

**Remarks by Cochairs of The Chicago Council on Global Affairs’  
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**HEARING – “Food for Thought: The Role, Risks and Challenges for American  
Agriculture and the Next Farm Bill in Meeting the Demands of a Growing World”  
U.S. Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee  
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Chairwoman Stabenow, Senator Roberts, and members of the committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear before you to discuss our on-going work to identify opportunities for the United States to provide leadership in advancing global agricultural development.

For the past three years, Catherine Bertini and I have supported an effort to restore American leadership in the fight against global hunger and poverty. We have done this from a platform at The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, through the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and in partnership with many public and private organizations and interest groups<sup>1</sup>. We have focused our efforts on activities that will result in a significant increase in agriculture and food sector development in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. These two regions have the world’s most un-developed agricultural systems, and we are convinced the development of these systems is essential to both the world’s ability to meet the demands that will be placed on the global agriculture and food system over the next decades, and to spurring economic growth and development in areas of the world where poverty and hunger are pervasive.

I am here today with some very good news. But I am also here with a challenge for congress, for the Administration, and for civil society including the for profit agribusiness community. I will base my testimony on two major sources of information; the “2011 Progress Report on US Leadership in Global Agricultural Development”, released only two days ago at a Symposium on Global Agriculture and Food Security, organized by The Chicago Council on global Affairs, and first hand observation of food security and agricultural development projects in Tanzania and Mozambique where Catherine and I had an opportunity to see some of the U.S. government’s work on food security projects led by USAID, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), and the World Food Programme (WFP).

The bottom line is that the attention that the US government has paid to global agricultural development since 2009 has been pivotal. For years this was an area that was extremely neglected by U.S. policymakers. However, now there is new energy, and much has been accomplished. America’s agricultural institutions have been part of this transformation. The US agriculture community has an opportunity to continue to support international agricultural development to not only address the challenge of global hunger, but support US food and agriculture interests.

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<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in this statement are those of Dan Glickman and Catherine Bertini and may not reflect the views of the Bipartisan Policy Center, Aspen Institute, the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, other organizations with which the cochairs are affiliated, or The Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

## **Global Food Security Contributes to US National and Economic Security**

The world food shortages of 2007-08 followed more than two decades of declining U.S. investment in global agriculture and revealed the importance of worldwide food security for America's national interest. At the time, optimists argued that the shortages and price volatility were temporary. World food prices did fall back in 2008 and 2009, but they stayed above the historically low levels seen earlier in the decade, and then rose sharply again to crisis levels in 2010-11.

Volatile commodity prices and food shortages are an important trigger for political instability and signal natural resource scarcities. These forces, combined with political corruption and soaring unemployment in low-income countries, loom as a further threat to the stability of governments, global economic growth, and U.S. national security.

Moreover, the demands that the food and agriculture system will face in the decades to come are enormous. There are currently 1.4 billion people who live on less than \$1.25/day. Global demand for food is expected to double by 2050 because of population and economic growth. This is a conservative estimate, because new data from the United Nations projects that the world's population is expected to expand more rapidly, and for a longer period of time than originally anticipated. To put it in stark terms --- the world's farmers, ranchers, and fishers will be expected to produce more food in the next 40 years than they have had to in the last 8,000 years combined.

The world now is extremely interconnected. The implications of the natural disasters in South Asia and fires across the wheat fields of Russia in 2010 were reflected in world commodity price markets. Moreover, many of the issues African and South Asian farmers grapple with are the same as those of American domestic producers: the challenges of how to increase yields and make crops more pest, drought, and disease resistant impact farmers not only in Africa, but America as well.

U.S. leadership in global agricultural development is an important component of meeting future challenges and minimizing commodity price volatility in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent global agriculture and food system. These investments will benefit both American and international agricultural producers. Improved U.S. policies towards and increased public investments in developing agrifood systems would make private sector investment less risky and more attractive and bring a return to rapid productivity growth and build a hedge against price volatility. Failure to exert sufficiently large and well-targeted efforts will simply continue the recent trend of increasingly volatile markets.

