



PROMOTE AFRICAN FOOD SECURITY **Action Kit**

*Join the movement to protect regional
food security in Africa*

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This guide is designed to help you advocate effectively and mobilize members of your community to promote food security on the African continent.

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OVERVIEW

Recent drought and famine in the Horn of Africa has shed new light on the importance of food security for the African continent. What is food security? Why do famines occur? How can we prevent these tragedies? This toolkit, published by Africa Faith and Justice Network, can answer these and other questions regarding food security in Africa.



What is food security?

The [World Food Summit](#) determined that food security exists “when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient nutritious food to meet their dietary needs for an active and healthy life.”

Food security is built on four pillars:

1. Availability of food in the marketplace or from production
2. Access to food, meaning the wherewithal to buy or otherwise obtain food
3. Utilization of food, including dietary intake and the ability to absorb and use the nutrients in the body
4. Stability, which is the ability to maintain sufficient nutrition over time

Unfortunately there are close to a billion people around the world who do not meet these criteria. Envisioning a world that lacks food insecurity, the UN established the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 to put food security at the top of development policy agendas and working towards halving the proportion of undernourished people by 2015. This deadline is nearly upon us. In order to tackle this issue, it is important for everyone to understand it.

What is hunger?

According to the World Food Programme, hunger is not simply the feeling of a lack of food; there are different manifestations of hunger that are measured in different ways:

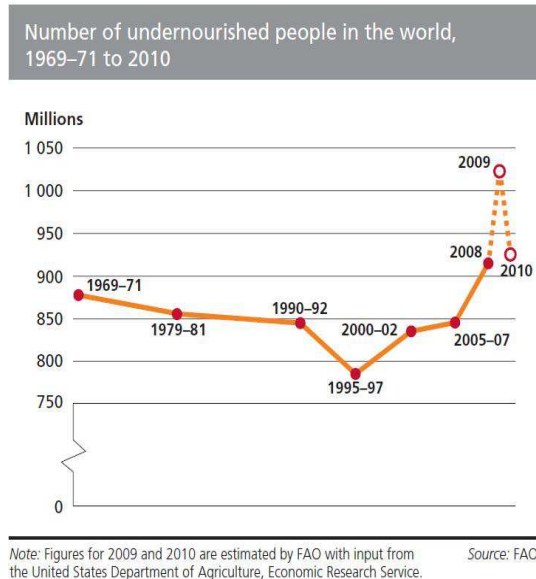
Under-nourishment is used to describe the status of people whose food intake does not include enough calories (energy) to meet minimum physiological needs for an active life. The Food and Agriculture Organization goes on to add that it is also the result of prolonged low levels of food intake and/or low absorption of food consumed. Generally applied to energy (or protein and energy) deficiency, but can also relate to vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

Malnutrition means 'badly nourished', but is more than a measure of what we eat or fail to eat. Malnutrition is characterized by inadequate intake of protein, energy and micronutrients and by frequent infections and diseases. Starved of the right nutrition, people will die from common infections like measles or diarrhea. Malnutrition is measured not by the amount of food but by physical measurements of the body (weight or height) and age.

It takes, on average, 2,100 kilocalories a day to maintain a normal and active life. According to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, one in seven people do not consume enough to lead a healthy life. There are more undernourished people in the world than the populations of the European Union, Canada and the US combined - making **hunger and malnutrition the number one risk to health** – *greater than AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined.*

Wasting is an indicator of acute malnutrition that reflects a recent and severe process that has led to substantial weight loss. This is usually the result of starvation and/or disease.

Recent events like the Somali famine encourage us to believe that emergencies such as tsunamis and droughts explain most of the food deprived population. As extreme as these events are, it is crucial to understand that almost one billion hungry people go unreported by the media regularly. Over half live in Asia and the Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa. Most of them are farmers who greatly depend on small-scale agriculture to obtain food. Because they have no alternative source of income, natural disasters and other unpredictable events make them particularly vulnerable to hunger and starvation.



