

June 10, 2024

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 2025 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, \$265 million for McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition**, and **\$500 million for agricultural research**. 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.

This Committee has a long-standing commitment to supporting these programs which are critical to fighting global hunger and malnutrition and putting people on the road to food and nutrition security.

We recognize the fiscal constraints placed on the subcommittee with significantly restricted allocations to cover critical programs in the Agriculture bill. However, we continue to face an unprecedented global food crisis, fueled primarily by conflict and climate-related extreme weather events. In 2023, record levels of acute food insecurity persisted due to protracted food crises and new conflicts around the world. In 48 countries, 238 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity – 10 percent higher than in 2022.

Conflict was the biggest driver of hunger and food insecurity around the world in 2023, with 70 percent of the world's hungry people living in areas afflicted by war and violence. From the gang violence in Haiti blocking critical needed humanitarian food distribution, the eruption of conflict between two rivals in Sudan leading to the largest displacement and numbers of acute food security in the world today, to the war in Gaza, which witnessed the fastest deterioration of food security in history, conflict has wreaked havoc on the food security of millions around the world. Additionally, climate change continued to be another significant driver of food insecurity with weather extremes, including drought and flooding destroying crops and livelihoods in places like Ethiopia and Myanmar.

Robust funding to global food security related accounts is critical to addressing the global food crisis we face today. In this effort, we must robustly invest in not only the treatment of acute food

insecurity but provide robust funding for the prevention of severe hunger and malnutrition to get out the continued viscous cycle of shocks and response.

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.

Food for Peace funding have been woefully insufficient to meet global emergency needs alone, last year responding to the bipartisan request from the Chairwoman and Ranking member of the Agriculture Committee, USDA took the extraordinary step of utilizing the Commodity Credit Corporation to provide for emergency assistance through the purchase of U.S. commodities in response to global food crises abroad.

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. Last year, the World Food Programme announced a multiyear initiative in Haiti to build the capacity Haitian producers to supply the Haiti school meals program, supported by USDA.

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: