UN welcomes India’s food security ordinance

New Delhi: The UN Thursday welcomed the Indian government's food security ordinance, saying it showed that the issue of hunger was being taken "seriously".

"By legislating food security, the Indian government is making a commitment to the people. It is a sign that the issue is being taken seriously," UN special rapporteur on food Olivier De Schutter said at a press conference here.

"What makes me hopeful is that we have willingness to make a firm commitment to the issue of hunger," he said.

Cautioning any country against weighing the costs of addressing hunger, the senior UN official said: "How about the costs of not helping the poor and not controlling hunger?"

The GDP growth of a country is estimated to be reduced by 4.5 percent by not addressing hunger, he said.

Brushing aside political opposition, the government on Wednesday decided to issue an ordinance to give the nation's two-thirds population the right to get 5 kg of foodgrains every month at highly subsidised rates of Rs.1-3 per kg.

The food security programme when implemented will be the biggest in the world with the government spending estimated at Rs.125,000 crore annually on supply of about 62 million tonnes of rice, wheat and coarse cereals to 67 percent of the population.

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