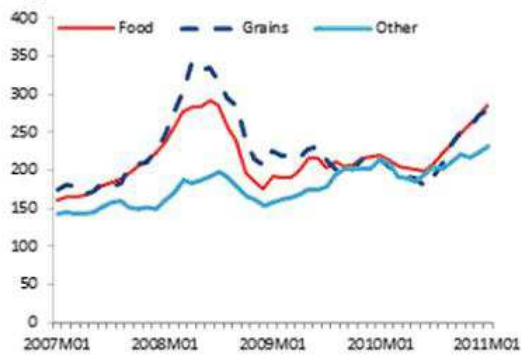
<http://www.fao.org/hunger/hunger-graphics/en/>



Economist Amartya Sen

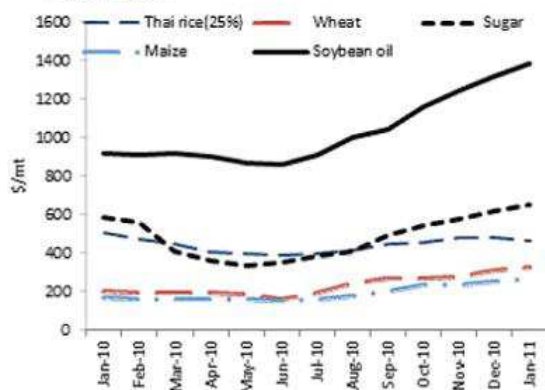
As the figure depicts, the number of undernourished individuals increased in 2005 and worsened with the economic crises of 2008. Although lack of food is an obvious factor, it is important to note that famines occur even when food is plentiful. The problem, as Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen stresses, is that people require 'entitlement,' or the capacity to gain access to food. People can be food insecure without a food shortage if they are unable to buy food, a problem that the urban poor face every day. The Great Bangladeshi famine of 1974 occurred in the same year that the country saw a peak in food production. According to Sen, although food was plentiful, severe flooding caused laborers to lose wages and with them the ability to buy food; millions starved to death.

Figure 1. World Bank Food Price Indices



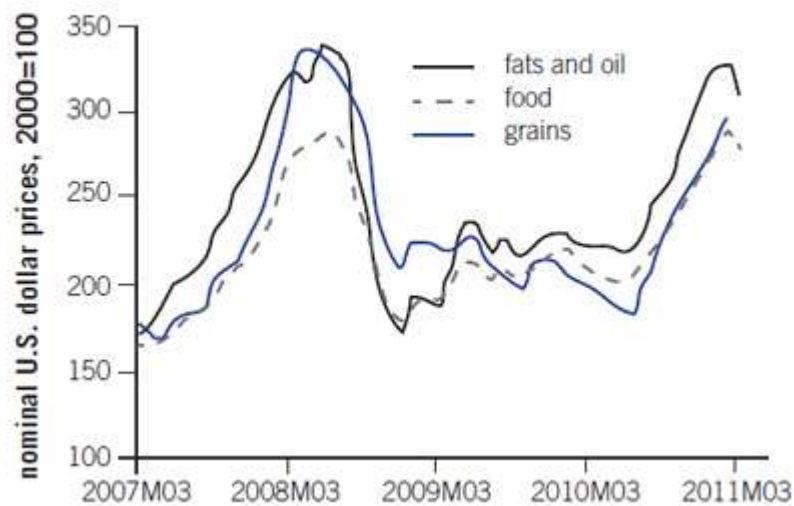
Source: World Bank Development Prospects Group.

Figure 2. Global Prices of Key Food Commodities



Source: World Bank Development Prospects Group.

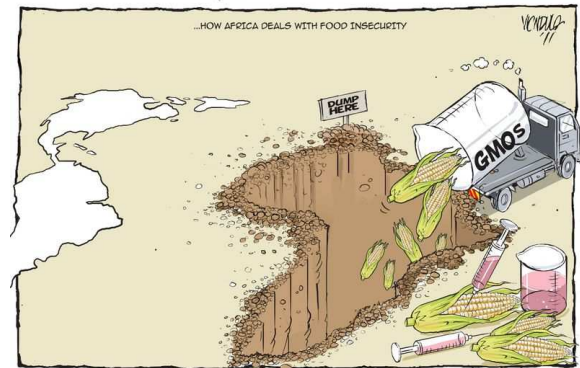
Figure 1: World Bank Global Price Indices (nominal U.S. dollar prices, 2000 = 100)





By KAP, Spain

(<http://www.cartoonmovement.com/>)



By Victor Ndula, Kenya

(<http://www.cartoonmovement.com/cartoon/2884>)



By Tanzanian artist Ali Masoud, nicknamed 'Masoud Kipanya' after his popular character the mouse (in Swahili: kipanya)

