

Global Food Crisis Policy Framework

Adopted by the Committee on International Justice and Peace and the
Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development

Adopted May 2008

Amended December 2008

1) Provide Prompt and Effective Emergency Funding for Food Programs

- The emergency supplemental budget for 2008 should include additional funding for international food aid.
 - *USCCB and CRS had originally requested an additional **\$600 million in funding for Title II (which was later increased to \$900 million as prices continued to rise)** to address the impact of price increases on US food aid programs. This increased request does not address the needs of the newly hungry, but just brings tonnage up to FY07 levels.
 - * The President's recent proposal of \$770 million for 2009 in additional emergency foreign food aid and agriculture assistance is a good start. On May 7 the Senate proposed \$1.245 billion be approved in the FY 2008 emergency supplemental. **USCCB and CRS support the Senate proposal for \$1.245 billion for Title II programs in the FY 08 Supplemental, but also call for a significant increase in non-food aid resource to be appropriated as well.**
 - * Approving the stipulation that up to 25% of Title II funds be set aside for local purchase would help stimulate, under the right conditions, food production in the developing world, could improve the timeliness of the arrival of emergency food to areas that need it now and would reduce overall costs.
- Emergency funding should be provided to help low-income people in the United States who are adversely affected by rising food prices.
 - *The economic stimulus package signed by the President in February did not include desperately needed resources for those who are unemployed or poor in the United States that would have helped them adjust to the increase in food prices. A **second stimulus package** is needed that would include an **Unemployment Insurance extension and Emergency Food Stamp Benefit increases**. Adequate funding is also needed in the 2008 emergency supplemental budget and the 2009 budget for the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the Commodity Food Supplemental Nutrition Program (CFSNP) and other federally funded youth and adult nutrition programs.
 - *The **emergency supplemental budget for 2008** should include \$100 million in additional funding for **The Emergency Food Assistance Program-TEFAP** program to help food pantries in the United States address the growing need.

2) Adjust U.S. Agriculture Policy

- The projected increase of at least \$9 billion in new ten-year domestic nutrition funding (for the Food Stamp Program and The Emergency Food Assistance Program-TEFAP) in the Farm Bill is a critical step toward providing food security for poor people in the United States. This initiative and future funding for these programs should be given strong support.

- Food aid provisions should be supported that (1) establish a “safebox” in the Senate-passed version of the trade section that sets aside without a waiver \$600 million of PL 480 Title II resources for development to aid those suffering from chronic hunger; (2) allow needed flexibility in using cash or commodities in fighting hunger abroad; (3) increase levels now and in the future to permit response to the newly hungry.
- The U.S. Government should continue to review its farm subsidies program to eliminate practices that do not comply with international trade obligations and that disadvantage poor farmers in other countries. (Last year Catholic Bishops and their lay colleagues from Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso came to Washington to plead for African farmers who are adversely affected by trade distorting U.S. farm supports. Haiti, once a country that grew all of its rice, is now the third largest importer of US rice.)
- The ongoing Doha Round of negotiations on liberalizing world trade are blocked in part over farm subsidies. Current high food prices in the U.S. mean that subsidy payments will be lower than in past years. The U.S. Government can take advantage of this opportunity by officially lowering subsidies. This action would make it easier for the U.S. and other countries to conclude the Doha round with a successful final agreement.

3) Make Food a Priority in Policies Regarding Biofuels

- The U.S. Government should review the economics and the ethics of subsidies for food for fuel in a way that places priority on the right of the poor in the United States and in the developing world to adequate access to nutritious food, and the promotion of sustainable agriculture practices that protect farmland, natural resources and wildlife for future generations.

4) Increase Development Assistance, Especially for Agriculture

- In the longer term the U.S. Government should greatly increase its support to developing countries to assist them to increase their investments in agricultural research, extension, rural infrastructure and market access for poor small farmers.

5) Continue to Focus on Prudent Responses to Climate Change, Especially Mitigation and Adaptation for the Poor in the U.S. and Around the World

- Experts suggest that human impacts on the global environment could lead to climate changes that significantly impact global agriculture and, therefore, access to food. Prudence dictates that policies be developed to address global climate change, as reflected in the U.S. bishops’ statement *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good*. Particular attention should be paid to the effects of climate change, and policies designed to reduce it, on people who are poor in this country and abroad.

6) Regulate Speculation of Food Commodities

- The United States Government, in particular the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, should seek to protect the basic needs of poor people and vulnerable and small farmers in the United States and in the developing world by regulating speculation of food commodities to recognize that food is different than other commodities because access to food is a basic human right.