

**November 13, 2009**

**To:** Alonzo L. Fulgham  
Acting Administrator and Chief Operating Officer  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Ronald Reagan Building  
Washington, D.C., 20523-1000

**Call for U.S. Leadership at the World Summit on Food Security**

Heads of state, international institutions and civil society groups are meeting at the World Summit on Food Security in Rome, Italy from November 16–18 to reaffirm their commitment to coordinate support, action and policies to eliminate hunger and to ensure food security. They have expressed their support for the right to food and practical applications to achieve its realization. Governments jointly acknowledge that any recipe for confronting climate change must allow for mitigation and adaptation measures in agriculture, including conservation and sustainable use of resources. They also say that urgent action is needed and call for a stronger United Nations.

As engaged U.S. groups, we expect strong leadership from the U.S. at the World Summit on Food Security in achieving these goals. We recognize that the U.S. administration has been actively contributing to the preparations for the summit and its commitment to achieving global food security. We support the U.S. government's efforts to 1) increase foreign assistance after years of declining overseas development assistance (ODA) and 2) to develop a comprehensive plan across government agencies to promote global food security.

However, we are greatly concerned that the United States' rhetoric for a stronger UN and sustainable investment is not in sync with its policy priorities that are focused on increasing large-scale production and trade to resolve the crisis rather than long-term sustainable solutions. The administration does not recognize the recent International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology (IAASTD) report, which represents a global consensus about what course international investment in agriculture should take to meet social and environmental goals. Instead, it actively promotes genetic engineering to address global food security needs. Our officials, along with U.S. agribusiness, are spreading the myth that more technology-intensive production can feed the world; a message that is not only incorrect but dangerous in terms of its harmful impacts on sustainable livelihoods for the majority of food producers, and its exacerbation of converging climate, financial, water and energy crises.

As U.S. civil society groups, we call upon the Obama administration to take bold actions to resolve the global food crisis in a way that is healthy for people and the environment. The U.S. government should:

1. Adopt the findings from the IAASTD report—that business as usual is not an option—as the basis for its approach to global food and agriculture. The IAASTD provides guidance on protecting and enhancing the multiple functions and benefits of agriculture, in order to achieve equitable and sustainable development in ways that engage local people in the solutions that make most

sense in their particular situations. It also prioritizes agroecological approaches that—among many other beneficial impacts—help to combat the worst effects of climate change.

2. Use its influence to strengthen the FAO Committee on Food Security so as to improve coordination among governments, other intergovernmental institutions and civil society to provide a framework for national strategies to increase food production and realize the right to food.
3. Rescind its proposal to establish the multi-donor trust fund at the World Bank. Decisions on funding should be informed by the international agencies that have specialized in advancing food security, particularly the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Food Program and the Food and Agriculture Organization. Contributions from UNEP, UNCTAD and UNESCO on how to link environmental, agricultural, trade and other closely connected issues should also be considered.
4. Increase and improve investment in sustainable agriculture—both at home and abroad. It can do this globally by taking into account the October 2009 Government Accountability Office (GAO) testimony and study that calls for comprehensively addressing underlying causes of hunger, investment in country-led plans and sustained and accountable commitments. Nationally, the U.S. must also develop a coordinated plan across relevant offices, agencies and mission areas to eliminate food insecurity, uphold rights for farmworkers and other food system workers and protect and fulfill the right to food.
5. Shift funding for food aid to support local and regional purchases of food, prioritizing purchases by smallholder farmers and developing appropriate post-harvest, transportation and processing support.
6. Regulate agribusinesses through stronger anti-trust and competition policy to keep them from dominating global supply chains that are drastically diminishing the ability of small-scale producers, farmworkers and consumers to thrive.
7. Change its trade policies to allow developing countries policy space to build their internal markets and to defend themselves against volatile agri-food imports that undermine local—especially smallholder—producers.
8. Pass strong legislation to address food availability and price volatility by curbing excessive commodity speculation and by supporting concrete efforts to promote local, regional and international food reserves as was agreed upon by the G-8 in the Aquila Statement in July, 2009.
9. Incorporate a gender approach to its food security plan that is more than safety nets, but ensures that women have access to and control over land, water, information, capacity building and resources.
10. Endorse the recommendations of the upcoming People's Forum for Food Sovereignty, which will be formally communicated to the parallel World Summit on Food Security. The People's Forum

has a profound legitimacy on the question of food security, including as delegates: peasants, fisher peoples, pastoralists, indigenous peoples, other small-scale food producers and providers, as well as those who are actually suffering from hunger and malnutrition from around the world.

In response to this troubled time, we expect the U.S. to show itself as a world leader by taking these positive steps toward progress that will be long lasting. We thank you for your serious consideration of this letter.

**Signed,**

**Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Food & Water Watch  
Pesticide Action Network North America  
Grassroots International  
Food First  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
World Hunger Year  
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Human Rights  
Center of Concern  
Partners for the Land & Agricultural Needs of Traditional Peoples (PLANT)  
The Oakland Institute  
Greenpeace USA  
Organic Consumers Association  
Via Organica (Mexico)  
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Justice and Peace Network  
Edmonds Institute  
Justice and Witness Ministries, United Church of Christ  
Washington Biotechnology Action Council  
Food Systems Integrity  
Agricultural Missions, Inc  
National Family Farm Coalition  
A Well-Fed World  
Slow Food USA**

**\*To follow-up on this letter, please contact Alexandra Spieldoch of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy at: 202-365-0721, [aspieldoch@iatp.org](mailto:aspieldoch@iatp.org)**

**cc: USDA Deputy Secretary, Kathleen Merrigan.**