eJOURNAL USA

U.S. FOOD AID: REDUCING WORLD HUNGER

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE / BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAMS

Volume 12, Number 9

International Information Programs:

Coordinator	Jeremy F. Curtin
Executive Editor	Jonathan Margolis

Creative Director	George Clack
Editor-in-Chief	Richard W. Huckaby
Managing Editor	Bruce Odessey
Production Manager	Tim Brown
Assistant Production Manager	Chloe D. Ellis
Web Producer	Janine Perry

Copy Editor	Kathleen Hug
Photo Editor	Maggie J. Sliker
Cover Design	Thaddeus A. Miksinski Jr.
Reference Specialist	Anita Green
Associate Editor	Alexandra M. Abboud

COVER: *Thousands of people march against hunger in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.* © AP Images/Edgard Garrido

Left inset: A woman carries a sack of U.S.-donated flour in Tuzla, Bosnia. © AP Images/David Brauchli

Right inset: Workers in Pakistan load U.S.-donated wheat for delivery to Afghanistan. © AP Images/Peter Dejong

The Bureau of International Information Programs of the U.S. Department of State publishes a monthly electronic journal under the *eJournal USA* logo. These journals examine major issues facing the United States and the international community, as well as U.S. society, values, thought, and institutions.

One new journal is published monthly in English and is followed by versions in French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Selected editions also appear in Arabic, Chinese, and Persian. Each journal is catalogued by volume and number.

The opinions expressed in the journals do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government. The U.S. Department of State assumes no responsibility for the content and continued accessibility of Internet sites to which the journals link; such responsibility resides solely with the publishers of those sites. Journal articles, photographs, and illustrations may be reproduced and translated outside the United States unless they carry explicit copyright restrictions, in which case permission must be sought from the copyright holders noted in the journal.

The Bureau of International Information Programs maintains current and back issues in several electronic formats, as well as a list of upcoming journals, at *http://usinfo.state.gov/pub/ejournalusa.html*. Comments are welcome at your local U.S. Embassy or at the editorial offices:

Editor, *eJournal USA*
IIP/PUBJ
U.S. Department of State
301 4th St. S.W.
Washington, DC 20547
United States of America

E-mail: eJournalUSA@state.gov

About This Issue

You are probably not hungry — not really hungry, not with the kind of hunger that makes people lethargic, makes them vulnerable to disease, possibly kills them.

Yet something like 850 million people around the world suffer from hunger and malnutrition. In 1996, leaders at the World Food Summit committed to reduce by half the number of hungry people by 2015.

That seems unlikely to happen even though farmers produce slightly more than enough food to feed the world.

The Green Revolution of the 20th century spread to developing countries the availability of high-yielding corn, rice, and wheat, likely staving off starvation for many people. Whether science can continue to find ways to grow world food supplies faster than world population is unknown. Biotechnology is one hope of the 21st century.

People in governments and nongovernmental organizations work hard to feed the hungry with the existing, if dwindling, world food surplus. The U.S. government, the largest donor of food aid by far, aims, first, to save the lives of hungry people and, second, to improve their lives so that they can feed themselves.

The obstacles are many, including disease, natural disasters such as floods, man-made disasters such as war, and poor policies influenced by politics in both donor and beneficiary countries.

Those countries are grappling with the obstacles to reducing hunger. Overcoming the political obstacles requires political will. That's food for thought.

— *The Editors*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE / SEPTEMBER 2007 / VOLUME 12 / NUMBER 9
http://usinfo.state.gov/pub/ejournalusa.html

U.S. Food Aid: Reducing World Hunger

4 Working Together to End Hunger
ALAN LARSON, SENIOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY ADVISER, COVINGTON AND BURLING LLP
Ending hunger and malnutrition requires developed and developing countries to make the right policy decisions.

7 The Green Revolution
EXCERPT FROM A NOBEL LECTURE BY NORMAN BORLAUG
The Green Revolution has won a temporary success in man's war against hunger and deprivation.

8 Feeding the Hungry Through Biotechnology
RACHEL CHEATHAM AND ANDREW BENSON, INTERNATIONAL FOOD INFORMATION COUNCIL
Given limited land and the difficulties of growing food in arid and pest-infested areas and salty water, biotechnology offers one promising approach.

9 Breaking the Cycle of Hunger
AN INTERVIEW WITH JOSETTE SHEERAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, U.N. WORLD FOOD PROGRAM
The means exist to halve the number of hungry people; what is needed is the political will to accomplish this.

12 Diplomatic Stewardship of America's Aid to the Hungry
AMBASSADOR GADDI H. VASQUEZ
The U.S. Mission to the U.N. Agencies in Rome works intensively on reducing world hunger.

13 Key Players in Food Aid
ANGELA RUCKER, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Getting food from U.S. farms to food aid recipients in the developing world requires a number of disparate players.

16 The American Farmer and U.S. Food Aid
BRUCE ODESSEY, MANAGING EDITOR, *EJOURNAL USA*
Congress is wrangling in its five-year farm bill over whether to allow procurement of some U.S. food aid from local markets instead of only from U.S. producers.

19 Hunger: Facing the Facts
BOB BELL, DAVID KAUCK, MARIANNE LEACH, AND PRIYA SAMPATH, CARE
Food aid helps in emergencies, but long-term, sustainable solutions are needed to achieve the goal of halving the number of hungry people.

24 Southern Africa's Triple Threat
Jordan Dey, Director of U.S. Relations, U.N. World Food Program
In southern Africa, HIV/AIDS makes farmers too sick to produce food. Donors can increase the effectiveness of the medicine they are already providing by also giving stricken families enough to eat.

28 Aiding Pastoralists in the Horn of Africa
Anne Marie del Castillo and John Graham, Policy Advisers, U.S. Agency for International Development
In Ethiopia, an innovative collaboration has allowed pastoralists not only to survive drought but also to rebuild their lives.

32 Tackling Child Malnutrition in Coastal Bangladesh
Ina Schonberg, Associate Vice President, Save the Children
Both food aid and cash aid are needed indefinitely in Bangladesh, where perhaps half of the people cannot afford an adequate diet.

36 Additional Resources

Working Together to End Hunger

Alan Larson

Courtesy of African Rice Center (WARDA)

Advanced food technology is shared with developing countries as here in The Gambia, where farmers assess rice varieties.

Ending hunger and malnutrition is an achievable goal, but only if governments in both developed and developing countries make the right policy decisions.

Alan Larson, formerly U.S. under secretary of state for economic and business affairs, is senior international policy adviser at the Covington and Burling law firm in Washington, D.C., and a director of the charitable organization Bread for the World.

There is no more important global goal than ending hunger. More than 800 million people around the world are hungry or malnourished. A large percentage of these are children.

Childhood malnutrition is a special tragedy. It can cause brain damage that permanently impairs an individual's capacity to achieve his or her full potential.

Food security is a need so basic that neither families nor countries can effectively tackle other challenges when they do not have enough to eat. Hunger and malnutrition must be conquered in order to make lasting progress on education, health, and environmental problems.

Americans of all political persuasions have a strong commitment to addressing hunger. For Republican and Democratic administrations alike, overcoming hunger has been a top priority. For years, the United States has been the largest supplier of food aid and the largest contributor to the U.N.'s World Food Program.

American universities and scientists share this commitment. Since Norman Borlaug won the Nobel Peace Prize for work leading to the Green Revolution, American universities have produced a stream of scientists devoted to curtailing world hunger. American citizens provide generous private contributions to

Courtesy of UNWFP/Keith Ursel

The United Nations World Food Program works quickly delivering food in emergencies such as the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan.

nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that deliver food aid abroad and to anti-hunger advocacy groups such as Bread for the World.

An Achievable Goal

Of all the pressing challenges the world faces, ending hunger can be one of the most achievable. There is no global shortage of food. The capacity to continue to produce sufficient high-quality food to meet the needs of the world's population is not in doubt.

Hunger, rather, results from policy problems. Wars and civil conflicts leave vulnerable women and children without access to food. Sometimes emergency food assistance is too small, too slow, or too inefficient to meet these needs.

Science and technology have not always been available to meet the special agricultural needs of developing countries. International donors sometimes have underfunded efforts to assist developing countries raise agricultural productivity and promote rural development. Developing countries sometimes have avoided valuable new technologies, such as biotechnology, that are used safely and effectively in developed countries.

Although the trading system can and should help people meet global food needs at lowest cost and least environmental impact, misguided trade and agriculture policies, in both developed and developing countries, sometimes have impaired the ability of the trade regime to operate. Europe and the United States, for example, cling to trade-distorting subsidies that disadvantage farmers in developing countries. Food-importing countries too often have used trade barriers to provide unfair and inefficient preferences for local production.

What Is Needed

Ending hunger and malnutrition is an achievable goal, but only if governments make the right policy decisions. Ending hunger will require great political will, close cooperation, a clear plan, and a sustained effort. Here are a few of the central elements of such a plan.

1. Providing More and Faster Food Aid: When international or domestic conflicts leave people in circumstances in which they cannot afford or cannot gain access to the food they need, international donors must step forward more quickly and more generously. Working under the leadership of the World Food Program, bilateral donors such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) have stepped forward. Other donors need to recognize that food aid is indispensable. All donors need to act more quickly in responding to food emergencies, using early warning systems.

2. Providing More Effective Food Assistance: Food assistance must be made more effective. In some instances, the direct delivery of food from traditional exporting countries such as the United States is less efficient than purchasing food locally or from the region in which the food shortage occurs. As the U.S. Congress rewrites the multiyear farm policy bill, groups including Bread for the World have been advocating reforms to make American food aid more efficient.

