

The Next Farm Bill: The Future of International Food Aid and
Agricultural Development

Testimony before the
House Agriculture Committee

Ms. Margaret Schuler

Senior Vice President, International Programs Group

World Vision- US

June 7, 2017

Chairman Conaway, Ranking Member Peterson, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on U.S. international food aid programs. Your continued leadership and focus on these critical programs is more important than ever, especially noting the unprecedented level of famine and near famine-like conditions present in four countries.

I testify before you today as the Senior Vice-President for International Programs with World Vision US. Prior to assuming this position last month, I served as the Regional Vice President of World Vision in East Africa – a region currently in the grips of one of its worst food crises in decades.

I have been on the ground in places like South Sudan, where millions of vulnerable people – mostly women and children - impacted by the violence and crisis in that country, have fled their homes and often have a day-to-day fight for survival. People whose lives were turned upside-down by the violence and who fled searching for safety. In many cases, families watched their children die along the way, but once they reached their destination, it was often generous food assistance from the U.S. government that allowed their remaining children to survive. Days before I left the region, I declared a multi-country hunger emergency at World Vision’s highest level of alert. Today, 25 million people are at significant risk in four countries of the region: Somalia, S. Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya.

Throughout my remarks today, I hope to address the importance of U.S. international food aid programs, but also highlight the lives of individuals most impacted by hunger in this region and around the world. I will conclude by providing policy and program recommendations based on World Vision's experience implementing food security programs in nearly 100 countries around the world.

World Vision Partnership

World Vision is a Christian relief, development, and advocacy organization serving millions of children and families. Our 45,000 employees are dedicated to tackling the root causes of poverty and injustice.

World Vision US has more than one million private donors in every state and Congressional district, partners with over 16,000 churches in the United States, and works with corporations and foundations. We are motivated by our Christian faith to serve every child in need and their family; those of any faith, or none. We partner with faith leaders throughout the world, equipping them to meet the needs of their communities.

We are part of a global World Vision Partnership, which last year implemented more than \$2.6 billion in programming to help children, families and communities through international relief, development, and advocacy assistance. Although private donors support much of our work, the U.S. Government is an invaluable partner. We leverage this partnership to reach many more vulnerable children and ensure that the precious resources of the American taxpayer are prudently used to promote and protect the well-being of children and communities abroad.

World Vision’s Approach to Food Security Programming

World Vision joins the international community and other partners in seeking to achieve the global goal of ending hunger by 2030. In pursuit of this hunger-free world, World Vision works alongside families to help smallholder farmers to produce their own food and improve their livelihoods, through increasing their access to markets. However, when disasters such as drought or conflict occur, World Vision provides emergency food assistance to ensure children and communities receive life-saving and nourishing food.

Food assistance is one of the critical global safety nets that supports the most vulnerable families in managing shocks like disasters, while empowering them to become more resilient against future food insecurity, and other drivers of poverty.

In our work, World Vision ensures its programming promotes dignity, fosters innovation, and is effective in creating lasting change. World Vision develops tailored and diverse responses based on local contexts. Our food assistance programming includes the distribution of U.S. as well as locally and regionally procured food commodities, cash transfers, and vouchers, which allow hungry families to purchase food and other essential household items. Additionally, World Vision implements school meals programs, and resilience building programming such as cash or food for work or assets.

World Vision's Food Security and Livelihoods team draws upon a group of technical experts who ensure quality food assistance programs in nearly 40 countries, often combining various programming modalities and services to best meet the needs of impacted communities. World Vision operates food assistance programs in partnership with the United Nations World Food Program (with whom we are the largest implementing NGO partner), USDA, USAID, and other partners.

Four Looming Famines and East Africa Food Crisis

With four famines possibly being declared this year, the world is currently in the midst of its worst humanitarian crises since 1945. As noted earlier, famine was officially declared in parts of South Sudan, while people face starvation in Somalia, Nigeria and Yemen. In Ethiopia and parts of Kenya, drought is contributing to growing food insecurity. In just the past year alone, the rate of global acute food insecurity increased by 35 percent, a massive increase from 80 million people in 2015 to 108 million today.

