

GENERAL SYNOD 2013

Motion No 6

Proposed by Mr David Thomas, Diocese of Down & Dromore

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Archbishop, Members of Synod,

My name is David Thomas from Down and Dromore Diocese and I'm very pleased to propose this motion in support of the Enough Food for Everyone IF campaign.

I wonder if you've ever been hungry? I'm sure most of us were feeling hungry just before the lunch break today, but I wonder if you've ever really been hungry? Those of you who fast maybe know what it is to feel hungry for a day or two, through choice. But, I wonder if anyone has experienced what it's like to have no choice, but to go hungry day after day. And worse than that to watch your children going hungry knowing that it's damaging their health and yet having no power to change their situation or your own. Sadly, this is the reality for one in eight people in the world today who go to bed hungry every night.

People like Salale Jaro who I met in Boricha, Southern Ethiopia in 2009. She had 6 children and was surviving by eating the roots of a tree that she had growing near her house. She came to a food distribution centre looking for help, but all the aid had already been allocated to other families. To give her aid would have meant denying someone else. So she had to be added to the list for the next months distribution. The food distribution centre that I visited had funding to feed 10,000 people for a period of 2 months, but there were over 40,000 in Boricha alone in need and an estimated 8 million across Ethiopia in urgent need of food aid.

Aid is essential and it is life-saving, but alone it is never sufficient and should never be the end goal. The aim of the Enough Food for Everyone IF campaign is altogether more

ambitious than that. We don't just want to feed hungry people, but rather to see a world where people are afforded the dignity to feed themselves. We want an end to the injustice of hunger and poverty and that will only happen if we tackle the root causes of hunger and challenge the systems and structures that make and keep people poor. We need to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke if we want to set the oppressed free.

This year is a huge opportunity for the church in Ireland to speak out on those global issues that trap people in poverty. The UK government will host the G8 summit in Northern Ireland in June and the Irish government holds the presidency of the EU. When we add our voices to others calling for action then G8 leaders will hear and will not be able to ignore the needs and the rights of the poorest and most vulnerable people.

The Enough Food for Everyone IF campaign is a coalition of almost 200 organisations including Christian Aid, Tearfund, Trócaire, Fields of Life, the Irish Council of Churches, Concern, Oxfam, Save the Children and many others. They are calling for action on four big IFs that IF effectively tackled at the G8 summit could mark the beginning of the end for the global hunger crisis.

There is enough food in the world for everyone:

IF the G8 keep their promises on aid and climate finance

IF the G8 stop big companies grabbing land from poor farmers

IF the G8 take action to stop tax dodging by multinational companies

IF the G8 push companies and governments to be open and honest so they can be held to account

In the run up to the G8 members of the campaign are working really hard to raise awareness amongst the public about these issues and there will be an opportunity on Saturday 15th June for thousands of supporters of the IF campaign to gather in Botanic Gardens in Belfast to show the G8 the strength of public support for action on hunger. I

would encourage you to come along on the 15th June and bring your friends, family and congregations.

Then on Sunday 16th June on the eve of the G8 there will be a joint service at St Macartin's Cathedral and St Michaels Parish in Enniskillen with the Archbishop of York Dr John Sentamu as the main speaker.

And then on Monday 17th June the G8 summit will begin and the eyes of the world will be on Enniskillen and it is our hope that the pressure generated by this campaign will ensure that the tackling hunger is high on the agenda and that the Northern Ireland G8 summit will be remembered as the year the world took its first great leap towards ending hunger once and for all.

Please ensure that the Church of Ireland takes its place at the forefront of these calls for justice for people like Salale Jaro and millions others just like her around the world. I hope that you will join me in supporting this motion.