



WORKING PAPER 2021-01

Centering Global Food Security for Global Prosperity

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Executive Summary

- The new Biden Administration will face global crises on multiple fronts. COVID-19, coupled with conflict and escalating climate disasters, is leading to one of the most disastrous humanitarian and hunger crises in the last century.
- In the past decade, previous Administrations have demonstrated the value and impact of food security and nutrition security programs for alleviating hunger and malnutrition and for reducing the threat of conflict and governmental instability.
- As a result of targeted and thoughtful assistance, there are 23.4 million more people today who live above the poverty line and 3.4 million more children are free from stunting. More than 5 million families now live free from hunger and billions of dollars in agricultural sales have been generated.
- The Biden Administration has the opportunity to build on a strong foundation of work. To strengthen this programming in the next decade, key considerations should include:

- Creating a more resilient and healthful food system that is capable of absorbing shocks and stressors. Systems thinking—especially the integration of food, nutrition, health, climate, and agriculture—can drive sustainable outcomes.
- Building inclusive partnerships from the beginning to create sustainable and resilient communities.
- Investing in agricultural economies beyond US borders should be understood as an investment in critical infrastructure that stretches back to our own heartland.

Summary of Chicago Council's Policy Recommendations

1. **The US should increase funding for global food and nutrition programs across the government from approximately \$3 billion to \$6 billion annually.** This increased funding should be allocated to support an expanded Global Food Security Strategy and increased agricultural and related nutritional research & development.
2. **A food security, nutrition security, and humanitarian crisis representative, such as the Administrator of the US Agency for International Development, should be appointed to the National Security Council alongside the new Special Envoy for Climate.** This appointee would help address the critical decision-making dynamics between hunger, particularly during acute humanitarian crises, and the issues of conflict escalation, US national security, and other key foreign policy objectives.
3. **The US Department of Agriculture should play a lead role in determining and leveraging US agricultural research capabilities to address global as well as domestic food and nutrition security challenges arising from climate change and COVID-19.** \$1 billion of the proposed increased funding should go towards supporting agriculture research and development.
4. To better achieve foreign policy goals, and specifically food and nutrition security goals, **the US must rebuild trust on the global stage and show reinvigorated interest in partnership with allies.** Rebuilding the State Department with capabilities to support global food and nutrition security programs through diplomatic means and policy promotion is critical to ensuring both immediate and longer-term success.
5. Creation of the new US Development Finance Corporation (DFC) is a critical step towards improving US financing capabilities. The DFC recently established an agriculture and food/nutrition security portfolio. **The Administration should take this opportunity to ensure the DFC has increased internal capacity and expertise for agricultural financing, building on the creation of this new portfolio.** It also should ensure that the DFC improves communication and collaboration with

US development agencies to target financing in areas of mutual investment.

6. **USAID should expand the number of countries participating in the US' flagship food and nutrition security program, Feed the Future.** Expansion of this successful investment of taxpayer dollars would demonstrate the Biden Administration's strengthened commitment to achieving global food security. **In addition, USAID leadership should build on the work already done and continue to more fully integrate sustainability, nutrition, gender, and data transparency across all operational and issue areas.**

The Current Crisis

The new Biden Administration will start 2021 with unprecedented challenges at home and abroad. In addition to the significant needs here in the US, the Administration enters the fray with a weakened US presence abroad, a huge deficit of trust from former allies, and diminished global standing. The entire world faces crises on multiple fronts; COVID-19, coupled with conflict and escalating climate disasters, have meant that countries are forced to manage major crises layered on top of crises. This has created an urgent need for clear leadership and decisive action from the public and private sectors. The US must reengage on the global stage or face the consequences of increasing disarray and disaster both domestically and internationally.

Global food and nutrition security was elevated as a major priority of the US government ten years ago, and progress has been mixed in addressing global hunger and malnutrition. During the first five years of the US' flagship food and nutrition security program, Feed the Future, the world saw substantial reductions in the number of hungry and malnourished people. However, the following five years, from 2015-2020, resulted in successive increases in global hunger and accompanying malnutrition.¹ In fact, the number of hungry people in the world just prior to the coronavirus pandemic returned to nearly 2009 levels.² Moreover, the combined impact of climate change, conflict, and COVID-19—along with the pressure of sustained poverty—is setting the stage for 2021 to witness one of the largest disasters in recorded history. Experts estimate that the pandemic could double the population of those suffering from severe food and/or nutrition insecurity.³ In addition to the dire need for increased and immediate humanitarian aid, the pandemic has disrupted livelihoods around the world which itself carries long-term consequences. The magnitude and urgency of this complex crisis cannot be overstated.

