

The International Food Security Treaty Campaign

Contact: Zadok Sacks, Co-Coordinator, IFSTC at UCSF

Phone: 805-453-4212; E-mail: zadok.sacks@ucsf.edu

Date: March 28, 2005

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Medical Students Host Program To End Hunger With Enforceable Law

On Tuesday, April 19, a group organized by medical students at the University of California, San Francisco will present a lecture on the International Food Security Treaty (IFST), a proposed plan to employ enforceable international law to achieve drastic reduction of world hunger. John Teton, Director of the International Food Security Treaty Campaign, will speak on "Food Security Treatment: Curing a Global Disaster with the Aid of Enforceable Law," and answer questions from the audience.

Based on existing international covenants, the IFST aims to establish enforceable international law guaranteeing the human right of freedom from hunger. Supporters describe it as the critical missing link in the world's efforts to overcome hunger, the world's worst public health problem, with more victims than all the world's wars and crimes combined. Mr. Teton's address will discuss the evolution of the IFST, support for the Treaty in Congress and elsewhere, and the role of health workers and the general public in the advance of the Treaty towards worldwide implementation.

Mr. Teton, a writer, filmmaker, and teacher who attended graduate school and worked in San Francisco after earning a degree in Social Relations from Harvard, has previously appeared on behalf of the IFST Campaign at the law schools of Harvard, the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of California, Berkeley; the Center for International Relations at the University of Southern California; the Global Studies Division at University of California, Santa Barbara; and briefings in Washington, D.C. including two before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus.

The IFST was developed by the International Food Security Treaty Campaign in consultation with food security advocates from around the world. It is designed to be a legally binding international agreement, spelling out the responsibilities of nations to prevent starvation and malnutrition, with enforcement provisions to ensure that they are carried out. Examples of legally prohibited activity would be the direct use of starvation as a weapon, as happened in Somalia in 1992, or governments channeling famine-preventing food supplies away from

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civilians to support their military forces, as has happened more recently in North Korea and the Sudan.

The human right to freedom from hunger was granted recognition in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a 1948 proclamation of the United Nations, and reiterated in the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. IFST advocates maintain that too little has happened to produce any real protection for that right.

Since originating in Santa Barbara in 1993, the IFST Campaign has crystallized a growing nucleus of support among leading figures in government and in religious and nongovernmental organizations. United Nations Undersecretary-General Maurice Strong, an expert in global commerce and a veteran in the field of international law, has stated “I’m very sympathetic to (the IFST)...as the centerpiece of a whole system by which the capacity of the earth to feed its people is translated into a real commitment to do something, because there’s no fundamental need for hunger now, and certainly none for starvation.” Statements from both Senators Boxer and Feinstein, some members of Congress, Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, and other prominent backers of the IFST, along with information about the Treaty itself, can be found on the Campaign’s website at www.treaty.org.

The event will be sponsored by IFSTC at UCSF, a swiftly-growing branch of the IFST Campaign which originated late last year among UCSF medical students. In a matter of weeks the group gathered more than 125 signatures from university staff and students petitioning for personal support of the IFST from Congressman Tom Lantos, Representative of the 22nd District, and Co-Chair of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus. The group has also begun networking to start additional branches of the IFST Campaign on other campuses, and is developing further alliances and support for the Treaty from world-renown experts in public health. “The visionary UCSF students behind the IFST are playing a historic role in the evolution of this assault on hunger,” states Teton. “They are bridging the now-completed phase of establishing the Treaty’s feasibility to the launch of a grassroots campaign aimed at developing support for the treaty among citizens and religious and political leaders throughout the U.S. and around the world.”

Co-sponsors of the event are Student Health Professionals for Social Responsibility and The Social Activism in Medicine Lecture Series at UCSF.

The presentation will take place at 6:30 P.M. on Tuesday, April 19 in room HSW-302 on the UCSF campus. The public is invited and admission is free.