



**Statement for the Record to the
House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee
on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights,
and International Organizations**

***“FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION
PROGRAMS IN AFRICA”***

A Statement for the Record by:

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Research shows that investments in global food security and agricultural development can foster economic growth, reverse poverty trends, and, perhaps most importantly, mitigate conflict and build resilience in communities across the globe.

The U.S. Government has rightfully prioritized agricultural development to address hunger, poverty, and malnutrition, beginning with President George W. Bush's Initiative to End Hunger in Africa and evolving into President Barack Obama's Feed the Future initiative. Our demonstrated leadership has catalyzed pledges from G-8 countries and the private sector, including more than \$10 billion in private sector commitments through the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition. In the past five years alone, the U.S. Government has invested nearly \$5 billion through its global hunger and food security initiative, Feed the Future. Now is the time to sustain and build on that commitment, not to reverse course by losing sight of the invaluable nature of agricultural development.

Feed the Future was created to address the root causes of hunger and poverty primarily through multi-year projects that increase smallholder incomes, improve agricultural productivity, and boost nutrition security. Efforts also include scaling up innovative technologies, introducing climate-smart agricultural practices, and engaging the private sector to boost commercialization.

We are just now seeing concrete results from our increased investments, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, which has 12 of the 19 Feed the Future focus countries. In FY2014 alone, Feed the Future trained nearly 2.5 million African farmers on how to use improved technologies and management practices; spurred over \$300 million in new sales; brought small-scale entrepreneurs increased income opportunities through nearly \$600 million in new agricultural and rural loans; and reached nearly 9 million children under 5 through nutrition programs.

The latest data also shows that U.S. Government efforts are contributing to substantial reductions in childhood stunting across the African continent. Ghana experienced a staggering 33 percent decline in stunting nationally between 2008 and 2014, and Kenya saw a more than 25 percent reduction in stunting from 2009 to 2014 in the areas where Feed the Future programs have been concentrated.

The CSIS Global Food Security Project provides long-term, strategic guidance to policymakers to ensure that U.S. foreign assistance programs are efficient, effective, and sustainable. One of the ways that the project analyzes the U.S. legacy in food security is through qualitative research on the ground in Feed the Future focus countries. I recently returned from our first research trip to Tanzania to look at the success and challenges of Feed the Future implementation.

Tanzania has received more Feed the Future funding than any other focus country in the world. The country saw a dramatic rise in funding for agriculture and nutrition, from \$2 million in 2008 to nearly \$70 million per year from 2012 to 2015.

After four years of increased investment to address food insecurity and undernutrition, impressive results have been achieved. A Feed the Future-funded policy analysis convinced the government of Tanzania to lift an export ban on maize in 2011, which had cost Tanzanian farmers \$200 million each year since the ban was put into place. In 2014 alone, Feed the Future-supported farmers increased the value of their agricultural sales by more than \$19 million. One hundred thousand producers reported that they are using new technologies and management practices for the first time, significantly improving production and increasing incomes. Feed the Future leveraged nearly \$152 million in private investments in food and agriculture. During the same time, the U.S. Government reached 1.4 million women with nutrition services to improve maternal and child health, focusing on exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding, dietary diversity, and the uptake of zinc, iron, and other targeted micronutrient supplementation.

When I was in the Morogoro region visiting beneficiaries of a Feed the Future nutrition program, I teared up when an elderly women introduced herself as a “1,000 days grandmother” and asked if I wanted to see her “1,000 days grandbaby.” As someone who worked directly on the launch of the 1,000 Days Partnership on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly back in 2010, it was beautiful moment to see a sincere understanding of this critical window in a child’s life and witness behavior change at the community level. Feed the Future is responsible for that.

Of course, there is also room for improvement. There needs to be more strategic alignment and coordination between stakeholders, particularly around private sector investments and agricultural commercialization. Partners, at all levels, seem stuck in more of an administrative dialogue than a strategic one. Tanzania's poor enabling environment and weak infrastructure are not conducive to attract the level of international investors required for a true agricultural transformation. On-the-ground progress under the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition is slow and frustrating. Many of these challenges are embedded in country leadership that has limited capacity and, although it means it may take more time, aligning Feed the Future strategies with country-led priorities is still the right direction to take.

There needs to be a deeper collaboration between U.S. agencies. While I was impressed with the linkages between USAID and the Peace Corps, there is no USDA presence on the ground and there is a missed opportunity with the upcoming MCC compact by not including a more direct link to food security. The whole-of-government concept is a commendable idea, but putting it into practice at the field level is much more complex than most understand.

Addressing food insecurity is more than just a moral obligation to help the nearly 800 million people who suffer from chronic hunger and undernutrition. Food insecurity is both a consequence and a cause of conflict, and there is a direct correlation between hungry people and political instability. In fact, dozens of riots and protests across the world in response to food price spikes in 2007-2008 were what sparked the U.S. Government to renew its commitment to agricultural-led development. Addressing the underlying causes of hunger and poverty is directly in line with our national security interests.

Support for long term-agricultural development programs should not be confused or combined with efforts to reform food aid assistance. Immediate humanitarian relief and agricultural development are two different facets of food security, requiring unique sets of resources, expertise, and funding mechanisms.

Just as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, advanced to be a part of the larger U.S. development legacy, Feed the Future has the potential to be sustained beyond the

current administration. With the 2016 elections around the corner, now is precisely the time to have a dialogue on how best to support a bipartisan, comprehensive agenda for global food security and agricultural development. We need a strong, coordinated food security strategy that continues to position the United States as a leader in the fight against hunger.

The U.S. Government's efforts to address hunger, poverty, and malnutrition needs heightened Congressional oversight and engagement. Food security should be cemented as a foreign policy priority for the United States, not tied to a particular President's legacy. While Feed the Future's interagency effort is far from structurally perfect, the initiative coordinates and leverages resources from 11 U.S. agencies in a way that traditional foreign assistance programs, to date, have not. We need a comprehensive strategy that ensures our assistance is efficient and accountable, along with stringent reporting requirements and increased programmatic transparency. This is a necessary next step for the U.S. Government to continue to be a leader in the global fight to eradicate poverty.

Agriculture is the backbone of developing economies across the globe. More than two-thirds of Africans depend directly on agriculture for their incomes. U.S. foreign assistance must continue to prioritize agricultural development to break the cycle of extreme hunger and poverty, and to support both domestic and international security interests around the world.