



# FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY

STATEMENT OF MARK VISO  
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FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, FOREIGN  
OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS  
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Madam Chair, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your leadership and this opportunity to provide written testimony. My name is Mark Viso, and I am President & CEO of Food for the Hungry, a Christian humanitarian organization providing life-changing, sustainable development programs, disaster relief, and advocacy since 1971. **I respectfully ask the Subcommittee to provide robust funding for critical food security, nutrition, and global health programs at USAID, including no less than \$1.2 billion for the Global Food Security Strategy, also known as Feed the Future; \$300 million for Nutrition within Global Health Programs; and \$1.01 billion for Maternal and Child Health within Global Health Programs. I also request \$5.27 billion for International Disaster Assistance; and \$4.88 billion for Development Assistance in Fiscal Year 2023.**

Moved and inspired by our Christian belief that every person has intrinsic value and inestimable worth, Food for the Hungry seeks to end all forms of human poverty and combat injustice by going to the hard places and humbly walking with the world's most vulnerable people. Food for the Hungry works hand-in-hand with communities to design solutions that provide long-term sustainable impact. We think outside three to five year grant cycles and leverage our private funding and deep relationships within communities to bring about real, lasting change.

By creating context-specific solutions in agriculture, health, livelihoods, clean water, education, and disaster risk reduction, Food for the Hungry focuses on transformational development, investing in families as the key to lift entire communities out of poverty. Through diverse partnerships with individuals, churches, corporations, foundations, the U.S. and other donor governments, and various United Nations agencies, we increase our impact and expand our reach, doing more for those we serve.

Last year, Food for the Hungry provided emergency and humanitarian relief to 3.1 million people as we responded to 25 different crises in 15 countries. Over 10 million people across 19 countries were impacted by our development programs, with just under 2 million directly served. Over 139,000 children benefited from our child sponsorship programs in 2021, helping to catalyze transformational change in 5,241 distinct communities. And 99.2% of our

staff serve in their country of origin, working to develop sustainable, locally led solutions to end poverty and fight injustice.

The multiple threats of the Covid-19 pandemic, conflict in Ukraine and elsewhere, climate change, and rising food costs have combined to create a global nutrition and food security crisis on an unprecedented scale. In what the United Nations World Food Programme calls “A Hunger Catastrophe,” over 811 million people go to bed hungry every night, with 276 million facing acute food insecurity. This number has more than doubled in the last three years, and currently 48.9 million people are facing emergency levels of hunger, or famine.

These figures are expected to worsen, as conflict both drives and results from global food insecurity, climate shocks destroy crops and livelihoods, and economic disruption caused by Covid-19 drives up the costs of nutritious food. As of this writing, global food prices are up 30% relative to just last year. Even before the pandemic, 300,000 mothers and 5.2 million children under 5 died every year, mostly from preventable causes. And this year maternal and child deaths are expected to rise, increasing human suffering, and risking the reversal of decades of global health and child survival progress.

We can all agree that the status quo is unacceptable. What we need is the political will and public courage of lawmakers like you to commit the necessary resources to save lives and enable more children around the world to reach their God given potential. The Subcommittee’s past support for critical relief and development programs confirms that you, too, are moved by these injustices and motivated to mobilize the full force of U.S. government programs to fight poverty and human suffering. Your continued partnership in aiding and empowering the most vulnerable members of our global community is indispensable to the work of Food for the Hungry. Towards that end, we respectfully request the following specific funding amounts in Fiscal Year 2023.

We request \$1.2 billion for the Global Food Security Strategy, also known as Feed the Future. As a multiagency effort focused on addressing the root causes of hunger, poverty and malnutrition, Feed the Future works in twelve high-need, low-resource, focus countries to develop and deploy agricultural innovations, unlock financing for food security, and empower people to feed themselves and nourish the next generation. Feed the Future also supports research and technical assistance aimed at reducing communities’ vulnerability to food shocks and stresses, thereby building capacity and resilience. In areas where Feed the Future works, 23.4 million more people live above the poverty line, 5.2 million families no longer go hungry, and 3.4 million more children are living free from stunting.

We request \$300 million for the Nutrition subaccount within Global Health Programs. Even though malnutrition is the leading cause of child death globally, less than 0.4% of U.S. foreign assistance is spent on the prevention and treatment of malnutrition. The Nutrition subaccount plays a central role in turning the tide against malnutrition by targeting action during the powerful, 1,000-day window between pregnancy and a child’s second birthday. Focusing on low-cost, high-impact interventions such as nutrition education, breastfeeding support, improved infant and young child feeding practices, multiple micronutrient supplementation, and the prevention and treatment of stunting and wasting, this funding supports the long-term physical and cognitive development of some of the world’s most vulnerable women and children.

We request \$1.01 billion for Maternal and Child Health within Global Health Programs. This funding supports programs aimed at ending preventable maternal and child deaths through the strengthening of health systems and routine immunizations as well as the treatment of disease and integration of safe water, sanitation, and hygiene practices. Maternal and Child Health funding also provides access to quality prenatal screenings, labor and delivery services, and postpartum and essential newborn care.

We request \$5.27 billion for International Disaster Assistance (IDA). This funding provides critical humanitarian services including food, water, shelter, health care and protection in times of natural disaster, conflict, and insecurity. IDA funds also help improve countries' response to crises and reduce underlying risks and vulnerabilities. Food for the Hungry is proud to have partnered with the U.S. government to implement Emergency Food Security Programs to address hunger and food insecurity in Mozambique and Haiti.

We request \$4.88 billion for Development Assistance (DA) in Fiscal Year 2023. This funding focuses on long-term poverty reduction through food security; water, sanitation, and hygiene; livelihoods; basic education; and climate programs. These funds are critical to the development of resilient, self-reliant, just, and democratic societies worldwide.

We encourage you to provide robust funding for these and related development and humanitarian aid programs.

We find ourselves at a pivotal moment in history, facing a world of growing conflict and newly emboldened authoritarianism, injustice, worsening climate change, and a devastating global pandemic. This new reality has shocked our collective conscience and forced many of us to confront the same uncertainty, scarcity, and sense of helplessness that many of the world's most vulnerable have known for far too long. But, with continued U.S. leadership and a renewed sense of purpose and commitment, we can collectively overcome these global challenges. Robust funding for critical relief and development programs makes an enormous difference in the lives of so many around the globe, while sending a strong message to our partners and allies regarding American values and priorities. Now is the time to redouble our nation's commitment to global leadership and continue to prioritize foreign assistance programs that save lives and transform communities. As an organization seeking to "uphold the cause of the oppressed and give food to the hungry" (Psalm 146:7), Food for the Hungry stands ready to serve as a humble partner in this critical work.

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