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Accountability-Integrity-Reliability

# Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-10-212T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

The number of undernourished people worldwide now exceeds 1 billion, according to the United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest prevalence of food insecurity, with 1 out of every 3 people undernourished. Global targets were set at the 1996 World Food Summit and reaffirmed in 2000 with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) when the United States and more than 180 nations pledged to halve the number and proportion of undernourished people by 2015.

In a May 2008 report, GAO recommended that the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in collaboration with the Secretaries of Agriculture, State, and the Treasury, (1) develop an integrated governmentwide U.S. strategy that defines actions with specific time frames and resource commitments, enhances collaboration, and improves measures to monitor progress and (2) report annually to Congress on the implementation of the first recommendation. USAID concurred with the first recommendation but expressed concerns about the vehicle of the annual reporting. The Departments of Agriculture, State, and Treasury generally concurred with the findings.

In this testimony, based on prior reports and ongoing work, GAO discusses (1) host government and donor efforts to halve hunger, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, by 2015, and (2) the status of U.S. agencies' implementation of GAO's 2008 recommendations.

View [GAO-10-212T](#) or [key components](#). For more information, contact Thomas Melito at (202) 512-9601 or [melitot@gao.gov](mailto:melitot@gao.gov).

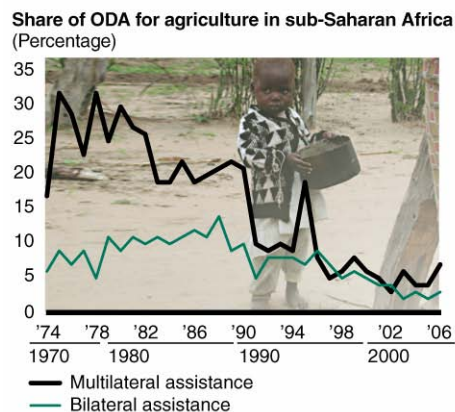
## INTERNATIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE

### A U.S. Governmentwide Strategy Could Accelerate Progress toward Global Food Security

## What GAO Found

Efforts of host governments and donors, including the United States, to achieve the goal of halving hunger in sub-Saharan Africa by 2015 have been insufficient due to a variety of reasons. First, host governments' agricultural spending levels remain low—the most current data available show that, as of 2007, only 8 of 38 countries had fulfilled a 2003 pledge to direct 10 percent of government spending to agriculture. Second, donor aid for agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa was generally declining as a share of overall official development assistance (ODA) until 2005 (see fig. below left). Third, U.S. efforts to reduce hunger in sub-Saharan Africa were constrained in funding and limited in scope. These efforts were primarily focused on emergency food aid and did not fully integrate U.S. and other donors' assistance to the region. To reverse the declining trend in ODA funding for agriculture, in July 2009, the Group of 8 (G8) agreed to a \$20 billion, 3-year commitment. The U.S. share of this commitment, or \$3.35 billion in fiscal year 2010, represents more than double the fiscal year 2009 budget request for agriculture and related programming.

#### Share of Official Development Assistance (ODA) for Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa Has Declined Until Recent Years



Sources: GAO analysis of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and U.S. Department of State data.

#### Principles for Advancing Global Food Security Proposed by the U.S. Department of State

- Comprehensively address the underlying causes of hunger and under-nutrition
- Invest in country-led plans
- Strengthen strategic coordination
- Leverage the benefits of multilateral institutions
- Deliver on sustained and accountable commitments

Consistent with GAO's first recommendation, U.S. agencies are in the process of developing a governmentwide strategy to achieve global food security. In September 2009, State issued a consultation document that delineates a proposed comprehensive approach to food security. Although the document outlines broad objectives and principles (see fig. above right), it is still a work in progress and should not be considered the integrated governmentwide strategy that GAO recommended. It does not define the actions, time frames, and resource commitments each agency will undertake to achieve food security, including improved collaboration with host governments and other donors and measures to monitor and evaluate progress in implementing the strategy. Regarding GAO's second recommendation, USAID officials plan to update Congress on progress toward the implementation of such a strategy as part of the agency's Initiative to End Hunger in Africa 2008 report, which is forthcoming in 2009.