

Bread for the World's 2019 Offering of Letters to Congress

Better Nutrition, Better Tomorrow

Questions and Answers

1. Why focus on global nutrition?

Making progress on malnutrition, especially among women and children, is key to ending chronic global hunger. Good nutrition during pregnancy and in the first two years of a child's life—the first 1,000 days—is critical to a child's brain development, health, and future well-being. A child's first five years of life are the riskiest, and good nutrition is key to helping children survive. Babies and children have immune systems that are still developing, so they are more susceptible to illnesses and diseases. Premature births, pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria, and other illnesses result in 5.4 million deaths of children under age 5 every year. Almost half of those children die of causes related to malnutrition. Chronic undernutrition leaves 151 million children each year vulnerable to disease and stunted physical and mental growth. But by focusing on improving nutrition during the critical first 1,000 days, much of the serious and irreparable damage caused by hunger and malnutrition can be prevented.

2. Has any progress been made?

Yes! Since 1990, the number of children who have died of causes related to malnutrition has been cut more than half, and the percentage of children under age 5 who are stunted, a result of chronic malnutrition, has dropped to 22.9 percent from 40 percent. Each year, funding for U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) programs saves the lives of millions of children under the age of 5 with simple solutions and inexpensive ways to stop the top causes of malnutrition.

3. So, we know what works?

Yes. We know how to end deaths and malnutrition among mothers, newborns, and children and rapid progress is possible—we just need the political will to get it done. Our government has worked with developing countries to increase access to lifesaving, cost-effective, and evidence-based solutions. For example, stunting—when a child does not grow and develop properly because of chronic malnutrition—was reduced by one-third in Ghana in just six years between

2008 and 2014 by applying evidence-based solutions. The United States has been a longstanding global leader in efforts to scale up nutrition interventions.

4. When and how can we urge Congress to take action on this issue?

There will be various times throughout the year when you will be able to reach out to members of Congress on the issue in this Offering of Letters, including the annual appropriations process and through the passage of authorizing legislation.

Bread for the World wants Congress to increase funding for the nutrition of mothers, newborns, and young children in countries with a high burden of malnutrition. In fiscal year 2018, funding for nutrition in the global health account was \$125 million. This year, Bread and its partners believe a funding level for global nutrition programs of at least \$145 million is needed to help millions of people realize their potential, resulting in more stable communities and economies across the globe.

In early spring, members of Congress will make their funding requests to appropriators in the House and Senate. During this time, it is important that congressional offices hear from you about global nutrition programs to ensure that increased funding is a top priority for the appropriators.

Later in the year, as the appropriations process moves forward, advocacy from constituents will be crucial to ensure that any increased funding is maintained during House and Senate negotiations.

Additionally, we will urge Congress to pass legislation to ensure a commitment to global nutrition through a targeted approach to nutrition programming. Congress should help the U.S. government take existing programs to the next level by introducing legislation to establish a new, scaled-up approach to utilize high-impact, nutrition-specific interventions.

You can keep up on Bread's legislative priorities by visiting bread.org/activist or signing up for Fresh Bread, our weekly email update on legislative hunger and poverty issues, at bread.org/freshbread.



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