

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA AND GLOBAL HEALTH**

“A Call to Action on Food Security: The Administration's Global Strategy”

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Chairman Payne, distinguished members, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor to have been invited to testify at this important hearing on U.S. efforts to promote global food security.

I want to thank Chairman Payne for his continued leadership on issues pertaining to global hunger, from highlighting the impact of hunger while traveling to developing countries, to holding hearings like the one today that draw attention to specific policies critical for improving U.S. efforts in this area.

Further it's important to acknowledge Congressman Jim McGovern and Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson for their tireless efforts over many years, including working to ensure global hunger is a priority of the Obama administration. It's also important to thank Congresswoman DeLauro, Congresswoman Lowey and Congresswoman McCollum for their continued leadership in promoting legislation and increased funding to improve U.S. hunger-alleviation efforts.

The world has long possessed the collective resources and knowledge to end global hunger. What has been lacking is the political will and sustained leadership at the highest levels of government. The Obama administration's new initiative, which couples significant improvements to U.S. policy with efforts to catalyze global action and collaboration, is a promising step in achieving the needed political will.

The administration's commitment is extraordinary and reaches to the highest levels, including the President and the Secretary of State. In his inaugural address, President Obama said, “To the people of poor nations, we pledge to work alongside you to make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow; to nourish starved bodies and feed hungry minds.” Subsequent announcements at the G20 meeting, G8 Summit and UN General Assembly have reinforced the administration's commitment to achieving global food security.

As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in announcing the 2009 World Food Prize Laureate, “By working together, I believe we can show the will necessary to end the hunger crisis, to usher in a new era of progress and plenty. That is our goal. That is our challenge.”

With this level of commitment, we are hopeful that we will see increases in global food security not seen for decades and the world will achieve the first Millennium Development Goal's target of cutting extreme hunger in half by 2015.

I. Statement of the Problem

We gather here today as both the absolute number and the percentage of people experiencing chronic hunger have increased for the first time in decades. Roughly 870 million people suffered from hunger in 2006 and that number has now exceeded 1 billion. Most of these people live on less than \$1 per day.

These increases are due in large part to the global food, fuel and financial crises of the past two years.

Last year, global food and fuel prices skyrocketed, with some people facing market increases as high as 75 percent. While prices have declined in 2009, they are still much higher in many places than levels just a few years ago, and markets remain volatile. In addition, the primary drivers of the crisis are still present, including growing demand for food in developing countries, fluctuating energy prices and poor harvests in important crop-producing regions.

On the heels of the food and fuel crisis, this year's global economic crisis has rippled through the developing world, lowering incomes, reducing remittances, decreasing trade, slowing investment, tightening credit and increasing the number of people at the bottom living with hunger.

The World Food Program was forced to expand its operations from targeting approximately 70 million people at the beginning of 2008 to more than 100 million by the beginning of this year, to help mitigate the worst impacts.

These crises are threatening to reverse the progress made by the global community during the past four decades in reducing the overall proportion of the world's hungry from 37 to 17 percent.

These hard-fought gains were achieved in large part due to U.S. leadership, and I'm confident that in spite of the difficult challenge the world now faces, with bold, significant action – of the kind contemplated by this new U.S. global food security initiative – the target set by the first Millennium Development Goal can still be achieved.

II. Growing Consensus on How to Address Global Hunger

A recent consensus has emerged regarding several key factors that have limited the success of previous U.S. efforts to address global hunger. Reports released by the GAO, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and others have highlighted these factors, which included: insufficient coordination across the many U.S. agencies and programs with a role in addressing global hunger, inadequate efforts to promote agricultural development and the lack of a comprehensive U.S. hunger-alleviation strategy that focuses on addressing both immediate and long-term needs.

Similarly, a consensus has emerged regarding the specific activities needed to address global hunger, as reflected in the administration's strategy. The UN High Level Task Force on the

Global Food Crisis, GAO reports, the Chicago Council Report and the Roadmap to End Global Hunger – which united more than 40 NGOs for the first time in history around a plan to improve U.S. hunger-alleviation efforts – have all called for the development and implementation of a comprehensive U.S. strategy to address global hunger. Recently introduced legislation – the Roadmap to End Global Hunger and Promote Food Security Act (H.R. 2817) and the Global Food Security Act (H.R. 3077) – draw heavily from these reports and also endorse a comprehensive approach.

III. The Administration’s Plan

The administration’s initiative incorporates the four cross-cutting pillars of a comprehensive strategy, as set forth within the Roadmap, the Comprehensive Framework for Action and the legislation referenced above. These pillars are emergency response and management programs, safety net programs, nutrition programs and agricultural development programs. All four of these cross-cutting pillars are necessary to target different groups who collectively comprise the 1 billion people suffering from hunger. Moreover, adopting these pillars will enable the U.S. and global community to address both the immediate and long-term impacts of hunger.

