

NGO Statement of Support:

International Food Assistance Programs in the Final 2018 Farm Bill



December 12, 2018

As U.S.-based charities, non-profits, and faith-based organizations working to end hunger, poverty, and malnutrition around the world, we express our deep gratitude to the Conference Committee for producing the bipartisan compromise H.R. 2, the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 ("Farm Bill"). This compromise not only reaffirms Congressional support for international food security programs authorized in the Farm Bill, but also strengthens them with common sense changes that will make them more effective.

The Farm Bill advances key reforms to the Food for Peace program that our community supports, such as removing the requirement to monetize commodities and recognizing the role of the Community Development Fund in Title II Development Food Security Activities. These enhancements will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Food for Peace Program, allowing more people to be reached with existing resources.

The Farm Bill also allocates ten percent of McGovern-Dole resources to local and regional procurement of commodities, which will help host communities better contribute to the long-term sustainability of school feeding programs. The Farm Bill also establishes a new pilot under the auspices of the Food for Progress program, which will examine the effectiveness and efficiency of programs that don't utilize monetization.

As we have learned over decades of experience, the conditions and contexts of food insecurity differ widely across the world. For this reason, U.S.-funded international emergency and long-term food security programs must respond with a range of tools, modalities, and interventions, including food vouchers, cash transfers, local and regional procurement, and U.S. commodities. We are grateful that the Conference Committee recognizes this need and chose to continue and build upon flexibilities instituted in the 2014 Farm Bill.

Ending hunger and malnutrition in our lifetime is possible, but many challenges to this goal remain. The Farm Bill couldn't have come at a more crucial time, with the Famine Early Warning Network (FEWSNET) recently reporting that 83 million people across 46 countries will face acute food security in 2019. International food security programs authorized in the Farm Bill are vital to addressing the challenge of hunger worldwide and we urge Congress to support these provisions in the Farm Bill.