

# Action Sheet

SEPTEMBER 2022

*God of sun and god of rain, In you, there is no dryness. In you, no weed chokes the root. No blight withers the leaf. No frost bites at the blossom. And so we pray for farmers and their harvests everywhere. Continue your prayer with [God of All Harvests](#).*

## SKILL AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING ACTION

Our missionary action is to write a letter to the editor targeting your U.S. Senators and Representative on the 2023 Farm Bill. Urge Congress to protect lifesaving international food assistance programs authorized in the 2023 Farm Bill to improve the efficiency and flexibility of international poverty-focused programs. See details below.

## LASER TALK

Access to sufficient, nutritious food for all people is decreasing at a rapid pace globally. 828 million people go to bed hungry every night. The United Nations World Food Program estimates 345 million people are projected to be acutely food insecure by the end of this year and will need emergency food assistance. And of that number, 50 million people are at risk of starving to death. Conflict, climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and economic shocks including those related to the conflict in Ukraine – continue to drive this increase in hunger. While the current situation is grave, there is hope in knowing that sustainable solutions exist. Pope Francis says, “each of us has a role to play in transforming food systems for the benefit of people and the planet.”

U.S. international food assistance programs like Food for Peace Title II, McGovern-Dole Food for Education, Food for Progress and the Farmer-to-Farmer reduce hunger and malnutrition. They do this by improving the livelihoods of small farmers, helping children excel in their studies and leveraging the expertise of American farmer volunteers to support sustainable food security outcomes. The Farm Bill sets our nation’s agriculture policy and authorizes these programs, which are funded through the annual federal appropriations process. In anticipation of the 2023 Farm Bill, we look forward to proposing improvements to these programs to make them more effective and allow us to serve more of our sisters and brothers.

## BACKGROUND

### [Global Food Crisis and Extreme Hunger](#)

Communities across the world are experiencing life-threatening levels of hunger and malnutrition on an unprecedented scale. Families are struggling to meet their food needs due to the effects of conflict, displacement, climate change, COVID-19 and rising costs. Inflation of food prices has put people under tremendous strain, while supply chain interruptions have slowed humanitarian operations and disrupted local and regional markets.

These challenges come at an already difficult time. Many governments have had to divert resources and funding to address the impacts of COVID-19 on people’s livelihoods, health and other aspects of their lives. The war in Ukraine is straining an already-fragile global food system, particularly for the emerging markets and developing economies that depend on Russia and Ukraine for fuel, fertilizer and staples such as wheat, corn and cooking oils. The urgency is escalating.

## Countries of Critical Concern

The UN estimates 20 million people need urgent humanitarian assistance across Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia to prevent severe levels of hunger, and 2 million children need life-saving treatment for acute malnutrition. This region, known as the Horn of Africa, faces its worst drought in 40 years after four consecutive failed rainy seasons. Since October 2020, over 7 million livestock have died, and more communities are migrating in search of pasture and water. Somalia faces the potential risk of famine without immediate action. At this moment, this region faces one of the most critical situations in the world.

## Food for Peace Title II

Food for Peace Title II is one of the four U.S. international food assistance programs your advocacy will focus on during the reauthorization of the 2023 Farm Bill. Food for Peace programs have provided emergency and developmental support to more than four billion people around the world since 1954. In addition to providing emergency food assistance – whether in the form of in-kind food aid sourced from U.S. farmers or through other modalities like cash, vouchers and locally-procured food – the FFP program funds long-term sustainable development projects called RFSAs, or Resilience Food Security Activities. RFSAs work holistically with communities recovering from disaster to build back their systems, reduce the impact of future shocks and promote more resilient communities. During this global food crisis, the FFP program, focuses on the immediate and long-term support of countries like Ethiopia.

In Dire Dawa, Ethiopia, the community who once relied on agriculture for their livelihood, have taken on different jobs for income, “I used to own a big farm with my brothers, but because of prolonged periods of no rainfall, it has dried up. I now wake up every morning not knowing what my job is going to be, sometimes I am a bricklayer, other times I unload trucks - I take any job I can get,” Mohammed Muktar says. In response to the widespread food insecurity stemming from irregular rainfall and declining agricultural productivity, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), under the Joint Emergency Operation (JEOP), part of Food for Peace Title II, provides critical food assistance to food-insecure families in six out of ten regions across Ethiopia. Read more about the experience of families involved in drought-ridden Dire Dawa [here](#).

## TAKE ACTION: Write a letter to the editor focused on your U.S. Senators and Representative

- 1. Find the local newspaper you will target:** To learn what is required for letters to the editor, Google the following: “(Name of the paper) letters to the editor guidelines.” Identify the word limit and submission method (i.e., via the website or email).
- 2. Think about the placement of the piece:** If you are writing to a daily newspaper, find an article or editorial that provides an entry point to discuss the need to care for vulnerable communities, especially communities facing food insecurity. If you are writing to a smaller weekly paper, write in a way that would be of interest to local readers.
- 3. Research:** Read a few letters to the editor in the newspaper you are targeting to see how they begin and the general tone.
- 4. Write your letter to the editor:** Using the newspaper’s guidelines and this Action Sheet’s information, identify yourself and share what values or experiences move you to work to support the world’s most vulnerable individuals. Have another chapter member provide some edits for your letter. Find additional guidance in this [letter to the editor training video](#).
- 5. Include your specific message:** This is a time of unprecedented and dire food insecurity in the world. As Congress begins work on the 2023 Farm Bill we urge members to reauthorize and strengthen international food assistance programs like Food for Peace Title II that work towards ending hunger for the world’s most marginalized and vulnerable people.  
**Note:** Use the background information in this document to illustrate why you care and demonstrate the impact that the Food for Peace Title II program is having around the world.
- 6. Report back and celebrate:** If your letter is published, contact your CRS representative, share it on social media tagging your members of Congress, send it to your members of Congress by email and have your chapter’s liaison call the key aide to make sure they saw it! If it’s not published, consider editing it, if needed, and sending it to another newspaper.
- 7. Log your published letters to the editor in the [Chapter Community site](#):** Use [this Help Guide](#) to log your action.