

**STATEMENT OF MARK VISO  
PRESIDENT & CEO  
FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY**

**TESTIMONY PROVIDED TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY,  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE, AND RELATED PROGRAMS  
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**APRIL 2, 2025**

Chairman Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member Frankel, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your leadership and the opportunity to testify. My name is Mark Viso, and I am the President & CEO of Food for the Hungry, a Christian humanitarian organization providing transformational relief and development programs since 1971. Food for the Hungry designs, develops, and delivers catalytic solutions that build resilience so that children, families, and communities can flourish. We are privileged to partner with U.S. churches and faith communities, as well as the private sector, the U.S. government, and other donor governments, to deliver vital humanitarian assistance and development programs that restore health, hope, and dignity to individuals in some of the world's hardest places. **As an experienced, faith-based implementer of U.S. foreign assistance programs, I respectfully ask the Subcommittee to provide robust funding in Fiscal Year 2026 for critical humanitarian, development and global health programs, including International Disaster Assistance; Development Assistance; the Economic Support Fund; the Nutrition and Maternal and Child Health sub-accounts within Global Health Programs; Feed the Future; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; and Basic Education. Additionally, I urge the Committee to provide robust funding for international food and nutrition security programs funded through the Agriculture Appropriations bill, including Food for Peace and the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program.**

Inspired by our Christian faith and encouraged by Micah 6:8 “to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God,” Food for the Hungry delivers locally-led relief and development, employing systemic solutions across health, water, education, and food security to meet immediate needs while building resilient, self-reliant communities. In the face of spiraling global conflicts, a growing hunger and malnutrition crisis, worsening natural disasters, and increasing economic and political uncertainty, our unique, resilience-based approach enables us to catalyze transformational change in even the hardest of places. Last year, we reached nearly 10 million people in 20 countries experiencing extreme poverty, delivering improved nutrition to over half a million vulnerable children and mothers, ensuring access to clean water for over 700,000 people, and creating more than \$14 million in assets.

As the needs of those suffering from poverty have grown in scale and complexity, I have been grateful to lead Food for the Hungry on a journey to reimagine international relief and development and our role within it, questioning long-held assumptions, seeking innovative

solutions, and recommitting ourselves to the agile and expert delivery of measurable impact for our shareholders—those we are privileged to serve. Through our experience we have recognized the imperative for a major pivot away from traditional models of poverty reduction and economic development towards a resilience approach that more explicitly focuses on preventing and tackling the converging risks and compounding crises that face the communities we serve, and which present challenges to making America safer, stronger and more prosperous. Increasing evidence shows that efforts to prevent conflict, promote long-term growth, trade and economic development, and foster sustainable poverty escapes for the most vulnerable all come by way of resilience.

To deliver on resilience for partner countries and communities and to advance US national interests, foreign assistance investments must move from charitable donation models to investment minded models that clearly articulate returns on investment with an eye on exponential and scalable impact beyond piecemeal projects. They should focus on targeted systems reform for resilience in social service delivery, social protection and market strengthening, and they must cultivate a clear and distinct set of capacities for resilience as intentional components of relief and development solutions. From PEPFAR to Food for Peace, we have seen the fruits of these efforts for vulnerable and crisis-affected populations, as well as the potential to maximize impact through a resilience focus.

Framing the entirety of our work through a risk and resilience lens allows us to accelerate transformational impact and ensure the long-term sustainability of solutions. Through a first of its kind resilience-based program model, Food for the Hungry works to not only meet immediate needs through emergency humanitarian assistance, but critically to support the development of resilient individuals, systems and markets which create more stable, peaceful, prosperous and economically self-reliant communities and countries.

U.S. foreign assistance investments make this life changing work possible, allowing us to leverage our partnerships with American churches and child sponsors, corporations and foundations, and other donor governments for greatest impact. I am grateful for the Subcommittee's past support of critical relief and development programs and request your continued prioritization of these strategic investments. Amid historic changes to U.S. foreign assistance programs, structure, and funding, I urge you to protect lifesaving humanitarian aid while also preserving strategic development and resilience programs that equip vulnerable families and communities with the tools necessary to withstand future shocks and move toward self-reliance.

Done well, U.S. foreign assistance has the potential to both advance national interests for a safer, stronger and more prosperous America, while also helping the most vulnerable communities and countries address disease outbreaks, conflict, destitution and disasters in ways that enable economic growth and future trading relationships. These investments bolster U.S. global leadership, honor human dignity, and create sustainable pathways out of poverty.

Smart, effective foreign assistance programs serve as a tangible reminder of American strength and generosity, building goodwill, preventing the spread of pandemics, opening markets for U.S. goods, and promoting the peace and stability necessary for prosperity. Now is the time to

continue such leadership. As an organization called to “feed the hungry and satisfy those who are in need” (Isaiah 58:10), Food for the Hungry stands ready to partner with you in this urgent work.