

January 28, 2014

Sen. Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,  
and Forestry

Rep. Frank Lucas  
Chairman  
House Committee on Agriculture

Sen. Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,  
And Forestry

Rep. Collin Peterson  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Agriculture

We would like to express strong support for the common-sense and balanced provisions enabling further reform of U.S. international food aid programs contained in the trade title of the 2014 farm bill. We would like to thank the chairs and ranking members of the Senate and House Agriculture Committees for their leadership and contributions to this effort.

These provisions represent significant steps in improving the efficiency of U.S. food aid programs, and will allow the United States to assist more hungry people around the world without additional cost.

In particular, we note that the 2014 farm bill addresses the key reform principles supported by our organizations:

- (1) improving the ability of the United States to respond to humanitarian emergencies and chronic food insecurity with a wider range of tools and greater flexibility in the use of food aid resources, which ensure the most appropriate response in each context, and
- (2) reducing the need to monetize commodities to raise funding for development projects under U.S. food aid programs.

The farm bill conference report supports these principles in the following ways:

- Establishes a permanent Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) program to be operated at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, authorized at \$80 million annually
- Increases the share of Title II (Food for Peace) funds that can be used to cover non-commodity expenses of food aid programs, up to 20 percent from its current cap of 13 percent, while broadening the scope of activities that can be paid for by these funds to include direct costs of development programs, thus decreasing the need to monetize food aid commodities and improving flexibility for programs
- Promotes transparency in the costs of food aid by requiring the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to report on costs involved in program

implementation, including overseas transportation, storage, and handling of commodities, administrative costs, and cost recovery for monetized food aid, with additional reporting required on monetization transactions that fail to generate at least a 70 percent recovery rate

- Provides robust funding for development food aid programs
- Maintains key funding for efforts to improve food aid quality initially provided in the 2008 farm bill, and
- Increases resources for (USAID) to operate overseas facilities for pre-positioned food aid commodities, to improve response times to emergencies.

We look forward to working with Congress and the administration toward the implementation of these reforms once the farm bill is enacted.

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| 1. American Jewish World Service              | 13. Mercy Corps  |
| 2. The Borgen Project                         | 14. Mercy-USA for Aid and Development                            |
| 3. Bread for the World                        | 15. Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network                       |
| 4. CARE USA                                   | 16. ONE Campaign   |
| 5. Catholic Relief Services                   | 17. One Acre Fund  |
| 6. Church World Service                       | 18. Oxfam America  |
| 7. Convoy of Hope                             | 19. Presbyterian Church USA                                      |
| 8. Counterpoint International                 | 20. Save the Children  |
| 9. Feed the Children                          | 21. United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society |
| 10. Friends Committee on National Legislation | 22. Women Thrive World Wide                                      |
| 11. InterAction                               | 23. World Food Program USA                                       |
| 12. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns      |  |