EXAMINING FOOD SECURITY ISSUES

Food Security & Climate Change

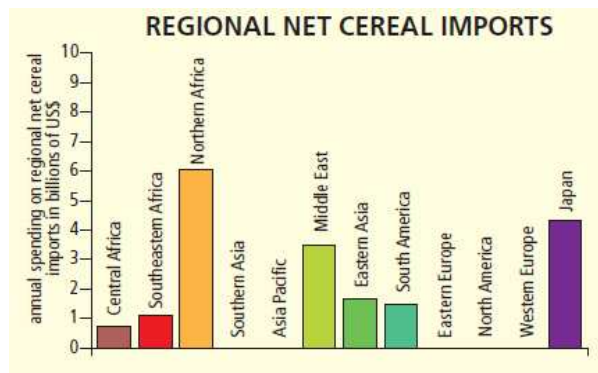
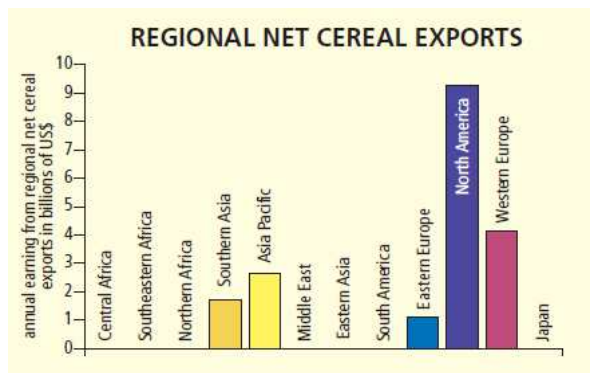
“I am a farmer. My mother was a farmer. For my mother, rains used to come from October to April. Today, because of climate change, the rains come in December and end in March. Our local varieties do not have time to mature. We are forced to buy hybrid crops, which are much more input-intensive, and we cannot afford these inputs. We are poor. So we are starving in Malawi.”

-- Joyce Tembenu, a widow and mother of 3 who farms in the Salima district of Malawi

The change in climate has dramatically altered the land in Africa and has greatly affected food security on the continent. Global warming has made dry areas drier, moist areas wetter, and intensified extreme weather events. Climate change is exacerbating the already tenuous food security situation on the continent. Africa's food emergencies per year have tripled since the mid 1980's, BBC News reports: “In the last year alone, 25 million people in sub Saharan Africa have faced food crisis.” Climate change has made the weather very unpredictable, making “subsistence farming difficult.”

Rosamond Naylor, Director of the Program on Food Security and the Environment at Stanford University, explains the connection between climate change and food security using basic economic principles:

1. Drought, flood, and extreme weather conditions make growing food more difficult, thereby decreasing the world's supply of food
2. Food prices go up because there is less food to sell and more people who want it
3. Countries that export food (North America, Western Europe, and parts of Asia) put into place trade barriers to block food exports in order to keep diminishing food supplies for domestic populations



4. With less food available in world markets, countries that rely on food imports (Africa and the Middle East) experience a food shortage: limited food supply, high demand for imported food, and high prices.

As policy makers begin to grasp the interdependency of climate change, international trade barriers, and food security, a number of solutions have been suggested. As advocates for responsible U.S. policy towards Africa, it is important that we promote:

Alternative renewable energy sources other than biofuels

While biofuels may provide an answer to fossil fuel dependence, they can wreak havoc on world food prices, impacting the most vulnerable groups worldwide.

Helping farmers to adapt to climate change

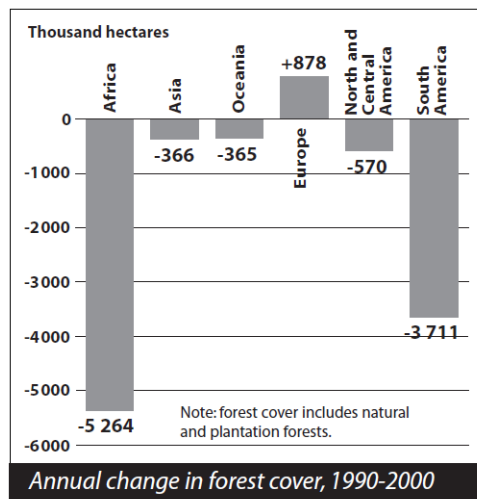
As farming becomes more difficult in an unpredictable climate environment, the U.S. should increase funding for climate change education, adaptation, and mitigation.

