



## SYMPOSIUM PAPER CHALLENGES OF FOOD SECURITY IN EMERGING ECONOMIES

C.O. Adedire

Department of Biology, Federal University of Technology, P.M.B.704, Akure, Nigeria  
coadedire@gmail.com

### INTRODUCTION

#### In the beginning

Food insecurity, poverty, hunger and malnutrition are age-long problems that endure till date and may continue for some time to come unabated until man is able to dominate his environment. The global population of about 6 billion people today have 15% more food available per capita than when the global population was 3 billion about four decades ago. Yet more than 820 million people are chronically undernourished because they lack access to sufficient food. As at 2010, about 900 million people are still suffering from hunger (Fans & Brzeska, 2010). It is evident from this statistics that the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of reducing the world population of malnourished people by half has been let off the track by a very wide margin. This situation is more prevalent in emerging or developing economies of the world today, particularly in Africa and South East Asia. This is a great irony considering the fact that the first documented deliberate policy on food security by any government in the world for its citizens started in Egypt, the centre of world civilization. When the nation of Egypt was threatened by a 7-year famine and its devastating consequences, biblical Joseph put forth a proposal for the establishment of strategic reserve all over the land of Egypt during the 7 years of surplus. *“My suggestion is that you find the wisest man in Egypt and put him in charge*

*of administering a nation-wide farm program. Let Pharaoh divide Egypt into five administrative districts and let the officials of these districts gather into royal store-houses all the excess crops of the next seven years, so that there will be enough to eat when the seven years of famine come. Otherwise, disaster will surely strike”* (Gen. 41:33-36). Lale (2010) noted that the nation of Egypt did not only avert disaster occasioned by famine at that time; it also made brisk business through the sales of grains and other food items. Similarly, United States of America today through her great visionary leaders has not only the largest strategic reserve of grains and other agricultural commodities but also of crude and refined petroleum, than many members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

#### Definition of the key concepts

There are four operative terms in food security and these are food insecurity, hunger, malnutrition and poverty. As used in this paper, these terminologies mean.

**Hunger** is a recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food.

**Malnutrition** is a state of inadequate nutrition due to dietary deficiency or illness. Malnourished people all over the world have little or no access to income, land, jobs, and social support from their families