

Roger Thurow
Senior Fellow, Global Agriculture & Food
Chicago Council on Global Affairs

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Thank you Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and distinguished Members of the Committee. Thank you very much for inviting me to testify today on the vital subjects of global food security and nutrition. Properly nourishing the world -- in the face of population, climate, and scarce resource pressures -- is the great challenge of our time.

I have been investigating and writing about this challenge for many years. First, as a reporter and foreign correspondent with the Wall Street Journal, and most recently as an author of two books -- with a third on the way -- on global food security and nutrition, as a senior fellow for the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. As you know, the Chicago Council has been a thought leader in global agricultural development for a number of years. Today, I would like to speak about some of my experiences from this reporting and some of the people I've written about -- observations that I believe are relevant to the committee's work.

In my first book, *Enough: Why the World's Poorest Starve in an Age of Plenty*, I and my co-author Scott Kilman explored how we had brought hunger with us into the 21st century. We looked at how the neglect of agricultural development and nutrition in the post-green revolution years resulted in increasing levels of hunger and malnutrition. There were one billion chronically hungry people entering the new century, with the numbers on the rise. Most of them were smallholder farmers in the developing world, especially in Africa. Our neglect of agricultural development had created the cruel irony that the hungriest people in Africa -- in the world -- were smallholder farmers. "Hungry Farmers." What an awful, shameful oxymoron.

In my next book, *The Last Hunger Season*, I set out to illuminate the lives of these smallholder farmers, and to show how important the contributions of these farmers are to global food security, and to all of us.

The one thing eminently clear from my reporting was the vital role that these smallholder farmers -- hundreds of millions of them around the world -- have in securing the global food chain. The more that they succeed -- through agricultural development, through efforts like **Feed the Future** -- the more we will all succeed in our efforts to nourish the world. And at this point let me note that the Chicago Council has recommended the authorization of U.S. global food security efforts like Feed the Future and appreciate the work of the Chairman, the Ranking Member and others in their endeavors on that front.

In my reporting, I followed four smallholder farm families in western Kenya for one year, in 2011. The transformation in their farming and in their lives when they finally had access to the essential elements of farming -- better quality seeds, small doses of fertilizer, training, storage, and the financing to pay for it all -- was remarkable. One of the families had a 10-fold increase in their harvest.

They were the Biketis -- father Sanet, mother Zipporah and their four children. They were in desperate shape when I first met them. Their youngest child, David, was manifestly malnourished. They were in the middle of the hunger season, a period of profound deprivation when food is rationed. In the previous planting season, they had no access to seeds or fertilizer or the financing to acquire them. They could only plant one-quarter of an acre of corn, their staple food; their harvest was meager, only two 100-kilogram bags of corn. It barely lasted two months, and then they plunged into the hunger season.

Desperate to improve their farming, and, thereby, their lives, they joined the one acre fund, a social enterprise organization that we'll be hearing more about from David Hong. Finally, with access to the essential elements of farming, they were able to plant one full acre, and their harvest was a magnificent 20 bags of corn -- two tons. With that, they had more than enough to conquer their hunger season -- they now had a surplus for the first time which they could use for school fees, for necessary medicine, for the construction of a new house with real bricks and a metal roof that didn't leak in the rain, and, perhaps most importantly, they could afford a second planting season, a wide-array of vegetables, to diversify their diets and greatly improve their nutrition.

From Zipporah I learned that the deepest depth of misery during the hunger season was to be a mother unable to properly nourish her children.

Which brings me to my current reporting on the importance of good nutrition in the 1,000 days, the time from when a woman becomes pregnant to the second birthday of her child. This is the most important time of human development. For what happens in those 1,000 days -- the foundation of healthy physical development, the rapid growth of the brain and cognitive skills -- determines to a large extent the course of a child's life -- the ability to grow, learn, work, succeed. And, by extension, the long-term health, stability and prosperity of the societies in which the children -- and all of us -- live.

Good nutrition is the cornerstone of this growth, the vital fuel of the 1,000 days. Any disruption of nutrition during this time leads to stunting -- physical, mental, or both. The World Health Organization and others tell us that one in every four children in the world today is stunted. A child who is stunted is sentenced to a life of underachievement: diminished performance in school, lower productivity and wages in the workplace, more health problems throughout life and a greater propensity for chronic illnesses like diabetes and heart disease as an adult.

The impact of under-education, of lost productivity, of more health care ripples throughout society. From the individual, to the family, to the community, to the nation, to the entire world. The cumulative toll of all this stunts the world economy by as much as 5%. That's the equivalent of several trillion dollars in economic activity, squandered every year.

You see, a stunted child in Africa or Asia or here in the Americas, is a stunted child everywhere.

In my reporting, I'm following moms and their children throughout the 1,000 days in four parts of the world: India, Uganda, Guatemala -- countries which face immense challenges of malnutrition and stunting -- and Chicago.

Why Chicago? Because the issue of good nutrition is not just something “over there” somewhere, it is also vital here in the U.S. Good nutrition in the 1,000 days is important for the success of American children in school and later in the workplace, as healthy adults who are contributing to the nation’s productivity and growth instead of weighing it down with increased health care costs.

Nutrition is an essential component of global food security. Nutrition and all that supports it – clean water, sanitation, hygiene, agriculture that is as focused on improving the nutritious value of food as it is on improving yields. It all works together. And in our development work all these elements must come together at once.

And here is where the United States government can, and should, lead. With Congressional action to authorize legislation that commits the U.S. to a global food and nutrition security strategy. With development work that places the success of smallholder farmers at the center. With policies that strengthen nutrition-smart agricultural development and that expand access to and spur consumption of healthy foods through food aid and social protection programs. With a focus on the crucial importance of the first 1,000 Days.

More than half of our global population is malnourished in some form. Some 800 million people are said to be chronically hungry, lacking enough food. But nearly three times as many people are lacking enough nutrients. They are micro-nutrient deficient – it is a hidden hunger which may not be evident to our eyes, the people may not look like they are starving, but it is just as debilitating and deadly. And then there are another 2 billion or so people who are overweight and obese.

And it all begins in the 1,000 days. It is where our quest for global food security – and where American leadership in agriculture development and improved nutrition around the world -- has its greatest impact.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify and I look forward to answering your questions.