

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 23, 2022

The Honorable Samantha Power
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Administrator Power:

As Members of Congress who have long championed the United States' leadership role in global food security efforts, we believe there is an urgent need for our government to act regarding food aid arriving in Haiti and U.S. food assistance policy more broadly.

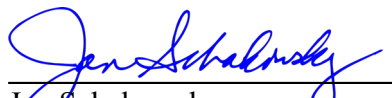
The United Nations has warned that up to half of Haiti's entire population will be confronting severe hunger by June. Currently, 4.5 million Haitians are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity. While this is currently the result of the domestic situation in Haiti and lower-than-expected humanitarian food assistance, historic U.S. policy has also contributed to the problem and we have a moral responsibility to address it. Moreover, Haiti's food crisis will be exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. The war has already disrupted critical grain exports and led to an increase in food prices; nations all over the globe are on the precipice of a food crisis. As an import dependent nation, this puts Haiti in a particularly dangerous position as it also continues to reel from political instability and the aftermath of the August 2021 earthquake.


We can and must support Haiti by ensuring it both receives emergency food aid, that aid is efficiently and equitably distributed, and that it is directed towards long-term sustainability and security for the Haitian people. First, we urge USAID to work with grassroots and community organizations and include them in the distribution process. These organizations know the communities best and can help with efficient distribution, coordination, and ensure that hard-to-reach areas are not missed. Also in this regard, we encourage USAID to continue collaboration with the Inter-American Foundation to ensure inclusion of locally-led development.


We also urge you to purchase emergency food aid from local sources whenever possible and ensure that long term aid directed at Haiti be used to support smallholder farm families in their quest to become more productive, climate-smart, and integrated with public health initiatives. This will help support local agricultural economies, ensure their long-term viability, and improve health and wellbeing in the region through nutrition. Supporting local organizations can also increase local capacity and capabilities to increase Haiti's long-term food security, aligning with broader efforts to ensure 25 percent of USAID funding goes to local partners. Finally, we ask that all aid be coordinated directly with national and regional Haitian authorities and that grassroots organizations are provided the opportunity to both inform and help implement aid-based programs.


Together, we can ensure food security in Haiti. We thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.


Sincerely,



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

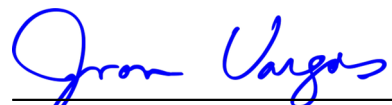

Andy Levin
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

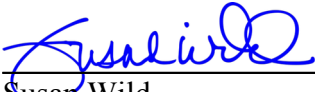

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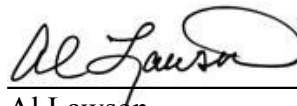
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Cc: David Beasley, Executive Director, World Food Programme