Sustainable agriculture

Farming systems must take into account economic, social, and ecological factors together.

Controlled deforestation

In an effort to increase arable land, much of South America and sub-Saharan Africa is being deforested, which can lead to eventual problems with erosion and desertification.



As the Advocacy Network for Africa, of which Africa Faith and Justice Network is a key member, explained in its 2011 *Congressional Briefing Booklet*, “Impoverished countries have done the least to create the climate crisis, yet are being hit first and worst by its impacts.” First among these is dangerous food insecurity.



Food Security & Trade

Demand for agricultural products in Africa is growing quickly, and as the previous section explained, African nations import the majority of the food needed to feed their growing populations. Importing food to Africa appears paradoxical given the continent's vast natural resources, but many experts blame internal factors like weak technological capacities and poor transport, storing and trade infrastructures for Africa's reliance on food imports. At the international level, the agricultural sector has been subject to numerous liberalization attempts, under the assumption that liberalization would enhance not only wealth in Africa but throughout the world.

After World War II, international economic cooperation was seen as a way to promote peace. In 1947, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was signed, which encouraged trade tariffs reduction. In 1994, the World Trade Organization (WTO) replaced GATT, and now, the WTO is comprised of 153 countries. Today's WTO has broader competencies than the former GATT but continues to promote trade liberalization in order to lower prices for consumers, encourage more efficient use for factors of production, and increase employment in countries with a comparative advantage.



“Today, only one industrial sector remains un-liberalized: agriculture.”

Today, only one industrial sector remains un-liberalized: agriculture. Agricultural tariffs are on average four times higher than those of other sectors. Until 1995, there was no universal framework for agricultural trade rules under GATT, and despite improvements to the WTO Agreement, constraints remain relatively weak.

Indeed, subsidies to the agriculture sector in developed countries (like the United States and Europe) remain high and seriously impede the emergence a liberalized market by distorting prices. It is estimated that over US\$280 billion is spent subsidizing domestic agriculture annually (compared to the just over US\$80 billion that the is spent on development aid annually). OECD countries (a group of economically developed and advanced nations) dominate world trade in agriculture, with over 70% of exports and 75% of imports while African countries turn around 1%. However, food prices measured at the farm gate in OECD countries are about 30% higher than elsewhere.



Let's take cotton for example, one of many subsidized agricultural products. Many of the world's least developed countries are dependent on cotton for rural livelihoods and export revenue. In Mali, Benin, Burkina Faso and Chad, cotton accounts for 5%-10% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In these nations, farming cotton provides the livelihood for 10 mil-

lion of the world's poorest people despite the fact that these countries produce cotton more cheaply than anywhere else.

Africa's competitive advantage over cotton production (its ability to produce cotton more cheaply than other goods) should put the continent in an excellent position to benefit from the world's ever-increasing desire for cotton products. However, the subsidies paid to US and European cotton producers (and increasingly Chinese and Indian cotton producers) have fatally undermined Africa's competitive advantage. The US is not only the world's leading exporters of cotton, but also the country with some of the highest costs of production: compare the average cost of production of \$0.80 per pound in the United States to the average cost of \$0.35 per pound in Benin. U.S. government subsidies allow American farmers to sell their cotton more cheaply making American cotton competitive with the world's poorest countries. These subsidies, in turn, create a global price dampening effect.

“To unlock the situation, the U.S. and E.U. need to end agricultural subsidies and the adverse impact subsidies have on the developing world.”

In 2001, the Doha Round of Negotiations was launched by the WTO in order to resolve the issue once and for all. Developed countries would try to reduce subsidies and, in return, developing countries would liberalize their own markets. International organizations like the WTO and the World Bank stressed the importance of the Round in limiting protectionism in developed economies. The African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) claimed the right to keep some traditional tools of trade politics like export taxes or import licenses in order to maintain wiggle room for their own agricultural development strategies.



In previous Rounds, negotiations were mainly brokered by the US and the EU, but as the Doha Round stalemate shows, this previous hegemony no longer exists. New international powers have now entered the discussion. To unlock the situation, the U.S. and E.U. need to *end agricultural subsidies and the adverse impact subsidies have on the developing world.*

Despite the myriad benefits of a free trade system, liberalization comes with a set of drawbacks for Africa and the rest of the developing world. In a free trade environment, countries specialize in one or two principal products, traditional markets disappear, outsourcing becomes a norm, multinationals are created, and oligopoly and profits concentration appear. Economic liberalization is not a panacea, and these schemes must be accompanied by social welfare programs that safeguard the interests of the most vulnerable individuals. It is only with a thriving economy and vibrant government that food security can truly be realized.

