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February 3, 2011

The Honorable Herb Kohl
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kohl:

The Administration requested \$1.69 billion for the Food for Peace (PL 480) Title II program and \$210 million for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program for FY 2011. Sufficient funding for those programs is critical for advancing U.S. humanitarian and security efforts. While less than the total funding provided in each of the last 3 fiscal years, the amount requested for Title II reflects an effort to provide adequate funding as part of the base appropriations rather than relying on supplemental funding. This allows USDA and USAID to manage programs, commodity procurement and shipments more efficiently and cost effectively. The Alliance for Global Food Security, comprised of 15 private voluntary organizations (PVOs) and cooperatives that conduct humanitarian and development programs in over 100 countries, therefore urges you to support the Administration's funding request in the final FY 2011 appropriations bill.

Food aid is effective:

Title II Emergency Programs: Assuring that there is a reliable source of appropriate commodities for emergencies that can be used to save lives and to give people the chance to recover is one of the critical roles of Title II. We are currently seeing this in Afghanistan, Yemen, Ethiopia, and other countries where conflict, economic crises or natural disasters have put people's lives in jeopardy by disrupting their access to food and depriving them of their land, homes and opportunity to work. In FY 2010, because sufficient funding was provided early in the fiscal year, USAID was able to use information from the Famine Early Warning System ("FEWSNET") and "pre-positioning" authority to buy and deliver commodities in a timely manner for emergencies.

Adventist Development & Relief Agency International ♦ ACDI/VOCA ♦ Africare ♦ Congressional Hunger Center ♦ Counterpart International
Food for the Hungry ♦ Joint Aid Management ♦ International Relief & Development ♦ Land O'Lakes ♦ OIC International
Planet Aid ♦ Project Concern International ♦ Salesian Missions ♦ United Methodist Committee on Relief ♦ World Vision

The funding requested for FY 2011 would allow continuation of those cost-saving and life-saving practices.

Title II Development Programs: By using food aid in development programs that improve nutrition, livelihoods and living conditions in poor communities where food insecurity is persistent, Title II also contributes to long-term food security. Developmental programs are implemented by PVOs and cooperatives in partnership with thousands of local business, governmental and organizational partners and incorporate strategies that:

1. Show measurable results, such as improvements in agricultural production, incomes, household food supplies, child nutrition and dietary and sanitation practices; and,
2. Build local capacity and infrastructure and prepare communities, organizations, government institutions, and businesses to expand activities, reap benefits and decrease vulnerability to hunger after the program is complete.

McGovern-Dole Programs: The McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program also has developmental goals, particularly to increase school enrollment, attendance and educational quality. Meals in schools and take-home food packages for children who regularly attend classes serve as incentives for families to send their girls to school. Longitudinal studies have shown that when girls receive at least a primary education, they tend to start their families later, adopt appropriate health practices and lead more productive lives.

Food aid programs provide needed commodities to food insecure countries:

U.S. food aid programs provide a reliable and safe source of foods (e.g. wheat, corn, sorghum, rice, vegetable oil, dry beans, peas and lentils, and products fortified by soy, dairy and/or micronutrients) for emergencies and areas of chronic need. Commodities are chosen by analyzing markets and people's food habits to identify food products that (1) are appropriate for the country and recipients and (2) will not interfere with commercial sales or compete with local production.

In FY 2011, Title II development programs are focusing on 21 of the most food insecure countries. The targeted countries do not produce enough agricultural commodities to meet the nutritional needs of their populations and cannot afford to import sufficient amounts to make up the difference. In 2010, the shortfall in 70 low-income, food insecure countries was equivalent to 12 million metric tons of grain; 882 people in those countries could not meet their basic caloric requirements (ERS Food Security Assessment, 2010-20, July 2010).

Assuring accountability for resources and results:

USAID administers the Title II program and USDA administers the McGovern-Dole program and buys the commodities for all U.S. food aid programs through open tenders on the U.S. market. When PVOs and cooperatives implement U.S. food aid programs, they are subject to government audits and required to follow regulations and guidelines, which include results-oriented objectives,

performance monitoring and reporting on the use of commodities and funds. PVOs and cooperatives take responsibility for using the food and funds according to the agreements they sign with government agencies and have developed tracking mechanisms to meet those requirements.

Food aid administrative procedures are constantly evolving to keep up with technological changes and new information about best practices. Since the enactment of the Food, Conservation & Energy Act of 2008, improvements have been made in procurement practices, new food products have been added to the eligible commodity list, results from previous programs have been used to strengthen the developmental components of new programs, and there is greater use of electronic systems to improve data collection. More needs to be done, such as updating food products based on a food quality and enhancement report commissioned by USAID, greater sharing of methodologies among program practitioners, and improving information collection on emergency programs. Indeed, ongoing improvement should be integral to government programs in general.

Sufficient funding in regular appropriations improves program efficiency:

The \$1.69 billion requested for Title II is less than the total appropriations for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2010, specifically: \$2.061 billion in FY 2008; \$2.321 billion in FY 2009; and \$1.840 in FY 2010. This is the second year that the Administration requested sufficient funding for Title II through the regular appropriations process to meet anticipated needs, thereby reducing reliance on supplemental appropriations (except for unanticipated crises due to war, economic conditions and natural disasters, such as the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti). Sufficient upfront funding is working well: it has allowed USDA and USAID to implement improved commodity procurement strategies which ultimately save the U.S. Government and the American taxpayer money. We urge you to continue this policy by providing the full \$1.69 billion requested by the Obama Administration.

Thanks to the productivity of American farmers, the efficiency and quality of our processing and transportation sectors, the ability of PVOs and cooperatives to reach and work with poor communities and, most importantly, the generosity of the American people, food aid has had a profound effect: providing sustenance and hope and improving the lives of the neediest. While only a small part of the U.S. international affairs budget, the funding requested for the Food for Peace and McGovern-Dole Programs for FY 2011 would nonetheless help nearly 50 million people. We strongly urge you to make those funds available to assure that the United States continues its leadership role in the fight against global hunger.

Sincerely,



David Evans, President, Food for the Hungry
and Chair, Alliance for Global Food Security



Ellen Levinson, Executive Director,
Alliance for Global Food Security