

Testimony of Rev. David Beckmann, President, Bread for the World
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
FY2014 International Affairs Budget
March 1, 2013

Thank you Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, and Members of the Committee for your leadership and for the opportunity to testify. I am David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World. Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. Bread's network of individuals and churches includes about one million people, and we enjoy the strong support of about 50 church bodies. Bread's secular affiliate, the Alliance to End Hunger, engages diverse organizations – interfaith partners, secular charities, universities, and corporations – in building the political will we need to end hunger. Madam Chairwoman, our poverty-focused development assistance in the State/Foreign Operations appropriations bill help build secure, healthy, and productive nations, and all for less than one percent of the federal budget. I ask the committee for its continued bipartisan support to protect funding for food security and agriculture, nutrition, especially during the first critical first 1,000 days of life, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and U.S. contributions to critical multilateral partners like the International Development Association and the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program.

My testimony focuses on funding for poverty-focused development assistance, reforms to make our assistance more effective, and U.S. leadership on global food security and nutrition.

First, Bread for the World strongly supports funding for the international affairs budget and especially for programs and agencies that are focused on reducing poverty or promoting development in poor countries. Over the past 15 years, Bread for the World has developed and

tested the list of poverty-focused development assistance programs that is attached to my testimony. A number of our colleague organizations now use this or slightly different versions of this list and you may find it useful as a guide to appropriations that will provide help and opportunity to hungry and poor people. In fiscal year 2012, poverty-focused development assistance accounted for about \$22 billion, one-third of the total international affairs account.

This committee has helped to substantially increased poverty-focused assistance since the year 2000. The world as a whole has made historic progress against poverty, and U.S. assistance has helped. But the international affairs budget has been cut by 15 percent over the last several years, and the sequester – if allowed to stand – will cut \$1.1 billion from poverty-focused development assistance this year. Some cuts kill – and the effects of the sequester cuts will include:

- 600,000 malnourished children deprived of nutritional assistance and thus vulnerable to irreversible damage or death;
- More than one million poor farmers deprived of agricultural assistance that would have allowed them to raise their incomes and produce more food for their families;
- More than five million fewer people deprived of life-saving HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria interventions – leading to more than 55,000 deaths.

Please do what you can to replace the sequester with a more sensible budget agreement and to avoid any further cuts to poverty-focused programs. Bread for the World believes that we really ought to be increasing funding for programs that help poor people around the world, and we are excited by the leadership that President Obama promised in his State of the Union address.

Let me now turn to reforms that can make U.S. assistance more effective. I am a co-chair

of the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network, a coalition of organizations and policy experts who are working together for improvements in coordination, accountability, and real partnership with the people we are trying to help. This committee helped President Bush improve U.S. foreign assistance through the launch of PEPFAR and the Millennium Challenge Account. And the Obama administration has moved the foreign aid reform agenda forward through initiatives such as his presidential policy directive on development and USAID Forward.

I want to commend USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah for his efforts to provide more assistance directly to governmental institutions and local NGOs and businesses in the recipient countries. I also want to commend Congressman Ted Poe for sponsoring the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act. Mrs. Lowey, Mr. Diaz-Balart, and Mr. Crenshaw cosponsored the bill. It passed the House unanimously, however was unable to clear the Senate. We hope to see it become law during this Congress.

There are important opportunities for efficiency in our food aid system. A recent independent evaluation commissioned by USDA found that local and regional procurement of food is cheaper, more timely, and helps to increase local agricultural capacity. A 2011 report by the Government Accountability Office found that the use of monetization for non-emergency food aid commodities resulted in a 30 percent loss of resources. We should not take away help from the hungry and poor people served by food aid, and NGOs run effective community development projects with monetized food aid. But I urge this committee to work with the administration and the agriculture subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee to eliminate the waste in our food aid program.

Third, I want to offer comments on U.S. leadership for global food security and nutrition. High and volatile grain prices led to a surge in world hunger in 2008. I am proud that the United

States, with support from this committee and Congress, led the world in responding by helping to strengthen agriculture and nutrition in low-income countries. With your leadership, we increased USAID investment in agriculture, but, even more importantly, the Administration leveraged our bilateral investment to encourage much larger investments in agriculture by the governments of low-income countries, multilateral banks, other bilateral donors, international businesses, and NGOs. As a result, the number of undernourished people in the world stabilized after 2008.

The U.S. government has also encouraged the world to use new knowledge about how best to reduce the carnage of child malnutrition. We now have clear evidence, for example, that available dollars should go first to improving nutrition in pregnant women, new mothers and young children in the critical 1,000 day window of opportunity. This will reduce preventable child deaths and lock in the potential of every child by giving them a good start to life. Missing the window from pregnancy to the child's second birthday can lead to irreversible physical and cognitive damage. The global Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement incorporates this and other evidence-based findings about what works.

Thirty-three developing countries that have a high burden of malnutrition have committed themselves to addressing this issue. They learned about the importance of maternal and child nutrition to their long-term development and have joined the SUN Movement partly because of exhortations from the United States and other donor nations. But the United States and other donor nations have not increased their funding for nutrition accordingly. I would suggest you increase U.S. funding for nutrition from \$95 million in FY 2013 to \$200 million in FY 2014.

In closing, I want to emphasize the religious importance of the work of this committee. The programs you oversee are important to U.S. global leadership in the world. The poverty-

focused programs are important to U.S. national security and the health of the global economy. But as a Christian preacher, allow me to say that our nation’s efforts to help reduce hunger, poverty, and disease around the world are important to Almighty God. I’m convinced that God loves me, all of us, and everybody – including the millions of families around the world who struggle to feed their children. Based on what the Bible teaches about God, I’m pretty sure that God thinks the work of this committee is some of the most important work that the U.S. Congress does.

Appendix: Poverty-Focused Development Assistance Programs

<p><u>Bilateral in Foreign Operations</u></p> <p>-Global Health Programs (USAID, State, & Contribution to Global Fund)</p> <p>-Development Assistance</p> <p>-Disaster and Famine Assistance</p> <p>-Transition Initiatives</p> <p>-Migration/Refugee Assistance</p> <p>-Emergency Refugee & Migration Assistance</p> <p>-Int’l Organizations & Programs</p> <p>-Millennium Challenge Account</p> <p>-Inter-American Foundation</p> <p>-African Development Foundation</p>	<p>-Development Credit Authority</p> <p>-Assistance for Europe, Eurasia, & Asia</p> <p>-Support for East European Democracy</p> <p>-Debt Restructuring</p> <p>-Peace Corps</p> <p>-USAID Operating Expenses</p> <p>-Freedom Support Act</p> <p><u>Multilateral in Foreign Operations</u></p> <p>-International Development Association</p> <p>-Enterprise for the Americas</p> <p>-Asian Development Fund</p>	<p>-African Development Fund</p> <p>-Int’l Fund for Agriculture Development</p> <p>-Global Environmental Facility</p> <p>-Global Food Security Fund</p> <p><u>Labor-HHS Appropriations</u></p> <p>-Refugee Resettlement</p> <p>-CDC Global Health</p> <p><u>Agriculture Appropriations</u></p> <p>-McGovern-Dole</p> <p>-P.L. 480 Title II Food Aid</p>
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