Food security & Foreign aid

After learning about the tenuous state of food security in Africa, many of us feel moved to do something about it, and this sentiment is shared by the majority of national governments around the world. But how should we go about improving the food security situation of the African people? And how should we respond to large-scale food crises, such as the present famine in the Horn of Africa? Should we send food and water to these regions? How can we prevent these crises from happening again? This section attempts to answer these questions about the relationship between foreign aid and food security.

Currently, the world's largest humanitarian program fighting hunger is the United Nations World Food Program (WFP). **The WFP's work can be divided into five subsections: emergency response, nutrition, procurement, food security analysis, and logistics.** Some of the work – emergency response, procurement, and logistics, for example – is more focused on sudden humanitarian crises, like famines, where an immediate and quick reaction is necessary. The remaining sectors – nutrition and food security analysis – are related to humanitarian responses but are also more well suited to long-term food security development projects. This focus on managing



short-term risk while working to avoid famine and other humanitarian crises in the future is crucial to food aid programs.



1963 Collectable
Stamp

The United States, despite being the world's largest donor to the World Food Program, also operates its own food aid organization called the U.S. Office of Food for Peace. Food for Peace was created by President Eisenhower in 1954 and was originally designed to donate surplus American food crops to the developing world.

The World Food Program and the U.S. Office of Food for Peace have been around for half a century, and yet, hunger, malnutrition, and famine still exist. Why aren't these programs working? Many scholars believe that there are intrinsic problems with the way foreign aid is administered.

For example, the original Food for Peace program shipped surplus American agricultural products (mostly corn, soybeans, wheat, and rice) to poor areas of Africa and Asia. Once this donated American food reached these places, it was provided free of charge (or very cheaply) to those who needed it. **The problem with this system is that this free food put local (African) farmers out of business.** Why would you choose to buy corn from a local farmer if you could receive it for free from the U.S. government? And so, free food aid put local farmers out of business, these previously self-sufficient farmers were now reliant on free food aid as well, and eventually the entire African agricultural sector suffered. You can see how Food for Peace, although originally designed to help the needy for the short-term, created a vicious cycle of dependence of foreign assistance.

The most recent program in the Office of Food for Peace is the 2002 George McGovern-Bob Dole International Food for Education and Nutrition Program, which provides school meals and take-home food packages to impoverished school children. Programs like the McGovern-Dole that target both education and food security simultaneously have become increasingly popular as foreign aid has shifted its focus away from “dumping” of agricultural goods into developing markets and towards more long-term goals like education and health.

Chris Barrett is a professor at Cornell University who studies poverty and international development. He believes that in order to create efficient and effective food aid programs, we need to understand food security as:

1. “An individual phenomenon” (each person experiences food security differently, so we should avoid generalizing an entire region or continent)
2. “A dynamic problem subject to uncertainty and thus best conceptualized as an *ex ante* status [causes] rather than an *ex post* outcome [effects]”
3. “Although both policy and research have focused on macronutrient (i.e., calorie and protein) sufficiency, micronutrient deprivation is just as serious an issue”

“Providing food aid to the hungry is more complicated than donating sacks of rice to Africa. Foreign assistance must encourage local employment, ... allow citizens to save money or food in case of unforeseen challenges, [and] provide safety nets for those who are incapable of providing enough food to meet the needs of their families.”

“The incentive effects of nutritional vulnerability and of food assistance programs [i.e. are people choosing to receive a free handout rather than plant food in their own fields?] ... may be significant”

Using the above understanding of food security, Barrett suggests the following three key elements for a successful food security strategy:

1. “Stable employment and high labor productivity to provide a regular means of sufficient income”
2. “Access to finance, food markets, and storage technologies that permit consumption smoothing in the face of shocks” (i.e. temporary unemployment, a bad harvest, illness, etc.)
- “Safety nets to provide transfers [aid] to those who suffer adverse shocks”

Today, scholars like Chris Barrett understand that providing food aid to the hungry is more complicated than donating sacks of rice to Africa. Foreign assistance must encourage local employment so that workers can grow or purchase food to feed their own families, allow citizens to save money or food in case of unforeseen challenges, but also provide safety nets for those who are incapable of providing enough food to meet the needs of their families. We know that the world is capable of producing enough food to feed its population; now it is a matter of giving everyone equal access to adequate nutrition.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT FOOD SECURITY WITH . . .