Currently, the majority of global humanitarian need is driven by civil conflicts, instability, and unresolved political disputes. The famine in South Sudan is largely a man-made catastrophe and in Somalia, the humanitarian crisis is a result of the combined effects of the drought and ongoing conflict. In recent years, World Vision has worked in 39 of the 56 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) declared fragile states, and we remain committed to scaling up interventions that prove effective in supporting countries as they transition out of fragility towards greater stability and lasting peace. All of the East African countries affected by the food security crises are among the fragile states as identified by the OECD. These fragile states are an increasing focus of World Vision's global strategy to help promote peace, end extreme poverty, and limit the impacts of disasters---all elements that bear on US national security and economic interests.

In East Africa, a region characterized by high levels of fragility and vulnerability, the current food crisis is affecting over 25 million people, requiring urgent, life-saving assistance. More than 3.5 million children under five are acutely malnourished, and 844,900 children are severely malnourished, with an estimated 14.4 million people in need of health assistance. Most of those affected live in rural areas and depend on agriculture and/or livestock for their food and income. In Kenya, South Sudan, and Somalia, certain areas have already reached, or are approaching, famine levels. At the same time, the number of people escaping conflict and hunger is dramatically increasing across the region with more than 3.3 million refugees, 59 percent of whom are children, fleeing into neighboring countries. Many of the refugees are from South Sudan, seeking refuge in Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia. Uganda is now hosting over 1 million refugees, nearly 900,000 of whom are from South Sudan. This is the largest refugee population in all Sub-Saharan Africa.

The immediate needs in this crisis are clear – we must get food and nutritional support in the region quickly and scale up efforts by donor governments and the international community to respond. We

know the U.S. government cannot do it alone, but its leadership inspires and promotes the actions of other donors. And, we also cannot ignore the long-term impact of malnutrition, particularly in children and pregnant mothers. Should we fail to address this crisis soon, not only will we witness more deaths from hunger, but we will see an increase in stunting in children that will have long-lasting detrimental impact on the mental and physical development of children and the economic and social development of communities.

While emergency funding is critical in this immediate crisis, the longer-term solution is programs that build more resilient, productive and economically productive rural communities. A core strategy to achieve this objective is supporting smallholder agriculture development, including through programs such as the Food for Peace's Development Food Security Activities.

FY17 Omnibus and Famine Supplemental

Thanks to Congressional leadership, including from Members of this Committee, \$990 million in emergency famine relief, including \$300 million for Food for Peace in war-torn South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and Nigeria, was recently included in the FY17 omnibus bill.

World Vision joined with partners and other stakeholders to advocate for this additional funding and we now seek to ensure these resources are distributed and allocated in a timely and efficient manner to the regions and people in greatest need. We seek to work with this Committee to ensure expeditious and effective implementation of the additional funding, especially the resources directly appropriated to Food for Peace.

The Administration's FY18 Budget Proposal

As it relates to international food aid programming, the Administration's FY18 budget request released on Tuesday, May 23rd included a series of problematic proposals including: a zeroing out of both Title II, Food for Peace (with any funding for emergency food aid shifted into the International Disaster Assistance Account (IDA), and the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program.

World Vision joins with our partners and strongly opposes these recommendations, which propose eliminating and/or severely cutting effective, life-saving funding that help create a safer and more secure world. Furthermore, the FY18 request from the Administration includes funding for emergency food needs within the International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account, yet the Administration also proposes to reduce IDA from \$3.2 billion to \$1.65 billion. When comparing the FY18 request to FY16, the cut to IDA is 10 percent. Factoring in the elimination of Title II Food for Peace (although the Food for Peace office appears to remain and emergency food aid assumed to be now funded from IDA), the cut to IDA when comparing FY16 to the FY18 request is about 48 percent.

