

India tops in underweight children in the world - Tamamura

Bhubaneswar, Oct 25: The number of underweight children in India are highest in the world with over 50 million under the age group of five reported to be malnourished, according to World Food Programme India Director Mihoko Tamamura.

Releasing Food Security Atlas of Rural Orissa at a function here, Ms Tamamura said the changing scenario of rising food prices had raised new concerns for food security.

It had been estimated that globally 130 million people had become food insecure due to high food prices, in addition to the existing 850 million.

She stressed that a comprehensive strategy has to be adopted to tackle the growing menace of the food and nutritional insecurity.

The World Food Programme (WFP), Ms Tamamura said, had come out with a series of food insecurity atlases, in collaboration with the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation to map the food insecurity in the country.

The most significant of the atlases, she said, was to mainstream the issue of food security besides identifying their incidence among the major states.

She said on behalf of the WFP, the Institute of Human Development (IHD) had prepared state specific atlases with comprehensive analysis at district and regional levels which would help the state government identify the districts at various levels of food insecurity and help in convergence of complimentary programmes of the government in addressing under-nutrition and child mortality in the country.

Ms Tamamura said the Atlas would mark the beginning of a comprehensive system for the state and would enable more rational allocation of resources to the most vulnerable areas for improving the food and nutritional security of the local communities.

She regretted that India performances in reducing hunger and malnutrition was not satisfactory and the progress was unequal among the states.

The Orissa atlas had explained the factors that contributed to a set of critical outcome indicators and suggested that the districts of Kandhamal, Malkangiri, Gajapati, Rayagada and Nuapada in Orissa were extremely insecure.

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