Environmentalists:

“Food security is enhanced by greener farming”

*Michael Kugelman and Susan L. Levenstein
World Politics Review (January 2010)*

Ensuring food security is as much an environmental issue as it is a human rights concern. The world's growing population is demanding greater food production, and investors in the developed world are turning increasingly to arable land in Africa and throughout the developing world. Unfortunately, these foreign land investors rely almost completely on large-scale industrial agriculture techniques. Land which has historically been farmed by small-scale, subsistence farmers is increasingly being destroyed to make room for “diesel-spewing tractors, pesticides, fertilizers, and other fossil-fuel-based technologies.” If this trend continues, “major portions of the world's carbon-storing ecosystems could be destroyed, leaving aggressive regimes of carbon-emitting industrial agriculture in their wake.”

It is important that environmentalists and food security advocates work towards solutions that both guarantee access to food and protect environmental integrity. For those of you who are passionate about protecting natural resources and the environment, it is important for you to know that guaranteeing food security for all people is as much an environmental concern as it is a human rights issue. We must move to put this issue on the environmental policy radar.

Peace Activists:

“Food is strength, and food is peace, and food is freedom, and food is a helping hand to people around the world whose good will and friendship we want.”

Then-Senator John F. Kennedy

In a 1960 speech in South Dakota

Food security is an important issue not only for the African advocacy community, but also for the vast community of peace activists around the world. History is full of examples of revolutions and social upheavals that began with decreased food production, increased food prices, and hunger. As South Africa's *Daily Maverick* described “Food security, then and today, remains a trigger of conflict.”

However, just as food insecurity lays the groundwork for civil conflict; the reverse is also true. The International Food Policy Research Institute reported in June 1998 that: “Creating a hunger-free world in the 21st century will require prevention and resolution of violent conflicts, as well as a concerted effort to rebuild war-torn societies.” The effects of violent conflict on food security can be intentional, such as sieges and pillages of cities, or more indirect, like littering agricultural fields with landmines.

For those of you who consider yourself peace activists, it must be very clear that food security and a peaceful world go hand-in-hand. Let's consider the movement towards improved food security as an integral part of the struggle to achieve a world of non-violence.



People of Faith

*“Let them worship the Lord of this House, / Who
has fed them, [saving them] from hunger and made
them safe, [saving them] from fear.”*

Holy Qur'an

Many communities of faith work to strengthen domestic food security through food pantries, soup kitchens, or community gardens, so it's only natural that these same values drive advocacy for increased food security abroad. In 2010, Africa Faith and Justice Network teamed with a number of faith-based organizations, including the American Friends Service Committee, American Jewish World Service, Lutheran World Relief, Mennonite Central Committee, Presbyterian Church, Unitarian Universalist Association, United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church, among others, to publish a response to the U.S. government's Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative, known as Feed the Future.

These faith-based groups share traditions that encourage outreach in culturally, economically, and environmentally sustainable ways, and this way of walking alongside those who suffer provides an important base for building projects which improve global food security. Faith-based groups can advocate side by side for more equitable trade policy, agricultural research and technology that includes input from local farmers, limiting commodity speculation, responsible land tenure policies, and culturally sensitive feeding programs. By choosing to support these issues, you are choosing to place the needs and concerns of the African people first.

The 2010 response from the interfaith community outlined a number of common principles to guide policy analysis. These include:

1. respecting the dignity of the human person and the integrity of creation;
2. advancing the common good and being watchful for the impact on the most vulnerable;
3. encouraging transparency and meaningful participation of the most vulnerable stakeholders;
4. respecting the legitimate role of government, in collaboration with civil society to set policies regarding the development and welfare of its people;
5. safeguarding the global commons and respecting the right of local communities to protect and sustainably develop their natural resources

For those of you who consider yourself a person of faith (no matter what your faith may be), it is important to recognize that promoting African food security is in the tradition of many of the teachings of the Old Testament, the Bible, the Quran, and of the Buddha. We must consider advocating for African food security as a means of putting our faith into action.

HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR AFRICAN FOOD SECURITY:

IN CONGRESS

Vote!