At a time of historic and unprecedented need, when close to 1.4 million children could die this year from famine-like conditions according to UNICEF, we urge Congress to continue to robustly fund the Food for Peace program (both emergency and development programs) and McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program in FY18. The International Disaster Assistance account must also be funded at FY17 or levels or above which includes the Emergency Food Security Program.

The Administration's budget proposal reframes the purpose of the International Affairs Budget, noting that "international programs help to advance the national security interests of the United States by building a more democratic, secure, and prosperous world." The goal of the budget appears to focus

more assistance on national security-aligned interests, as opposed to long-term development or anti-poverty initiatives, but in the view of World Vision, these are not mutually exclusive priorities.

Food security programming builds more prosperous and stable societies, and is fundamentally aligned with America's global leadership. These programs are essential to shaping a world where our national interests will thrive. Disproportionate cuts to these accounts will not make the world safer. In fact, according to a recent report published by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, in 2007-2008, destabilizing rises in food prices produced widespread social unrest and toppled governments in Haiti and Madagascar and conflicts over food policy and prices are also linked to the Arab Spring in 2011. Proposals to eliminate funding for these critical accounts will have life-and-death consequences for the poorest people in the world, and will harm America's own safety and security in the process.

Lastly, as World Vision seeks to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness in the U.S. international development and humanitarian assistance programs, we stand as ready partners willing to improve foreign assistance so it saves more lives, builds resilience, and reduces poverty. To this end, we affirm our openness to identifying reforms to improve programming (we're all in this as partners together), but not when it means fewer lives saved, or turning our backs on what we know works.

As such, we are aware of the Administration's interest related to ongoing reform efforts pertaining to the activities of USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and the Office of Food for Peace. As these efforts evolve, we affirm the role of Congress and the relevant authorizing committees in overseeing and leading any reform efforts to our international development and humanitarian assistance programs, and support continued stakeholder engagement including with the private sector and NGOs.

Title II Food for Peace Program

Since 1954, Food for Peace (FFP) has enabled the United States to reach more than 4 billion people with food assistance. As the largest U.S. government food aid program, Food for Peace Title II includes emergency response that distributes food to people in the grips of natural disasters, conflict, and other food security crises. Food for Peace also provides funding for non-emergency, development programs that reduce poverty and build the capacity of beneficiaries to feed themselves.

Between 2010 and 2015, FFP programs reached an average of 52 million people in 50 countries per year. In addition to meeting food needs, Food for Peace fosters stability and builds resilience in regions that might otherwise pose possible national security risks.

FFP's development programs are particularly important in efforts to end hunger, as they go beyond the "free hand out" paradigm by addressing the root causes of food insecurity. Development Food Assistance Activities uses a multi-sectoral approach – inclusive of key areas like resilience, nutrition, and livelihoods – that puts whole communities on a sustainable path towards self-reliance. Projects are typically five years in length, which give implementers enough time to achieve real results, like revitalizing a watershed or making a lasting impact on farmers' skill sets. Food for Peace development programs primarily serve the poorest communities, using income levels, stunting rates, and other indicators of extreme poverty to direct resources to the countries and communities most in need. World Vision is the lead implementer of three Food for Peace development projects in Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, and Bangladesh.

The 2014 Farm Bill established funding for development programming at \$350 million per year with the authority to increase this funding to 30% of overall Food for Peace appropriations with the remainder of funds supporting emergency activities. We view this "safe box" programming as critical in our efforts to help countries tackle the root causes of poverty, by putting people on the path to self-reliance. Additionally, as part of our efforts to promote nutrition and food security, according to the FY17

Congressional Budget Justification, development food assistance was the second largest source of funding for nutrition programming in U.S. assistance, accounting for \$87M in the FY2017 request.