3. Helping Poor Countries Grow More Food: The United States and other donors can do more to help developing countries increase their agricultural productivity. The United States has begun to do so during the past six years. The World Bank and the regional development banks need to ramp up their own programs for agriculture. Robert Zoellick, now president of the World Bank, has taken an interest in African agricultural

© AP Images/Themba Hadebe

Poor policies in Zimbabwe have helped turn a rich agricultural land into a hungry one.

issues. I hope he will act to re-establish the leadership position of the World Bank in increasing agricultural productivity in developing countries.

4. Using Food Aid to Support Agricultural Development in Developing Countries: International food aid should be a short-term response, not an enabler of long-run dependency. Working with NGOs, the United States supports countries that are trying to use food aid to jump-start their own agricultural productivity. In Burkina Faso, USAID and the U.S. Department of Agriculture work with a group called Northwest Medical Teams to support farmer groups that share cultivation equipment and build wells. Similar successful projects have been launched in Senegal, Kenya, and Eritrea.

5. Making Agriculture and Nutrition National Priorities: While assistance is indispensable, hungry countries themselves must take the lead in making agriculture and nutrition national priorities. China and India, the world's most populous countries, have shown what can be done. In China, the government launched major reforms that have given farmers more freedom over what they grow. In India, the government has launched seed distribution schemes to assist farmers and milk distribution schemes to help consumers. Each country has begun to harness its scientific capability to address issues of hunger and nutrition. Policy makers and scientists from China and India have won the prestigious World Food Prize.

In contrast to these positive examples, abysmal leadership in Zimbabwe has transformed this rich agricultural land into a hungry one. In North Korea, the distorted goals of the regime and its heavy-handed political control over food distribution have created great hunger and hardship, notwithstanding years of generous food aid.

6. Extending the Power of Technology: In the United States, our citizens have been fortunate to benefit from sustained advances in food technology. Some advances, notably biotechnology, not only have increased productivity but also can produce plant varieties that are more resilient to drought, have higher nutritional content, require fewer chemicals, and are more resistant to pests. With a concerted international program, including both the public and private sectors, the power of biotechnology could be harnessed to the benefit of farmers and consumers in developing countries. It is heartening that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation are teaming up to address agriculture. With stronger international help we can expect even more important initiatives from researchers such as Sierra Leone's Monty Jones, who improved rice-growing techniques in West Africa.

7. Tapping the Power of Trade: The trading system must be a tool in ending hunger. Rich trading regions such as Europe and the United States must slash trade-distorting agricultural subsidies that impoverish farmers in developing countries. Rich countries including Japan must

slash stiff trade barriers against the agricultural exports of developing countries so that the food production capabilities of those countries can be enhanced.

At the same time, too many developing countries have been slow to realize that trade barriers against food imports raise food prices for their people and perpetuate inefficiencies in their own food supply systems. While adjustment periods may be appropriate, a reduction of developing-country barriers to food imports is a necessary part of the solution to global hunger.

8. Making the Elimination of Hunger a Top Political Priority: In the fight against world hunger, we face a shortage. It is not a shortage of food; it is a shortage of political will. Eight hundred million people, many of them women and children, are counting on us. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

THE GREEN REVOLUTION

© AP Images
Norman Borlaug in 1970.

Norman Borlaug, a native of Iowa, earned a PhD in plant pathology in 1942. His work sparked what is known today as the Green Revolution. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 and the Congressional Gold Medal in 2006. The following is excerpted from his Nobel Lecture, delivered at the Nobel Institute in Oslo, Norway, in December 1970. The full text is available at http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1970/borlaug-lecture.html.

The term "The Green Revolution" has been used by the popular press to describe the spectacular increase in cereal-grain production during the past three years. Perhaps the term "green revolution," as commonly used, is premature, too optimistic, or too broad in scope. Too often it seems to convey the impression of a general revolution in yields per hectare and in total production of all crops throughout vast areas comprising many countries. Sometimes it also implies that all farmers are uniformly benefited by the breakthrough in production.

These implications both oversimplify and distort the facts. The only crops which have been appreciably affected up to the present time are wheat, rice, and maize. Yields of other important cereals, such as sorghums, millets, and barley, have been only slightly affected; nor has there been any appreciable increase in yield or production of the pulse or legume crops, which are essential in the diets of cereal-consuming populations. Moreover, it must be emphasized that thus far the great increase in production has been in irrigated areas. …

The green revolution has won a temporary success in man's war against hunger and deprivation; it has given man a breathing space. If fully implemented, the revolution can provide sufficient food for sustenance during the next three decades. …

We must recognize the fact that adequate food is only the first requisite for life. For a decent and humane life we must also provide an opportunity for good education, remunerative employment, comfortable housing, good clothing, and effective and compassionate medical care. Unless we can do this, man may degenerate sooner from environmental diseases than from hunger.

And yet, I am optimistic for the future of mankind.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY THROUGH BIOTECHNOLOGY

With the United Nations projecting a global population of about 10 billion by 2050, estimates indicate that farmers will need to grow twice as much food as they do today. The impact is particularly significant for countries with the largest population growth and the most widespread nutritional deficiencies. Many agricultural tools and resources will be needed to meet these demands. Given the limits on land available for cultivation and the ability of current techniques to grow food in arid and pest-infested areas and salty water, agriculture biotechnology now offers one of the most promising approaches.

Biotechnology's potential role in addressing vitamin A deficiency is one example. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 140 million to 250 million children, most living in developing nations, suffer serious symptoms of vitamin A deficiency, the leading cause of avoidable blindness and other afflictions. Vitamin-enhanced "golden rice" and cooking oils derived through biotechnology may help to meet this challenge. Similar approaches are targeting dietary shortages of iron, zinc, and other essential nutrients.

The first biotech food reached the market in 1994: a tomato with improved ripening. Insect-protected maize was introduced in 1996, followed by pest-resistant and herbicide-tolerant maize, cotton, and soya. While the first countries to adopt the technology were developed countries including the United States, Canada, and Argentina, biotech crops are now grown in 22 countries around the world by more than 10.3 million farmers, of which 9.3 million are small-scale farmers living in developing countries. Maize, cotton, and soya constitute the largest share of crops currently produced using biotechnology; however, other biotech-improved crops are now available, including disease-resistant papaya and squash and nutritionally improved maize, soya, and canola. Growing biotech crops increased income to farmers by about $27 billion between 1996 and 2005, with $13 billion of that going to farmers in developing countries.

Yet all these advances have generated differences of opinion and even controversy. Although data show that most American consumers feel they do not know enough about food biotechnology to have an opinion, among those who do express an opinion, positive attitudes are twice as common as are concerns. In a 2006 survey by the International Food Information Council, some 75 percent of American consumers indicated that they are at least somewhat confident in the safety of their food. By contrast, consumer perceptions in Europe have historically been more negative, likely stemming from a number of food safety crises totally unrelated to food biotechnology. Nevertheless, consumer acceptance appears to be slowly growing in Europe; consumers polled in 2005 by Eurobarometer expressed an increasingly positive opinion toward medical and pharmaceutical developments in biotechnology and a moderately positive opinion about the technology as a whole.

As with many major developments in science, initial doubts and uncertainties may change to acceptance and optimism as knowledge and understanding increase. Agricultural biotechnology is meeting with growing acceptance in countries around the world, helping farmers and food producers rise to the challenge of producing enough food to meet the needs of growing populations in the 21st century and beyond.

— Rachel Cheatham, director of science and health communications, and Andrew Benson, vice president for international relations, International Food Information Council.

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

Breaking the Cycle of Hunger

An Interview With Josette Sheeran

Courtesy of UNWFP/Emilia Casella

Josette Sheeran, World Food Program executive director, visits Kassab IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) Camp in Kutum, North Darfur, Sudan.

The means exist to cut by half the number of hungry people in the world; what is needed is greater political will in both beneficiary and donor countries, according to Josette Sheeran, executive director of the U.N. World Food Program (WFP).

Managing editor Bruce Odessey interviewed Sheeran just months after she assumed the WFP leadership position. Challenges to reducing hunger abound: AIDS, poverty, weak governments, climate change, rising food costs due to biofuel increases, and others. Sheeran cited hope, however, that concerted action can break the cycle of hunger that passes from generation to generation.

Sheeran was formerly U.S. under secretary of state for economic and business affairs, including agriculture, and before that deputy U.S. trade representative.

Question: Hunger and hunger-related causes kill an estimated 25,000 people a day, and the United Nations says the number of chronically hungry in the world is rising by some 4 million a year. Are we losing the battle against world hunger?

Sheeran: We've made gains against hunger in the world over the past few decades. Yet because of population growth in some of the world's poorest regions, we have — in absolute numbers — more hungry people today than ever before. I strongly believe we can beat hunger; we can and we will, but we have to deploy not only all of the science and technology at our disposal, but also the political will to do so.

Courtesy of UNWFP/Judith Schuler

A girl at the Tambeye Nomad School in Niger receives from WFP the nutrition she needs to learn.

Today, we still lose a child to hunger every five seconds — an unacceptable toll. Yet we are now at a point in history where we have the science and technology to feed everyone on Earth. I hope both to raise awareness of how that can be accomplished and to give profound thanks to the citizens of the many countries that contribute so much in the fight against hunger.

Q: How is the World Food Program engaged in fighting hunger?

Sheeran: The World Food Program feeds about half of the hungry who receive food assistance, usually in the most difficult and remote corners of the Earth. That is our mission. Over many decades, we have built up a huge logistical capacity that is so effective it has become the U.N.'s primary humanitarian arm for logistics — not only for food but also for medicines, tents, blankets, whatever people need in emergency situations.

But even with a nearly $3 billion annual budget and thousands of ships, planes, and vehicles delivering food every day, we're only reaching about 10 percent of the hungry in the world. And so we still lose 25,000 people a day to hunger-related causes — the number-one public health problem in the world, killing more people than TB [tuberculosis], malaria, and AIDS combined. We simply must ramp up all that we are doing to get ahead of the hunger curve.

Q: What do you see as WFP's greatest challenges?