Despite the best efforts of initiatives like Feed the Future, factors that contribute to the rise of global hunger and accompanying malnutrition have been intensifying over time and have hampered efforts in addressing those

challenges. The frequency and magnitude of natural disasters, such as cyclones and drought, have increased as a result of a changing climate.⁴ Temperature and rainfall have become increasingly variable, wreaking havoc on best-laid plans of farmers all around the world. Additionally, agricultural pests and pathogens continue to remain a threat, as demonstrated by locusts plaguing Eastern Africa and the Middle East and the global spread of African swine fever, which in 2019 claimed one quarter of the world's swine population.⁵

The hunger crisis is fueled by more than just natural disasters and climate issues. The UN World Food Programme (WFP) noted that almost 60 percent of the world's 690 million severely hungry people live in areas affected by armed violence.⁶ Conflict is currently the single greatest challenge to creating a hunger-free and nutrition-secure world, with conflict being the main driver for 80 percent of the most severe hunger crises and nutrition shortfalls.⁷ From 2011-2018, the number of people seeking refuge outside their country of origin increased by 70 percent.⁸ Conflict also disrupts agricultural production and economies, both of which are already stressed by climate change. This interaction creates a negative feedback loop. It has displaced a staggering number of people causing refugee crises in neighboring regions. In 2019, more than 79.5 million people were displaced in part due to conflict and the ensuing crises.⁹ In the Central Sahel alone, climate change and conflict have resulted in 1.6 million people internally displaced and 5 million people in need of immediate humanitarian assistance.¹⁰

For the first time in 100 years, the world is facing a devastating global pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has both intensified the threat posed by climate and conflict, and it has revealed a path forward—by focusing on resilient systems. As the number of infected cases continue to rise around the world, with a third wave hitting both Europe and the US this winter, more lockdowns are imminent.¹¹ The disease has spread like wildfire across countries, often afflicting the most vulnerable. Governments, health officials, and local leaders are failing to contain the spread for various reasons. While high-income countries have fallen short, swift action from the African Union and country governments have mitigated the spread in some low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).¹² However, necessary actions to prevent the spread of the virus have had a huge economic impact. The closing of markets and borders across entire regions has greatly affected the ability to sell, trade, and buy needed agricultural and food supplies.¹³ In many LMICs, social protections are either limited or in some places non-existent, leaving those most vulnerable to deal with these interlocking crises alone. Food and nutrition insecurity is on the rise in the US¹⁴ and Europe, and it is reaching devastating numbers in already struggling communities in Sub-Saharan Africa

and South Asia. The WFP estimates that an additional 130 million people will fall into severe food insecurity and malnutrition due to COVID-19.¹⁵

A deeper understanding of the intersection and integration of agriculture, health, and nutrition has never been more important as is the certainty that agriculture's principal goal is human wellbeing. The pandemic disrupted global food supply chains and markets, reemphasizing the fragility of our global food system. Food has spoiled in shocking quantities because it could not reach the people who needed it.¹⁶ Labor shortages severely hampered harvests around the world.¹⁷ Farmers were unable to access both inputs to support their production and markets at which they can sell their products.¹⁸ The world needs to invest in solutions leading to more resilient food systems that can withstand costly and deadly shocks (like a pandemic, cyclone, or conflict) without events escalating into crisis. A global pandemic and its impact on short- and long-term food insecurity may demand a global response, but it also requires US leadership.

Building from a strong foundation

Feed the Future has achieved remarkable results, and the US' flagship food and nutrition security program will continue to be critical for addressing the looming crises ahead. The 10-year anniversary serves as a moment to reflect on the reasons for the original commitment and investment, evaluate our progress, and prepare for future challenges. Today, there are 23.4 million more people who live above the poverty line because of this program, and 3.4 million more children are free from stunting. More than 5 million families now live free from hunger, similarly growing numbers are free of malnutrition, and billions of dollars in agricultural sales have been generated.¹⁹ This is a direct result of Feed the Future's targeted and thoughtful assistance and its focus on continual improvement.