World Vision acknowledges the critical need for emergency food aid this year, but we also believe funding for these long-term development programs must remain a priority in the next Farm Bill, as they help to prevent and mitigate future food emergencies and the need for emergency assistance. To further illustrate, Congress appropriated close to an additional \$1 billion to meet emergency needs in FY17. To draw that funding from development programs would have completely depleted funding for development programming, undermining existing multiyear investments, and leaving these beneficiaries vulnerable to reversing back into poverty.

Food for Peace in Zimbabwe and Haiti

In Zimbabwe, World Vision through the [Enhancing Nutrition, Stepping up Resilience and Enterprise \(ENSURE\)](#), a USAID funded program, empowers poor, rural households in Manicaland and Masvingo provinces to become more food secure. In fiscal year 2016, 4,682 persons were trained in disaster preparedness (130 per cent of target met), 107 community assets-like dams, irrigation schemes and gardens-were created or rehabilitated (445 per cent of target met), and 217 producer groups were supported in goat and poultry value chains (238 percent of target met). To this end, the quality of food consumption, especially of children under 23 months as well as pregnant and lactating mothers, was significantly enhanced, breaking the inter-generational cycle of malnutrition and poverty.

During the massive El Niño-induced drought in Zimbabwe last year, World Vision received a \$19 million cost modification to our Title II-funded ENSURE program. This flexibility provided by the U.S. government enabled us to quickly respond to the rapidly increasing food deficits experienced by households in the east and southeast of the country, some of the hardest hit by the drought, with more than 18,000 metric tons of U.S. commodities. Through this cost modification we provided a supplemental feeding ration to more than 313,000 people who were affected by the drought. Additionally, this also protected early gains made by the development program, by ensuring that many households were able to protect assets they had generated through U.S. government assistance, instead of selling them off, thereby adding to their longer-term resilience. World Vision and the families with whom we are engaged greatly appreciate this flexibility and the rapid response it allowed.

In Haiti, another development food assistance program, Kore Lavi is supporting 18,150 households with monthly food vouchers in five out of the ten departments across the island. The program is being led by CARE and the Government of Haiti, in partnership with WFP, Action Against Hunger and World Vision, with funding from USAID. This four-year long program has the goal of strengthening the Haitian national social safety net and improving the food security and nutritional status of vulnerable populations.

In addition to the ongoing voucher program, Kore Lavi was reinforced with a “crisis modifier” from USAID following the impact of [Hurricane Matthew](#). For three months after the hurricane, some 1,100 families received 3,000 Haitian Gourdes (the equivalent of US \$50) per household, per month. This crisis modifier injects emergency funding into existing development programs to rapidly address emerging humanitarian needs.

In the words of one beneficiary, a young widow named Dachena, “[t]he program is really helpful for the boys and me. It has allowed me to feed them better with the rice, beans, oil and vegetables that I buy,” and I have observed an improvement in their physical health and energy. They are gaining some weight.” For families like Dachena's, cash transfer programming and emergency crisis modifiers have been a life-

line. Furthermore, they have protected development gains by enhancing resilience made in disaster prone areas with high levels of vulnerability, and in this way, help to address the humanitarian-development divide.

Food for Peace and Private Sector Linkages

World Vision, together with its private sector and NGO partners, have also developed innovative approaches to link food insecure farmers to suppliers and buyers. Under the USAID Food for Peace TOPs learning platform, World Vision provided training on market linkages to four USAID Food for Peace Development Food Assistance Activities and one USAID Niger Economic Growth funded project. As part of our collaboration with the TOPs learning platform and with support from USAID, World Vision produced the "[Integrating Extremely Poor Producers into Markets Field Guide](#)." The Field Guide includes a set of over 20 tools for market development professionals to use in order to strengthen the commercial relationships between food insecure and extremely poor farmers with private sector suppliers and buyers. These commercial market linkages with the private sector provide sustainable business relationships that will last well beyond the life of the USAID funded project.