Sheeran: A number of things are happening. We have what we call the "triple threat" of AIDS and poverty and weak government capacity — especially in southern Africa — that makes it tough to get ahead of the hunger curve. We also have what could be a "perfect storm" developing among climate change, rising operational costs, and the demands that biofuels are putting on the global food system. Over the past five years at the World Food Program, we've seen the purchasing costs for staple commodities rise by about 50 percent. This is due to a combination of factors: increasing world demand for grain that — along with the advent of biofuels — has pushed up commodity prices, as well as skyrocketing fuel and shipping costs. And so, even if WFP maintains the same or a slightly larger budget, we're still feeding many fewer people. The rising price of food also means the poorest of the world are having greater trouble feeding themselves at the household level.

Q: What is the impact of biofuels? And climate change?

Sheeran: Biofuels present a significant opportunity for poor farmers but also a challenge for the hungry, because grain markets are tighter and food prices are higher than they've been for decades. With climate change, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [an international consensus body that reflects the work of hundreds of scientists] predicts that, in some areas, yields from rain-dependent agriculture will be cut in half by 2020. And in Africa, our sister U.N. agency, the Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], estimates that 95 percent of agriculture is rain dependent. Even if these predictions do not materialize in full, we still can see huge challenges ahead for regions such as Africa that will be hit hardest by climate change — where dry areas will get drier, and wet areas wetter.

Courtesy of UNWFP-Photolibrary

Women in Cajamarca, in Peru's northern Andes, tend crops at their community field as part of WFP's food-for-work activities.

Q: What are the political obstacles to conquering world hunger?

Sheeran: There has to be the political will to succeed at every level — from the village to the provinces, to the country level and on up.

Q: Are you talking about recipient or donor countries?

Sheeran: I'm talking about all of them because everyone has a stake in this battle. To cite a positive example, we know that the New Partnership for Africa's Development, or NEPAD, in Africa has worked very hard with the African Union to make agriculture and hunger a top priority for African states. That includes formulating a pledge of 10 percent of investment going to agriculture. We know that the only way to defeat poverty and hunger — whether in Swaziland or Ireland or the United States many years ago — is to figure out how to address the plight of the poor farmer. In countries that do figure that out, we see economic gain and development. And we see deep, chronic hunger become a thing of history.

Many countries have broken out of the grasp of hunger, but it takes concerted action and almost always external help with technology and knowledge and, sometimes, investment.

Q: How is the world progressing toward achieving the U.N. Millennium Development Goals [MDGs] to cut the proportion of poverty and hunger in half by 2015?

Sheeran: Countries including Chile have already met the first MDG of cutting poverty and hunger in half, while Ghana and Brazil are close. Yet as a world community, we are not on track to achieve the MDGs.

What is revolutionary about the MDGs is that we finally got all the world's leaders to sit down and agree on a limited set of priorities to eliminate the worst disparities in poverty, hunger, health, education, etc. Forums like the G8 have produced practical action plans to achieve these goals, something I strongly support. Defeating world hunger is a big, overwhelming mission for most people. We have to find ways to make this achievable bit by bit.

Q: What needs to happen?

Sheeran: The most important thing in fighting hunger is to break the cycle of hunger that passes from generation to generation. It has been documented in many countries that hungry women give birth to malnourished children, an "inherited hunger" that can persist for generations. So part of what we're trying to do at the World Food Program is to confront this life cycle of hunger right at its root. If we can break the life cycle of hunger, then communities have a chance to break the cycle of poverty.

These things are completely interlinked. If a child is stunted physically from malnutrition, his or her brain will also be underdeveloped. Imagine the implications for economic development in countries where the rate of stunting among children exceeds 50 percent!

We need to reach the hunger right at the root — among young children and pregnant mothers — and, at the next stage, try to bring kids into school. One thing I've really looked at is the incredibly powerful effect of school feeding. When children get at least one meal a

day at school, all kinds of other social goods happen: Enrollment, especially among girls, goes up; attendance and academic performance improve. Education has also been proven to have a strong mitigating effect against acquiring HIV.

These are not unattainable goals. I am also hopeful because the sciences — the seed science, the soil science, and the science of packing and moving food in a safe and efficient manner — now hold within them the potential for the world to be able to meet the food needs of every citizen on Earth. And so within all these challenges is the potential, I think, to end hunger in a way that would meet the vision of people like scientist Norman Borlaug and others who were part of the Green Revolution that saved so many millions of lives throughout Asia and elsewhere. We know it can happen because we have seen it happen.

Q: Anything to add?

Sheeran: I think that Americans should be really proud of their contributions over many decades to fighting hunger. Not only is the U.S. government the World Food Program's most generous donor, but it also feeds almost half of the hungry that are reached through external help each year. USAID's [U.S. Agency for International Development] Office of Food for Peace has literally led the way since [U.S. President Dwight] Eisenhower created it in the 1950s and President John Kennedy expanded it in the 1960s. Food for Peace is now the backbone for fighting against hunger globally. ■

The opinions expressed in this interview do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

DIPLOMATIC STEWARDSHIP OF AMERICA'S AID TO THE HUNGRY

Ambassador Vasquez helps serve lunch in Honduras.

The thousands of tourists who visit the famed Roman square Piazza del Popolo pass unknowingly by the U.S. Mission to the United Nations Agencies in Rome. Yet no other U.S. embassy is more involved in reducing hunger around the world.

As the eighth U.S. representative to the U.N. Agencies in Rome, I lead the mission staff in drawing attention to global problems of hunger and food insecurity and in managing and ensuring the effective use of U.S. resources provided to the United Nations for the benefit of the poor, the hungry, and the marginalized.

The U.S. mission serves as the primary link between the U.S. government and the three principal U.N. organizations dedicated to food and agriculture — the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Program (WFP), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The mission, consisting of personnel from the Department of State, Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Agency for International Development, oversees U.S. relations with and plays a leading role in U.S. engagement with these Rome-based U.N. agencies.

As the biggest U.N. contributor, the United States has a large stake in ensuring that the organizations are well run and that their activities complement and enhance U.S. national and foreign policy objectives to feed the hungry. My team and I at the U.S. mission represent the U.S. government in the Rome-based U.N. agencies on policy and programmatic issues, negotiate positions with other local representatives from donor and recipient countries, and build bridges between Washington and Rome on strategic policies for the best stewardship of America's aid to the hungry.

— Ambassador Gaddi H. Vasquez

KEY PLAYERS IN FOOD AID

© AP Images/Ariana Cubillos

In Haiti, these women get clean water courtesy of the Food and Agriculture Organization, one of the United Nations agencies providing food aid.

More than half of the world's food aid comes from the United States. Getting food from U.S. farms to food aid recipients in the developing world can be a daunting and controversial task. Pulling off the complicated journey from fields to feeding centers calls into play a number of disparate players, including international bodies, national legislatures, the agriculture industry and its lobbyists, nongovernmental organizations, and advocacy groups. And only a few major organizations provide guidance on the process. Who is involved and what laws and initiatives govern how the food is distributed?

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID): USAID, which operates the Food for Peace program, is the lead U.S. government agency providing humanitarian food assistance to developing countries. The program marked its 50th year in 2004. It was initially created as a way to stem hunger and malnutrition in some of the world's poorest regions and to help the U.S. agriculture industry. The official mandate comes from Public Law 480, Title II. The law calls for USAID to make donations of aid to "cooperating sponsors," such as nongovernmental organizations, in both emergency and long-term efforts in food assistance. Subsequent laws over the years have expanded and clarified this mission. In 2006, the United States provided $2.2 billion in food aid to 82 developing countries, making it the top provider of food aid in the world.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA): USDA is a close partner with USAID in carrying out the U.S. government's food aid programs, but it focuses more on the agribusiness aspects of humanitarian food assistance, both for U.S. producers and for agribusiness in developing countries. USDA is responsible for international trade agreements and negotiations on food aid as well. USDA's international experts are based in more than 90 countries, and there are also agricultural trade offices in key markets to serve U.S. exporters and foreign buyers.

United Nations: The primary players here are the U.N. World Food Program (WFP), the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the U.N. Development Program (UNDP). Any appeal for emergency food aid — for earthquake victims or refugees of civil war — will more than likely come from the World Food Program, the best known of the U.N. family of hunger agencies. It is the first responder in the world of food aid.

© AP Images/Beatrice Larco

Participants in the World Food Program's "Walk the World" global march against hunger in Rome in 2005. Proceeds raised by the annual event go to the WFP's Global School Feeding Program, which provides free school meals to millions of children in developing countries.

The WFP, which is based in Rome, distributes food assistance to nearly 88 million people, with about one-third of that going to development projects and the remaining two-thirds going to emergencies and relief and recovery operations. The WFP works with multilateral and bilateral groups, individual countries, corporations, and foundations to collect and distribute food and other commodities.

The other U.N. organizations focus on the underlying causes — and solutions to — food insecurity. The FAO works on identifying and reversing the causes of world hunger in rural areas. It helps countries modernize their agriculture sectors so that they will be able to feed their people. The Consultative Subcommittee on Surplus Displosal (CSSD), which was established by FAO, attempts to properly dispose of surplus food by facilitating donations to countries where the food is needed and can be of use without disruptions to the normal flow of commerce in those countries.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development provides low-interest loans and grants to fund these sorts of agriculture improvements. To date, the figure amounts to about $10 billion invested in rural agriculture projects. The UNDP works on a number of development issues, with combating food insecurity being one part.

Nongovernmental Organizations/Private Voluntary Organizations (NGOs/PVOs): NGOs and PVOs play leading roles in feeding the hungry in emergency and nonemergency situations. Their workers are the ones television viewers typically see on site in some dangerous or dire situations, passing out food aid to those in need. Some of the better-known outfits are Catholic Relief Services, CARE, Oxfam, and World Vision, but dozens of similar organizations with lower profiles work in countries where food security is perilous.