Feed the Future is not the only program addressing food and nutrition security, however. The US government's Global Food Security Strategy operates in conjunction with eleven different US agencies, including the US Department of Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of State. These programs aim to address issues at the heart of hunger and nutrition insecurity, specifically targeting smallholder farmers to drive up production, provide new technologies, and help support market development of the most appropriate foods. Global food and nutrition security programs do not aim to address immediate humanitarian need, but rather build resilience, sustainability, and enhance the livelihoods of farmers around the world. Support of sustainable livelihoods through agricultural development linked to promoting human wellbeing has been proven to be an effective way to help farmers better weather famine, pests and disease, help

assure the healthy development of their families and manage other acute crises thus mitigating their need for humanitarian aid in the future. Programs like USDA's Cochran and Borlaug Fellowships and Farmer-to-Farmer program help to build capacity and enhance knowledge transfer to farmers around the world. These global food and nutrition security efforts also include partners from many countries and multilateral institutions, such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

Diverse investments, along with strong US leadership, have provided the gains seen over the past decade. Global food and nutrition security efforts have been effective even with the pressures of COVID-19, climate change, and conflict. In fact, the outlook would have been worse if it were not for the sustained efforts of coordinated global food and nutrition security programs. Feed the Future and the wider food security strategy have helped to mitigate hunger and nutrition insecurity and have also provided a solid infrastructure to build on as the US turns the page to consider the next decade. Over the past 10 years, the programs have grown, changed, and adapted to reflect new thinking and new realities. During that time, the US development model was updated to emphasize resilience, which is reflected in USAID's new Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (RFS). Gender and nutrition have importantly been integrated and incorporated on a much larger scale, and sustainability is finally emerging as a key consideration to US programming. Yet more work remains in all three areas.

Feed the Future was created following the 2007-2008 food price spikes and the ensuing global turmoil. The program was a result of the recognition that food and nutrition security and national security are clearly linked. Today, global food and nutrition security continues to be a matter of national security. As threats to global food and nutrition security intensify, so will threats to US national security. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence has codified climate change and food security as threats to national security in their annual threat assessments.²⁰ Furthermore, it is important to recognize the rising influence of other nations in areas of strategic interest to stated US foreign policy goals. Investing in low- and middle-income country development is one way to bolster and re-establish positive partnerships. Feed the Future alongside other US global food and nutrition security programs not only feeds people, but it also builds human capacity and enables stronger markets, which ultimately creates communities more resilient to future crises. Forging true partnerships with target countries strengthens US strategic relationships, and it accelerates market growth in LMICs. As we move towards an uncertain future, global food and nutrition security efforts will remain a smart investment.

Conversely, the cost of inaction is high, and decreasing investment or delaying action could risk undoing a decade of progress. Therefore, continued US investment in global food and nutrition security programs is critical. The long-term consequences of COVID-19 can be predicted but have yet to be seen. The hunger and nutrition crisis is immediate; however, it will be malnutrition, stunting, and wasting that will impact a generation of children and young adults in the decades to come because of their irreversible effects on human health. The resulting impacts on cognitive, physical, and economic growth for the foreseeable future will limit prosperity for countless people and countries. Food and nutrition insecurity, hunger, and unemployment are factors known to lead to instability and civil unrest. Fragile countries, which are broken by a rising wave of hunger, are breeding grounds for threats to US national security. Through Feed the Future and other global food and nutrition security programs, the US has an existing tested-and-proven infrastructure to help prevent as well as respond to future crises. By building on the success of our global food and nutrition security programs and incorporating changes from valuable lessons learned, we can ensure these programs remain relevant and capable of addressing challenges to continue our hard-fought progress.

What can be improved?

A reinvestment from the US and a reinvigorated assertion of US leadership through partnership with those in the global food and nutrition arena will be essential. The past decade of implementing global food and nutrition security programs has produced both major successes and some failures, with important lessons to learn. The Feed the Future development model has adapted and grown intermittently and sporadically over the past decade, and it will be imperative to fully integrate key areas of understanding to ensure its future success. In moving forward, there are three major areas of investment that should be more fully integrated into global food and nutrition security efforts.

