Ever since I can remember, charities have been bombarding television screens with adverts, pleading for people to donate money and resources. Decades later they are still begging for donations, so when will this vicious cycle end? When will the advert of the malnourished child with a fly in his eye have enough food? Maybe when the world stops spending large sums of money on funding senseless wars. With four million newborns dying within the first month after birth, the lack of human compassion is decreasing drastically as people turn their attention towards the latest political scandal and regime change drama.

Perhaps the problem is because there is not enough food produced to feed the growing population. However the world hunger and poverty report released in 2011 revealed that world agriculture produces 17% more calories per person today than it did 30 years ago, meaning everyone should receive a minimum of 2,720 kilocalories a day. Well, that can’t be the reason why 925 million people are undernourished.

The frightening issue of malnutrition and death in children aside, poor health creates low levels of energy and mental impairment. These factors then lead to reduced ability to work and learn, thus leading to even greater poverty and the vicious cycle becomes permanent. The leading cause of death for children in the developing countries is diarrhoea, accounting for 61% of all deaths. Diarrhoea is easily preventable using methods of cleaner water which would have cost the United Nation less than what it spends in other missions annually. However, that money is being used to buy weapons and equipment to fund peace keeping and other extravagant missions that last for decades.

The notion of cutting aid to poor countries, in order to be able to fund conflicts, regime change and chaos, will only make the current situation worse. As America recently accounted, it would be cutting funds to food programmes such as Head Start and The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), however the $3 billion being used for military aid towards Israel will remain untouched. Would it not be wiser for the US to freeze funding to Israel’s military until they have come to an agreement with Palestinians, instead of supplying them, with cluster bombs and other sophisticated weaponry. However, that probably won’t happen while the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) continues to lobby in the White House and help fund presidential campaigns. Israel prepares a shopping list and congress produces the cheque, while 22 million infants are not protected from preventable diseases by routine immunisation. If only the children in developing countries had someone to truly lobby for them in the White House or the United Nations, then maybe funds to the programmes that keep them alive won’t be cut.

Although some have argued that even if the UN does spend money on aid, where is the money really going once it enters the country? Will aid solve the problem of poverty or should undeveloped countries adopt Eritrea’s self-reliance policy? Aid has become undeveloped countries’ curse in disguise and as they continue putting their
lives solely in the hands of the same people taking food out of their mouths with the other hand. But these wolves may not necessary be from the UN or USA, they can be those governing their people. For instances Ethiopian Premier Meles Zenawi recently ordered 200 T-72 tanks worth over $100 million from Ukraine, while millions are on the verge of starving to death in Ethiopia. Shouldn’t the International aid agencies question how Meles can go on a shopping spree and splash millions of dollars on ammunitions while his people are begging for emergency food aid to feed their families.

However, Meles’ reason for the starvation in his country is due to the country's economy growth at a rate of more than 10% during the past seven years. However, Meles says that even double-digit growth would not be enough because Ethiopia's population has increased faster than the country's rate of economic growth. The population now stands at around 80 million. Although that doesn't justify U.S. aid amounting to more than $1.5 billion in food aid to prevent famine and alleviate chronic food shortages is being spent elsewhere.

Many factors are attributed to the poverty of children’s conditions from climate change, post-colonial struggles, lack of education and resources. Nevertheless obtaining more weapons worth hundreds of millions when their focus should be targeted towards the development and stability of their country rather than destruction and reliance is not justifiable.

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