

# About This Issue

**Y**ou are probably not hungry — not really hungry, not with the kind of hunger that makes people lethargic, makes them vulnerable to disease, possibly kills them.

Yet something like 850 million people around the world suffer from hunger and malnutrition. In 1996, leaders at the World Food Summit committed to reduce by half the number of hungry people by 2015.

That seems unlikely to happen even though farmers produce slightly more than enough food to feed the world.

The Green Revolution of the 20th century spread to developing countries the availability of high-yielding corn, rice, and wheat, likely staving off starvation for many people. Whether science can continue to find ways to grow world food supplies faster than world population is unknown. Biotechnology is one hope of the 21st century.

People in governments and nongovernmental organizations work hard to feed the hungry with the existing, if dwindling, world food surplus. The U.S. government, the largest donor of food aid by far, aims, first, to save the lives of hungry people and, second, to improve their lives so that they can feed themselves.

The obstacles are many, including disease, natural disasters such as floods, man-made disasters such as war, and poor policies influenced by politics in both donor and beneficiary countries.

Those countries are grappling with the obstacles to reducing hunger. Overcoming the political obstacles requires political will. That's food for thought.

— *The Editors*