First, a large number of factors contribute to food insecurity, hunger, and malnutrition. Poverty and unemployment serve as major drivers of all three issues.²¹ With this in mind, US programs cannot be created in a vacuum and should account for other community influences and obstacles facing smallholder farmers and families. Consideration of the food system as a whole must be included as part of any successful programming, especially in creating a more resilient and healthy food system that is capable of absorbing shocks and stressors. Delivering sustainable outcomes requires systems thinking—with the integration of food, nutrition, health, climate, and agriculture.²² When farmers and families are not only taught or provided tools to produce more but also provided a sustainable infrastructure on which to

build, they are more likely to move out of poverty and become economically successful.²³

A resilient and sustainable food system infrastructure must include community-led and inclusive efforts for both female and male farmers of all socio-economic standing. It must create and expand market access, driving demand for local products and creating a trading infrastructure that can grow alongside the community. It should include expanding investment in agricultural research and development at local universities to allow innovation in the field, and inclusive extension networks to better translate new technologies to remote and underserved farmers.²⁴ Until recently, addressing malnutrition has been insufficiently integrated into hunger relief and development programs. Better integrating nutrition across Feed the Future programs and elevating it as a key pillar when measuring successful program outcomes will allow results to reach beyond rhetoric and impact families on the ground.²⁵ Finally, it should incorporate USAID's Journey to Self-Reliance model, with the goal being to foster communities that no longer need aid.²⁶

Second, while there has always been an understanding that the US cannot act alone and should not act without the support and inclusion of local on-the-ground partners, the vision for how to build productive and collaborative partnerships has been evolving. For the past decade, uneven attention has been given to engaging local partners in countries where global food security programs are being implemented.²⁷ Building sustainable and resilient communities requires inclusive partnerships from the beginning, yet true partnerships have been rare. Outcomes, milestones, implementation, and metrics should be led by local institutions and communities. Support for local agripreneurs and businesses should be included at all levels in order to ensure that programs are built as sustainable businesses rather than solely short-term relief. Unemployment, a main factor contributing to poverty and thus food insecurity, can be mitigated if local talent is cultivated. Youth are particularly vulnerable to driving civil unrest if they are stuck in a cycle of unemployment, malnutrition, and hunger. As the youth bulge continues to grow, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, engaging them in a profitable, health-promoting, and successful agricultural system on and off the farm can be mutually beneficial.²⁸

Investment and collaboration with local partners help to build sustainability by creating buy-in from institutions, foster market demand by identifying needs dictated by the community rather than the national or international perspective, and build long-term infrastructure and behavior patterns which can be passed from generation to generation. In addition to local partners, collaboration with multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, FAO, African Development Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development

(IFAD) (funded through the Department of the Treasury), and the CGIAR (formerly Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) system—as well as bolstering coordination with other high-income country initiatives such as those executed by the EU, UK, Germany, and Japan—is critical to driving overall reductions in food and nutrition insecurity. The United States joined the international community’s commitment to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but has abdicated a leading role for the past four years. Now is the time to reengage with national and international partners to build progress towards these goals, specifically SDG2 which addresses hunger and agricultural development.

Finally, new thinking has emerged across the development community that rejects financial growth as the only metric for success.²⁹ The development community should abandon the notion that development is linear, one directional, and narrowly defined by financial growth as success. US farmers and consumers have been impacted by disruptions in other parts of the global food system. COVID-19 has demonstrated that the US system is part of a larger global network and cannot be divorced from the world. In addition, our food system is becoming increasingly fragile.³⁰ US investment in agricultural development should be viewed as an investment for improving the stability and healthfulness of the global food system as a whole and an investment in prosperity for future generations. Investing in agricultural economies beyond US borders should not be viewed as supporting competition, but instead as an investment in a critical infrastructure that stretches back to our own heartland. Strengthening a US agricultural enterprise that supports human wellbeing will require innovative, sustainable technologies and practices in our own backyard while also supporting expansion of markets in struggling nations.

What should the Administration do?

