

Statement of Ministry of Women and Child Development on Global Hunger Report 2021

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Following are the observations of Ministry of Women and Child Development on the Global Hunger Report 2021, released on 14th October, 2021 by Concern Worldwide and Welt Hunger Hilfe, the publishing agencies:

“It is shocking to find that the Global Hunger Report 2021 has lowered the rank of India on the basis of FAO estimate on proportion of undernourished population, which is found to be devoid of ground reality and facts and suffers from serious methodological issues. The publishing agencies of the Global Hunger Report, Concern Worldwide and Welt Hunger Hilfe, have not done their due diligence before releasing the report.

The methodology used by FAO is unscientific. They have based their assessment on the results of a ‘four question’ opinion poll, which was conducted telephonically by Gallup. The scientific measurement of undernourishment would require measurement of weight and Height, whereas the methodology involved here is based on Gallup poll based on pure telephonic estimate of the population. The report completely disregards Government’s massive effort to ensure food security of the entire population during the covid period, verifiable data on which are available. The opinion poll does not have a single question on whether the respondent received any food support from the Government or other sources. The representativeness of even this opinion poll is doubtful for India and other countries.

It is noted with surprise, from the FAO report ‘The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021’, that other four countries of this region – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, have not been affected at all by Covid-19 pandemic induced loss of job/business and reduction in income levels, rather they have been able to improve their position on the indicator ‘proportion of undernourished population’ by 4.3%, 3.3%, 1.3% and 0.8% points respectively during the period 2018-20 over 2017-19.

The Global Hunger Report 2021 and FAO report on ‘The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021’ have completely ignored the following facts available in public domain:

- i. As part of Economic Response to Covid-19, Government of India has implemented additional nation-wide schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojna (PMGKAY) and Atma Nirbhar Bharat Scheme (ANBS).
- ii. Under PMGKAY, Government of India has made allocation of food grains @ 5 kg per person per month free of cost for around 80 Crore (800 million) beneficiaries of the 36 States/UTs covered under National Food Security Act (Antyodaya Anna Yojana and Priority Households) including those covered under Direct Benefit Transfer for the period April to November 2020 and again for the period May to November 2021.
- iii. During the year 2020, 3.22 Crore (32.2 million) Metric Tons of food grains and during the year 2021, about 3.28 Crore (32.8 million) Metric Tons of food grains have been allocated free of cost under PMGKAY scheme to approximately 80 Crore (800 million) NFSA beneficiaries.
- iv. In addition to food grains, pulses have been provided @ 1 kg per household per month for the period April to November 2020 free of cost to all beneficiaries under NFSA covering 19.4 Crore (194 million) households.
- v. Under ANBS, Government made allocation of about 8 Lakh (800 thousand) Metric Tons of additional free of cost food grains covering all the States/UTs for migrants/stranded migrants who were neither covered under NFSA nor State Scheme PDS cards, @ 5 kg per person per month free

- of cost for a period of two months, May and June 2020. In addition to food grains, about 0.27 Lakh (27 thousand) Metric Tons whole chana was allocated under ANBS for this period.
- vi. The allocation of free food grains, pulses/whole chana under PMGKAY and ANBS was in addition to normal allocation done under the NFSA
 - vii. In addition to PMGKAY and ANBS, Government of India has allocated food grains under Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic) for all the beneficiaries to whom ration cards have been issued by the State Governments under their own schemes but who are not covered under NFSA for three months from April to June 2020 at Rs. 21 per Kg. wheat and Rs. 22/- per Kg. rice. There is no upper limit for allocation of food grains. This scheme has been extended beyond May 2021.
 - viii. To prevent disruption in the employment of the wage-earners below Rs 15,000/- per month in organized sector businesses having less than 100 workers, government paid 24 percent of their monthly wages into their PF accounts for three months, April to June 2020.
 - ix. MNREGA wages were increased by Rs 20/- with effect from 1 April 2020 to provide an additional Rs 2,000/- benefit annually to a worker to benefit approximately 13.62 Crore (136.2 million) families.
 - x. The first instalment of Rs 2,000/- due in 2020-21 was front-loaded and paid in April 2020 itself under the PM KISAN Yojana to benefit 8.7 Crore (87 million) farmers.
 - xi. A total of 20.4 Crore (204 million) Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna women account-holders were given ex-gratia of Rs. 500/- per month for three months, April to June 2020.
 - xii. Limit of collateral free lending was increased from Rs 10 to Rs 20 Lakhs (Rs. 1 million to 2 million) for women organised through 63 Lakh (6.3 million) Self Help Groups (SHGs) supporting 6.85 Crore (68.5 million) households.
 - xiii. Government gave Rs 1,000/- per month from April to June 2020 to 3 Crore (30 million) aged widows and people in Divyang category who are vulnerable due to economic disruption caused by COVID-19 to tide over difficulties.

As per this report, India's position on the first indicator, child mortality, has improved in 2021 compared with 2020. Position on two indicators, i.e., child wasting and child stunting, has remained unchanged in 2021 compared with 2020."

BY/AS

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