



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://feedthefuture.gov/article/us-government-announces-child-stunting-rates-drop-ethiopia-maize-yields-increase-zambia>

U.S. Government Announces Child Stunting Rates Drop in Ethiopia, Maize Yields Increase in Zambia

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced new data today demonstrating the impact of the U.S. Government's innovative global hunger efforts, including the [Feed the Future initiative](#) led by USAID in partnership with 10 other federal agencies. Just weeks after the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) [announced the number of chronically undernourished people](#) in the world has fallen by more than 100 million over the last decade, new data in Zambia and Ethiopia underscore the impact of U.S. leadership in the fight against global hunger and undernutrition.

With Feed the Future support in Zambia for policy reforms and work with smallholder farmers, Zambian maize farmers more than doubled their use of fertilizer and significantly increased their adoption of high-yielding hybrid seeds. This contributed to a 32 percent rise in maize production between 2013 and 2014. And in Ethiopia, Feed the Future and other U.S. Government initiatives have contributed to remarkable declines in stunting; preliminary data from a recent national survey reflects the stunting rate has dropped an estimated 9 percent over the past three years-resulting in an estimated 160,000 fewer children under five chronically malnourished

"Through Feed the Future, we are harnessing the power of science, technology and innovation to unlock opportunity for the world's most vulnerable people," said USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, who serves as coordinator for the whole-of-government initiative. "By creating and scaling cutting-edge solutions to our most pressing agricultural challenges, we can help the world's most vulnerable people move from dependency to self-sufficiency-and out of the tragic cycle of extreme poverty."

For more than 60 years, the United States has provided consistent global leadership in addressing food security and investing in agricultural development, research, innovation and humanitarian assistance. Between the 1950s and 1980s, American support for the Green Revolution helped the world more than double cereal production, helping millions of people gain self-sufficiency and transforming the economies of countries in South Asia and Latin America.

Continuing that legacy, Feed the Future serves as the United States' flagship global hunger and food security initiative. Led by USAID, Feed the Future draws on the skills, expertise and resources of 10 other U.S. government agencies in a coordinated approach to reduce global hunger, poverty and undernutrition. The primary objectives are to improve food security by increasing productivity and incomes as well as reducing undernutrition in 19 priority countries. Feed the Future focuses on improving the lives of smallholder farmers, especially women.

In 2013 alone, Feed the Future helped nearly 7 million farmers and food producers use new technologies and management practices-such as high-yielding seed varieties-on about 9.9 million acres of land. Moreover, Feed the Future reached more than 12.5 million children with nutrition interventions that can help ensure a stronger and more successful future. Feed the Future and its complementary efforts, such as Grow Africa and the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, have helped to leverage \$10 billion dollars in responsible private sector commitments in African agriculture-the majority from African businesses.

A recent FAO report on food security found that, globally, over 805 million people lack enough food to eat and approximately 165 million (or 1 in 4) children under the age of five are stunted due to lack of proper nutrition received between pregnancy and a child's second birthday. The reduction in stunting rates in Ethiopia has been supported by Feed the Future's approach that focuses on this critical 1,000-days period-the most important time for a child's cognitive, intellectual and physical development. Every year, undernutrition contributes to 3.1 million child deaths-45 percent of the worldwide total. It also costs low- and middle-income countries up to 8 percent of economic potential. While the world has seen a 37 percent drop in stunting since 1990, Feed the Future is committed to a world where every child has the potential for a healthy and productive life.

Feed the Future reflects a new model for development that leverages partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders, including leadership from countries themselves. In Zambia, Feed the Future promoted local government policies that encouraged private-sector competition to buy smallholders' maize and by helping local farmers access improved seeds and fertilizers through private-sector providers. These policies helped the country achieve its largest-ever maize harvest.

Last month, bipartisan members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives introduced legislation to codify and strengthen Feed the Future's comprehensive approach to cultivating the potential of agriculture-sector growth. Senators Bob Casey (D-Pennsylvania), Mike Johanns (R-Nebraska), John Boozman (R-Arkansas), Christopher Coons (D-Delaware), Ben Cardin (D-Maryland), and Johnny Isakson (R-Georgia) sponsored the Senate bill ([S. 2909](#)). Representatives Christopher H. Smith (R-New Jersey) and Betty McCollum (D-Minnesota) sponsored the House bill ([H.R. 5656](#)). The legislation seeks to codify the U.S. Government's commitment to the productivity, incomes and livelihoods of small-scale producers, particularly women, by working across agricultural value chains and expanding farmers' access to local and international markets. It strengthens the initiative's existing accountability mechanisms and establishes parameters for robust Congressional oversight, as well as monitoring and evaluation of impact toward this commitment. For details on each bill, view the news releases on each from [Sen. Casey](#) and [Rep. Smith](#).

This press release originally [appeared](#) on the USAID website. Learn more about [sustaining Feed the Future progress](#) on the USAID website.