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Mary's Meals Statement on World Food Day and the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

Bloomfield, N.J. – October 16, 2023 – Monday, October 16 is World Food Day marking the founding of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization which is dedicated to achieving food security for all. It is followed on Tuesday, October 17 by the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty to promote understanding and dialogue between people living in poverty and the wider society.

In a deepening hunger crisis affecting more than [735 million people](#) of whom more than 60 million are children out of school, hunger is both a cause and result of poverty in which women and children comprise an estimated 60% of the world's hungry.

Both World Food Day and International Day for the Eradication of Poverty reinforce the critical work of organizations on the frontline of feeding in the most vulnerable countries where poverty is extensive.

To address both hunger and poverty, international school-feeding charity, Mary's Meals carries out its work in 18 countries with a simple, locally-managed solution to world hunger: feed children where they learn to enable the education that can help break the cycle of poverty.

"Mary's Meals is a global movement playing a crucial part in working towards ending child hunger. School meals provide one very important way to ensure children receive a nutritious meal daily and gain access to education," explained Mary's Meals USA Executive Director, Terry Bonet.

"We've seen incredibly [positive results](#) during 21 years of school feeding – through crises and conflicts – and see a new generation of young people, who have received school meals and an education working toward bright futures," Bonet added.

The causes of hunger are complex and there are many issues compounding the current situation – poverty, war, displacement, rising costs, the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and climate change. All present huge challenges for governments, organizations, and communities while more people slip deeper into poverty and hunger.

School-feeding programs are an effective way to alleviate immediate hunger among children while promoting access to education. Mary's Meals currently reaches 2,429,182 children with healthy school meals in 18 countries every school day in countries like Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Malawi, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.

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About Mary's Meals

Now in its 21st year, [Mary's Meals](#) is a global movement that sets up school-feeding programs in some of the world's most vulnerable communities, where conflict, poverty and hunger often prevent children from gaining an education. Mary's Meals works with in-country volunteers to provide one daily nutritious meal in a place of learning to attract children into the classroom to receive an education. This simple solution to help end world hunger also enables children to lift themselves from the cycle of hunger and poverty.

Mary's Meals began by feeding 200 children in Malawi in 2002. Today, the organization feeds 2,429,182 hungry children every school day in 5,084 schools across five continents in the following countries: Benin, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Myanmar, Niger, South Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Mary's Meals collaborates with the U.N. World Food Program, partners with USAID in Liberia and is part of the global School Meals Coalition, an emerging initiative of governments and partners to drive actions that can urgently re-establish, improve, and scale up food and education systems. For more information about Mary's Meals, visit marysmealsusa.org.

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