
**THE COALITION IN SUPPORT OF THE
GEORGE MCGOVERN-ROBERT DOLE
INTERNATIONAL FOOD FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM**

September 6, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
637 Dirksen Senate Office Building
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Chambliss:

We are writing to seek your support for mandatory funding for the George McGovern-Robert Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program in the Farm Bill. Mandatory funding will strengthen the ability of USDA to carry out long-term planning and increase local capacity-building and sustainability. Similar to the Farm Bill recently passed by the House of Representatives, we urge you to restore funding to \$300 million---the level provided when the program was launched. We believe that providing food to malnourished children in schools is one of the most effective tools in the fight against hunger and poverty.

The McGovern-Dole Program has established a proven track record of fighting hunger and promoting education by providing food to chronically hungry children in schools in the world's poorest countries. In countries where school feeding programs are offered, enrollment and attendance rates increase significantly, especially for girls. Providing food at school is a simple but effective method to get children into school, improve literacy, and help break the cycle of poverty.

In addition to fighting hunger and promoting education, the McGovern-Dole Program has been the catalyst in furthering other essential interventions. These interventions benefit the increased number of children attending school and include de-worming treatment and education about HIV/AIDS prevention. The UN Millennium Project has referred to school feeding as one of the "quick wins" that can help to address a range of critical problems facing children in the world's poorest countries.

The McGovern-Dole Program demonstrates America's generosity and goodwill. It also promotes U.S. national security interests by offering an alternative to children who may otherwise be susceptible to recruitment by groups that provide meals in return for attendance at extremist schools that serve as a breeding ground for terrorists.

In 2005, the Program distributed approximately 120,000 metric tons of U.S. commodities including wheat, wheat flour, corn, cornmeal, corn soya blend, rice, lentils, dry beans and vegetable oil. In addition to U.S. farmers, the Program benefits a range of related industries, such as packagers, freight forwarders and shippers, as well as U.S. port facilities.

Although the Program has proven to be effective and has built a wide base of bipartisan support in Congress, the capacity exists to do more. Under current funding, the Program reaches approximately 3 million of the world's 110 million chronically hungry school-aged children. With support from other countries, the international community is able to reach an additional 15 million students a year.

There is no better representation of American ideals and values than the George McGovern-Robert Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. Please assist us in continuing to deliver food and educational opportunities to many deserving children around the world.

Sincerely,

Africare
Alliance to End Hunger
America's Second Harvest
American Red Cross
American Soybean Association
Better World Campaign
Bread for the World
Chocolate Manufacturers Association
Congressional Hunger Center
Education Africa USA
Friends of the World Food Program
Global Food & Nutrition Inc.
Heifer International
The Humpty Dumpty Institute
Islamic Relief
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
National Farmers Union
North American Millers' Association
ONE: The Campaign to Make Poverty History
Project Concern International
School Nutrition Association
Share Our Strength
United Nations Association of the USA
United States Dry Bean Council
US Coalition for Child Survival
US Fund for UNICEF

