



SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

World Food Day: 16 October 2008

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World Food Day highlights the human right of each person to food and provides a platform to increase awareness of the plight of the 850 million malnourished people around the world, most of whom live in developing countries and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. Due to global warming and the bio-fuel boom, this number may even increase in the near future. Stemming from such information the aptly chosen theme for World Food Day 2008 was “Food security: the challenge of climate change and bio-energy”.

World Food Day was observed on 16 October 2008 by the University of South Africa’s (Unisa) Department of Agriculture, Animal Health and Human Ecology (DoAAHHE), in partnership with the Thembelihle Farmers’ Association. What deserves special mention from the day’s events was the launch of a project aimed at empowering the Mokobobo farming community in Lenasia. The aim of the project is to establish a community-based initiative that will equip farmers with skills in vegetable production, farm business management and the marketing of farm produce. These skills are envisioned to enable the farmers to realise sustainable livelihoods. The DoAAHHE envisages investing its resources and expertise in this community development initiative and developing a collaborative partnership with the community. It is hoped that the initiative will assist the Mokobobo farming community to enjoy improved food security and empower them to generate an income. The DoAAHHE, in turn, will benefit from the opportunity to improve its research and teaching capacity. Unisa’s Institute for Social and Health Sciences played a mediatory role between the farmers and the DoAAHHE.

This initiative is important as it provides a platform for the farmers to alleviate poverty on a community level. In the same vein, violence and poverty have been linked, as much research has indicated that violence often grows from



conditions of poverty. Thus, survival creates a need in people to possess at all costs what they cannot have through practices of freedom. When communities are unable to resolve disagreements, they may become deadly, resulting in violence. Thus, while alleviating poverty begins at a local level, such initiatives on a national level may reduce violent crime within communities and foster safety within them.

