

**Written Testimony to the  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee**

**Hearing on Global Food Security**

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Respectfully submitted by  
David Beckmann  
President, Bread for the World

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity. I am David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, a collective Christian voice that urges our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad.

**Mozambique and Malawi**

I was in Mozambique and Malawi in December. I got to visit a remote area of Mozambique, a hundred miles from the nearest road. My first stop was a settlement of about 40 households called Mtimbe. There were no shops or government buildings, just mud homes, each with its cassava field.

The tremendous importance of agriculture to the world's poorest people was obvious in Mtimbe. If a family's cassava field flourishes, they are fine. If it fails, they go hungry for a long time.

The farmers I visited in Malawi benefit from extension services, improved varieties, and rural roads. The farmers across the lake in Mozambique have none of that, and they are *much* poorer.

I was heartened to see U.S. assistance at work even in far-off Mtimbe. The great majority of the kids are in school, partly because of debt relief. I met people who had been at death's door but are now farming and taking care of their children – because of AIDS medication that our government funds.

But I also noted that the United States does less than we should to support agriculture in Malawi and Mozambique. More generally, we aren't very responsive to local needs and priorities, because our aid programs are heavily earmarked here in Washington. In Mozambique USAID, PEPFAR, and the MCA is each doing its own thing.

### **The Global Food Security Act**

I am grateful to Senator Lugar and Senator Casey for the Global Food Security Act. It would reinvigorate U.S. assistance to agriculture and make our emergency food assistance more efficient and effective. It calls for an integrated global food security strategy.

The Chicago Council report and another recent report, the Roadmap to U.S. Leadership to Ending Hunger, both suggest what might be included in an official global food security strategy. Other panelists will discuss the Chicago Initiative, so I'll focus on the Roadmap. It is endorsed by more than 30 NGOs, including many of the organizations that administer food aid. It says that we should be investing as much in agricultural development as in food aid; that over time half our food aid should be purchased locally; and that nutrition programs should be focused on the most vulnerable groups (small children, their mothers, and people with HIV and AIDS). It also flags the impact of our trade policies on global food security.

### **Foreign Aid Reform**

Bread for the World's main campaign this year is calling for broad reform of foreign assistance. We hope Congress will pull several aid agencies together into one accountable agency, focus it clearly on development and poverty reduction, and allow it to be responsive to local needs and priorities.

That would lead to substantially more funding for agricultural development and better ongoing coordination across the government on hunger and other development issues.

The Committee is well aware of the need for foreign assistance reform. You have taken steps toward reform in the past. Mr. Chairman, I recommend that you make it clear that the committee is willing to work for foreign assistance reform if key policymakers in the administration and House are willing to work with you. The Obama administration, especially Secretary Clinton, is actively considering what is needed to make our aid programs better coordinated and more effective. Your counterparts in the House under the leadership of Chairman Berman have made foreign assistance reform a priority for this year.

A remarkably diverse array of organizations and experts are calling for foreign assistance reform. Many of them are connected with the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network, which I co-chair with Steve Radelet. Our coalition includes many groups with nationwide reach. But right now, people outside the beltway don't have a very effective way to urge their senators to show their support for the Committee's work for foreign assistance reform. We need a bill or resolution they can ask their senators to cosponsor.

Because of high grain prices and the recession, almost a billion of the world's people are now hungry. Some of the poorest people in the world have been hardest hit by the turmoil in the global economy. We should provide additional assistance. But given our own economic problems, we need to make our foreign assistance just as effective as possible and focus more of the aid on reducing hunger and poverty.

I hope you will pass the Global Food Security Act and move forward on broad reform of foreign assistance.