1. Emergency Response and Management Efforts – Emergency response and management efforts target the world’s most vulnerable populations in times of urgent need, whether provoked by natural disaster, man-made conflict or acute economic difficulties, when governments lack the capacity to provide the assistance on their own. These programs seek to save lives through the provision of food assistance to people affected by an emergency, including through direct food distribution, food vouchers and cash transfers. Based on current trends, it is estimated that approximately 100 million people will continue to require emergency food assistance annually.
2. Safety Nets – Safety net programs are designed to limit or mitigate the impact of shocks on vulnerable and food insecure populations who would become destitute without additional assistance. Like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly Food Stamps) in the U.S., safety net programs can include vouchers, cash and other resource transfers to help vulnerable populations meet their basic needs, retain meager household resources that they might otherwise sell and develop resiliency to future shocks. By helping vulnerable populations achieve a basic level of self-sufficiency and food security, these programs reduce the need for more costly emergency interventions and help provide a foundation for future development efforts.
3. Nutrition Programs – These programs aim to ensure that nutritionally-vulnerable populations, particularly mothers and young children, have access to the required calories and nutrients needed to live healthy, productive lives. Specific interventions include targeted feeding programs, micronutrient supplementation and breastfeeding promotion.

There is widespread consensus regarding the need to provide adequate nutrition during pregnancy and during a child’s first two years to avoid irreversible developmental

impacts and to promote proper cognitive development. Efforts in this area should also support the unique needs of those suffering from HIV/AIDS and other severe chronic illnesses. There is evidence that proper caloric and nutrient intake strengthens immune function and improves the absorption and tolerance of antiretroviral drugs (ARVS) and other medications.

4. Market-based Agriculture and Infrastructure Development Programs – As referenced before, U.S. and global efforts to alleviate hunger have underemphasized longer-term agricultural development programs during the past two decades. These programs increase the productivity and profitability of smallholder farmers, which is critical to breaking the cycle of hunger among the vast majority of the world’s poor who live in rural areas and rely on agriculture for their livelihoods.

These efforts seek to expand and enhance: a) rural infrastructure, such as farm to market roads, storage facilities and irrigation; b) access to and availability of financial services, so that smallholder farmers can afford inputs and investments needed to expand their capacity; c) extension services, research and training so that seed varieties and other technologies are developed and disseminated to meet the needs of poor, rural farmers; and d) post-harvest opportunities and market access to ensure farmers have opportunities to reap the benefits of their harvests.

In summary, a comprehensive strategy that combines emergency assistance, safety nets, nutrition assistance and agricultural development is necessary to address the full spectrum of food insecurity – acute and chronic, urban and rural. Hunger takes many forms, from those devastated by hurricanes and disasters, to urban slum dwellers on the verge of destitution, to poorly nourished mothers and children, to smallholder farmers struggling to produce enough to feed their families and turn a profit. By integrating each of the categories outlined above, we will ensure that the strategy reaches these and other populations with the type of assistance they need.

a. Incorporating Gender and Natural Resource Management Across Elements of a Comprehensive Approach

There is also unprecedented agreement regarding several key features that need to be integrated across various components of the initiative, including gender and natural resource management.

- Gender considerations should be fully integrated throughout the strategy. Women often face context-specific, gender-related barriers to accessing resources (education, financial services, land tenure, etc.). These and other aspects of gender inequality are one of the primary challenges to improving food security in many countries. Interventions should be designed, monitored, and evaluated through a gender lens to ensure that gender dynamics at the community and household level are well understood and that interventions are implemented accordingly.

- The initiative should support environmentally sustainable agricultural practices to ensure that increased agricultural productivity does not come at the expense of natural resource management.

b. Interagency & Open Planning Process

In addition to embracing a comprehensive approach, the administration has employed an open planning process that has engaged all relevant stakeholders, both inside and outside of the federal government.

To coordinate efforts within the federal government, Secretary Clinton formed an interagency food security task force, chaired by her chief of staff, that has brought together all of the agencies with a role in addressing global hunger. The Consultative Document drafted by this group, as well as the more detailed operational plan from which this public document was culled, incorporates perspectives and expertise that reflect a “whole of government” approach. Further, the administration’s announced intent to appoint a “Global Hunger Coordinator” will help institutionalize this collaboration moving forward.

Similarly, the administration has consulted with and incorporated the views of multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and WFP, NGOs, businesses, foundations, education and research institutions, farmers’ organizations and many other stakeholders with a role in addressing global hunger. This approach reflects Secretary Clinton’s view that our world is no longer just multi-polar, but multi-partner.

c. Multilateral Implementation Process

As planning proceeds to implementation, the administration has made it clear that partnership and coordination with other nations, both developing and developed, will be critical to the initiative’s success. The strategy’s framework and operational plan will guide the formulation of country-led plans, based on consultative processes at the local level. As noted, the U.S. has used the G20, G8, UNGA and other forums to catalyze global action regarding the coordination and increase of resources from donor nations to promote food security.