As a U.S. citizen, you are given a very special right – the right to cast a ballot! If you don't agree with your Representative or Senator's position on Africa, you can choose not to re-elect that person to office. Make sure they are voting for YOU!

Whether or not you are new to political activism, it is important for you to educate your Representatives and Senators about the importance of guaranteeing food security in Africa. If you disagree with your Representative or Senator's position, let them know why you think they should work to rebalance our foreign policy away from destructive trade policies and toward more equitable development for both continents. However if your representative is already working towards promoting food security in Africa by supporting important U.S. development projects or equitable corporate policies, they also need your support! It's not easy for members of Congress to work against the mainstream, so it is important for them to know that they have constituent support.

Let your representatives know!



First, know who your representatives are. To find out, go to www.congress.org for your senators and www.house.gov for your house representatives.

There is no comprehensive list of all votes placed on African issues for each representative, so you may have to do some searching. A good place to start is with your representatives' website. Explore their stances on issues and see if you can find anything under the headings of "foreign policy" or "humanitarian aid" or something of the sort. This will usually give you a clue as to how

they swing on issues relating to developing countries and Africa.

Another great place to start is <http://thomas.loc.gov/>, the Library of Congress website. Here you can type in a keyword (i.e. "Africa" or "defense") and find bills relating to it. Often, the introducers of the bill will be included in the text. Project Vote Smart (www.votesmart.org) is another resource for researching your representative's voting record; find your representative, then click "voting record," and finally refine the search for only "foreign aid and policy issues."

How to contact your representatives

Once you've discovered their stance, contact them and let them know how they're doing! They won't know to vote differently unless you tell them to, so write, call, and visit. Visiting your representative's district office shows that this issue is incredibly important to you and most representatives are happy to meet with constituents, but can be time-consuming. A handwritten letter also shows that you are invested in the issue, but not quite as much as a visit. Calling comes in third, but is still incredibly important.

See the next few pages for advice!

Sample Letter to Representatives:

The Honorable Senator/Representative [your Senator or member's name]
United States Senate/House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515/20510

[Date]

Dear Congressman [your Senator or member's name],

As your constituent, I am writing to express my concern over the current state of food security in Africa. As someone who cares deeply about peace, security, and development on the continent, I hope to see a shift away from inequitable trade policies, environmentally harmful agricultural practices, and corporate land grabbing and towards food security throughout the continent.

The ongoing drought and famine in the Horn of Africa that has killed over 30,000 children serves as a reminder of the ongoing struggle to secure food security on the African continent. Failure to address this issue and develop strategies to eliminate future risks clearly puts the lives of Africa's civilians in jeopardy.

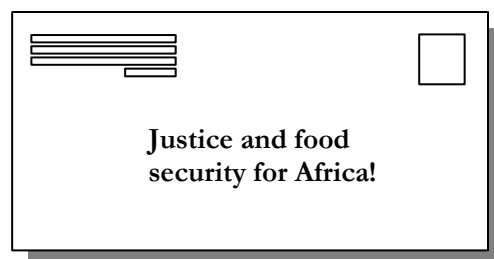
[If relevant, insert your thoughts on a specific regulation/bill/voting recommendation here.]

In short, I ask that you vote to increase spending for projects which promote food security in Africa and around the globe.

I will continue to follow this issue and hope that you will act in favor of peace, development, and true stability in Africa.

Thank you,

[Your name]



Call your representatives!

Each Senator and Member of Congress has a website with contact information for your district as well as Washington, DC. In Washington, your elected officials can be reached through the Capitol Switchboard at 202.224.3121. When calling:

- Introduce yourself and mention that you are a constituent. You will most likely speak with a desk attendant.
- State your request and supporting reasons. (If applicable, cite the specific bill number.)
- Ask specifically, “Can I count on Senator/Representative _____ to support this bill/issue?”

Remember to express your thanks and follow up with emails or phone calls for updates.

Visit your representatives!

The most effective way to get your message across to policymakers is to schedule a face-to-face visit with them or their staff members in their home district offices. These visits are incredibly important in establishing relationships and ensuring that your voice is heard.

- When making an appointment, indicate the issue you plan to discuss. Prepare yourself and your group by researching the lawmaker’s voting record and organizing an effective presentation with facts to back up your argument.
- During the visit, deliver a clear and concise message. Personalize the issue by letting them know why it is so important to you. Offer solutions that are doable and be specific about the ideal outcome. Be patient and passionate; don’t react angrily even if you don’t get the response you want to hear. Always remain polite.

