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# WFP: China Ends Need for Food Aid

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The World Food Program has made its last shipment of grain to China - a sign that the country's drive over the past 30 years to feed itself has paid off. But, there still are worries about China's harvest.

The final load of World Food Program wheat for China arrived by ship Thursday at the southern port of Shenzhen.

The 43,000 tons of Canadian grain was the last of nearly \$1 billion worth of WFP aid sent to China since 1979.

But after more than 25 years of economic reforms, China no longer needs help from the United Nations' food agency. Instead, it is expected to increase its own contributions to the WFP.

However, bad weather over the past few years and a shrinking amount of arable land have sparked concerns about the size of China's harvest in the coming years.

Qin Gang is a spokesman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry. On Thursday, he expressed caution about China's ability to donate more food.

"China is a developing country," he said. "We are not rich. We can only do what is within our power to progressively increase the contributions to the U.N. World Food Program."

Douglas Broderick is the WFP representative in China. He says that China's experience in lifting millions of people out of dire poverty and hunger can help other countries.

"We have a global mandate to respond to and alleviate hunger," he said. "And China, with their experience and ability to respond to hunger and lead, many, many millions of people out of hunger - we're natural partners together."

While China manages to feed its people, it still is struggling to close the income gap between its urban workers and rural families.

Although the country's eastern cities are home to a rapidly growing middle class - and boast designer boutiques and fleets of foreign cars - more than 700 million rural residents still struggle to earn a living.