IV. Recommended Steps Ahead

While the initiative put forth by the administration is buttressed by sound principles, solid commitments, an open, partnership-driven approach and many other features vital for success, the follow areas are highlighted for further consideration:

1. **Maintain Robust Emergency Response** – With the prevalence of international emergencies expected to increase in the future as a result of climate change, emergency response remains a critical component of a comprehensive strategy. The U.S., which has traditionally provided at least 40 percent of global emergency food assistance each year,

should continue to lead the global community in providing food aid during humanitarian emergencies, while expanding its food crisis toolbox to include greater cash support for a more flexible range of interventions, including local and regional purchase of commodities, cash transfers and/or voucher programs.

Flexibility is critical as sometimes cash-based interventions make the most sense while in other situations commodity-based food assistance might be more effective.

For example, vouchers are appropriate in situations where markets are well-functioning and food is readily available, while LRP can be an effective tool to reduce food aid costs and delivery time while also bolstering local food systems.

In areas such as Sudan, on the other hand, where WFP feeds approximately 6 million people each year, in-kind assistance works best because it provides a reliable stream of commodities in an area where it can be difficult to purchase large quantities on local and regional markets. In addition, WFP is able to pre-position the food ahead of the rainy season, when transport becomes challenging.

2. **Improving the Flexibility of In-Kind Assistance** – There are opportunities to explore creative approaches to increasing the flexibility and efficiency of in-kind food aid provided under Title II. For example, the U.S. government should permit humanitarian organizations to use the commitment of U.S. food aid as collateral to borrow from in-country programs or reserves to respond to emergency needs. By allowing implementers to use the in-country food, the delivery time to reach those in need could be decreased from several months to several days. The in-country food used to meet the emergency needs would be replenished by U.S. commodities.
3. **Develop Strong Indicators** – The administration should adopt strong indicators to measure success on an ongoing basis and to inform the development of new approaches if current methods can be improved. Adopting the first MDG as a measure of success will provide an effective, transparent, and internationally-accepted indicator and enable the use of already-compiled data by the UN and others in establishing a baseline for monitoring future progress. As previously referenced, the nutritional status of children in the first two years of life is critical and should also be a key indicator of this initiative's effectiveness.
4. **Build Safety Net Systems** – As currently referenced in the administration's Consultative Document, safety nets are described as "temporary assistance that allows those who are poor to protect their assets during unexpected shocks." It is important to present a broader vision, however, for international support in helping countries develop safety net programs. Efforts in this area should help governments create their own safety net systems, similar to those in the U.S., Brazil and other countries, which prevent people on the economic margins from falling into destitution in the wake of shocks.

5. **Continue to Engage All Key Stakeholders** – As noted above, the administration has engaged a wide-range of stakeholders in the planning and development of its initiative. Further, the administration has expressed its commitment to working with both developed and developing countries in marshalling the needed resources to fund country-developed plans. The U.S. should continue to work with relevant UN agencies, including WFP, as well as international NGOs, on implementation at the country, regional and global levels.
6. **Coordination within Congress** – Because funding, programs and jurisdiction for addressing hunger are divided among many Congressional committees, including the Foreign Affairs and Agriculture Committees, as well as the Foreign Operations and Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittees, efforts to enhance “inter-committee” coordination within Congress are important for the initiative’s success. Especially with respect to appropriations, coordination between all subcommittees with a role in funding the initiative will be critical to ensure that all elements of the strategy receive the needed resources to achieve overall success.
7. **Support Cross-Cutting Initiatives:** Fully realizing the benefits of a comprehensive approach will involve identifying and supporting strategies that help achieve many objectives of the initiative simultaneously. For example, the McGovern-Dole school feeding program helps alleviate child hunger, promote education and further a wide range of nutrition and health interventions. In addition, the McGovern-Dole Program provides authority to reach preschool-age children, which include the most nutritionally vulnerable in the 0-2 age range.

Another example is the Purchase for Progress program and other similar local and regional purchase initiatives, which enable small-holder farmers to sell directly to WFP and other international NGOs. These innovative models help address humanitarian, safety net and development food aid needs, while bolstering local agricultural markets, food processing and related industries, by providing a market for the sale of the food.

The road ahead will not be easy as critical implementation challenges remain. But I’m optimistic that if the administration sustains its commitment to the principles it has outlined – such as uniting key stakeholders, fostering whole-of-government collaboration, and spurring global action in support of comprehensive, country-driven approaches – we will make significant, lasting strides in alleviating global hunger.

WFP, Friends of WFP and the entire Roadmap Coalition of more than 40 NGOs stand ready to assist the administration and other global partners in this endeavor – to help translate the initiative’s sound framework into an implementation plan that comprehensively addresses global hunger and food insecurity.

I look forward to answering the committee’s questions. Thank you.