February 23, 2021
The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As World Food Prize Laureates from across the globe, we have dedicated decades to driving change in food systems, continuing the legacy of Nobel Peace Prize recipient Dr. Norman Borlaug. Some of us are American, some not, but we all recognize that at this time, leadership from the United States (U.S.) is pivotal to achieving the global goals on food.

Even pre-COVID-19, hunger was on the rise, climate emissions—in part driven by the food system—were not on track to meet the Paris Agreement targets, and the United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization reported in 2020 that an estimated 3 billion people could not afford a healthy diet in 2017. While the world reduced absolute poverty from 2 billion people in 1990 to 800 million people before the pandemic, the UN Development Programme approximates “COVID-19 could push the number of people living in extreme poverty to over 1 billion by 2030.”

In a world rattled by COVID-19, now is the time for audacious ambition as we envision what the world could look like in 2030, the year the Sustainable Development Goals should be met. Let us imagine a world in which everyone is well-nourished and no one goes to bed hungry. How do we get there?

First, cast a wide-angle lens on our food systems that produce, distribute, process, market, and prepare food. Food systems intertwine hunger, nutrition, food safety, biodiversity, resource use, climate emissions, jobs and livelihoods, as well as the resilience of families, communities, and economies. We know that improvements in food systems create huge benefits in all of these critical areas.

Second, strengthen and leverage our alliances to raise ambitions and find game changers for food. The COVID era is teaching us that the unimaginable is attainable, the unthinkable is in fact doable: vaccines in under a year; unprecedented economic relief packages; doing global business from home; digitized commerce even in the most fragile settings; unprecedented community solidarity; and increasing the number of people in food safety net programs from 0.6 billion to 2 billion. The returns for imagination and boldness have never been greater.

Third, provide leadership for high impact. In September 2021, the UN Secretary-General will lead a Food Systems Summit to mobilize global action on hunger. The Summit involves civil society, business, and development agencies—everyone—to work with governments. It is the People’s Summit, and its aim is action, not declaration. In addition, the UN named 2021...
We urge the Biden-Harris Administration to seize this moment and invest in development and cooperation to achieve zero hunger by 2030.

We urge the Biden-Harris Administration to re-establish American global leadership to end hunger, play a leadership role in the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit and other global initiatives, refresh U.S. evidence-based policy and investment to achieve the goal of ending hunger, and expand the highly-successful USAID Feed the Future Initiative and Innovation Labs to reach more countries.

The opportunity for renewed U.S. leadership to transform food systems has never been greater. The appetite of partners around the world to work with the U.S. in both the public and private sectors is strong. We urge the Biden-Harris Administration to seize this moment and invest in development and cooperation to achieve zero hunger by 2030. American leadership on getting food systems right will inspire and embolden others to join forces to end hunger, counter climate change, generate jobs, and promote responsible stewardship of the environment.

Evidence suggests that increased investment in food security is in the U.S.’s interest. Supporting economic growth globally leads to increased trade for American entities, increases stability in conflict areas, builds bonds of solidarity and trust that are the bedrock of diplomacy, and alleviates the suffering of the most vulnerable. These outcomes reflect long-held, treasured American values and offer opportunities to realize global aspirations.

In 2009, post-financial crisis and as a result of the L’Aquila Declaration, the U.S. announced the $3.5 billion Feed the Future Initiative with bipartisan support, helping to reverse decades-long declines in funding for food and agriculture around the world. This American investment prompted collective global investments of $22 billion and triggered progress for hundreds of millions.

According to the recent Ceres2030 report, we could end global hunger by 2030 with an extra annual investment of $33 billion, a small fraction of the world’s COVID mitigation investment.

**U.S. ACTIONS NEEDED**

In all humility, we call on the Administration of U.S. President Biden to:

1. re-establish American global leadership to end hunger,
2. play a leadership role in the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit and other global initiatives,
3. refresh U.S. evidence-based policy and investment to achieve the goal of ending hunger, and
4. expand the highly-successful USAID Feed the Future Initiative and Innovation Labs to reach more countries.
Such an agenda will help the U.S.—and the rest of the world—achieve the four-way win so desperately needed on climate, health, jobs and hunger.

As the world staggers out of COVID and into the light of 2021, we seek to illuminate our collective path towards 2030. **We urge the Biden-Harris Administration to focus on the promise to Build Back Better in transforming our food systems.**

U.S. leadership in ending global hunger is imperative and must be backed by bold actions and your personal commitment for the U.S. to engage on major global initiatives. Nothing is more important than ending global hunger and malnutrition. In the words of U.S. Vice President Harris: be **“bold, fearless and ambitious.”**

Signed in Partnership,

Rattan Lal  
Director, OSU Carbon Management & Sequestration Center  
2020 Laureate  

Simon Groot  
Founder, East-West Seed  
2019 Laureate  

Lawrence Haddad  
Executive Director, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition  
2018 Laureate  

David Nabarro  
Strategic Director, 4SD  
2018 Laureate  

Akinwumi A. Adesina  
President, African Development Bank  
2017 Laureate  

Maria Andrade  
Principal Scientist, Sweetpotato Breeder, CIP  
2016 Laureate  

Howarth Bouis  
Founding Director, HarvestPlus  
2016 Laureate  

Jan Low  
Principal Scientist, International Potato Center (CIP)  
2016 Laureate  

Robert Mwanga  
Sweetpotato Breeder, International Potato Center (CIP)  
2016 Laureate  

Mary-Dell Chilton  
Distinguished Science Fellow, Syngenta  
2013 Laureate  

Robert T. Fraley  
Former Executive VP & CTO, Monsanto  
2013 Laureate  

David Beckmann  
President Emeritus, Bread for the World  
2010 Laureate  

Jo Luck  
Former President, Heifer International  
2010 Laureate  

Gebisa Ejeta  
Director, Purdue Center for Global Food Security  
2009 Laureate  

Robert J. Dole  
Former United States Senator  
2008 Laureate  

Philip Nelson  
Professor Emeritus, Purdue University  
2007 Laureate  

Edson Lobato  
Former Technical Director, Embrapa Cerrados  
2006 Laureate  

Alysson Paolinelli  
President, Instituto Fórum do Futuro  
2006 Laureate  

Modadugu V. Gupta  
Senior Research Fellow, WorldFish  
2005 Laureate  

Pedro Sanchez  
Professor, Tropical Soils, University of Florida  
2002 Laureate  

Per Pinstrup-Andersen  
Professor Emeritus, Cornell University  
2001 Laureate  

Gurdev Khush  
Professor Emeritus, University of California, Davis  
1996 Laureate  

Hans R. Herren  
President, Millennium Institute & Biovision Foundation  
1995 Laureate  

Muhammad Yunus  
Chairman, Yunus Centre  
1994 Laureate  

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