



# *Congressman Donald Payne*

## Tenth District - New Jersey

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### Payne Calls for Greater Agricultural Development

Congressman Donald M. Payne, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, today held a hearing entitled “Food Security in Africa: The Impact of Agricultural Development”. This hearing, the second in a series, sought to examine the role of agricultural development in food security.

In 1996 at the World Food Summit in Rome, nations pledged to work together to cut the number of undernourished people in half by the year 2015. Four years later, the Millennium Development Goals reiterated that same principle. Unfortunately, neither of the promises is on target to be met. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, there are currently 842 million people in the world who suffer from chronic hunger – of which 824 million live in developing countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of people chronically hungry stands at a staggering 206 million – a 37 million person increase from 1990 - 2003.

During the hearing, Payne elucidated the fact that food aid is only a short term fix to a long term problem. Only through agricultural development will regions like Africa see true alleviation from food insecurity. “Food aid is an important element of food security, and we have to do it more effectively and more efficiently,” Payne remarked. “However, it is not the only means we have with which to promote food security. The United States government must invest more resources in long-term agricultural development programs in order to achieve results.”

There are serious obstacles to agricultural development in Africa. Issues such as water scarcity, climate change, conflict, good governance and poverty have impeded true progress. However, the long term socioeconomic benefits must not be ignored. Payne commented, “Seventy percent of Africa’s workforce is employed in the agriculture sector. There are many opportunities for which the US government can make an impact – adequate funding for collaborative research programs through US land grant colleges, for research and development at African universities, and for African farmers. Therefore, with proper investment in this industry, Africa will reap multiple dividends.”

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