Businesses and Foundations: Increasingly, national and international corporations are promoting their work — or the work of their foundations — in combating world hunger. Corporate social responsibility is the catch-phrase to describe such efforts, which typically provide needed goods and expertise in developing countries. Well known are a few big foundations such as the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Some companies have found mechanisms that allow them to partner with governments and with bilateral and multilateral organizations to help spread their largess. Land O'Lakes, a leading U.S. farmer-owned cooperative, works with USAID, for example. Volunteers in its Southern Africa Farmer-to-Farmer program provide agricultural and business expertise in Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zambia. Land O'Lakes volunteers work also in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Russia.

Guiding Agreements

Food Aid Convention (FAC): The Food Aid Convention, agreed to in 1967, is set for reauthorization in 2007. The FAC has been reauthorized a number of times over its lifetime. The pact addresses cooperation among 23 large food aid donor countries and sets minimum donation levels that are intended to ensure enough food for people in developing countries who need it. It is run by the London-based International Grains Council, which is responsible for keeping statistics on the amount of food aid donated and where it is going.

World Trade Organization (WTO): WTO members have yet to come to an agreement on how that body will address food aid. The latest round of negotiations has been suspended, with food aid reform as one of the points of contention.

Commitments for Future Progress

U.N. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): The first of the U.N.'s Millennium Development Goals calls for eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. Specifically, the goals call for a reduction by half of the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. This and seven other MDGs were created at the beginning of 2000 by U.N. member nations in an effort to begin the new century with an ambitious plan to improve the world. The target date for the hunger and all other goals to be met is 2015.

At the end of 2006, progress was measurable but slow. Even though hunger rates (a measure of the percentage of people who suffer from chronic hunger) have dropped, the actual number of people who are hungry has increased. The goals and deadline are meant to encourage wealthier countries to take meaningful steps to help poor countries defeat hunger within their borders.

G8 Initiative: In 2004, the Group of Eight industrialized countries (G8) — the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, and the United Kingdom — made promises to address hunger in countries on the African continent with some of the direst situations, particularly in the Horn of Africa. The approach is three-pronged: provide a safety net for communities that routinely face food insecurity, improve global response to food crises on the continent, and boost agriculture production in rural areas of Africa. The goal is to end famine in the Horn of Africa by 2009. G8 summits in 2005, 2006, and 2007 included progress updates on the effort. In 2005, in particular, the world's richest countries addressed development in Africa.

Presidential Initiative to End Hunger in Africa: This initiative from the United States was announced in 2003. It is part of the U.S. effort to meet commitments made at G8 summits to address the issue. Under this initiative, the United States, through USAID, is working on agriculture reform in sub-Saharan Africa under the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program.

— Compiled by Angela Rucker, USAID

The American Farmer and U.S. Food Aid

Bruce Odessey

As the U.S. Congress considers a five-year farm bill, the Bush administration is pushing for change to allow delivery of some food aid by procuring commodities from local markets rather than providing only U.S.-produced commodities. Resistance to change is strong, and the outcome is uncertain.

Bruce Odessey is managing editor of eJournal USA.

Government decisions about food aid spending involve a political calculation, of course. The biggest U.S. food aid program is called Public Law 480, Title II. For a long time this program has required that all U.S. foreign donations of food aid consist of U.S.-produced commodities.

Right now Congress is considering U.S. agricultural policy for the next five years as the 2002 farm bill expires at the end of September 2007. Whether Congress will change the food aid policy part of the bill remains uncertain.

Passed by Congress about every five years, a farm bill regulates U.S. agriculture policy, covering not only foreign and domestic food aid but also support for commodity prices and farm incomes, loans, conservation, research, and rural development.

The fact that U.S. food aid helps support American farmers and agribusiness interests has been crucial in Congress's support for these programs over the years.

© AP Images/Pat Roque

Congress is deciding whether U.S. food aid will consist entirely of U.S. -produced commodities or whether some part of the food could be purchased from foreign producers closer to a site of emergency.

Differing Viewpoints

Among several changes the Bush administration wants from Congress in the 2007 farm bill is some flexibility for the U.S. food aid program.

The administration wants authority to use up to 25 percent of the money allocated to the food aid program every year to be able to buy food commodities in the local and regional markets of developing countries. In some emergency situations, buying in local or nearby markets could hasten food delivery to victims.

The version of the 2007 farm bill passed by the House of Representatives by a vote of 222 to 202 in July would leave the existing program unchanged. House members did not raise the issue during full House debate.

"They're still of the mode that this should be American products we're using our tax dollars to provide them," said Representative Collin Peterson, Democratic chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture.

The American Farm Bureau Federation opposes local and regional purchases of emergency food. Chris Garza, the group's director of congressional relations, says the existing program of sending U.S.-grown commodities has worked well.

"A lot of the product … that would be purchased is obviously coming from countries that don't always have enough food of their own, and so it could cause food prices in those countries to go up," Garza said.

The final outcome remains uncertain, however. To become law, a final version of the 2007 farm bill must be passed by both the House and Senate and signed

U.S. INTERNATIONAL FOOD AID PROGRAMS: BASIC DESCRIPTIONS

PROGRAM	PURPOSE
P.L. 480, Title I	Concessional commodity sales through long-term loans. In fiscal year (FY) 2006, approximately 178,000 metric tons (MT) of commodities, valued at $50 million, were provided to three countries under P.L. 480, Title I.
P.L. 480, Title II	Development and emergency-relief programs in partnership with private voluntary organizations (PVOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the U.N. World Food Program (WFP), and government-to-government programs (emergency only). In FY 2006, approximately 1.7 million MT of emergency food aid, valued at $1.2 billion, were provided to 42 countries through 68 programs. An estimated 38 million people benefited from U.S. assistance. Approximately 664,000 MT of nonemergency food aid, totaling $342 million, were provided to 30 countries through 77 programs. An estimated 10 million people benefited from Title II nonemergency activities.
P.L. 480, Title III	Government-to-government commodity donations to the least developed countries; linked to policy reforms. No money was appropriated for this program in FY 2006.
Food for Progress Act of 1985	Commodity donations offered for emerging democracies and developing countries making commitments to introduce or expand free-enterprise elements in their agricultural economies. Agreements may be with governments, PVOs, NGOs, private entities, cooperatives, and intergovernmental organizations. In FY 2006, Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) financed the purchase and shipment of 275,000 MT of commodities to 20 countries at a value of $147 million. In addition, Title I resources were used to deliver 212,000 MT, with a value of $73 million, under the Food for Progress program.
Agriculture Act of 1949, Section 416(b)	Surplus commodities to PVOs, NGOs, WFP, and government-to-government, donated to accomplish foreign food aid objectives. Some 9,600 MT of non-fat dry milk were delivered to four countries during FY 2006, with a value of $20 million.
McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition	Commodity donations and financial assistance to provide incentives for children to attend and remain in school, as well as helping to improve child development through nutritional programs for women, infants, and children under age 5. USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service provided more than 82,000 MT of commodities to support child nutrition and school feeding programs in 15 countries, the total value of which was more than $86 million.

Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

by the president. And the Senate has yet to begin its consideration of the bill — in fact, final passage of the 2007 farm bill remains unlikely to happen until months after the 2002 farm bill expires.

If the Senate passed a bill differing from the House version, then the House and Senate would have to reconcile the different versions. Most likely a House-Senate conference would work to put together a compromise bill for final votes in the House and Senate.

Senator Tom Harkin, Democratic chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, has indicated interest in creating a small pilot program for local procurement, perhaps $25 million a year for four years. "The goal is to help us respond more quickly to dire humanitarian emergencies," Harkin said.

Administration Position

Mark Keenum, under secretary of agriculture, agrees that local procurement would be used only for emergencies. "It would mean the difference in saving lives," Keenum said. Even in emergencies, he said, the United States would send U.S. food when and where no local or regional food is available for purchase.

Keenum added that the flexibility to buy locally, instead of shipping U.S.-sourced food aid, should have no notable effect on U.S. commercial markets.

According to Keenum, the vast majority of U.S. food aid consists of grains and oil seeds. Annual U.S. production of these commodities amounts to about 200 million tons a year. Annual food aid donations of these amount to less than 3 million tons. And the administration proposes providing locally procured food instead of U.S. food for only up to 25 percent of donations, he said.

Some U.S. nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that distribute food aid around the world support the local procurement concept; others do not.

Also, the United States is under pressure in the long-stalled World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations to make a change. The United States resists any agreement letting the WTO dictate what quantity or proportion of food aid must be cash or commodities, Keenum said. ■

Hunger: Facing the Facts

Bob Bell, David Kauck, Marianne Leach, and Priya Sampath

Courtesy of Ami Vitale/CARE

Sumo Nayak feeds children at a Nutrition and Health Day meeting in Irikpal in Chhattisgarh state, India.

Hunger takes different forms, but they all can cause death and undue suffering, mostly in developing countries. More than 850 million people go hungry even though the world produces enough food to feed everyone. Food aid helps in emergencies, but long-term, sustainable solutions are needed to move toward achieving the international goal of halving the number of hungry people.

CARE is a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty. Bob Bell is director of CARE's Food Resources Coordination Team, David Kauck is a senior program technical adviser, Marianne Leach is director of CARE's Government Relations Team, and Priya Sampath is a senior policy analyst.

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that more than 850 million people worldwide suffer from hunger today, 820 million of them in developing countries.

In the 1980s, CNN brought us images of millions of starving children and adults in Ethiopia, showing the Western world what hunger looks like in developing countries. Aid and assistance poured into the country. Since then, however, we have become somewhat inured to the phenomenon as every year brings the now all-too-familiar pictures of famines, floods, and other disasters or of abject poverty.

Effects of Hunger

Protein-energy malnutrition — PEM (insufficient consumption of protein and energy calories) — is the leading cause of death in children in developing countries.

