

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Press Center



Treasury Secretary Geithner Remarks at the Announcement on International Commitment to Fight Global Hunger and Poverty As Prepared for Delivery

4/22/2010

TG - 655

Good morning.

We have just concluded an important meeting to launch the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program. My thanks to Bill Gates, Minister Flaherty, Minister Salgado, Minister Yoon, President Zoellick and Minister Muhith for being here today. I also want to thank Secretary Vilsack for joining us.

A year ago, the world came together in a powerful and coordinated effort to restore stability to the financial systems of the major economies and provide support for emerging and developing economies on a dramatic scale. The actions we took together are working, and the world is beginning to recover from its most severe economic crisis since the Great Depression.

But as we work to build a stronger, more stable and balanced global economy, we must renew our commitment to tackle global hunger and poverty. Because a world where more than 1 billion people suffer from hunger is not a strong or stable world. A world where more than 2 billion people in rural areas struggle to secure a livelihood is not a balanced one.

We are moved to act both by our conscience and our common interests. Eradicating hunger anywhere advances humanity everywhere. Promoting economic growth abroad increases prosperity and security at home.

Recognizing this, Leaders of the G-8 and G-20 have agreed that we must act to help the world's poorest farmers grow more, earn more and lift themselves out of poverty.

To this end, I am pleased to announce that the United States proposes to contribute \$475 million toward the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program – a new fund that will reduce global hunger and poverty by increasing agriculture productivity, linking farmers to markets and improving rural infrastructure. Our commitment is key to the Administration's efforts to enhance food security, raise rural incomes and promote stability in poor countries. It will complement the existing food security activities of USAID and the Department of Agriculture.

The need for the new fund could not be clearer.

At a time when the threat of global poverty has increased, the fund will seek to put poverty back on a downward path.

At a time when investment in agriculture has declined, the fund will work to reverse the neglect and increase investment in this crucial area.

At a time when the challenges that we face are increasingly transnational, the fund will operate across borders and issues. It will help us address climate change and water scarcity even as we tackle food security and agriculture.

The United States will be guided by three principles in this effort.

First, with financial resources constrained at home, we will work with our partners at the multi-lateral institutions to fully leverage our investment dollars. We will seek to mobilize the resources from other countries and foundations to join us in tackling the challenges of food security.

Second, recognizing that foreign aid alone cannot unleash the potential of agriculture, we will work to assure that private sector investment complements aid flows. The new fund will have a private sector window that will work with businesses, investors and local financial institutions to increase the commercial potential of small and medium-sized agri-businesses.

Finally, the fund will embrace a transparent governance structure by ensuring that recipient countries and civil society organizations, as well as donors, have a voice in the operation of the fund.

We know that the new fund alone will not put an end to food insecurity. But by pledging our support for the fund, we are taking a bold step to help the world's poorest farmers. We call on our colleagues from other G-8 and G-20 countries to join us in this extraordinary effort to

help the world's most vulnerable populations and, in the process, take an important step towards creating a more balanced, prosperous and secure world for all.

Thank you.

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