performed well, either. Part of the reason that low-income countries have met with limited success in terms of poverty reduction and agricultural growth is that there have been major changes in foreign aid allocations and operating procedures in recent years.

John Mellor is currently President of John Mellor Associates, Inc., a policy consulting firm. Prior to that he was Vice-President of Abt Associates, Director of the International Food Policy Research Institute, and Chief Economist of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID.)

<http://www.ifpri.org/events/seminars/2009/20090113aid.asp>

12th Ordinary Session of the African Union Summit: Infrastructure Development in Africa, Addis Ababa, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

The AU Summit will hold according to the following schedule:

- The 17th Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC): 26-27 January 2009;
- The 14th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council (EC): 29- 30 January 2009; and
- The 12th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government: 1-3rd February 2009.

[http://www.africa-](http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Conferences/2009/january/summit/pr/communique%20de%20presse%20en.doc)

[union.org/root/au/Conferences/2009/january/summit/pr/communique%20de%20presse%20en.doc](http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Conferences/2009/january/summit/pr/communique%20de%20presse%20en.doc)

Agricultural Development

Donors' Statement in Support of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP), USAID, November 29

The International Conference on Financing to Develop Conference met in Doha, Qatar on November 29 through December 2. They committed their support to African countries' programs and action plans to increase agricultural growth in line with the principles of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program. In addition to mitigating the effect of increased food prices, the support extends to enhancing African capacity to develop and manage water resources infrastructure and to employ appropriate agricultural practices that maximize the efficient use of these water resources.

<http://www.usaid.gov/press/releases/2008/ps081129.html>

IMF Executive Board Completes Fifth Review Under PRGF Arrangement with Benin and Approves US\$1.3 Million Disbursement, IMF, December 15

The funds distributed to Benin were approved under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility arrangement and meant to help stimulate agriculture. “The authorities have allowed full pass-through of international prices, accompanied by well-targeted safety net measures. This will help the economy adjust and foster a positive agricultural supply response.” They call for further reforms.

<http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2008/pr08323.htm>

IFAD Sanctions \$30.17 Million Loan to India, Press Trust of India, December 16

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has sanctioned a loan of \$30.17 million to India to empower rural women and reduce poverty in India’s Mid-Gangetic plains region. The Mid-Gangetic Plains constitute India's largest pocket of poverty. The rural economy suffers from acute population pressure, low crop productivity and inequitable land tenure. The program is expected to mobilize more than 6,000 self-help groups and reduce poverty by investing in agriculture, focusing on scheduled castes, tribes and vulnerable groups, and equipping people with the necessary assets and skills for self-employment.

<http://www.ptinews.com/pti%5Cptisite.nsf/0/CC30228F092E95166525751E00271289?OpenDocument>

Food Crisis

The Food Crisis Isn't Over, Joachim von Braun, Nature, December 11

Once the financial crisis gripped the world, food prices declined and agricultural concerns lost their sense of immediacy. The credit crunch is likely to have strong and long-lasting effects on emerging economies and on the people most in need however. Recession threatens to cut the income and employment of the most vulnerable and undermine investment in agricultural production. The economic bailout and suggested market regulations now being discussed will not protect food prices from future spikes.

<http://www.nature.com.proxy.cc.uic.edu/nature/journal/v456/n7223/full/456701a.html>

Has the Food Crisis Abated?: A Q&A With Joachim von Braun, Director General of the International Food Policy Research Group, David Bellio, Scientific American, December 15

The price of staple food has recently decreased in the last couple of months, leading some to believe that the food crisis has subsided. Despite the lowered prices, however, the growing recession has led to decreasing employment for the world’s poor while also stemming capital for agricultural investment. Mr. Braun argues that the food crisis and the financial crisis, while originating from different causes, have become intricately intertwined; he says greater agricultural R&D is needed to curtail the further advance of the food crisis.

<http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=has-the-food-crisis-abated>

Economic crisis threatens “potato boom”: Expansion of world potato production is vital to food security, FAO, December 15

The potato is the world’s number one non-cereal crop with total production reaching a record 325 million tons in 2007. The current boom in potato agriculture is faltering, however, as the economic slowdown is reducing investment, trade, and potato farmers’ access to credit. In Africa and Asia potato yields average just over 15 tons per hectare, less than half of which is reached in Western Europe and North America. In order to improve this figure FAO and the International Potato Center are calling for

better quality planting material, varieties of potatoes that are more resistant to pests, diseases, drought and climate change, and farming systems that make more sustainable use of natural resources.

<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/8901/icode/>

Cameroon: Boost Maize Production or Face Food Crisis, Local NGO Warns, *IRIN, December 15*

Still hampered by the food crisis, many Cameroonians are turning to maize for their sustenance on account of its affordable price. Unfortunately, increasing demand and heightened production costs are threatening to trigger a bout of severe food insecurity—in the past year alone, the price of maize has doubled to 47 cents per kilogram. In addition to being consumed by over 12 million Cameroonians each day, maize is also essential for animal feed. In fact, 70 percent of all maize goes to feeding livestock, making an increase in its price an especially dire situation.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=81967>

World Goes to GM Crops to Tackle Food Crisis, *Commodity Online India, December 16*

Higher costs, population growth, drought and other setbacks linked to global climate change are pressuring world food supplies. Given these pressures, countries that had previously been opposed to genetically modified crops have recently been softening their stance and watering down their restrictions.