Micronutrient deficiency (inadequate essential "micronutrients" such as iron, iodine, and vitamin D) is a leading contributor to child mortality and the stunted growth, development, and learning potential of millions of children.

That there are nearly a billion hungry people in the world today despite the gains made in agricultural productivity seems unimaginable. Recognizing the enormity of the issue, the World Food Summit in 1996 set a goal to reduce by half the number of hungry people in the world by 2015, later reaffirmed in the first Millennium Development Goal. But half way to 2015, it is becoming clear that this goal will not be met — the estimated number of undernourished people has risen from 798 million in 2000 to about 852 million today.

What Is Hunger?

Hunger is a phenomenon related to food insecurity. Food security is a condition that "exists when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life," according to a 1996 World Food Summit statement.

Hunger results when households and individuals are food insecure for a period of time.

Hunger affects the normal functioning and development of the human body and contributes to the global disease burden by drastically reducing the body's ability to resist infection. In extreme cases, death results from starvation brought about by prolonged hunger or by succumbing to infectious disease.

Hunger weakens people physically. As persistent, chronic hunger limits the body's ability to use energy for activities, the undernourished have difficulty performing at school, finding work, and being productive. Employers and teachers may see hungry people as slow or lazy, when in fact they suffer from lethargy, the body's response to prolonged calorie and nutrient deprivation.

Hunger thus traps individuals and households in a vicious cycle of ill health and diminished capacity for learning and work, causing and contributing to widespread poverty and death. These damaging effects extend to communities and economies.

Widespread hunger undermines the development potential of nations. Improved nutrition affects economic growth directly through improved labor productivity. An FAO study of developing countries over 30 years found that if countries with high rates of undernourishment had increased food intake to an adequate level, their economic output, or gross domestic product (GDP), would have risen by 45 percent. Losses in labor productivity due to hunger can cause reductions of 6 to 10 percent in per capita GDP, according to a U.N. task force on hunger.

Why Does Hunger Still Persist?

Hunger is a complex issue, and addressing it appropriately needs to be informed by an understanding of why it exists in the first place, free of commonly held misperceptions and myths.

Myth #1: People go hungry because not enough food is produced — it's about supply.

Chronic and Transitory Hunger

Chronic hunger occurs when people lack access to sufficient food over a long time due to persistent poverty. About 95 percent of the developing world's 820 million hungry are chronically hungry.

Transitory hunger is a temporary condition brought about by events such as natural disasters and conflicts or, on a smaller scale, by unemployment, disease, or a death in the family. At any given time, tens of millions of people are at risk of transitory hunger.

Fact: To date, global food supply has kept pace with world population, defying Malthusian doomsday scenarios of population growth outstripping food supplies. At the same time, however, many regions of the world are unable to continuously satisfy the food needs of their residents through local production alone. Seasonal shortages and periodic crop failures are quite common and are not necessarily a cause for alarm.

When there is a bad harvest in a region that has extensive, properly functioning markets, commodities from stocks or food-surplus regions normally flow into the market in response to rising prices, thus alleviating local food deficits.

It is only when markets are poorly developed or fail to function properly that persistent problems of food availability are likely to occur.

Over the past 150 years, famines due to persistent food shortages have ceased to be a common occurrence in many parts of the world. In large part, this is because of improvements in transportation infrastructure, the expansion of markets, and steady growth of domestic and international trade.

Nonetheless, there are still times and places where food availability can be a serious problem. There are parts of the world — including several large, isolated regions deep in the interior of the African continent — where the impediments to trade are still so great that rising prices fail to trigger adequate inflows of commodities when they are needed. In these places, the risk that crop failures will trigger famine can be substantial. Very frequently, hunger occurs in places where there is even a food surplus but where certain socioeconomic groups nonetheless face extreme hardship. The term "food access" refers to the ability of individual households to acquire sufficient food to meet their basic needs.

Households acquire food through some combination of production, purchase, or noncommercial social transfers (from family, friends, or some form of welfare). Poor households face hunger when their food production, savings, income, and entitlements are insufficient to meet their food needs. Circumstances that are likely to contribute to deepening problems of food access include:

- Loss of productive assets
- Falling wages
- Changes in commodity prices that erode the purchasing power of the poor.

Analyses of "food access" focus attention on the productive capacity and purchasing power of poor households. They also shine a light on the relationship between changing patterns of income inequality and the distribution of hunger.

Another critical aspect of hunger is "utilization," how food itself is biologically used. Does the food provide sufficient energy and other essential nutrients? Is there potable water available, and are there adequate sanitary conditions to prevent diseases and enable the body to absorb the energy and nutrients contained in food? Finally, what are the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of people consuming the food? Certain family members lack the ability to command an adequate share of household resources due to gender, age, or other culturally determined factors, with resulting increased hunger.

Finally, "vulnerability" plays a role. Vulnerability is the likelihood that a household's food security will be compromised by a major catastrophe or by the cumulative effects of a series of small shocks

Regional Differences in Hunger Levels and Trends

While the overall number of hungry people in the world has increased, some regions are faring better than others:

- *Considerable progress has been made in Latin America, East Asia, and large parts of South Asia — regions that have experienced sustained macroeconomic growth.*
- *Significant setbacks have occurred in the Middle East, in North Africa, and especially in sub-Saharan Africa.*
- *In sub-Saharan Africa, hunger has steadily become both more widespread and more persistent, with one-third of the population suffering from chronic hunger.*
- *Most undernourished people come from small farms and landless families living in rural areas and working on small plots of isolated, marginal land.*

© AP Images/Brennan Linsley

In drought-stricken Ethiopia, as in much of the Horn of Africa, hunger affects millions.

to a person's or household's livelihoods. The level of vulnerability depends on the likelihood of these events and the ability of households to cope with it — their resilience to withstand and adapt.

Households need the capacity to cope with and recover from disasters to stay food secure.

Myth #2: Hungry people need food — so food aid is the answer.

Fact: Food aid is not the universal or long-term solution.

For more than 50 years, the American people have generously responded to the needs of hungry people around the world primarily through a program called Public Law 480 — Food for Peace. This program provides food aid as the principal source of assistance for responding to both urgent food crises and chronic hunger. This assistance has indisputably saved millions of lives in its current form.

However, the increasing numbers of undernourished tell us that world hunger cannot be solved in a sustainable way by the provision of food assistance alone.

CARE has long been associated with food distribution programs and is justifiably proud of assisting poor, vulnerable, and crisis-affected people worldwide through food aid programming. But current policies and programs have shortcomings.

First, in most years, 70 to 75 percent of U.S. food aid is used to address transitory hunger resulting from emergencies and humanitarian crises. While emergency food aid is vital in times of crisis, it neither addresses the root causes of chronic hunger nor reduces the likelihood of future emergencies.

Second, addressing chronic hunger, as opposed to emergencies, needs sustained, long-term assistance, which is hard to provide under current programs and policies.

Current programs have multiple policy goals and short time frames, which often prevent the use of some of the most appropriate, cost-effective approaches and often do not reach the neediest. For example, agricultural programs targeted toward increasing productivity and rural incomes do not often reach the most vulnerable households, which tend to be smallholders or day laborers. Further, most interventions are fragmented and undertaken in isolation by several different agencies, each having separate funding streams, time frames, and reporting requirements. Such fragmentation diffuses the overall effectiveness of these programs.

Emerging Challenges, Outlook

Notwithstanding the adequate global availability of food supplies, there are emerging challenges to their continued adequacy.

Experts say that the Green Revolution's reliance on technological and chemical inputs has resulted in increased soil erosion and polluted groundwater and surface water, and has caused serious public health and environmental problems, putting the revolution's sustainability in doubt.

In addition, several developing countries are already experiencing the effects of climate change — changes in weather patterns, reduced rainfall, modified river flows, and increased desertification have all been projected to dramatically affect food production.

At the same time, rising demand for food crops for biofuels is also projected to threaten world food security by driving up cereal crops prices and eroding the purchasing power of poor households.

© AP Images

Chronic hunger and emergency-related hunger are different problems requiring different solutions. Food aid is the response to a 2006 drought in northern Kenya, where a boy peers into a sack of food.

If predictions about climate change and increased use of crops for biofuels are realized, there will likely be dramatic increases in the incidence of chronic hunger.

A Better Way

CARE believes that it is time to recast the usual approaches to hunger to fully and meaningfully address chronic hunger.

Reducing chronic hunger will require programs to target very poor, vulnerable people and to provide support before emergencies arise. Programs must use approaches that address not only the basic needs of hungry people, but also focus on the underlying social, economic, environmental, and political causes of hunger.

Attacking the causes of hunger requires a massive, sustained effort that is beyond the capacity of one country and one donor to provide. Donor agencies must coordinate and support national governments to put in place and adequately resource national policies, strategies, and plans, rather than pursuing stand-alone projects.

Much of the current emphasis of U.S. government programs needs to change. Multiyear, integrated strategies and adequate multiyear resource commitments not subject to annual appropriations limitations must be put in place. Addressing the complexities of hunger requires assured, long-term commitments of resources.

Most importantly, practitioners need flexibility in programming to choose the most appropriate, cost-effective approach to any given food security situation. This means having freedom to address the underlying causes of hunger. To address these causes, programs will be required to invest in education, health, livelihood support, and asset protection. It also means that programs, where appropriate and based on sound analyses, use resources such as imported food aid, locally or regionally procured food, and/or cash transfer options (vouchers, food stamps, and cash for work) as part of a broader response.

These elements need to be integrated as part of a plan to reduce, progressively and steadily, the number of people living in crisis or at great risk and to increase the numbers accessing, securely and sustainably, their food and nutrition requirements. Only then can we begin the slow, long march toward eradicating hunger and its causes to ensure that no child goes to bed hungry. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

Southern Africa's Triple Threat

Jordan Dey

© AP Images/Obed Zilwa

People wait for maize at a distribution point in Sanje, Malawi, one of the countries hit hardest by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

In southern Africa, the HIV/AIDS epidemic is making farmers too sick to produce food, while reducing governments' ability to provide help. Donor countries can sharply increase the effectiveness of the medicine they are already providing by also giving stricken families enough to eat.

