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Seeking Ways to Feed a Hungry World

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Re "[Experts Worry About Feeding the World as Its Population Grows](#)" (news article, Oct. 22):

To the Editor:

We agree that more agricultural investment is needed to help the billion people on the planet who are hungry. But solving hunger, particularly in Africa, is not an either-or scenario — either focus on seed breeding, artificial fertilizers and genetically modified crops to feed the world or rely on organic farming practices.

There is overwhelming evidence that a combination of approaches is more effective in terms of productivity, income generation and resilience than any one approach, including using conventional practices paired with agro-ecological approaches.

On heavily depleted soils across Africa, for instance, farmers often use some chemical fertilizer in the short term to take full advantage of composting, nitrogen-fixing crops and other agro-ecological approaches that boost yields over the long term.

Yes, more investment is needed from the international donor community to reduce the number of hungry, but we also need to break out of old ways of thinking that haven't eliminated hunger in the past.

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Washington, Oct. 23, 2009