

Recommendations on the U.S. Global Food Security Strategy for the Biden-Harris Administration

Strengthen and Advance Leadership on Global Food Security and Nutrition

As world hunger continues to rise for the fifth straight year, the need for sufficient, affordable, and widely accessible nutritious foods for the world's most marginalized children, women, and men is more urgent now than ever before. The COVID-19 pandemic is putting additional stress on global food systems, threatening the lives of those who were already experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity and undernutrition prior to the pandemic. In fact, acute food insecurity has reached an all-time high, with the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimating that **105 million people** need immediate, crisis-level food assistance. Additionally, 2021 could be a potentially catastrophic year as the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) predicts that the number of people on the brink of starvation is **likely to double** due to increased violent conflict compounded by the effects of COVID-19. The wide-ranging impacts of COVID-19 will undoubtedly have long-term effects on food security and nutrition, lessening our odds of reaching a world free of hunger by 2030.

We call on the Biden-Harris Administration to champion a new U.S. Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS) that is people-centered, justice-oriented, and forward-looking. A sustainable pathway to ending hunger starts with U.S. leadership and commitment. As history has shown us, progress is possible with the right combination of policies, political leadership, and everyone doing their part. The new GFSS should prioritize family farms and rural livelihoods; pursue climate justice; implement targeted interventions specifically at women and youth; elevate the first 1,000 days of life for optimal nutrition outcomes and to increase child survival; drive forward resilience; and promote an integrative approach to addressing the various, interconnected drivers of hunger and malnutrition.

A successful strategy will recognize that in a world that produces enough food to feed every mouth, **690 million people** should not go to bed hungry every night. It is a testament to the broken and fragile nature of the current global food system that has very real and dire consequences for poor communities worldwide. It is time for a transformative GFSS that takes into account the inextricable linkages and cross-cutting nature of food security and nutrition and its importance to other development sectors like water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); health; education; land tenure; and climate, while simultaneously placing resilience at its center. The U.S. is well-positioned to reverse the upwards trajectory of food insecurity and prevent backsliding on years of historic progress, preserving a legacy of leadership on food security worldwide.

Recommendations

Strengthen the next iteration of the Global Food Security Strategy.

- **Address and prepare for new challenges** like COVID-19, water scarcity, mass displacement, climate change, land and resource grabs, and an uptick in invasive agriculture pests like fall armyworm and desert locusts; programming gaps; and other barriers to effective implementation.
- **Expand the list of Feed the Future target countries** to include a larger and more diverse set of countries—commensurate to increasing global food and nutrition security needs—prioritizing those that are fragile yet ripe for capacity building, innovative training, and technologies, and have a proven track record of country ownership in areas of agriculture, food security, and nutrition. This expansion will build on the Feed the Future Initiative's



vision of accelerating agriculture sector growth and improving the nutritional status of people in Feed the Future countries.

- **Improve the humanitarian-development nexus among all USG food security and nutrition programs** to transform global food systems, address structural barriers, elevate and universally integrate resilience-focused programming, and bring high-impact interventions to scale.
 - Prioritize diplomatic efforts and peacebuilding programming that prevents and mitigates extreme violent conflict, a primary driver of global food insecurity.
 - Continue to leverage emergency food assistance to build and institutionalize strong and shock responsive social protection systems that lead to sustainable rural development
- **Invest in research, development, and innovations to examine food systems** in rural, peri-urban, and urban environments to improve program effectiveness and resilience and reach marginalized demographics including women, youth, indigenous populations, and people with disabilities, encouraging them to take ownership in how their food is grown, processed, distributed, consumed and recycled.
- **Improve coherence across U.S. government agencies implementing the Feed the Future program**, specifically regarding climate and gender, monitoring the roll-out of new government strategies at USAID and within the whole-of-government.
 - Boost climate-smart incentives for sustainable agriculture practices to decrease the vulnerability of small-scale farmers by taking an agroecological approach to improve land and resource access and efficiency, preserve biodiversity, protect rural livelihoods, and promote good governance of both human and natural systems.
 - Advance women's social and economic empowerment by closing the gender gap—recognizing that gender equity and equality is a fundamental human right—which plays an instrumental role in ensuring inclusive agriculture-led growth and development, and strengthening linkages to other sectors like global health.
- **Collaborate with a diverse group of domestic and international stakeholders**, including faith-based and civil society organizations; universities and research institutions; the U.S. private sector; farm and commodity organizations; and partner governments—in addition to newer, smaller, and localized partners through the New Partnerships Initiative.

Advance U.S. global leadership in multilateral organizations to support robust investments in local food systems to increase the effectiveness and scale of U.S. food security assistance.

- **Make a bold and ambitious pledge at the 2021 U.N. Food Systems Summit** that emphasizes food systems' fundamental role in ensuring optimal human health and nutrition; recognizes its influence on access to food, land, and natural resources; the unsustainable nature of food production and consequent environmental degradation; and the impact of food systems on healthy and nutritious consumption. Further, urge governments and donors to invest in local, nourishing, equitable, resilient, and sustainable food systems.
- **Pledge to increase U.S. support for the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)** during the final meeting of the current replenishment negotiations of IFAD's core resources in February 2021. A strong U.S. pledge would demonstrate a renewal of the U.S.' commitment to the fight against global food insecurity, mitigating the effects of climate change on the poorest, and enabling resilience to shocks—core to IFAD's mission.



Increase U.S. investments in food security and nutrition programs.

- **These programs have a proven track record of reducing poverty;** creating more sustainable livelihoods; increasing nutrition outcomes and decreasing hunger; and building more peaceful, just, and prosperous communities.

About InterAction's Food Security, Nutrition, and Agriculture Working Group

The Food Security, Nutrition, and Agriculture Working Group is InterAction's advocacy arm covering humanitarian and development issues relating to hunger and malnutrition. Our working group supports legislative advocacy on all relevant food security, agriculture, and nutrition appropriations accounts; relevant bills and resolutions including—but not limited to—the USG's Global Food Security Strategy, Feed the Future Initiative, Food for Peace, USAID's Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy, and international food aid titles within the U.S. Farm Bill; engagement with U.N. agencies and other multilateral organizations and entities; and ensures that Congress continues to prioritize food security and malnutrition as necessary components for implementing sound, impactful, and inclusive U.S. foreign policy.

About InterAction

InterAction is a convener, thought leader, and voice for NGOs working to eliminate extreme poverty, strengthen human rights and citizen participation, safeguard a sustainable planet, promote peace, and ensure dignity for all people.