Jordan Dey is director of U.S. relations for the United Nations World Food Program.

Southern Africa, long a breadbasket for Africa and more recently one of the continent's most economically and politically stable regions, is under siege from a triple threat: the combined onslaught of HIV/AIDS, eroding food security, and declining government and civil capacity.

Every day in the world, 8,000 people die from HIV/AIDS; 5 million new infections occur each year. Some 40 million people are infected with HIV, two-thirds of them in sub-Saharan Africa.

The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) operates in Angola, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Southern Africa is on the front lines of the global battle against this devastating disease, having 9 of the 10 countries with the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates. AIDS has cut life expectancy to medieval levels — the mid-30s — in many countries in the region. The disease has hit the productive sector extremely hard, decimating the ranks of civil servants, teachers, doctors, businesspeople, and farmers — weakening governments as

well as civic and social infrastructure. An estimated 8 million farmers have died of AIDS in the past two decades in southern Africa. And according to a recent report from Oxfam International, current mortality rates indicate that one-fifth of the agricultural workforce in southern Africa will have died from AIDS by 2020.

Left behind in southern Africa are an estimated 3.3 million AIDS orphans. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) says that the proportion of orphans to the whole population is growing faster there than anywhere else in the world.

The combination of high HIV/AIDS prevalence and high numbers of orphans is straining communities and extended families, as well as government budgets for health care and social services, food security, and education. All of these trends hold disturbing implications for long-term economic and political stability. In the meantime, household food security is already seriously undermined.

Mounting Food Shortages

Southern Africa has made substantial gains in agricultural production since 2002, when the entire region teetered on the brink of one of the worst humanitarian crises the region has ever seen, with more than 14 million people needing emergency assistance across six countries. Serious loss of life was averted by unprecedented coordination in the humanitarian response and the generosity of donors, particularly the United States, the European Union, Australia, Canada, Japan, and South Africa.

Since then, the number of people requiring food aid has steadily declined, largely as a function of better harvests due to more regular rains and more widely available seeds and fertilizers. Yet in 2007, poor harvests in many areas of the region — notably Zimbabwe, Swaziland, and Mozambique — are again pushing up the numbers in need of emergency food aid. The current estimate of those in need is 4.4 million for the region, although a new food security report on Zimbabwe indicates that that figure will rise by at least another 2 million because of that country's poor harvests and worsening economic crisis. Drought, the high costs of seeds and fertilizers, and uneven market access and land policies are all fueling the latest food shortages. So is HIV/AIDS.

Political leaders in southern Africa, as in the rest of the world, have made significant progress in fighting HIV/AIDS. The disease is finally out in the open, ending years of denial, shame, and stigma.

The Bush administration's pledge of $15 billion to combat HIV/AIDS in the developing world, mostly in Africa, is historic: the biggest commitment to a global health challenge from any government ever. President Bush is also proposing a five-year extension with almost twice the financing — $30 billion over five years starting in 2009. This tremendous commitment by the U.S. government has mobilized many complementary responses — especially on the medication front — from regional governments, the private sector including drug companies, and other donors.

In southern Africa, antiretroviral drugs are being gradually distributed in all countries, including a nine-fold increase in drug disbursement in Malawi — from 8,000 people in January 2005, to more than 70,000 people at the start of 2007. However, all countries in southern Africa have a long way to go to meet demand, and many millions remain without access to life-sustaining drugs.

Enhancing Drug Effectiveness

Donors could greatly enhance the effectiveness of their multibillion-dollar investment in AIDS treatment by following a simple, but often overlooked, prescription for success: food along with the medicine. It's a prescription that is endorsed by the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization. It has also gained support from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which, for example, is working with the World Food Program in Ethiopia to help provide food, vitamin supplements, and nutritional counseling to people affected by HIV/AIDS.

The logic is simple: Most drugs come with instructions to take them before or after meals, a regimen designed for affluent parts of the world, where wondering where the next meal will come from is rarely a concern.

But in Africa, where one in three people is malnourished and lives on $1 a day, many living with HIV can't take even one daily meal for granted. Powerful drugs that sustain life don't work nearly as effectively on depleted bodies and empty stomachs.

Field research has demonstrated that providing the right food and the right nutrition at the right time can

Courtesy of CFAO/Giuseppe Bizzarri

Children in Chimoio, Mozambique, learn agricultural techniques at one of the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools, a program operated by U.N. agencies in six countries.

make a tremendous difference, helping people survive longer, keeping children in school and off the streets, and helping families stay together. It is an idea that is finally catching on.

Peter Piot, head of UNAIDS, often relates a story about meeting a group of women in Malawi living with HIV. "As I always do, I asked them what their highest priority was," he said. "Their answer was clear and unanimous: food. Not care, not drugs for treatment, not relief from stigma, but food."

This is hardly surprising on a continent where AIDS kills many times more Africans than war. Africa, where WFP conducts half its operations, is already afflicted with the worst food security problems in the world. Eight out of 10 farmers in Africa are women, mostly subsistence farmers, and women are disproportionately affected by the disease.

AIDS and Families

Food is also a huge issue for families affected by AIDS, undermining food production and security at the household level.

Studies from Africa and elsewhere show that AIDS has devastating effects on rural families. The father is often the first to fall ill, and when this occurs the family may sell farm tools and animals to pay for his care — frequently leading to rapid impoverishment of often already-poor families. Should the mother also become ill, then the children may face the daunting responsibilities of working the farm and taking full-time care of their parents as well as themselves.

With millions fewer farmers working, countries have less food. Weakened, HIV-positive farmers who can still work are not as productive, and they are less capable of earning off-farm income as well. As farmers earn less, they cannot afford fertilizers and other farm inputs. Harvests

dwindle further, and they enter a merciless downward spiral, selling what assets they have and sliding into abject poverty. Soon enough, their families go hungry.

In southern Africa, up to 70 percent of farms have suffered labor losses due to HIV/AIDS. As agricultural workers are affected by the disease, they tend to plant fewer hectares and less labor-intensive crops. In Malawi, 26 percent of households with a chronically ill member changed their usual crop mix, and 23 percent left land fallow. And in Zimbabwe, maize production fell by 67 percent in households that suffered an AIDS-related death.

Packages of Assistance

Antiretroviral drugs can help mitigate this dire situation — when they are deployed in tandem with adequate food and nutrition. AIDS is not a battle that will be won with medicine alone: Integrated packages of assistance are needed.

One promising tactic in the war on AIDS and food insecurity in southern Africa is a program run by the World Food Program and its partner Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) called the "Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools," now operating in six countries. Hundreds of orphans and other vulnerable children from ages 12 to 17 are enrolled for a year in classes that teach them traditional and modern agricultural techniques, as well as critical life skills. HIV/AIDS awareness education is also included. Although lack of funding has not permitted these programs to be adequately expanded, they are part of the essential social structures needed if Africa is to beat back an epidemic that is expected to orphan a staggering 20 million children by 2010.

Consider the story of one African farmer, Benedicte, an HIV-positive father of two boys. When Benedicte, 46, first enrolled in a drug program supported by WFP food aid, he arrived on a stretcher to collect his rations. Not long after receiving regular drugs and food, Benedicte could collect his sacks of maize and beans by bicycle. Today, he is back at work in his fields. Food and treatment together got him — and his family — back on their feet.

Benedicte is a hopeful metaphor for communities hardest hit by HIV/AIDS and food insecurity. With well-targeted support involving medication and good nutrition, people suffering from HIV/AIDS can get back on their feet and confront this terrible scourge. Making sure food and good nutrition are part of the package to fight AIDS will maximize the impact of the U.S. government's great investment to combat AIDS in Africa. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

Aiding Pastoralists in the Horn of Africa

Anne Marie del Castillo and John Graham

Courtesy of WFP/Melese Awoke

USAID is working to help African herdsmen, such as this woman driving cattle near Zeway, Ethiopia, to sustain their livelihood.

In Ethiopia, an innovative collaboration between a U.S. government foreign aid agency and nongovernmental organizations has allowed herdsmen not only to survive drought but also to rebuild their lives.

Anne Marie del Castillo and John Graham work for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Del Castillo is a policy adviser for the Office of Food for Peace in Washington, and Graham is a senior policy adviser for the USAID/Ethiopia Mission.

Abdul Hussein is an old, grizzled veteran of many droughts in the drylands of Borena in southern Ethiopia. He sits with eight other elders in a cramped local government office, knees touching the USAID monitoring team, as he talks about the last drought — while welcome rain finally lashes the ground outside. Like the others gathered here, Abdul is a pastoralist, dependent on livestock to feed his family and buy his needs, occasionally planting some grain if the rain conditions are particularly good in this parched land. Herding their sheep, goats, and camels requires seasonal migration to access pasture.

"We have never had this happen before. Our animals have died from drought many times, but this time the people from [the humanitarian organization] CARE helped us to sell our cattle before they died," he said. "I sold one cow, and I was able to use the money to hire a truck to take my other cows to a place farther north, where they could survive. Now the drought is over, and I still have my cattle."

Many development experts misinterpret pastoralists' apparent increasing vulnerability in the Horn of Africa as a sign that their livelihood is no longer viable. As a result, they often advocate that pastoralists transition into farming or other more sedentary productive activities.

But these experts fail to appreciate the remarkable efficiencies inherent in the pastoralists' way of life that

are being undermined primarily as pastoral groups suffer political, social, and economic marginalization. Few national governments adequately recognize the importance of pastoralist livelihoods or provide the right kind of support. Support to sell or maintain animals in a drought and to have better access and higher prices from livestock markets has proven to have a remarkable effect.