Food for Peace, Social Accountability, and Good Governance

World Vision's Bangladesh Nobo Jatra Food for Peace Development Food Assistance Activity is seeking to address underlying causes of chronic food insecurity through advocacy and government reforms. By engaging local authorities through this social accountability approach, Nobo Jatra is working with farmers and government agricultural staff to identify agricultural service delivery gaps -- using social auditing, community services scorecards, and "town-hall style" interface meetings for citizens with service providers and government officials.

Citizen feedback on services will be used to advocate for governance reform across the target ministries of health, water and sanitation, and agriculture. Citizen monitors and committees will work with government officials to monitor progress and address gaps through ongoing advocacy. Food for Peace's adoption of social accountability as a top line objective in its new global strategy issued last year -- along with World Vision's own pioneering of this kind of work -- has the potential to revolutionize these already successful programs by integrating bottom-up, people-driven governance reforms, which improves public services and keeps corruption in check.

The McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program

The McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program provides the donation of U.S. agricultural commodities to reduce hunger and malnutrition and promote literacy and primary education in food insecure countries. For highly vulnerable communities, there is an incentive for parents to send their children to school as they receive the dual benefit of access to both education and nutritious food. For girls, the program has shown an increase in school attendance, driving literacy and educational attainment and helping to institute greater gender balance.

McGovern-Dole has reached 40 million children with food at school and it is currently active in 24 countries. As implementers of the McGovern-Dole Food for Education, World Vision is particularly focused on the long-term sustainability of the program, and engaging host governments to ensure the program continues beyond the duration of the grant. World Vision implements these programs in Mozambique and Nicaragua.

Food for Education: Mozambique

World Vision is implementing a Food for Education project in Mozambique known as “Educating Children Together.” The aim of the project is to improve the literacy of school-aged children in grades 1-7, increase the use of health and dietary practices, improve the quality of literacy instruction, and student and teacher attendance. Across the two districts in which World Vision currently implements Food for Education, 8,000 metric tons of food are being used to feed 64,000 beneficiaries, improving food security, and boosting school attendance especially among girls. Literacy rates have also improved from 2 percent at the inception of the project to about 35 percent because of USDA interventions. In most cases, the lunch provided through this program is the only meal these children receive all day. Further, the food provided is fortified with much needed micronutrients.

The USDA Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) program, made permanent by the 2014 Farm Bill, is intended to be used in conjunction with McGovern-Dole programming to fill in nutritional or food availability gaps for targeted populations through purchasing of locally sourced food that will help transition management of school feeding to local governments. World Vision received a \$2 million award in 2016 to implement an LRP project under the current McGovern Dole Food for Education project in Mozambique. The project leverages the resources, skills and partnerships built with 43 farmer groups to supplement school meals with beans, groundnuts and orange fleshed sweet potatoes in 43 target schools.

In FY16, the project experienced a pipeline break because the commodities from the U.S. did not arrive on time. During this period, 64 schools out of the 150 target schools received 114 metric tons of locally sourced food such as maize, beans, groundnuts, sweet potatoes and vegetables (cabbage, lettuce, onion, tomatoes, etc.) for school meals before the arrival of the imported Corn Soya Blend (CSB+). This was, and remains, an effective and efficient way to promote dietary diversity and demonstrate sustainability.

Food for Education is designed to ensure that school meal programs can, after a transition period, be transferred to a national or local government to operate on its own. Indeed, the success of World Vision’s McGovern-Dole program in Mozambique demonstrates the importance of partnerships with the Government of Mozambique and farmer groups to strengthen the local supply chain. World Vision views LRP as critical to the sustainability of school lunch programs. These efforts empower local farmers to grow the quality and quantity produce needed for school lunches. Additionally, LRP spurs investment in food processing industries, and often results in the procurement and the promotion of culturally appropriate food commodities. As a result of this collaboration, a sustainable school feeding model has been developed, resulting in nutritional gains for nearly 64,000 children, and it also supports the Government of Mozambique efforts to stimulate its own market development.