<http://www.truthabouttrade.org/content/view/12995/54/>

Water Scarcity

Water: Forgotten in the Food Crisis, *Colin Chartres, Science Alert, December 12*

When examining the causes of the food crisis, such factors as the growing population, urbanization, dietary changes, biofuel production, and climate change have all been cited. Few commentators have mentioned the role that the declining availability of water has played in the crisis. Although genetically modified crops may help solve this problem, this potential solution will fail unless attention is paid to where the water is going to come from. The article claims that water scarcity affects those residing in the poorest countries the most and that there is a need for the construction of more water infrastructure (i.e., dams and reservoirs).

<http://www.sciencealert.com.au/opinions/20081212-18577.html>

South Africa's ticking water bomb, *Eleanor Momberg, The Sunday Independent, December 14*

Dr. Turton, a fellow at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), warns that the water crisis in SA would hamper the country's future economic development. The link between health and the quality of water became clear in recently with the outbreak of cholera in Zimbabwe because of the collapse of water purification systems and increased pollution in rivers. The United Nations 2008 Global Environment Outlook Programme stated that more than 2 million people in the developing world die each year from waterborne diseases. The report added that, by 2025, water use will rise by 50 percent in developing countries and by 18 percent in the developed world.

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=13&art_id=vn20081214084955869C275213

Women in Development

A Mother's Final Look at Life, *Kevin Sullivan, Washington Post, December 12*

500,000 women a year die due to complications in childbirth, almost all of which occur in the developing world where extreme poverty and poor health care make maternal mortality a pressing problem. As compared to maternity death rates in some Western countries (i.e., United States: 1 out of 4,800; Ireland: 1 out of 48,000), 1 in 8 Sierra Leone women will die while giving birth.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/11/AR2008101102165.html>

'This is the Destiny of Girls', *Mary Jordan, Washington Post, December 13*

This article documents the plight of girls growing up in India. It states that half of the girls over 15 are illiterate, twice the rate for men, and millions of poor girls are pulled out of school to help at home, often when they are 10 to 12 years old. The death rate of girls under 5 is also higher than that of boys since the male children are given scarce food and medicine before the female children.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/12/AR2008121204265.html>

In Africa, One Family's Struggle with the Global Food Crisis, *Kevin Sullivan, Washington Post, December 15*

This article tells the story of Ruth Bamogo, a poor Burkina Faso woman fighting to provide enough food for her children, her husband, and herself. In Burkina Faso, as in much of the developing world, women are responsible for feeding their families but when it comes time to eat, men and children eat first and women eat whatever is left. As a result, the rising food prices have made it more difficult for women to have enough to eat.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/07/20/AR2008072001580.html>

USAID Provides \$3.7 Million in New Alliance with CARE, *USAID, December 16*

USAID gives \$3.7 million dollars to help rural women in Africa. The goal of the program is to promote girl leaders in vulnerable communities by: (1) cultivating opportunities for girls to practice their leadership skills; (2) creating public-private partnerships to promote leadership; and (3) enhancing global knowledge to implement and promote girls' leadership programs.

<http://www.usaid.gov/press/releases/2008/pr081216.html>

Poverty and Hunger Relief

Fed-Ex to Bottom Billion, *Arnaud de Borchgrave, The Washington Times, December 15*

The World Food Program (WFP) prides itself on its ability to provide food to some of the world's most starved areas. The Program feeds over 3 million people a day and can supply any point on the globe with lifesaving food within less than 24 hours. For the first time in the Program's history, however, it is having problems buying enough food to feed the areas in most need, despite a doubling in their food budget to \$5 billion. Furthermore, 90 percent of their budget goes to staving off the effects of natural disasters while only 10 goes to developmental concerns.

<http://washingtontimes.com/news/2008/dec/15/fed-ex-to-bottom-billion/>

World Food Programme in Plea for \$5.2 Billion, *Javier Blas, Financial Times, December 15*

The World Food Programme has launched an "urgent appeal" to governments to donate a record \$5.2bn, as it confronts an increase in aid recipients because of the economic crisis at a time when food prices are high and its coffers are empty. In spite of a drop in wholesale food prices and a 10.6 percent increase in its budget, the WFP's funding needs are increasing as more countries ask for food aid relief.

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f799a622-cace-11dd-87d7-000077b07658.html?nclick_check=1

WFP's Head Hails India's Innovative Hunger Solution, *Malaysia Sun, December 16*

WFP has pledged to support India in its campaign to achieve a 'hunger free India'. India is home to more than 230 million undernourished individuals—one quarter of the global population of malnourished people. It is estimated that 43 per cent of children under five in India are underweight. WFP is currently developing a 'smart' nutritional intervention for children of 6 - 24 months. Designed for India, this new, ready-to-use fortified food has already provoked interest elsewhere in Asia and in Africa. Other innovative hunger solutions include a pilot project to improve the nutritional status of people with HIV and AIDS. WFP is also working on rice fortification which has huge potential to reduce micronutrient deficiencies.

<http://story.malaysiasun.com/index.php/ct/9/cid/b8de8e630faf3631/id/442821/cs/1/>

Health Crisis

UN Says Cholera Death Toll in Zimbabwe Reaches 978, *New York Times, December 15*

The total number of suspected cases of cholera in Zimbabwe has risen to 18,413 since the start of the outbreak in August. They warn that this figure could rise to 60,000 if the outbreak is not contained. This epidemic is largely a result of both the country's poor health care system and its deteriorating water supply systems.

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2008/12/15/world/AP-UN-UN-Zimbabwe-Cholera.html>

Zimbabwe's Neighbors Aid Campaign, *BBC, December 17*

Southern African countries are launching an urgent campaign to help Zimbabwe fight cholera and overcome its acute food shortage.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7787950.stm>