

May 06, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chair
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chair DeLauro, and Ranking Member Granger:

As [leaders of multidisciplinary organizations](#) committed to ending global food insecurity and malnutrition, we are grateful to the United States Government for their leadership in addressing these issues. Most recently, we applaud the inclusion of \$2.65 billion through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)'s International Disaster Assistance (IDA) program to provide emergency food and nutrition assistance, health care, and other urgent support in the final FY22 omnibus spending package and the passage of H.R. 4693 - The Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act of 2021.

Unfortunately, rates of global hunger and malnutrition, which had already increased dramatically due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing conflicts like the crisis in northern Ethiopia, have worsened significantly in the last two months as rising inflation, unprecedented drought in the Horn of Africa, and the war in Ukraine cause food prices to reach the highest level ever recorded on the FAO Food Price Index. This price increase affects individuals and organizations alike, vastly increasing the cost of doing business.

These extraordinary circumstances are creating the conditions for a global food crisis of epic proportions. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) projects that this crisis will lead to between 8 and 13 million more people becoming undernourished in a single year on top of the already 800 million undernourished people across the globe. Additionally, just as malnutrition impairs immune systems and helps to spread and mutate infectious diseases, global health threats like COVID-19 worsen rates of hunger and malnutrition. The actions we take to tackle malnutrition and address global health challenges are mutually reinforcing, improving the chances of success at both.

In light of these catastrophes and their impact on global food insecurity and malnutrition, **we write to request \$5 billion of supplemental funding for U.S. international humanitarian and development food and nutrition assistance programs and \$5 billion of global COVID funding.** The urgent need for supplemental funding to combat both food and nutrition insecurity and COVID impacts will be further illustrated by the witnesses in next week's Senate State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs hearing on these interconnected crises.

Russia and Ukraine produce outsized portions of the world's food, including nearly 30% of the world's exported wheat, and the Black Sea nations are the main suppliers of fertilizer and fuel in Sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia. Disruption in those supplies will further raise prices, and hurt the planting and harvest outlook for small-scale farmers in some very fragile agricultural systems. This means that the current crisis will not only result in short-term food shortages, but will also have long-term effects on the

ability of these countries to grow and harvest crops and will require investments in both short and long-term solutions to these challenges.

Among the most devastating consequences these crises will have will be their impact on children. Malnutrition is the greatest threat to child survival worldwide, and recent modeling predicts COVID-19-related disruptions alone will result in an additional 13.6 million wasted children by the end of the year. In order to survive wasting, the most deadly type of malnutrition, many of these children will need to be treated with ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF). Supplemental funding must ensure children can access this life saving treatment, by procuring U.S.-produced RUTF to meet short-term needs as we work toward enhancing local and regional RUTF production. Furthermore, for young children, even a short period of severe malnutrition can lead to permanent physical and mental stunting that causes life-long repercussions on their health, education, and earning potential. Supplemental development funding must also focus on the cost-effective interventions we know can help prevent this suffering, including support for breastfeeding moms, prenatal vitamins for pregnant women, and routine Vitamin A supplementation.

The recent Russian invasion of Ukraine has drawn the world's attention to global food security and malnutrition issues, but needs were growing long before the war. We have learned from previous hunger and humanitarian crises that time is of the essence, and we need to act immediately by providing relief to all those at risk. Behind these numbers and statistics are real human beings being devastated by violence, hunger, and malnutrition. Good food does not just address hunger, it improves nutritional status and is a key tactic in building resilience to future conflict or pandemics. Additionally, we know that women and girls often eat last and least in moments of crisis, making food assistance particularly critical as a means of addressing these gender inequities. These emergency investments are necessary to address the current and growing need now, and to complement the long term investments in development programs that support the health and nutrition of children and families to prevent the problem of malnutrition from increasing in severity and having lasting effects down the road.

The U.S. has been a leader in alleviating global malnutrition and hunger for decades. We need to continue this commitment and demonstrate to the world that our values do not stop at our borders. We respectfully request that Congress urgently fulfill these supplemental funding requests to support vulnerable communities globally and invest in resiliency so that we can all better withstand future shocks and conflict. Thank you for your leadership in these trying times.

Sincerely, on behalf of the following leaders on the Nutrition CEO Council:

Arun Baral, CEO, HarvestPlus

Joanne Carter, Executive Director, RESULTS/RESULTS Educational Fund

Rev. Eugene Cho, President and CEO, Bread for the World

Carrie Hessler-Radelet, President, Global Communities

Michelle Nunn, President and CEO, CARE USA

Saskia J.M. Osendarp PhD, Executive Director, Micronutrient Forum

Charles Owubah, CEO, Action Against Hunger

Kathy Spahn, President and CEO, Helen Keller Intl

Joel Spicer, President & CEO, Nutrition International

Blythe Thomas, Initiative Director, 1,000 Days of FHI Solutions

Mark Viso, President & CEO, Food for the Hungry