Recommendations

World Vision promotes public policy initiatives and legislation that advance efficient food security and nutrition programming. As Congress works on the Agricultural Act of 2018, World Vision urges the enactment of the following policy recommendations that will further ensure the greatest number of beneficiaries are reached in an effective, efficient, and culturally-sensitive manner.

Improving Food Assistance Programs in the Farm Bill of 2018

- Support and advance the increased use of various food assistance modalities including cash, food vouchers, food commodities, and local and regional procurement in Food for Peace and McGovern-Dole Food for Education.
 - Considering the estimated 70 million people across 45 countries in need of emergency food assistance during 2017, World Vision recommends lowering or eliminating the current requirement that mandates 100 percent of food aid be grown in the United States, additional modalities can be used including locally and regionally procured (LRP) commodities, vouchers, and cash transfers—whichever is the most efficient option.
 - An initial LRP pilot project conducted by USDA through the 2008 Farm Bill found that use of LRP commodities allows the U.S. to feed more people quicker and at a lower cost. Additionally, as described above, the LRP program in Mozambique is encouraging local governments to assume responsibility for school lunch programs, while also building the capacity of local farmers. We anticipate the government will be better able to take the program over when funding of the grant ends, ensuring the sustainability of the initial gains achieved.
- Provide discretion to food aid implementers on the use of various food aid modalities.
 - While a range of various food assistance modalities exist, there is no “right” intervention. In consultation with donors, World Vision believes implementers, who often have the most adequate and up to date knowledge on current conditions, should have discretion over the type(s) of modalities used in its food aid programming.
 - Before selecting a modality/modalities to be used in food aid programming, a comparison of all options should be considered and evaluated based on the following factors: appropriateness based on market conditions, feasibility and likelihood of success, objectives of the program, and the overall cost of the intervention.
 - World Vision supports and uses U.S. grown commodities in its food aid programs when local markets are not functioning or there is insufficient food available to meet the local food need. When local market conditions are favorable and adequate quantities of food are available, local commodities can be purchased and then used in country or regional response efforts. We also utilize cash transfers which allow qualifying beneficiaries to purchase food and other household items in local markets and vouchers as a form of cash based transfers that are used when there is a perceived risk of transferring cash or if there is a need to ensure people receive a specific type of food.
- Eliminate the minimum monetization requirement and support use of the Community Development Fund and 202e funding within Food for Peace non-emergency, development programs.
 - Under current US law, at least 15% of non-emergency food aid funding must be made available to qualifying nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) for monetization.