1. The US should increase our investment in global food and nutrition security efforts in order to prevent devastating long-term impacts from COVID-19 alongside ongoing drivers of hunger, malnutrition, climate change and conflict. **Continued investment in food and nutrition security programs across the government is necessary for building upon and expanding current efforts and should be increased from its current levels of approximately \$3 billion to \$6 billion annually.**³¹ The current level of funding includes investments under both the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs and the Agricultural Appropriations account. The recommended doubling of funds and efforts reflects the expanded need for addressing the triple crises of climate challenges, conflict, and COVID-19.

- a. Of the additional \$3 billion in additional funding proposed, \$2 billion should be invested in support of the Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS). Specifically, this funding should support GFSS programs such as USAID’s Feed the Future to expand its reach. By expanding Feed the Future to include additional “target countries,” like those in potential new regions of focus such as Central America and South Asia, US food and nutrition security programs could drastically increase the number of beneficiaries and reduce food and nutrition insecurity in strategic foreign policy regions. Also, this additional investment should enhance activities, as enumerated below, across the US government. This includes activities in the White House and agencies such as USDA, Department of State, and Development Finance Corporation which participate in the GFSS. The remaining \$1 billion of this additional funding should be dedicated to support ongoing and expanded agricultural research and development both domestically and internationally.
 - b. The new Administration should demonstrate renewed US resolve to engage and expand on global food and nutrition security efforts at the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit and Nutrition for Growth Summit. The State Department, alongside USAID and USDA, should agree upon a high-level representative delegation as well as specific domestic and global commitments reflective of this new resolve and include a specific financial commitment.
 - c. As the Administration plans renewed engagement in the UN’s Global Climate Action Agenda, it is critical that food and nutrition security and agriculture are included as priority issues. For example, the next meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP26), represents an important opportunity to incorporate agriculture, nutrition, and food security issues in all discussions.
2. **A food security, nutrition security, and humanitarian crisis representative, such as the USAID Administrator, should be appointed to the National Security Council alongside the new Special Envoy for Climate.** This appointee would help address critical decision-making dynamics between hunger, particularly during acute humanitarian crises, and the issues of conflict escalation, US national security, and other key foreign policy objectives.
- a. This representative, with support from USAID’s Deputy Coordinator for Feed the Future, should lead a new taskforce called the Global Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainability Taskforce, on which the new Special Envoy for Climate should be consulted. This Taskforce would be built upon the current global food security strategy coordination structure and should examine global food and nutrition security efforts underway across the US

government to identify and address any gaps. The Taskforce should align the US national security strategy for key regions with the global food security strategy, multi-sectoral nutrition strategy, global water strategy, global fragility strategy, and any new whole-of-government climate strategy created by the new Special Envoy for Climate to support overlapping and coordinated goals, countries, and regions. This would allow agencies to move forward in a more synchronized way. This Taskforce should leverage key thought leadership across academia, the private sector, and government, including experts such as USAID's Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD) appointees.

- b. The White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy should create a coordinated Agriculture Research Council which incorporates input from agencies across the defense, intelligence, agriculture, interior, food, and development communities. This Council would provide guidance on how to allocate additional funding towards key research priorities to protect and enhance US agriculture and, by proxy, the global food system. This Council should also periodically liaise with American land-grant colleges and universities, a rich system of agricultural knowledge that could be more fully utilized by the US government, and the CGIAR system, an international consortium of research labs aimed at advancing agriculture. Innovative science and technology have never been more instrumental in transforming agriculture and solving hunger and malnutrition in our lifetime.
3. The US Department of Agriculture performs a critical role in supplying key knowledge and expertise on agricultural research and technologies. The Administrations should ensure all departments are fully staffed, including critical research agencies like the Economic Research Service and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Building on the Agricultural Research Council suggested above, **USDA should play a lead role in determining and leveraging US agricultural and nutrition research capabilities to address global as well as domestic food and nutrition security challenges arising from climate change and COVID-19.**
 - a. Specifically, USDA's Secretary should direct the USDA Chief Scientist to coordinate both intramural and extramural research activities related to global as well as domestic climate change issues. Additional climate-related R&D should incorporate a food systems-based approach for addressing climate-related issues. It should include international research coordination and support for the CGIAR system and Feed the Future Innovation Labs at land-grant universities. Achieving this goal will require leadership

