

May 6, 2024

Dear Secretary Yellen,

As leaders of organizations focused on global nutrition, we are grateful for the U.S. government's ongoing leadership on nutrition. The U.S. government plays an important role on nutrition and food security globally through bilateral USAID programs, and as a top donor to UNICEF, the World Food Program, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and more. We are particularly grateful to this administration for its powerful global leadership on child wasting, with a landmark funding commitment in 2022, the extraordinary diplomatic effort led by Administrator Power to rally other donors, and USAID's ongoing leadership of the Action Review Panel on Child Wasting.

There is still, however, a desperate need for further action on nutrition, with massive funding shortfalls across the globe. This year we see an opportunity to leverage the U.S. position at the World Bank to secure a step change in global progress. We believe the World Bank can, should, and must do more to support countries to tackle the global malnutrition crisis. With the World Bank eyeing its biggest IDA replenishment in history, the opportunities for impact on nutrition are enormous. As a major shareholder and leader within IDA, we hope the Biden Administration will further extend its own leadership on nutrition by ensuring the issue is a priority within the World Bank's investments and IDA21 in particular.

Basic human needs like health, social protection, and nutrition are the foundation for achieving the World Bank's mission to end extreme poverty. Malnutrition is deeply intertwined with challenges around climate, conflict and fragility, gender and more – but when malnutrition isn't specifically targeted as an element of these challenges, it often gets left out. Despite malnutrition being the root cause of nearly half of all child deaths, it still receives less than 1 percent of Official Development Assistance globally.

IDA resources are already a critical tool for countries to address malnutrition and food security challenges. Governments have consistently prioritized these investments when funding is available – evidenced by the historic demand in response to the World Bank's most recent 2022 commitment on food insecurity, the immediate response from countries to the new Child Nutrition Fund for which IDA financing plays a critical matching role, and more.

IDA's unmatched scale of financing and its ability to work across sectors – health, social protection, agriculture, and more – make it well placed to support the lowest-income countries on the multidimensional challenge of combating malnutrition. IDA can also play a critical role in increasing the impact of other financing tools for nutrition, including the new Child Nutrition

Fund and the Global Financing Facility for Reproductive, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health and Nutrition.

As the policy framework and parameters for IDA21 are negotiated, we encourage you to make this a top priority of the United States. Specific recommendations for the World Bank are included as an addendum to this letter. While the nomenclature and exact structures the Bank uses may shift, we hope the Biden Administration will push for nutrition to be a top priority within IDA, for IDA's impact on nutrition to be better measured and publicly reported, and for the World Bank to increase its own nutrition investments and leverage its partnerships to drive progress on global malnutrition.

We're grateful for the administration's championing of nutrition and IDA. We see an opportunity to bring these two priorities together and cement a powerful Biden Administration legacy on both.

Sincerely,

Joanne Carter, Executive Director, RESULTS/RESULTS Educational Fund, Co-chair  
Rev. Eugene Cho, President and CEO, Bread for the World, Co-Chair  
Arun Baral, CEO, Harvest Plus  
Sarah Bouchie, President and CEO, Helen Keller Intl  
Matt Freeman, Executive Director, Stronger Foundations  
Eric Mitchell, President, Alliance to End Hunger  
Michelle Nunn, President and CEO, CARE  
Saskia Osendarp, Executive Director, Micronutrient Forum  
Charles Owubah, CEO, Action Against Hunger  
Carrie Hessler-Radelet, President and CEO, Global Communities  
Tessie San Martin, CEO, FHI 360  
Solianna Meaza, Interim Director, 1,000 Days of FHI 360  
Janti Soeripto, President and CEO, Save the Children US  
Joel Spicer, President and CEO, Nutrition International  
Mark Viso, President and CEO, Food for the Hungry



*The Nutrition CEO Council is a body of leaders from international non-governmental organizations (INGO) that aims to inspire increased support for nutrition from U.S. political leadership through high-level engagement and advance civil society advocacy, commitment, and support for nutrition as a foundational part of all development success. More information about the Council is available at [NutritionCEOCouncil.com](http://NutritionCEOCouncil.com).*

Addendum:

Proposed strategies to sharpen the focus and impact on nutrition in IDA21:

- **Increase IDA funding levels and the pace of disbursements** given the extraordinary need and accelerating crisis in many of the lowest-income countries.
- Given the cross-cutting nature of nutrition and its connection to other human capital areas, IDA should **increase both the amount and the proportion of investments going to human capital**. As it stands, nutrition – and human capital broadly – appear under-prioritized within the focus areas. Focus Area 1, “People,” should more explicitly elevate human capital and nutrition within it.
- **Add a lens on Nutrition and Food Security within IDA21** to signal the centrality of the issue, and bring the full cross-sector power of IDA financing to bear.
- Further **sharpen the focus on nutrition in the new WBG Scorecard**. We welcome the enhanced focus on outcomes and commitment to disaggregated results, and are grateful to see the proposal to include both “Millions of people with strengthened food and nutrition security” and “Millions of people receiving quality health, nutrition, and population services” as key indicators. As the methodology and data measurement process is decided, we strongly encourage a rigorous measurement of key nutrition-specific outcomes – including on stunting, wasting, and anemia – and their evidence-based interventions.
- Develop an approach for the Global Challenge Program on Food and Nutrition Security that maximizes its reach and impact, and **ensures that the particular needs of undernutrition are not lost** among broader food security challenges.
- In addition to more direct financing for nutrition, make more of its portfolio “nutrition smart” – following in the footsteps of the African Development Bank, which is increasing the volume of “nutrition smart” assets under its management to over \$7 billion.
- Prioritize nutrition in the New Knowledge Compact and core analytics that underpin country engagement, and in enhancements to the Crisis Preparedness and Response Toolkit.
- **Enhance the funding and focus on nutrition within the Crisis Response Window (CRW)** and its Early Response Financing (ERF), and support countries to include acute malnutrition in their crisis preparedness and response plans. In addition to increasing financing, the ECW should revise the triggering criteria for food security crises, to more specifically address nutrition and to be more sensitive to earlier signs of a potential crisis.
- Design **consistent reporting and clearer coding** on nutrition-specific interventions and programming in the public database, including disaggregated by wealth quintile.

CC:

USAID Administrator Samantha Power

U.S. Alternative World Bank Executive Director L. Felice Gorordo

World Bank President Ajay Banga