USAID Initiatives

Since the late 1990s, USAID has directed support in the Horn of Africa to the pastoralist people through projects such as the Southern Tier Initiative and Emerging Focus, which addressed health, education, and veterinary services. In addition, massive humanitarian assistance was provided during droughts in 1999-2000, 2002-2003, and 2005-2006, both in food and nonfood aid. As a result of the droughts and the concomitant loss of livestock, the resource base of more than a million pastoralists has eroded to the point that they now depend on food assistance for several months every year.

In October 2005, USAID's mission in Ethiopia launched the Pastoralist Livelihood Initiative (PLI), a $29 million investment, programmed over two years, that is changing the way USAID addresses pastoralist vulnerability in the Horn of Africa. Support came from the Famine Prevention Fund, a flexible USAID contingency fund used to prevent and mitigate famines quickly.

The PLI project aims to address the underlying causes of hunger in such a way as to effect long-term, positive change. USAID proceeded with PLI because of the urgent need, together with indications of growing commercial prospects for the meat market, keen private-sector interest, a supportive government stance, and the presence of an experienced regional nongovernmental organization (NGO) network already in place.

The project employed a development approach — building and updating the linkages between the pastoralists and modern meat and livestock markets — in the context of an emergency. In this way it successfully protected livelihoods during the 2005-2006 drought and created sustainable market relationships that should significantly increase the pastoralists' ability to manage through future droughts.

Getting Started

The USAID mission in Ethiopia worked through a consortium of NGOs, as well as the Tufts University Famine Center and the private, nonprofit Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI/VOCA). The PLI's original objectives were to build long-term livelihoods for beneficiaries through livestock support and marketing, improve emergency response mechanisms, and promote policy reform to improve market access. The work took place in three pastoralist regions of Ethiopia: the Somali region (3.8 million population), the Afar region (1.8 million population), and the pastoralist areas of the Oromia region (2.4 million population). The project directly assisted 400,000 pastoralists and indirectly assisted some 2 million people.

The project's rapid start-up proved fortuitous. In December 2005, just two months after the project's official launch, it became clear that the rains had failed badly in the southern part of the project area. PLI cooperating partners adjusted by redeploying their resources to respond to the effects of the 2005-2006 drought. They were able to use flexible mechanisms, including emergency purchase of animals before they perished, both commercially and for slaughter for use as food aid, emergency animal health care, and protection of breeding herds through the provision of fodder and water.

Within one month, the PLI was facilitating animal sales by introducing traders who normally procured their livestock from the Northern Highlands to the suppliers in the drought-affected region in the south. PLI facilitated that purchase and slaughter of livestock by commercial traders and butchers, provided emergency water, and helped maintain livestock breeding herds by supplying feed and animal vaccination. Through these emergency operations, the pastoralists had cash from the sales and a core of breeding herd with which to begin rebuilding their flocks.

An innovative loan program for traders made the commercial sales feasible. PLI partners made loans totaling $250,000 available to traders and placed an additional $50,000 in a loan fund through an NGO, which was 100 percent repaid. With the extra money, traders could buy substantially more animals. The traders also committed an estimated $1 million of their own capital for emergency livestock purchase.

How It Worked

For the pastoralist households, commercial livestock de-stocking provided most of the cash to hold them through the drought; nearly half of the money was used to buy food and fodder. Tufts University estimated the cost-benefit ratio at 1:41. Through de-stocking, private traders bought tens of thousands of animals from pastoralists who would have otherwise been destitute, providing them cash to buy animals after the drought.

Supplementing these activities were animal fodder programs to preserve the core breeding herds. The PLI partners, in cooperation with the regional governments and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), helped to vaccinate 3 million animals and provide veterinary treatment to more than 2.8 million animals. As a result of the PLI emergency response alone, the estimated survival rate of livestock increased by 10 percent, and the value of livestock assets protected was worth more than $22 million.

Once the rains returned in April, PLI partners and their government counterparts resumed the originally approved activities aimed at strengthening pastoralist livelihoods, such as restocking and marketing. Coincident with the PLI, there was a fundamental shift in regional meat and livestock trade patterns. By introducing the pastoralists in the southern regions to northern traders, the PLI emergency response helped these herdsmen benefit from the evolving market trends.

Traditionally, the cattle from southern Ethiopia traveled to the Kenyan markets, and sheep and goats to Somalia. Now, as demand for meat outstripped the Highlands meat supplies, traders looked southward for additional supplies. As a result, the pastoralists gained access to the slaughterhouses and live-animal markets in the north. In addition, the Somali pastoralists shifted their camel trade away from their traditional market trek to the south to the more lucrative Egyptian and Saudi Arabian markets for live camels.

New Markets

At Filtu, in a southern Somali region, women beneficiaries talked about the help they got from PLI partner Pastoralist Concern Association of Ethiopia (PCAE).

"Before, we would sell our sheep and goats to Somalia in the south, and sometimes to the Mandera market in Kenya," Aisha Abdulahi said. "Now those people are coming here to sell their sheep and goats. We are selling every animal to go north to Negelle and Addis Ababa, and we are getting better prices than ever before.

"When there was drought or war in Somalia, we used to suffer," she said. "Now it doesn't matter; we sell our animals in Ethiopia. Many members of our women's savings and credit association are using credit to buy sheep and goats in the market here, then selling at a profit in Negelle."

The impact of the PLI was also manifest in the dynamic growth in the local economies. The PLI replaced informal bush markets with modern livestock facilities, including permanent fenced enclosures having livestock corrals and watering areas. This change allowed for more orderly exchanges and provided sanitary conditions for the livestock, thus attracting traders from the north, who sent fleets of trucks to the roadside markets with proper pens and loading facilities.

Perhaps more important were the associated enterprises that began flourishing around the new facilities. Within two weeks of the inauguration at Harobake of one of the PLI's 25 modern livestock market facilities, a number of small restaurants, hotels, pharmacies, and retail shops had sprouted.

Fofu Gezu, the local organizer for ACDI/VOCA, explained the electrifying impact of the new market: "We spoke to the community when we planned this, and they told us this was the place for the market. Because this was their choice, the local officials said yes, and now we see what has happened. The community knew that this place could grow, and they support it. Now they are planning a whole town here, and they say this will be the new center for the whole area."

Lessons Learned

Pastoralists, though a nomadic people, are not always on the move. The women and children of the pastoral household tend to be relatively sedentary, residing in small rural towns at least six months of the year. USAID-funded pilot micro-finance programs have helped women to form or expand lucrative cooperatives; operate small grain mills; and conduct petty trade, small ruminant trade, and other enterprises. The steady stream of income from these activities complements the more seasonal income generated from the pastoral activities.

Courtesy of USAID

Across the Horn of Africa, goat herders and other pastoralists need money and technical expertise.

Building on the success of these activities, USAID encouraged Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to form a Livestock Policy Forum. Five working groups have been building government policy on emergency de-stocking, emergency animal health care, emergency fodder provision, restocking, and natural resource management. One result already: Ethiopia's government has agreed to make concessionary loans to traders to purchase livestock in an emergency.

The PLI helped pastoralists to withstand the drought, maintain their self-sufficiency, and preserve their herds. One key lesson is that agencies with a long-term presence and expertise can exercise flexibility in redeploying funds immediately to protect livelihoods. Such technical capacity and funding flexibility should be the norm for future emergencies. Adequate contingency funds need to be available at the national level and from bilateral and multilateral donor sources. Recurrent drought in the Greater Horn of Africa need not mean recurrent distress for pastoral communities. National and regional governments should implement policies and interventions to strengthen, not erode, pastoral livelihood systems.

A second key lesson is that the pastoralist livelihood is viable when it has robust links to national and regional economic and financial systems. The Pastoralist Livelihood Initiative strengthened the resiliency of the pastoralist livelihood simply by strengthening the links between pastoralists and commercial meat and livestock markets. In turn, this had a positive and dynamic impact on the local economy.

The PLI successfully and quickly addressed the root causes of vulnerability among pastoralist communities, helping to retain their livelihood by fostering financial and economic integration with the society at large. While this program has successfully completed the objectives, it has also developed new areas for programming.

Because the initial funding covered only two years, alternative funding sources will need to be identified to build on the valuable lessons learned. Implementing partners, USAID, and the Ethiopian government hope that the progress made in the first phase will convince other donors, both bilateral and multilateral, to provide the needed support to continue increasing the capacity of these pastoralists to thrive in the modern economy. ■

Tackling Child Malnutrition in Coastal Bangladesh

Ina Schonberg

Food aid works in Bangladesh to feed hungry children after devastating floods or in other emergencies. Cash aid works to provide children with the health care and schools they need and to provide their families with the means to produce household income. Both kinds of aid are needed indefinitely in a country where perhaps half the people cannot afford an adequate diet.

Ina Schonberg is an associate vice president of the independent nonprofit charity Save the Children.

Bangladesh is most often in the news when floods, population pressure, and extreme poverty collide. It remains one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with more than 130 million people living in a fertile flood plain delta that is crisscrossed by rivers, lakes, and ocean inlets. Floods and cyclones are a constant threat, pollution is on the rise, and soils are being depleted. Despite consistent socioeconomic progress, poverty remains pervasive and deep rooted. In the south central coastal regions of Barisal, food insecurity is high and malnutrition persists more than in other parts of the country.

Along Bangladesh's coast, Save the Children works with other nongovernmental organizations and local governments to reduce child malnutrition. Using food from the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Title II program, the Jibon-O-Jibika (Life and Livelihood) program feeds 180,000 children every month. The people on the program's staff penetrate deep into villages to immunize children (jointly with the government), monitor their growth, and provide health services where none existed. The program provides access to safe drinking water and sanitation services and gives poor families opportunities for adding income by getting them started on homestead gardens.

