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Since the beginning of the food prices crisis, Action contre la Faim (Action against Hunger - ACF) insists on the emergency to treat malnourished children. Before this global crisis, they were already more than 19 millions to suffer from severe acute malnutrition and one child out of ten suffered from global acute malnutrition. How many are they going to be tomorrow if nothing is done very soon?

Although many countries are seriously affected by the food crisis, most of the affected children are still not treated. However, they could be 80% treated because of the evolution of the treatment – especially through the outpatient methodology.

Furthermore, the improvement of the technical know-how and research enables now to foresee when and where a nutritional crisis may break out. However malnutrition is yet killing hundreds of thousands of children every year.

Is it due to a lack of political will, scientific research, amount or use of funds ? What is sure is that malnutrition is not a priority for the international community and neither for the most affected countries.

With the March hunger riots the occidental world rediscovered that millions of people are starving - despite these riots did not happen in the most malnourished countries : the hunger is often a silent phenomenon. These events mobilised at that time the representatives of the rich countries and the senior officials of the main international institutions. Some promises have been done and the commitments were multiplied. In practice we have assisted to several mechanisms of budget reorientation but rare were the new economic efforts to help the most vulnerable to cope with the crisis.

Above all, we considered too weak the part devolved to the essential fight against malnutrition. The initiatives for the local farming development are essential to respond to the causes of the crisis but we must not forget the daily emergency killing a child every 5 seconds. Our field work remember us every day the hunger consequences. Half of the deaths of the under five years children are directly or indirectly linked to malnutrition. Millions of other children are lifelong marked by an insufficient nutritional intake during their first months. The solution must be immediate and need important means that cannot be hidden behind the necessary reforms of national and international agricultural policies. The millions of vulnerable children, not yet severely malnourished before the food prices increase, are more lives at risk if nothing is done in the coming months to prevent this hecatomb.

With this symposium, ACF and its partners wish to focus the discussions on malnutrition: the mobilisation of everyone, academics, humanitarians, politicians, etc. can lead to collective awareness and action in order to stop the hunger threat for millions of people.