



# The Partnership to Cut Hunger in Africa

*.....is an independent effort formed by U.S. and African public and private sector institutions and international humanitarian organizations. The goal of the Partnership is to formulate a vision, strategy, and action plan for renewed U.S. efforts to help African partners cut hunger significantly by 2015.*

To learn more, visit the Partnership's Web site ([www.africanhunger.org](http://www.africanhunger.org)) or write to:

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***The objective of the Partnership to Cut Hunger in Africa is to develop a new consensus on a long-term strategy for U.S. efforts to help cut hunger in Africa and a continuing partnership to implement the resulting program.***

## **Context**

Africa's massive food and hunger crisis is the world's most challenging development problem. In the year 2000, almost 200 million Africans, fully a third of the total population, go to bed hungry and 31 million African children under the age of five are malnourished. These problems are compounded by the AIDS epidemic now ravaging the continent. The human and economic costs are staggering.

Strengthening agriculture in Africa is key to addressing the root causes of hunger. By providing rural families (75 per cent of the population) with opportunities to produce more of their own food, or earn income to buy more food and basic consumer goods, countries can lay the foundation for fighting hunger in a sustainable way. Agricultural investments that favor the poor are essential to stimulating new growth and income-earning opportunities not only in farming, but in other rural and urban activities as well, particularly micro-enterprises.

These investments also stimulate the necessary economic growth to finance improvements in child/maternal health and nutrition education, which are essential to cut malnutrition. Agricultural productivity growth also reduces population pressure on forests and fragile ecosystems, thereby helping to protect the environment.

In the United States, public funding for agricultural assistance to Africa has declined dramatically over the last decade. Americans give generously to calls from charitable organizations for short-term emergency and food needs. But this critical short-term assistance is not enough to create the successful food and agricultural sector that will spur broad-based economic growth and allow Africa to feed itself on a sustained basis.

In the U.S., efforts are being made to reverse the decline in funds. At the World Food Summit in 1996, 186 nations, including all of the African countries and the United States, endorsed efforts to cut hunger worldwide by half by 2015. The U.S. African Food Security Initiative (1998-2000) and the Africa: Seeds of Hope legislation (1998) focused on the need to develop Africa's agriculture as a primary strategy for cutting hunger.

Despite funding shortfalls, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other U.S. government agencies, foundations, universities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector companies are presently implementing many innovative programs directed toward alleviating hunger and poverty in Africa.

While important, these actions are not enough to keep poverty and hunger from growing in many African countries. The U.S. is not providing sufficient resources, nor is it tapping into the full range of interest, ability, experience and capacity available to address this problem. What is needed is a shared U.S./African vision that articulates the strategic importance (to both Africa and the United States) of cutting hunger in Africa, with adequate resources and a mechanism to bring the vision to fruition.

## **How is The Partnership Working to Cut Hunger in Africa?**

In developing and gaining consensus for a new strategy, the Partnership seeks to:

- Increase understanding among U.S. public and private leaders and citizens that cutting hunger in Africa is an important strategic priority for the United States;
- Demonstrate how agricultural development in Africa both contributes significantly to, and relies upon, complementary efforts to enhance overall economic development, improve prospects for the survival of children, safeguard environmental resources, provide health care and educational opportunity, cope with AIDS, and foster peace; and
- Solidify a partnership between Americans and Africans that can help improve programs to strengthen African agriculture and fight hunger. These programs will be initiated and implemented in partnership with Africans by USAID and other U.S. government agency partners, international organizations, the private sector, NGOs, foundations and universities.

The Partnership to Cut Hunger in Africa will build on past efforts and leverage several new developments to expand the U.S. response to the problem. These developments include advances in technology (especially information technology and biotechnology), the potential for increased trade, global financial markets, and, democratization in African countries. There is also a growing recognition that we must look past crisis intervention to sustainable development of Africa's agriculture and food systems.

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