### **American Leadership**

Since the release of The Chicago Council's 2009 *Renewing American Leadership in the Fight Against Global Hunger and Poverty* report, a number of policy developments signal a significant shift in thinking about how the U.S. can best leverage its resources to address global hunger and poverty. In April 2009, President Barack Obama called for a doubling of U.S. support for agricultural development at the G20 summit; in July the G8 announced a new \$22 billion multinational food security initiative. Both the House and Senate considered legislation to enhance support for agricultural productivity. In September 2009,

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton released a consultation document on the U.S. Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative and in May 2010 the Administration launched the *Feed the Future Guide*, a whole-of-government food security effort led by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The government's increased focus on agricultural development and food security occurred in the context of a broader effort at foreign assistance reform, embodied in two new kinds of policy statements, the Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) on Global Development released in September 2010, and the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) delivered in December 2010. U.S. investment in agricultural development has increased sharply in the past several years, a clear statement that indeed the U.S. recognizes the gravity of the global food security situation and is prepared to take a leadership role in addressing head-on the causes of food insecurity.

America's past and present successes with domestic agricultural development mean it is well placed to lead the global fight against hunger and rural poverty. The institutional and technological strengths that built the U.S. agricultural sector can be deployed overseas to help the most fragile regions of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia achieve robust productivity growth comparable to that which was achieved over the last century. Past experience with U.S.-led assistance for agricultural development in countries like South Korea shows how valuable it can be for America to sustain these investments over many years, and thereby permanently transform a vulnerable and unstable country into a prosperous and secure partner. There is great, un-tapped agricultural potential in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Yields in Africa are, on average, seven times lower than those in America, and in many places, only about 20 percent of arable land is in use.

If we fail to lead in this way, America will be the poorer for it. U.S. public agricultural institutions have the world's strongest track record of success in achieving food security and poverty alleviation, in large part by delivering new technologies and market infrastructure for use by farmers and private-sector input suppliers and product marketers. Other countries that seek to influence agricultural development in Sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere often bring a very different agenda, such as European countries opposed to biotechnology, or Chinese efforts to influence Sub-Saharan African governments and control natural resources through massive land purchases. If the U.S. fails to sustain leadership in global agricultural development, the result could be a significant setback in the struggle against hunger and rural poverty.

### **Progress in Delivery of Global Agricultural Development**

The area where there has been the most impressive progress has been the improvement in the national and international institutions that deliver agricultural development assistance. USAID's leadership and effectiveness at delivering agricultural development has been renewed, and there is impressive interagency collaboration on *Feed the Future*. The agency is being re-energized under new, dynamic leadership; a Bureau for Food Security has been created and is being staffed with professional officers. The interagency coordination that went into the development of first the US Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative Concept Paper and then the *Feed the Future Guide* was exceptional.

USAID has implemented, and is continuing to implement, the broader structural changes needed to ensure that it can deliver effective, targeted, agricultural development assistance

that will have maximum impact. The Agency's ability to monitor and evaluate the impact of their programs has been totally restructured and is already being implemented.

There has also been improved interagency coordination. There are 10 agencies that are working on various components of the *Feed the Future* initiative. The *Feed the Future* research strategy has laid out ambitious plans for coordination, including the new Norman Borlaug Commemorative Research Initiative, which establishes partnerships between USAID and USDA to leverage the expertise of USDA's research agencies.

The US government is also taking new measures to work with partner organizations in the field, and more of this collaboration should be encouraged. When strategy is clear, integrated and high-performance field teams can maximize limited resources. For example, in Mozambique, which is a focus country for *Feed the Future*, agricultural development is a key part of the vision for U.S. country programming. The US mission has integrated its Food for Peace and PEPFAR work into its agricultural development plans, and is working with local businesses and international organizations such as the World Food Programme. Although Mozambique is only receiving a limited amount of funds for *Feed the Future*, those monies are well-directed and managed.

