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gLOBALIZATION could help OVERCOME **h**UNGER

by Ramesh Jaura

BONN, Sept. 18—Nearly one in six people worldwide go hungry and all of globalization's gloss cannot dull this stark reality, says an eminent development economist.

However, globalization by itself does not cause or aggravate hunger, added professor Joachim von Braun, a former director of the World Bank-funded International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in Washington.

In fact, globalization can help overcome hunger—if industrialized states provide developing countries access to the necessary modern technology and know-how to do so.

But technology and know-how transfer from the "North" to

the "South" has so far been only partial and not at a sufficient level to overcome hunger, said von Braun, who heads the North-South Center for Development Research at Bonn University, at a press meeting convened by the non-governmental organization Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, which is the German chapter of the worldwide Freedom from Hunger Campaign.

At the same meeting, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (German Agro Action) president Ingeborg Shaeuble said "The issue of right to own and till the land has gained importance in view of the increasing number of protests and actions by the landless in Asia, Latin America and Africa."

Last year's World Food Summit in Rome emphasized the right of access to land by peasants and small farmers, and the need for agricultural reform in countries where large tracts of land are owned by people who are not putting it to productive use.

Von Braun pointed out that strengthening the rights of the landless and hungry should be part of efforts to promote democracy and participation. "Political globalization" could in fact back such efforts.

But at present, the globalization process was not enough to combat hunger, even though many developing countries were expected to achieve high growth rates in the next decade, argued von Braun.

Expected growth rates of 7.6 percent in East Asia, 5.9 percent in South Asia and four percent in Africa, as forecast by

multilateral institutions like the World Bank, would still not alleviate hunger because it would leave the deprived and the debilitated on the sidelines.

Von Braun's warning follows a United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report that concluded that growth in the world economy this year would not make "a significant dent in poverty in the South and unemployment in the North."

Hunger, said von Braun, is a crucial cause of poverty. From an economic viewpoint, it is tantamount to "an immense waste of resources—not least the loss of millions of potentially productive people today and the decades to come."

In the past two decades, the proportion of the hungry in the developing world has declined from 36 percent to 20 percent, though hunger still afflicts 900 million people. The sixth world food survey, published by the Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) last year, found that close to 255 million people suffered from hunger or were undernourished in South Asia. In sub-Saharan Africa, they numbered 212 million and in North Africa, 327 million. Some 64 million people went hungry or suffered from undernutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean.

As many as 190 million children in the world—nearly two-and-a-half times the total population of Germany—were undernourished, a total that is decreasing rather slowly. "Insufficient nutritional intake," or hunger is cited as a cause

in 55 percent of child deaths.

But how to tackle the problem of hunger? "Equip them with market-economy opportunities," says von Braun. There should be no dithering on launching structural reforms. The governments should pursue a solid budgetary and monetary policy. Agriculture should have priority.

New genetic technologies should be deployed to improve the quality of farm produce, make crops resistant to pesticides and raise production. Thereby, the interests of small farmers in the developing countries should be particularly kept in mind.

Von Braun also pleads for increasing spending on agricultural research expenditure in the developing countries from 0.5 percent of the total value of their farm production to 2 percent.

Yet another important step towards alleviating hunger, according to von Braun, are the so-called food-for-work projects. Nearly 20 billion dollars would be required to provide productive employment to one-tenth of the poor in the low-income countries.

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