- Due to costs associated with monetization, including current U.S. law that requires using more expensive U.S. cargo ships for transportation of U.S. commodities, World Vision recognizes monetization can often be an ineffective practice.
- Community Development Funds (CDF) are a portion of Development Assistance funding that complement Food for Peace Title II development programming.
- CDF funds should continue be used to support community-level development activities so that Title II nonemergency monetization is not undermining other U.S. government efforts to boost local agriculture production and local markets. This will ensure Title II development programs are using U.S. taxpayer money as efficiently as possible to build self-reliance in food insecure communities.
- The 2014 Farm Bill increased the amount of Food for Peace funding available to 202e allowing USAID to expand the use of these funds to include cash-based food assistance, when appropriate, in recipient countries where a Title II program is already operating. World Vision supports both the use of 202e funds, as well as Community Development Funds, allowing our programs to avoid using the costly, and time-consuming process of monetization.
- Eliminate Cargo preference.
 - Cargo preference is a law that requires at least 50 percent of the gross tonnage of all government generated cargo, meaning food procured, furnished, or financed by the U.S. government, to be transported on privately owned, U.S.-flag commercial vessels. Often, food aid can be shipped on non-U.S. vessels at much lower rates, resulting in more beneficiaries being served through additional resources being spent on food and not shipping costs. World Vision urges Congress to consider eliminating or reducing the minimum tonnage of food aid to be shipped on U.S. flagged vessels.
- Leverage crisis modifiers in Food for Peace with more frequency and depth to enhance resilience to shocks and protect development gains in agriculture, food security and livelihoods
 - USAID has pioneered the use of crisis modifiers to quickly inject emergency funds during crises into existing development programs. These funds allow partners to respond rapidly to address humanitarian needs, reducing livelihood and other development losses.
 - Crisis modifiers are agile and respond quickly to changing needs. Emergency food aid is used to reach vulnerable beneficiaries, and once these needs are met, often a return to the original development activities in the area is resumed.
- Further leverage good governance and social accountability programs in Food for Peace and McGovern-Dole Food for Education to empower vulnerable and disadvantaged populations to improve their own food security through more transparent and responsive public and private institutions. World Vision affirms the Food for Peace strategy of focusing on host country government reform which addresses root causes of poverty and food insecurity by helping people hold their own governments accountable to spend U.S. assistance and domestic resources effectively and make it sustainable. The World Vision Development Food Assistance Activity in Bangladesh mentioned earlier illustrates the impact of this critical Food for Peace program component.

- World Vision's Citizen Voice and Action programming has been highlighted above in our Food for Peace programming which serves as an effective model in promoting social accountability and good governance. By facilitating relevant, tangible and high quality civic education on government policies and planning for food security, WV supports civil society with the knowledge and confidence to engage with local government officials on whether and how government programs and policies are effective.
- Through simple but compelling social accountability approaches, World Vision is helping community leaders, farmers, and other stakeholders to identify their key priorities and needs, while facilitating local and national platforms for them to address these priorities directly to key decision makers in government.
- World Vision's evidence-based best practices in this area, addressing root causes and supporting greater self-reliance, combined with Food for Peace strategy and practice – both supporting communities to engage directly with their governments over the most fundamental need of food security – are a strategic combination. Social accountability – or citizen-state engagement – is now an 'operational model' helping Food for Peace and its partners to achieve better governance and sustainability for food security, including in fragile states. Emerging World Vision research is showing that this work increases state legitimacy in fragile contexts, thus mitigating cycles of ongoing conflict that threaten food security.
- Further invest in development food assistance programming in fragile contexts through Food for Peace.
 - Much of the humanitarian need today has been driven by civil wars, instability, and unresolved political disputes including in South Sudan and to some extent in Somalia. By intervening in fragile states before they become failed ones, future famines and food insecurity crises can be averted.
 - Implement innovative and flexible approaches to addressing wide-spread extreme poverty and vulnerability, including through adopt multi-year, flexible funding.

Conclusion

At World Vision, our organization's theme this year is life in all its fullness, as Christians, as people of faith we take this prophetic call seriously, its central to our mission and all we do.

World Vision will remain focused and dedicated, alongside many partners, in responding to the immediate needs of affected communities throughout East Africa and beyond. But the window of opportunity to avert a larger catastrophe is rapidly closing. We believe that if governments including the U.S., international donors and humanitarian actors all act swiftly, we can prevent this crisis from worsening, but the time to act is now. If we don't, we will have failed in living out our American values, and for many of us, our Christian call to care for the least of these.

We hope that Congress and this Committee will reject the Administration's budget proposal related to food aid programming and continue to provide strong leadership and advocate for the funding and programs that are needed to respond to this crisis. Additionally, we stand ready as partners to work with the Committee to make improvements to our food aid programs, so that they can better meet the needs of the world's most vulnerable populations, while ensuring greater peace and stability around the globe.

We also urge Members of this Committee to demonstrate strong support for the International Affairs Budget as discussions around 2018 appropriations begins.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Appendixes

- *World Vision East Africa Hunger Response Situation Report- May 25, 2017*