Courtesy of Save the Children, Hunger and Malnutrition Unit

A malnourished Shireen and her mother were enrolled in Save the Children's Intensive Nutritional Counseling program; the child received food, and the family got a new well and latrine.

For children like Shireen, such a program could not have come soon enough. Identified as being severely malnourished from repeated illnesses and an inadequate diet, Shireen was at risk of dying before she turned two

years old. Shireen's mother was given food as an incentive to attend Save the Children's monthly activities in her village, and community volunteers worked with Save the Children staff to provide Shireen with enough nutrition to gain weight. Installation of a new tube well for water and a sanitary latrine gives Shireen's family immediate gains while offering them hope for better nutrition and reduced illness in the longer term.

Changing Behavior

Save the Children's Jibon-O-Jibika program aims at getting mothers to adopt different habits for feeding their infants and young children and taking them for critical health care. It also makes sure needed health services are available. Modest food aid rations give mothers in families most at risk of food insecurity an incentive to get training to change their behavior.

Results from the program after two years, as of June 2007, are impressive:

- Some 311,080 mothers and children received health services, with consistently high rates of attendance at all provision points.
- More than 29,000 tube wells were tested for arsenic; 37 percent more families reported access to sanitary latrines.
- Both production and consumption of green leafy vegetables increased.

At the same time, Save the Children has worked closely with local government officials and community groups in 66 of the most vulnerable coastal areas to cope with emergencies. More than 1,200 volunteers have been trained and equipped for disaster preparedness and mitigation. They plan improvements to cyclone shelters, conduct drills to improve disaster warnings, conduct search and rescue missions after floods, and conduct rapid assessments for distribution of emergency relief. Access to emergency food stocks, combined with the people and infrastructure to deliver them, has saved lives and reduced suffering in disasters.

Effective Food Aid

Studies have found that effectively targeted food aid is essential to Bangladesh's food security, not only for short-term emergency relief but also for long-term economic development. Emergency food aid has been found to be effective in saving lives. Food aid closely tied to specific developmental objectives — such as enhancing infrastructure and production or supporting social outcomes such as education — has been effective in reducing poverty and in contributing to food security gains for the family.

Studies have found that food stockpiling and use of food aid to reduce cereal price fluctuations — particularly any adverse effect on producers — have contributed to the overall stability of the cereal supply in the country, benefiting all Bangladeshis.

The optimal results are achieved when aid is both well targeted and directed toward meeting specific development objectives as part of a wider program.

But it takes more than food to fight hunger. The effectiveness of food aid is maximized when programmed together with cash aid. Cash is needed, for example, for training people to grow their own food, supplying them with the initial supplies, and monitoring their progress.

Still, in some circumstances, aid recipients, particularly women, prefer food aid over cash because it is easier for them to control. And studies indicate that, in both developed and developing countries, food consumption remains higher when direct food aid is provided as compared with cash. In Bangladesh, given the severity of malnutrition and extent of hunger, the use of direct food assistance remains essential.

New Directions for Food Aid

By some estimates, about half of Bangladesh's 143 million people are still unable to afford an adequate diet (42 percent of households are below the poverty line). While economic growth and market policies are essential to poverty eradication, the poorest fifth of the population remains seriously underfed and unable to participate in the economy. For them, a safety net in the form of direct food assistance is critical for both income and nutritional security.

Food aid flows to Bangladesh have been declining with reduced overall development assistance. Increased commodity and freight costs, as well as shifting U.S. government aid priorities, have played a role in reducing food aid availability. The implications are already being felt directly on the ground with USAID Title II program cuts. A shortage of funds has delayed implementation and expansion of some program activities such as treatment of sick children with acute respiratory illness and diarrhea. Food distribution will have to be phased out to some

beneficiaries earlier than planned. In addition, efforts to decrease community and household vulnerabilities to natural shocks through increased community preparedness will not be expanded to all vulnerable areas served by Jibon-O-Jibika.

Food aid tied to specific development objectives has worked in Bangladesh. It has raised households' income, allowed girls to enroll in and complete school, and reduced food insecurity during periods of hunger.

Cash aid is also critical to ensure that food aid is programmed effectively for improving health care and access to water, improving schools, and responding to flood disasters. Innovative programs can include combinations of cash-supported programs, food aid, and even cash transfers.

Given the positive outcomes, consistent supplies of food aid supported by adequate levels of cash assistance should continue to be a priority for Bangladesh. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

About half of Bangladesh's people, such as these at a relief camp in Dhaka, are unable to afford an adequate diet.

© AP Images/Pavel Rahman

Additional Resources

Books and Articles

Barrett, Christopher. *Food Aid After Fifty Years: Recasting Its Role*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Bourlaug, Norman. *The Green Revolution, Peace, and Humanity*. 1970 Nobel Peace Prize lecture. *http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1970/borlaug-lecture.html*

The Development Effectiveness of Food Aid: Does Tying Matter? Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005. *http://webdomino1.oecd.org/comnet/dcd/untiedpubliccws.nsf/viewHtml/index/$FILE/pdf_Food%20aid%20study_en.pdf*

Dubber, Celia W. "CARE Turns Down Federal Funds for Food." *New York Times* (9 August 2007): p. A1.

Dubber, Celia W. "Bush Gains Support for New Approach on Global Food Aid." *International Herald Tribune, Americas Edition* (21 April 2007). *http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/04/21/america/web-0421food-35235.php*

Edkins, Jenny. *Whose Hunger? Concepts of Famine, Practices of Aid.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

Kent, George. *Freedom From Want: The Human Right to Adequate Food*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2005.

Melito, Thomas. *Foreign Assistance: Various Challenges Limit the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Food Aid*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accounting Office, 24 May 2007. *http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07905t.pdf*

O'Neill, Helen, and John Toye, eds. *A World Without Famine? New Approaches to Aid and Development*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.

Raney, Terri, and Prabhu Pingali. "Sowing a Gene Revolution" *Scientific American*, vol. 297, no. 3 (September 2007): pp. 104-111.

Runge, C. Ford, et. al. *Ending Hunger in Our Lifetime: Food Security and Globalization*. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute, 2003.

Schaible, Ulrich E., and Stefan H. E. Kaufmann. "Malnutrition and Infection: Complex Mechanisms and Global Impacts." *PLoS Medicine*, vol. 4, no. 5 (May 2007): pp. 806-812.

U.S. Agency for International Development. *Celebrating Food for Peace, 1954-2004: Bringing Hope to the Hungry.* Washington, DC: USAID, 2004. *http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/ffp/50th.*

World Trade Organization. *Agriculture Negotiations: Backgrounder, Food Aid.* 2002. *http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/agric_e/negs_bkgrnd25_ph2foodaid_e.htm*

Internet Sites

U.S. Government

U.S. Agency for International Development, Office of Food for Peace
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/ffp

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service
http://www.ers.usda.gov/Browse/TradeInternationalMarkets/FoodSecurityHunger.htm

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service
http://www.fas.usda.gov/food-aid.asp

U.S. Department of State
http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/tpp/c10325.htm

Other Resources

Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
http://www.rockfound.org/initiatives/agra/agra.shtml
The Alliance for a Green Revolution is a joint initiative of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to promote agriculture development to reduce hunger and poverty in Africa — similar to the Green Revolution of the 1960s.

Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
http://www.cgiar.org
The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, better known by its acronym CGIAR, is made up of representatives from countries, international and regional organizations, and private foundations. The group promotes sustained agricultural growth that benefits the poor through scientific research in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, policy issues, and the environment.

Famine Early Warning Systems Network
http://www.fews.net
Experts in the United States and Africa feed data into the Famine Early Warning Systems Network, which is a system that monitors and analyzes information — including remotely sensed data and ground-based meteorological, crop, and rangeland conditions — that could indicate potential threats to food security.

Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Project
http://www.fantaproject.org
The USAID-funded Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Project, which is managed by the Academy for Educational Development, works to integrate strategies to combat food insecurity and malnutrition with a focus on women and children, and provides this information for governments, nongovernmental organizations, and other groups that work in the field.

Hunger Web
http://nutrition.tufts.edu/academic/hungerweb
Hunger Web is an academic Web site run by Tufts University's Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy that provides general information, research findings, and links to people interested in learning about and combating hunger on a local, regional, national, or international stage.

International Food Policy Research Institute
http://www.ifpri.org
The International Food Policy Research Institute has a two-fold mission: to help develop local, national, and international public policies that lead to sustainable food security and improvements in nutrition, and to conduct and disseminate research into sound food policies.

Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa
http://www.africanhunger.org
The Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa is led by American and African leaders and aims to marshal public and private support in the United States to end hunger on the continent through a focus on strengthening its food and agricultural sectors.

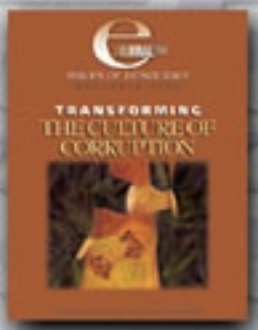
United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
http://www.fao.org
A sister agency to the World Food Program, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization works in developed and developing countries to end world hunger. It focuses its efforts on developing rural areas, which it says are home to 70 percent of the world's hungry.

United Nations World Food Program
http://www.wfp.org/english
The U.N. World Food Program is that international body's leader in fighting world hunger and operates programs that feed millions of hungry people across the globe. The agency's Web site includes an interactive "hunger map" that shows countries where hunger is most prevalent.

World Health Organization
http://www.who.int/nutrition/en/index.html
The World Health Organization is the U.N. body responsible for global health matters and focuses, among other things, on the importance of nutrition to health and development.

The U.S. Department of State assumes no responsibility for the content and availability of the resources listed above. All Internet links were active as of September 2007.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESENTING IN-DEPTH INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNITED STATES IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES



REVIEW THE FULL LISTING OF TITLES AT
http://usinfo.state.gov/pub/ejournalusa.html