### **Future Opportunities for American Leadership in Global Agricultural Development**

In spite of this progress, there are areas where the US can strengthen its leadership and support for agricultural development. We will focus our remarks towards the areas that are especially pertinent for the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee's consideration.

Agricultural education for international scientists and extension systems in developing countries need strengthening and more innovative methods should be adopted. Although the U.S. government is supporting agricultural training for a greater number of foreign students at American institutions (In 2008, the U.S. government supported training for about 80 students. In 2010, that number increased to approximately 125 students, thanks to the fellowships from USDA and USAID), the majority of these programs give students just one year of education. Deepened educational experiences are needed, and more support should be provided for high-quality training in developing country institutions.

Partnerships between US and developing country institutions require significant strengthening : there is little evidence, from our experience and perspective, on the ground of partnerships between U.S. and African and South Asian universities. These partnerships need to be led by the institutions in the developing countries, and designed to build indigenous capacity, including the establishment of institutional networks and centers of excellence in Africa and Asia.

Further support for extension systems in developing countries is also critical. Because of the limited capacity of governments in the developing world, the US government and private sector actors are beginning to invest in alternative extension models, and this kind of investment should continue. In Tanzania, we saw how the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa is training agro-dealers to be extension agents. These agro-dealers become knowledgeable about handling of inputs, and then in turn, train their customers in yield-improving techniques.

Additionally, the US is well positioned to continue to strengthen its leadership in the area of agricultural research. USAID and USDA have collaborated on the *Feed the Future* research strategy, and a large portion of it focuses on research that would be beneficial to both American and international producers. Modest, increased investments in the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research, National Agricultural Research Systems in the developing world, and Collaborative Research Support Programs hosted at US universities are critical vehicles for international agricultural research. Moreover, many components of USDA, including the Economic Research Service, Agricultural Research Service, and National Institute for Food and Agriculture, could focus more of their research agenda on issues that can strengthen both American and international production. Efforts to advance this portion of the research agenda are underway, but on-going and bolstered Congressional support, particularly from the members of this committee, would further energize these activities.

The recently released *Progress Report* analyzed U.S. policies currently seen as harmful to agricultural development abroad. It concluded that there has been no change since 2008 in U.S. policies that inhibit agricultural development abroad – U.S. food assistance delivery, including the monetization of food aid abroad and US cargo preference rule and trade and biofuels policies. These policies continue to generate heated debate. However, there is real opportunity for change in the year ahead because the Farm Bill is being considered. The 2009 Chicago Council Report recommended the following:

- Food aid policy is more effective and efficient when monetization is scaled down and local and regional purchase increased. There are two opportunities in particular that this committee might consider. First, the local and regional purchase pilot project launched under USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service in 2008 with Congressional endorsement, will conclude in 2012. An expanded version of this project should be extended. Second, the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program has become not only a source of pride for the US but an incredibly effective mechanism to both alleviate global hunger and malnutrition and increase educational opportunities for children. This committee might consider also providing technical assistance to developing country governments and local organizations to support the expansion of school-feeding in lower-income regions.
- The Bumpers amendment still prohibits the US government from supporting foreign research for commodities that are also produced in America. There was legislation to modify this amendment in early 2010, but it was not passed.
- Revise U.S. trade distorting policies related to agriculture.
- Reconsider bio-fuels policies. However, it should be noted that the US Department of Agriculture is investing in research for non-foodstock biofuels, which is consistent with our recommendation.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the *Progress Report* and visits to field programs in Africa show that there has been significant improvement since 2009 in America's leadership in global agricultural development. The attention this issue has received over the past two years has been unprecedented since the 1980s. There is the opportunity to demonstrate real results --- and permanently reduce the incidence of global poverty while expanding and strengthening the global agriculture and food system to meet the demands that will be placed on it in the

years ahead. What is needed now is a long-term, American commitment to advancing agricultural development, and continued leadership. Thank you.