



Congressman Donald Payne

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Payne Calls the GAO Report on Food Insecurity in Africa a 'Clarion Call'

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) released its report “International Food Assistance – Insufficient Efforts by Host Governments and Donors Threaten Progress to Halve Hunger in sub-Saharan Africa by 2015.” Congressman Donald M. Payne, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Africa and Global, along with Senator Russell Feingold [D-WI], requested the report out of concern over increasing food insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa and to assess progress towards the Millennium Development Goal of halving hunger and poverty by 2015.

“The release of the GAO report could not have been more timely,” Congressman Payne stated. “This report is a clarion call. With acute food shortages being experienced around the world, this comprehensive report can hopefully underscore what many of us have known and have been calling for – increased investment in Africa’s agricultural development.”

As chairman of the subcommittee, Representative Payne has held multiple hearings on food insecurity in Africa where he has repeatedly asserted that the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and other Western partners have failed to provide adequate resources to support agricultural development on the continent. He has called for rapid investment and the removal of harmful policies such as unfair subsidies to Western agricultural conglomerates.

In spite of the pledge that the US and over 100 countries made almost one decade ago to halve hunger by 2015, the number of people around the world who are undernourished, an estimated 850 million, has barely decreased. In sub-Saharan Africa, that number has increased from 170 million in 1990 – 1992 to over 200 million in 2001 – 2003. According to the GAO, several factors have contributed to the chronic undernourishment that has persisted in the sub-Saharan region including low agricultural productivity, limited rural development, climate change and global commodity prices. However, the lack of robust action by host governments and donors has exacerbated the food crisis that is currently being experienced on the ground.

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