After your visit, continue to build a relationship by sending a thank-you letter or email to the legislator or staff member for spending time with you. Let them know that you will be following the legislator’s actions to ensure that your concerns are upheld in Washington.

HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR AFRICAN FOOD SECURITY:

OTHER OPTIONS

Advocate with the White House

Because the President plays a crucial role in policymaking, it is important that President Obama hears your concerns about food security in Africa. Although Congress votes on funding, major decisions often begin in the White House.

So, just as you do with Congress, write and call! It is more difficult to visit with someone in the Executive Branch, so be sure to send a letter in to President Obama.

Get involved!

Consider donating to peace groups such as Africa Faith and Justice Network (www.afjn.org), Catholic Relief Services (www.crs.org), or the World Food Program (www.wfp.org) all of whom work on food security issues. Donations to these groups go a long way to support efforts to promote food security. Or, many organizations have email-alert systems that let you know when your voice can join with those of many other concerned individuals to let policymakers know what they can do. Get plugged in to their e-mail networks to learn about ways you can help.

- Boycott companies who have been involved in abuses in Africa, particularly ones that use land “grabbed” from African farmers to grow agricultural products. Write letters to company executives to let them know why you have chosen not to purchase their products.

Write letters to the editor of newspapers or magazines that publish anti-African views in order to express a dissenting view. See advice for how to get your letter to the editor published at:



http://www.action.org/site/get_involved/write_a_letter_to_the_editor/

Stage an Event!

- Host a forum, lecture, teach-in, or panel discussion for your community, church or school that addresses African food security. You can look for knowledgeable individuals with insights and experience related to foreign policy and Africa within your community, or you can bring an outside speaker, recommended to you by others or found through your research. Be sure to extend your invitations to many different groups and churches. If you are interested in hosting a speaker, feel free to contact AFJN and we will do our best to recommend someone.
- Stage a protest. Choose a relevant location, such as outside policymakers’ offices, and time your protest around a relevant event or key upcoming policy decisions, or in response to a vote on a harmful bill.
- Organize a vigil: Bring members of your church or community together to call attention to the impact of food insecurity.

See the following page for more information on organizing a successful event!

STAGING A PUBLIC EVENT

Thanks to Sojourners (www.Sojo.net) for providing this informative text, also published in AFJN's Northern Uganda Faith and Action kit and Resist AFRICOM Action Kit.

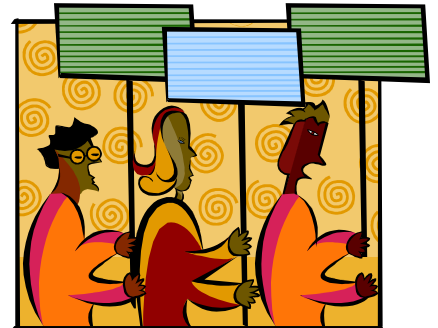
Here are some steps for how to organize a successful and effective event:

- **Establish a small planning committee.** This committee can work within an existing organization, like a local social action or public witness committee.
- **Reach out and network with other organizations, school groups, communities, churches, synagogues, mosques, and other houses of worship in the area to organize and participate.** An email and a phone call can go a long way. If you decide to organize an interfaith vigil, invite people of each faith to read and pray from their own tradition and talk among the groups about how to be respectful of each tradition.

Location, location, location! For a protest or a vigil, we recommend looking for sites near offices for your Senator and Representative – to see these locations, go to www.senate.gov and www.house.gov. It is useful to walk through the space where you intend to hold the event. You may need to apply for and secure a permit in advance. You should begin that process as soon as possible. Call your local police department for more information on obtaining permits.

- **Create a list of necessary equipment:** sound systems, megaphones or microphones, candles, programs, sign-in sheets, podium, and signs. You'll need to find someone who can provide these.
- **Publicize, publicize, publicize!** Consider taking out an advertisement in a local paper or other news source, writing a letter to the editor announcing the event, and listing it in bulletins of local houses of worship. Post and pass out fliers in public spaces like bus stops, subway stations, Laundromats, stores, restaurants, and community centers. Ask permission where necessary. Write a press release to local media outlets (TV, newspapers, and radio stations) and follow up with appropriate reporters (see the next sheet on "Publicizing Your Event in the Media" section for details).

E-mail or telephone friends, colleagues, and local leaders the day before the event to remind them to attend.



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