

# Open Letter to Congress on Haitian Food Sovereignty

September 18, 2023

Dear Members of Congress:

As organizations from the U.S. and Haiti, we write to ask you to support efforts by local Haitian farmers to respond to unprecedented hunger in their country. More than half of all Haitians face acute hunger as a result of high imported food costs, a decade of drought, and government neglect of agriculture.

As Congress debates a new Farm Bill, and annual appropriations for USAID, which include tens of millions of dollars in emergency funding to Haiti, you have a long overdue opportunity to realign U.S. agricultural assistance to Haiti with the urgent needs of local Haitian farmers, so they can play a leading role response to hunger in Haiti.

Since 2010, only 3.1 percent of the \$383 million USAID has spent on agriculture Haiti has gone to local Haitian organizations. Moreover, the focus of USAID programming in Haiti does not match the priorities of Haitian farmers. Whereas USAID is focused on market system reform, local Haitian farmers are asking for help with irrigation, higher quality seeds, better tools, land rights, and support from agronomists to adapt their crops to drought conditions.

GAO's March 2023 report on USAID activities in Haiti found that, "USAID/Haiti does not have a process to accurately track and analyze data on its partnerships with local organizations. Nor does it know the full scope or effectiveness of activities ...to help build local partner capacity." These findings reflect a deep disconnect between USAID's Haiti Mission and the leading Haitian peasant and agricultural organizations.

In order to make U.S. aid to Haiti more effective and sustainably reduce hunger, we ask you to use your appropriations, oversight, and legislative authority to support the following changes in U.S. agriculture policy in Haiti.

1. Direct USAID to change its agricultural policy in Haiti from market system reform to support for small-scale farmers to adapt to drought and climate change. This should include focusing agricultural investments on the inputs local farmers need, including irrigation, seed banks, tool banks, land tenure, better roads to get crops to market, and help from agronomists to adapt crops.
2. Direct USAID to work with local regional government water and agriculture agencies and peasant and community organizations to develop a comprehensive water management plan to help Haitian farmers and communities adapt to drought and climate change.
3. Increase funding for Haitian-led peasant, farmer, and community-based organizations working to strengthen agriculture, through the Inter-American Foundation (IAF), either through direct appropriations to IAF, or through USAID.
4. Include localization provisions in the Farm Bill, so that 25 percent of U.S. funding for Section 202(b) Resilience Food Security Activities and McGovern-Dole Food for Education is managed

by locally-led organizations, and 50 percent of programming places local communities in the lead in setting priorities and designing programs.

5. Direct USAID and USDA to support pilot programs designed for local organizations in Haiti and other countries facing extreme climate change to support locally-led programming by community-based organizations to help small-scale farmers adapt to drought through water management, seed and tool banks, land reform, access to affordable micro-credit, and agronomists.

6. Require that USAID and USDA program design for agricultural activities include consultation with community-based and peasant organizations in targeted areas and that their priorities be included in Requests for Applications.

7. Direct U.S. agencies to maximize the amount of emergency food assistance to Haiti that is purchased locally and reject legislative proposals that would require that nonemergency food aid be spent on U.S. commodities.

The U.S. people need to know that the foreign assistance funding for Haiti is being spent wisely, and is reaching those who need the most help. It makes common sense and it is in the U.S.'s interest to focus on helping Haitians restore their capacity to meet their food needs. With your leadership we can make Haitian food sovereignty a reality.

Sincerely,

Amnesty International USA  
Centre d'Agriculture Saint Barnabas Support Group Ltd.  
Faith in Action International  
Faith in New Jersey  
Faith in New York  
Franciscan Action Network  
Haiti H2O: Hope to Opportunity  
Haitian Community Land Trust  
Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.  
Organisation Peuple Œcuménique pour le Développement du Nord (OPODNO)  
Organisation Peuple Œcuménique pour le Développement du Nord-Est (OPODNE)  
Passionist Solidarity Network  
Passionists International  
Presbyterian Church (USA), Office of Public Witness  
Quixote Center  
Raising Haiti Foundation  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team  
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)

Chè Manm Kongrè a:

Antanke òganizasyon ki soti nan peyi Etazini ak Ayiti, nou ekri pou nou mande w pou sipòte efò kiltivatè ayisyen yo fè pou reponn ak grangou san parèy nan peyi yo. Plis pase mwaye nan tout Ayisyen fè fas ak grangou akòz gwo depans manje enpòte, yon dekad sechrès, ak neglijan gouvènman an nan agrikilti.

Pandan Kongrè a ap debat sou yon nouvo Farm Bill, ak apwobasyon anyèl pou USAID, ki gen ladann plizyè dizèn milyon dola nan finansman ijans pou Ayiti, ou gen yon opòtinite depi lontan anreta pou reyaji asistans agrikòl Etazini an Ayiti ak bezwen ijan kiltivatè ayisyen lokal yo, kidonk. yo ka jwe yon wòl prensipal repons pou grangou ann Ayiti.