- capable of cross-government accountability, for example by including USDA's Chief Scientist on the White House Agriculture Research Council. Additional funding, if appropriated by Congress, should target and address increased productivity, specifically land- and water-use efficiency, abiotic stresses such as heat and drought, and biotic stresses such as pest and diseases that will likely increase under climate change. Increased R&D funding should also invest in developing solutions for water and waste management in intensive livestock systems and for improved pasture varieties and management for grazing systems.
- b. USDA should lead in encouraging and promoting the adoption of appropriate new and existing precision agriculture and irrigation technologies by both farmers at home and abroad. Through provision of credit, information services, and advanced information and communications technology applications, USDA could improve the adoption and efficient use of these technologies by small-scale producers which would have significant benefits. These benefits include increased income from higher-value crops, higher yields due to more precise irrigation applications at critical crop growth periods, farmer convenience and labor savings, and lower pumping costs.
 - c. USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) should better coordinate and collaborate with USAID's missions in countries where programming overlaps. Expanding the number of foreign agricultural service officers in key regions such as Western Africa is critical to creating resilient investments across US programs. A key goal of resilient food and nutrition security programs is the development of functioning markets and a robust trading system. FAS brings unique skills and expertise on agricultural trading markets and in addressing tariff and non-tariff barriers. Wherever FAS has a presence, they should increase coordination and knowledge transfer with regional and local country governments with the goal of building and increasing foundational demand for US agricultural products in new markets as well as helping countries streamline trade across local and regional borders.
 - d. The new Administration should seize the opportunity to enhance the successful McGovern-Dole International Food for Education program by addressing any new distribution and operations constraints resulting from COVID-19 restrictions. To achieve this goal, USDA should permit appropriate modifications in program metrics and assessments. Many implementing organizations have drastically adapted their efforts when schools were forced to close across regions to protect children from infection. In order to continue providing life-saving food assistance, these NGOs have

made necessary changes to their programming, such as the use of take-home food rations.

4. To better achieve foreign policy goals, and specifically food and nutrition security goals, the **US must rebuild trust on the global stage and show reinvigorated interest in partnership with allies.** The Biden transition agenda acknowledges the importance of strengthening institutional and agency capacity, specifically at the US Department of State. This recognition is critically important to the State Department for executing US foreign policy priorities, advancing US leadership, and protecting US national security. The Department has been understaffed for several years, resulting in negative diplomatic consequences critically identified by US foreign policy operatives and our allies. Despite the relative success of investments in humanitarian and development programming, civil unrest and instability still proliferate in food insecure regions of strategic importance to the US. In many cases, issues of humanitarian access go unaddressed resulting in increased acute and chronic food insecurity. We need a robust response, and the State Department plays a key role in supporting USAID's global food and nutrition security efforts as diplomatic political access and solutions can make a difference in successfully implementing a global food and nutrition security response. Rebuilding the State Department with capabilities to support these programs through diplomatic means and policy promotion is critical to ensuring both immediate and longer-term success.
 - a. With more local partnerships and country-led development, US agencies need better tools for assessing and anticipating future conflict and crises on the ground. By leveraging in-house expertise at embassies in countries alongside USAID's ongoing missions in key areas, the State Department can more effectively support assessments to better adapt food security and nutrition programming to anticipate and react to challenges.
 - b. The State Department should ensure every Ambassador and embassy staff in countries included under the global food and nutrition security strategy, global water strategy, and global fragility strategy receive mandatory training and briefings from the USAID mission on in-country agricultural development and nutrition programming. This training should include briefings on all food and nutrition security activities undertaken through US programs, multilateral efforts, and donor-funded activities. There should always be a direct line of communication between USAID Mission Director and the Ambassador.
 - c. The Administration should reengage with key international institutions and strengthen leadership in the international agenda. Institutions that the US should advance engagement must include,

but is not limited to: UNICEF, FAO, IFAD, WFP, CGIAR, and global non-governmental organizations.

