

February 26, 2021

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Fortenberry:

Each year our nation's international food aid programs, including P.L. 480 Title II Food for Peace, Food for Progress, and McGovern-Dole International Food for Education within the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, help reach millions of vulnerable people around the world. These programs have enjoyed significant bipartisan support for more than 60 years. We, the undersigned organizations, respectfully request Congress continue to fully support these programs and that the Fiscal Year 2022 agriculture appropriations funding for these critical accounts be increased to at least \$2.2 billion.

Global food assistance is required as drought, continuing conflict, and other crises persist around the world. Chronic and acute hunger have continued to rise and the U.N. World Food Programme warns that the number of people facing crisis levels of food insecurity may increase to 270 million over the next year, the result of Covid-19, ongoing conflict and climate related extreme events. USAID's Famine Early Warning System Network estimated that approximately 113 million people were in need of humanitarian food assistance in 2020, a roughly 25 percent increase in needs relative to anticipated 2020 needs before the COVID-19 pandemic. With hunger on the rise, now is the time for America to continue its leadership role in the world by showing full support for its international food security programs.

Food assistance programs not only benefit the recipients, but also U.S. economic and national security interests. Food aid, in all its forms, is made available through these programs usually bearing the U.S. flag and/or marked "from the American people." By furthering stability in fragile countries and sparking hope in countless people who are struggling to survive, U.S. strategic interests are protected and expanded. Ultimately, these kinds of foreign assistance programs help create a firm foundation for vulnerable communities to grow and prosper, which is why many former food aid recipient countries are now among the most important U.S. trading partners.

The use of American grown commodities as food aid has been a cornerstone of U.S. foreign assistance programs for decades and U.S. food aid has continually evolved and adapted to meet changing needs. Using a combination of U.S. commodities, cash, vouchers, and locally purchased food, the U.S. has worked to expedite hunger relief, increase resilience and save countless lives. Through a joint public-private partnership, American farmers, fishing families, mariners, port workers, private voluntary organizations (PVOs), and the U.S.

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Government have developed the strongest frontline response to urgent global food insecurity. Food aid is a tangible source of hope to those in need, and American stakeholders take great pride in their support for the world's most vulnerable people through these programs.

While our organizations at times have policy differences, we stand united in our belief that U.S. food aid programs are among the world's most critical foreign assistance programs, save countless lives, bolster our nation's and global security, and help millions in need around the world. We ask that you continue the lifesaving and life improving work of food aid by increasing the agriculture appropriations funding in Fiscal Year 2022 to at least \$2.2 billion to carry out the necessary and vital work accomplished in the P.L. 480 Title II Food for Peace, Food for Progress, and McGovern-Dole programs.

Thank you,