GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY
Progress toward a U.S. Governmentwide Strategy Is Under Way, but Approach Has Several Vulnerabilities

What GAO Found

The U.S. government supports a wide variety of programs and activities for global food security, but lacks readily available comprehensive data on funding. In response to GAO’s data collection instrument to 10 agencies, 7 agencies reported funding for global food security in fiscal year 2008 (see figure below) based on the working definition GAO developed for this purpose with agency input. USAID and USDA reported the broadest array of programs and activities, while USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, Treasury, USDA, and State reported providing the highest levels of funding for food security. The 7 agencies together directed at least $5 billion in fiscal year 2008 to global food security, with food aid accounting for about half of that funding. However, the actual total level of funding is likely greater. GAO’s estimate does not account for all U.S. government funds targeting global food insecurity because the agencies lack (1) a commonly accepted governmentwide operational definition of global food security programs and activities as well as reporting requirements to routinely capture data on all relevant funds; and (2) data management systems to track and report food security funding comprehensively and consistently.

What GAO Recommends

The related GAO report recommends that the Secretary of State (1) develop an operational definition of food security that is accepted by all U.S. agencies and establish a methodology for reporting comprehensive data across agencies; and (2) collaborate with other agency heads to finalize a governmentwide strategy that delineates measures to mitigate the risks associated with the host country-led approach. The Departments of State, the Treasury, and Agriculture (USDA), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) generally concurred with the recommendations.

View GAO-10-494T or key components. For more information, contact Thomas Melito at (202) 512-9601 or melitot@gao.gov.

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