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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## The Price of Hunger:

A Conversation on the World Food Crisis with Anthropologist Solomon Katz

On July 2, 2007, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon issued an upbeat progress report on the UN Millennium Goals. The goals, adopted in 2000, set forth plans to halve the number of poor and hungry people of the world from 880 million to 440 million by the year 2015.

Now, one year later, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) has successfully garnered \$500 million emergency funds from world government leaders on top of the \$2.9 million it sought a few months ago, to feed millions at risk of near starvation due to skyrocketing food and fuel costs. Empty stomachs have triggered widespread rioting, threatening country-wide stability, while those too hungry to protest suffer in silence.

How could this have happened so suddenly, devastated tens of thousands or even millions of people, triggered widespread rioting and protests, and in the case of Haiti, toppled a government? What are the consequences of the crisis and scenarios for solution in the immediate and long-term future? Is there a silver lining to the crisis today?

To face these questions head-on, the American Anthropological Association has created a special Task Force on World Food Problems. Under the leadership of founder Solomon (Sol) Katz, the Task Force brings together some of the world's leading experts in food and nutrition, culture and agriculture and global food systems in an all-hands-on-deck effort to explore the dynamics and scope of global food problems and develop scientific as well as policy solutions to combat the crisis.

As cultural experts with wide-ranging insight on the peoples and populations of the world, anthropologists bring a unique perspective to understanding the relationships between humans, the environment and food. With respect to the food crisis, anthropologists have been particularly beneficial in exploring the impact of rising food prices on communities and households, the impact of hunger and malnutrition on mental and physical health, and the intersection between hunger, poverty, and HIV/AIDS.

Katz himself has been studying the anthropology of food for over thirty years, and he has conducted extensive research on African food systems in crisis, nutrition, culture and evolution, the efficacy of genetically modified foods and organisms and intersections between food and spirituality. His current research and activism hopes to highlight the magnitude of the crisis, which is greater than even the UN indicates, with as many as 850 million near starvation in India and China alone, he said.

As current media coverage of the crisis reflects, the prognosis for the future may be grim. But there is hope for combating world hunger in the long term if public awareness about today's crisis can prompt increased funding for agricultural research and critical policy changes that take into account impacts of governmental policies on households, villages and communities around the world.



Sol Katz will be sharing his perspectives on the World Food Crisis on Thursday, July 31 from 2:30-3 pm EST. The discussion on the food crisis is part of a larger AAA media conference call that begins at 2 pm. Discussion will be followed by a Q&A period.

To register for the conference call, please contact Jennifer Steffensen, AAA Media Relations Associate, at 703-528-1902 ext. 3039, or [jsteffensen@aaanet.org](mailto:jsteffensen@aaanet.org).

Also for journalists, the Task Force on World Food Problems has created the following wiki for tracking the latest research reports and news articles on the crisis. It can be accessed at <https://wfmo.pbwiki.com/shared.php?wph=6f9b918d51d32e2c9f3fd5829f91fa8f8f69f72b>.

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Solomon (Sol) Katz is a professor of anthropology and director of the Wilton M Krogman Center for Research Child Growth and Development at the University of Pennsylvania and is affiliated with Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the DuPont Children's Hospital in Wilmington, DE. Katz served as the founder and Chairman (1984-1986) of the Task Force on the African Famine for the American Anthropological Association which produced a series of monographs, symposia and reports on food security in Africa. Katz was also the Series Editor of "Food and Nutrition in History and Anthropology" Gordon and Breach Publishers (with a dozen books in the series) from 1986 - 1995 and is Editor-in-Chief of the "Encyclopedia of Food and Culture" published by Scribners (Gale) in 2003, which was awarded six major national and international awards and prizes including the Dartmouth Medal (US) and the Emerald Award (UK) in 2004 for the best reference publication of 2003. He currently serves as Chair of the Task Force on World Food Problems and for the Society for the Anthropology of Food and Nutrition (SAFN) and Culture and Agriculture of the AAA.

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*Founded in 1902, the American Anthropological Association is the world's largest professional organization of anthropologists and others interested in anthropology, with an average annual membership of more than 10,000. The Arlington, Va.-based association represents all specialties within anthropology — cultural anthropology, biological (or physical) anthropology, archaeology, linguistics and applied anthropology.*

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