

June 16, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chair, House Committee on Appropriations  
2308 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Vice Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on  
Appropriations  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, House Committee on  
Appropriations  
2413 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwomen Murray and Granger, Vice Chair Collins, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The state of food security and nutrition both in the United States and around the world can be summed up in a single word: uncertainty. In the United States, we continue to see families squeezed by inflationary pressures in grocery stores as well as paying for basic needs such as housing and medical bills. Globally, 820 million people find themselves unable to feed their families – a number that has increased for nearly a decade. With continuing conflict around the world, economic uncertainty at home, and overall increasing stresses on vulnerable populations everywhere, now is the wrong time to usher in any decreases to food and nutrition programs.

### **Domestic Programs**

#### **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**

WIC provides a monthly benefit for healthy foods, which has been shown to produce long-term health benefits for participants. We are requesting that WIC be funded at a minimum of \$6.3 billion for FY24. WIC participation has experienced an upward trend in growth over recent months and recently reached a high of 6.6 million participants. Adequate funds are necessary to meet the growing need for WIC. If WIC funding is rolled back to FY22 levels, for the first time in three decades, state WIC offices would be forced to institute waiting lists for new mothers and children due to inability to accommodate growing caseload.

Additionally, the recent bump to the fruits and vegetable cash-value benefit (CVB) has played a crucial role in improving the diets and health outcomes of millions of kids since 2021. WIC participants have benefited significantly from the CVB as it has increased their access to a broader range of healthy foods and supplemented their nutritional needs. The Fiscal Responsibility Act forces the Agriculture Subcommittee to work from a lower allocation than last year, which would slash the fruit and vegetable CVB for 5 million toddlers, pregnant/postpartum mothers, and children, by 56% for children and 70% for mothers.

#### **The Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program**

OAA supports nutrition services for older individuals throughout the country and significantly reduces hunger and nutrition insecurity, promotes social interaction, advances health and well-being, and

impedes adverse health conditions. We are requesting that the OAA Nutrition Program be funded at a minimum of \$1.284 billion. This level of funding would represent a meaningful investment toward addressing the most immediate demand for services, as the number of adults struggling with hunger is rising and local senior nutrition programs, like Meals on Wheels, are simultaneously navigating supply chain challenges, labor and volunteer shortages, and elevated food and gas prices. Although estimates suggest that an increase of about six times over current funding would be needed to reach all those who likely need congregate and home-delivered meals but are not currently receiving them, this proposed level of funding would represent a meaningful investment toward addressing the most immediate demand and elevated operational costs, including food, gas, and labor. Assuming OAA funding represents 40% of the total cost for meals delivered on average, an estimated 5.4% cut in funding would amount to more than 5 million fewer meals served to our nation's most vulnerable older adults. For many, the OAA Nutrition Program provides their only meal of the day.

### **Global Programs**

The funding cuts proposed in the House of Representatives to the Agriculture and State, Foreign Operations Appropriations subcommittees will deal a significant blow to our efforts to combat global hunger at a time of a global food crisis with hunger on the rise around the world. The latest report from the Food Security Information Network estimates that 258 million people – 27% of the analyzed population – in 58 countries/territories faced high levels of acute food insecurity in 2022, up from 193 million in 53 countries.

Today, we are facing an unprecedented global food crisis, compounded by conflict, climate related extreme weather events, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Title II – Food for Peace**

We are requesting that Food for Peace is funded at \$2.0 billion in FY24. The current FY23 funding level for FFP is \$1.75 billion. Last year, funding to Title II Food for Peace enabled USAID to procure nearly 1.8 million metric tons of food from the United States, reaching nearly 45 million beneficiaries in 31 countries. America is proud to be a leader in fighting the scourge of global hunger and malnutrition. Cutting Food for Peace at a time when we are facing an unprecedented global food crisis will only translate to more people going hungry and more lives lost.

### **McGovern-Dole Food for Education**

The McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition program marked its 20th anniversary last year with a bipartisan resolution celebrating the program that has provided over 5.5 billion school meals, benefiting over 31 million school-age children – especially girls – in communities in over 48 countries around the world. The program has helped to reduce hunger and improve literacy and primary education in developing countries. For FY 2023, USDA anticipates awarding up to \$224 million in new McGovern-Dole cooperative agreements. We are seeking \$265 million in FY24 to continue this critical program.

### **Global Food Security – Feed the Future**

Feed the Future is a whole-of-government initiative that invests in agriculture, resilience, and nutrition. Through FTF, the U.S. has enabled millions of families around the world to achieve the basic necessity

and dignity that comes with sufficient nutritious food. USAID reports that in areas where FTF is implemented, an estimated 23.4 million more people are living above the poverty line, 3.4 million fewer children are stunted, and an estimated 5.2 million fewer families are hungry. The FTF program is currently running in 20 countries around the world. A reduction in funding would result in likely decreasing the number of countries we are able to support. We are seeking \$1.2 billion in FY24 for implementation of the successful Feed the Future program.

#### Global Health - Nutrition

Robust funding of the nutrition account is critical to saving lives and reaching USAID's goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths. More than 1 billion adolescent girls and women worldwide suffer from malnutrition, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and anemia, impacting current and future generations. Undernutrition is a direct threat to child survival and is the underlying cause of about 45% of all childhood deaths under the age of 5. Not only is malnutrition fatal, it is also costly, with estimates showing that malnutrition costs the world \$3.5 trillion in lost productivity and healthcare costs each year. Supplemental funding in 2022 led to 7.3 million children under age 5 receiving life-saving treatment for severe wasting (a 35 per cent increase from 2021), the highest annual increase and the highest number of children treated for severe wasting since large-scale treatment began. A cut in funding for nutrition would reverse this positive trend. We are asking for \$300 million in FY24 for global nutrition.

The Alliance to End Hunger and our broad coalition of member organizations strive to eliminate hunger and malnutrition in all of their forms everywhere. Our efforts rely on the historic bipartisan agreement that hunger should not be tolerated. As you finalize FY24 funding levels, we urge you to ensure the needs of food and nutrition insecure people in the U.S. and around the world are met. We thank you for your consideration of the above requests, and we look forward to our continuing work together.

Respectfully,



Eric Mitchell  
Executive Director  
Alliance to End Hunger