

October 15, 2015

Mary Beth Goodman, Senior Director
National Security Council
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. Goodman,

As U.S. based development, humanitarian, advocacy and faith organizations committed to ending global hunger and promoting food and nutrition security, we write regarding an outstanding food security issue at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The last decade has seen a sharp decline in people living in hunger, a significant accomplishment considering an acute food crisis in 2008-2009. Despite these gains, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates that 795 million people worldwide are still undernourished, due in large part because aid and opportunities have not flowed to the most vulnerable. To close this gap, developing countries and donors alike must maintain an uncompromised commitment to food security, focused on solutions that help people feed themselves.

The United States has been at the forefront of global efforts to alleviate hunger and malnutrition. In its six years, the Obama Administration's cornerstone agricultural development program, Feed the Future, has reached millions of farmers, with a particular focus on small-scale producers and women, key populations to ensuring food security and nutrition at the household and community-level. The U.S. is the largest donor of international food aid, which provides life-saving assistance in times of crisis, but also valuable non-emergency agricultural development. Recent reforms have allowed additional food aid to be purchased closer to affected areas, strengthening local markets and reaching hundreds of thousands more people in-need.

Together with other world leaders, the United States has just made a historic and inspiring commitment to achieve zero hunger by 2030. And in this year's Quadrennial Diplomacy & Development Review, the United States reaffirmed its commitment to focus on food security agriculture as a core strategy to alleviate extreme poverty and advance inclusive growth. The United States has the opportunity to further this country-led agricultural development agenda at the World Trade Organization.

Many developing countries are taking the lead in strengthening domestic food systems through local agriculture, including through "public stockholding programs" (as defined by Annex 2 of the Agreement on Agriculture). These programs allow states to ensure that hungry populations are guaranteed a basic basket of subsidized food staples, while ensuring that the food is procured from resource-poor farmers. These programs allow countries to reduce poverty and hunger on both the producer and consumer sides, and are reasonable options in building an effective national safety net system. These policies also reduce the need for developing countries to depend on international food aid by allowing them to better meet their own food security needs. Unfortunately, they may run afoul of outdated rules in the WTO that subject these types of programs to inappropriate restrictions simply because they were not in place when the WTO rules were written, including requiring countries to calculate subsidies based on reference prices that are nearly three decades old (1986-1988 average).

We believe food security can only be achieved through strong local food systems, able to withstand the volatility of international markets. We agree that public stockholding is a legitimate programmatic intervention to assist both producers and consumers. We support the call for increased investment in smallholder sustainable agriculture included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. We note that WTO members agreed in November of last year to find a permanent solution to public stockholding for food security by December 31, 2015, and that this issue will be on the agenda for the upcoming WTO Ministerial in Nairobi to be held December 15-18, 2015.

To ensure aid effectiveness and policy coherence, and help advance the global commitment to eradicate hunger by 2030, we call upon the United States to ensure that:

- 1) A strong commitment to food security, particularly in developing countries, is reflected in U.S. trade policy.**
- 2) U.S. trade policy respects the stated objectives of developing countries with regards to self-financing of their food security programs, helping them to reduce their dependence on foreign aid.**
- 3) U.S. representatives participate in negotiations on the food security issue in good faith, giving due consideration to and not obstructing existing proposals such as the G33 Public Stockholding for Food Security (JOB/AG/27 of 16 July 2014) – put forth by nearly 50 developing countries and Least Developed Countries – as well as broad appeals to revise outdated subsidy calculations.**

Sincerely,

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| 1. ActionAid USA | 13. NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby |
| 2. Action Against Hunger | 14. Oxfam America |
| 3. ADRA International | 15. Presbyterian Church (USA) |
| 4. American Jewish World Service | 16. Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur-
International Office for Justice and Peace |
| 5. Bread for the World | 17. The Hunger Project |
| 6. Church World Service | 18. United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries |
| 7. Church of the Brethren, Office of Public Witness | 19. United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society |
| 8. Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach | 20. World Food Program USA |
| 9. Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy | |
| 10. InterAction | |
| 11. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns | |
| 12. National Cooperative Business Association
CLUSA International | |

cc: Ambassador Michael Froman, U.S. Trade Representative, Office of the United States Trade Representative

cc: Ambassador Alfonso S. Lenhardt, Acting Administrator, United States Agency for International Development

cc: Gayle E. Smith, Special Assistant to the President, The White House