

March 30, 2023

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Chairman, Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and
Related Agencies Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member, Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Heinrich and Ranking Member Hoeven:

As you determine priorities for the Fiscal Year 2024 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration Act, we respectfully urge you to provide robust funding for global nutrition and food security programming. Specifically, **\$2 billion for Food for Peace Title II**, and **\$265 million for McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition**. This Committee has provided long-standing support for these programs which are critical to alleviating hunger and malnutrition around the world. Any increases in these programs should not come at the expense of other poverty reduction accounts.

Today, we are facing an unprecedented global food crisis, compounded by conflict, climate-related extreme weather events, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Food Programme reports a record 349 million people across 79 countries are facing acute food insecurity – up from 287 million in 2021. This constitutes a staggering rise of 200 million people compared to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels.

Food insecurity and malnutrition are particularly acute in the Horn of Africa, which is facing its most severe drought in 70 years, with five consecutive below-average rainy seasons. USAID reports that approximately 23 million people across Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya are experiencing high levels of acute malnutrition and excess mortality from hunger requiring emergency food assistance.

The Title II Food for Peace Program provides critically-needed support, both in the case of emergencies, as well as longer-term support for communities to sustain their food and nutrition security, through multi-year programs strengthening the resilience of these communities against recurrent shocks. In emergencies, Food for Peace provides individuals with life-saving treatment, such as Ready-to-Use-Therapeutic Food (RUTF) produced in the U.S. By supporting the world's most vulnerable, Food for Peace is building a more stable world and ensuring that people have the opportunity to lead healthy, productive lives.

With Food for Peace funding being insufficient to meet global emergency needs alone, last year USDA took the extraordinary step of drawing down the full balance of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust (BEHT) to provide for emergency assistance through the purchase of U.S.

commodities in response to global food crises abroad. The full \$282 million drawdown was used to procure U.S. food commodities to bolster existing emergency food operations in six countries facing severe food insecurity: Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Yemen. We urge Congress to provide the necessary funding to replenish the BEHT.

The McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition program recently marked its 20th anniversary last year, marking two decades of success in alleviating childhood hunger and fostering literacy worldwide. The McGovern-Dole program has provided over 5.5 billion school meals, benefiting over 31 million school-age children – especially girls – in communities in over 48 countries around the world. The program has helped to reduce hunger and improve literacy and primary education in developing countries.

The continuing role of U.S. leadership in combating world hunger and malnutrition remains critical. Investments in these programs not only help alleviate global hunger and malnutrition, but also bolster our national security. Where hunger and malnutrition persist, instability grows. Responding to hunger is a critical tool for achieving peace and stability in fragile places and protecting American interests through our goodwill.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this request.

Signed:

1,000 Days, an initiative of FHI Solutions
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Congressional Hunger Center
Edesia
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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GrainPro Incorporated
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InterAction
Islamic Relief USA
One Acre Fund
Opportunity International
Save the Children
Rise Against Hunger
World Food Program USA