Depi 2010, sèlman 3.1 pousan nan 383 milyon dola USAID te depanse nan agrikilti Ayiti te ale nan òganizasyon lokal ayisyen yo. Anplis de sa, konsantre nan pwogram USAID ann Ayiti pa matche ak priyorite kiltivatè ayisyen yo. Pandan ke USAID konsantre sou refòm sistèm mache, kiltivatè ayisyen lokal yo ap mande èd ak irigasyon, pi bon kalite semans, pi bon zouti, dwa tè, ak sipò nan men agwonòm pou adapte rekòt yo a kondisyon sechrès.

Rapò GAO Mas 2023 sou aktivite USAID ann Ayiti te jwenn ke, “USAID/Ayiti pa gen yon pwosesis pou swiv ak analize ak presizyon done sou patenarya li yo ak òganizasyon lokal yo. Ni li pa konnen tout dimansyon oswa efikasite aktivite yo...pou ede konstwi kapasite patnè lokal yo.” Rezilta sa yo reflekte yon gwo dekoneksyon ant Misyon USAID Ayiti a ak dirijan peyizan ayisyen yo ak òganizasyon agrikòl yo.

Pou rann èd Etazini ann Ayiti pi efikas epi redwi grangou yon fason dirab, nou mande w pou w sèvi ak afektasyon w yo, sipèvizyon w yo ak otorite lejislatif ou yo pou sipòte chanjman sa yo nan politik agrikilti ameriken an ann Ayiti.

1. Dirije USAID pou l chanje politik agrikòl li ann Ayiti soti nan refòm sistèm mache a pou l sipòte ti kiltivatè yo pou yo adapte yo ak sechrès ak chanjman nan klima. Sa ta dwe gen ladan konsantre envestisman agrikòl yo sou entrées kiltivatè lokal yo bezwen, tankou irigasyon, bank semans, bank zouti, dispozisyon tè, pi bon wout pou fè rekòt yo mache, ak èd nan men agwonòm pou adapte rekòt yo.

2. Dirije USAID pou travay ak ajans dlo ak agrikilti gouvènman rejyonal lokal yo ak òganizasyon peyizan ak kominotè pou devlope yon plan konplè jesyon dlo pou ede kiltivatè ak kominote ayisyen yo adapte yo ak sechrès ak chanjman klimatik yo.

3. Ogmante finansman pou òganizasyon peyizan, kiltivatè ak kominote ki ap dirije pa ayisyen k ap travay pou ranfòse agrikilti, atravè Fondasyon Entèameriken an (IAF), swa atravè afektasyon dirèk bay IAF, oswa atravè USAID.

4. Mete dispozisyon lokalizasyon nan Farm Bill la, pou 25 pousan finansman Etazini pou Seksyon 202(b) Resilience Food Security Activities ak McGovern-Dole Food for Education se jere pa òganizasyon lokalman dirije, epi 50 pousan nan pwogramasyon mete kominote lokal yo nan dirije nan fikse priyorite ak konsepsyon pwogram yo.

5. Dirije USAID ak USDA pou sipòte pwogram pilòt ki fèt pou òganizasyon lokal ann Ayiti ak lòt peyi k ap fè fas ak chanjman klimatik ekstrèm pou sipòte pwogram òganizasyon kominotè yo dirije lokalman pou ede ti kiltivatè yo adapte yo ak sechrès atravè jesyon dlo, semans ak bank zouti, refòm tè, aksè a mikwo-kredi abòdab, ak agwonòm.

6. Egzije ke USAID ak USDA konsepsyon pwogram pou aktivite agrikòl ki gen ladan konsiltasyon ak òganizasyon ki baze nan kominotè a ak òganizasyon peyizan nan zòn ki vize epi pou yo enkli priyorite yo nan Demann pou Aplikasyon.

7. Dirije ajans ameriken yo pou yo maksimize kantite asistans manje ijans pou Ayiti yo achte lokalman epi rejte pwopozisyon lejislatif ki ta mande pou yo depanse èd manje ki pa ijans sou machandiz ameriken yo.

Pèp Ameriken an bezwen konnen ke finansman asistans etranje pou Ayiti a ap depanse avèk sajès, epi yo rive jwenn moun ki bezwen plis èd. Li fè bon sans e li nan enterè Etazini pou konsantre sou ede ayisyen retabli kapasite yo pou satisfè bezwen manje yo. Avèk lidèchip ou nou ka fè souverènte alimantè ayisyen an yon reyalite.

Sensèman,

Amnesty International USA  
Centre d'Agriculture Saint Barnabas Support Group Ltd.  
Faith in Action International  
Faith in New Jersey  
Faith in New York  
Franciscan Action Network  
Haiti H2O: Hope to Opportunity  
Haitian Community Land Trust  
Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.  
Organisation Peuple Œcuménique pour le Développement du Nord (OPODNO)  
Organisation Peuple Œcuménique pour le Développement du Nord-Est (OPODNE)  
Passionist Solidarity Network  
Passionists International  
Presbyterian Church (USA), Office of Public Witness  
Quixote Center  
Raising Haiti Foundation  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team  
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)