

## Food Security

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More than one billion people worldwide suffer from chronic hunger. Global food supplies will need to increase by an estimated 50 percent to meet demand increases in the coming 20 years. At the G8 Summit in July 2009, the United States and other nations agreed to commit \$20 billion over the next three years to seek long-term solutions to food security. The core of this new effort will be country-led partnerships and investments in market-driven agriculture to provide reliable access to nutritious food and raise the incomes of the rural poor. USAID supports increased food security as part of the U.S. Government-wide response to global hunger.

### USAID's Approach

USAID targets improving food security in some of the most vulnerable countries in the world. It builds agricultural productivity through research and technology development; increases access to finance, inputs, markets, and trade; and targets emerging threats, including climate change. Increasing opportunities for smallholder farmers, especially women, and other very poor people is a priority. USAID works with a variety of partners including other donors, foundations, universities, and for-profit firms to increase food security in developing countries. Methods for delivering emergency food aid complement long-term food security goals.

### Performance Highlights, 2008-2009

- **Saving lives.** In FY 2008, 26 developing countries benefited from USAID's \$2.06 billion in emergency food assistance. In Sri Lanka, for example, emergency food aid has helped approximately 275,000 internally displaced persons and civilians trapped in the combat zone during the recent conflict. Part of USAID emergency food assistance resources worldwide was set aside to buy food locally in Somalia, Ethiopia, Nepal and Tajikistan in order to cut costs and encourage local food production.
- **Raising output and promoting trade.** To promote agricultural production and help farmers and rural communities in 2009, USAID is investing \$130 million for the production and trade of (staple) foods including corn, wheat, cassava, sorghum, and millet. This assistance focuses on Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and the West Africa region.
- **Promoting country-led development.** USAID programs strengthen the institutions that developing countries need to manage their own agricultural development plans. In 2008, USAID worked with staff from the Mozambique national market information system (SIMA) to analyze price movements and market dynamics during the rapid increase in international food prices. USAID work on the first national Agriculture Public Expenditure Review provided a good opportunity to build linkages with the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Finance, while demonstrating how the government's resources are being used. The review provides the baseline for monitoring Mozambique's implementation and achievement of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development (CAADP) targets.
- **Investing in research.** USAID-supported research through the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research includes developing food crops that can better resist disease and produce higher yields. For example USAID-supported improved bean varieties have helped more than 200,000 farmers in El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Haiti achieve consistently good yields. These bean varieties resist climate variation, disease and pests.
- **Increasing production while mitigating climate change.** With USAID support, the International Center for Agroforestry Research (ICRAF) developed and disseminated, through partnerships with farmer organizations, NGOs and other partners, a system that integrates nitrogen-fixing trees ("fertilizer trees") in Africa. Without using additional fertilizer, farmers using the nitrogen-fixing trees increased yields by 50-300 percent. In 2008, farmers unions in both countries reported this sustainable system was adopted by 120,000 farm families in Zambia and 100,000 in Malawi.
- **Addressing the needs of the poorest farmers.** In FY 2008, USAID's support to the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), a CGIAR Center, and its collaborative work with UC Davis and Asian partners led to a breakthrough in rice with release of new, flood-tolerant varieties in South Asia. In some of that region's poorest, most food insecure areas, the new IRRI rices will help smallholder, food-insecure farm families withstand the impact of deep water early in the season, which can lead to losses of over 50 percent. USAID also supports IRRI's work on drought, heat and salt-tolerant rice in partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- **Increasing women's access to agricultural assets and information.** In Nicaragua, researchers from USAID's Assets and Market Access Collaborative Research Support Program with the University of Wisconsin are analyzing a government conditional cash transfer program to determine impact on household well-being, risk management and asset accumulation. They found that expenditures on preventive health care and nutrient-rich foods, both of which improve development outcomes for children, increased by more than the amount of the cash transfer, indicating a change in parental behavior brought on by participation in the program. The research was able to show that conditional cash transfer programs can have even greater impact by involving female leaders, since their participation in program implementation expanded investment and asset accumulation by recipient households.