5. Agricultural financing for small- and medium-sized entrepreneurs in LMICs, and especially for farmers, has consistently been underfunded in US development efforts. Creation of the new US Development Finance Corporation (DFC) is a critical step towards improving US financing capabilities. The DFC recently established an agriculture and food security portfolio. This investment portfolio will be an important building block for robust agricultural financing and is a good first step. **The Administration should take this opportunity to ensure the DFC has increased internal capacity and expertise for agricultural financing, building on the creation of this new portfolio. It also should ensure that the DFC improves communication and collaboration with US development agencies to target financing in areas of mutual investment.** The DFC should leverage public-private partnerships and work closely with the World Bank and the African Development Bank to build on their existing work. The portfolio should focus on financing and lending to food and nutrition and/or climate-integrated projects, and it should also strengthen the DFC's small business support clause.
6. The Biden Administration should seize the opportunity to make the US Agency for International Development fit for purpose by funding and executing the following recommendations and ensuring the agency is fully staffed:
 - a. **USAID development activities and investments should continue to support and enhance US foreign policy priorities.** As articulated above, this will require the inclusion of the USAID Administrator in the National Security Council.
 - b. The Administration has the opportunity to demonstrate strong leadership on food systems development through Feed the Future and other global food and nutrition security programs. Admittedly, the agency has built on the recognized success of these programs and adapted as new operational challenges arose, most recently the COVID-19 pandemic. As mentioned above, **the new Administration should expand the number of countries participating in Feed the Future.** Expansion of this successful investment of taxpayer dollars would demonstrate the Biden Administration's strengthened commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goal Two.
 - c. **USAID and its Resilience and Food Security Bureau will need to foster more widespread coordination of investments across the nexus of water, energy, and agriculture.** A systems approach for understanding the relationship between water, energy, health, and agriculture should not just apply to on-farm practices, but

also apply more broadly to activities across the entire food system, such as processing and packaging.

- d. **The Board for International Food and Agricultural Development should be reshaped to more accurately reflect a diversity of experiences.** The President appoints all seven members of BIFAD and therefore, with input from the USAID Administrator, should strengthen the group by better integrating representatives and feedback from Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other land-grant universities, such as the Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, into policy and programming across the agency.
- e. **To enhance the agency's efforts and better fulfill its mission, USAID leadership should build on the work already done and continue to more fully integrate sustainability, nutrition, gender, and data transparency across all operational and issue areas.**
 - i. USAID should expand its efforts to integrate sustainability into programming. In order to better address food system-wide issues, especially those expected to have the largest impact in the future. This will require consideration of sustainability into all aspects of implementation.
 - ii. Nutrition programming has been overlooked for decades but should be fully integrated into agriculture, food and resilience programming. The new USAID Leadership Council on Nutrition created as a part of the most recent restructuring is a step in the right direction, but it should provide clear and actionable guidance on nutrition programming that can enhance food security. This guidance should also support efforts to better partner with the private sector which can impact a larger number of those suffering from malnutrition. The Council should also have clear goals beyond just food and agriculture, because focusing on nutrition through food security alone will not solve the wider needs of malnourished populations. Metrics for measuring success in nutrition should overlap with food security, but not completely. Other factors such as the impact of nutrition on education, health, maternal and child welfare, as well as behavior modifications should also be taken into account.
 - iii. Gender-responsive programming should build on the work already performed and more deeply integrate these considerations into operational planning. In addition, gender should cut across and be included in all programming, including food and nutrition security programming.

- iv. Increased data transparency is critical to driving long-term change. Improvements have been made, including the creation of the Foreign Assistance Dashboard, yet more is needed for increased transparency especially with the call for increased funding. Specifically, greater transparency is needed for how nutrition funding is allocated and used in programming as well as for determining how “climate-smart” agricultural programs are designated. Finally, using metrics to dictate program and staffing changes is critical to ensure sustainability and efficacy of these changes.

The new Administration will launch in January 2021 with unprecedented challenges and will require a bold vision for what the US can accomplish over the next four years. While US food and nutrition security programming has been successful in the past, there are opportunities for improvement to ensure continued success. The Biden Administration has the opportunity to build on a solid foundation and expand the number of beneficiaries of US generosity and technical knowledge to build back an even better future.

ENDORSEMENT*

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Mark Green, Administrator, USAID (2017 - 2020)

****ENDORSEMENTS AS OF DECEMBER 17, 2021***

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