



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Talking G8, Hunger and Food Security with USAID's Don Steinberg

ONE asked the following three question's to USAID's Deputy Administrator Don Steinberg. Here's what he had to say about global food security and the upcoming G8 summit.

Hunger is a global issue—how is a focus on growth in the agricultural sector so central to poverty reduction, and why is an emphasis on Africa particularly important?

Ambassador Steinberg: Food security is vital to human security. On a national level, countries marked by hunger, volatile food prices, and poverty stemming from a lack of agricultural productivity face constant political and security crises that undercut stability and economic development.

At the personal level as well, hunger and malnutrition affects the entire life-cycle, causing stunting in infants and young children, poor concentration and inadequate learning in school-aged kids, low resistance to communicable and infectious diseases, and low productivity and high absenteeism in the work place.

Africa is particularly vulnerable to the effects of hunger and malnutrition, and is the only continent where agricultural productivity has remained stagnant for the past three decades. Given that growth in agriculture is, on average, at least twice as effective in reducing poverty as growth in other sectors, investments in agriculture are fundamental to transforming Africa and the rest of the developing world and eradicating poverty and hunger.

The 2009 G8 in L'Aquila signaled an important turning point for global focus on food security. What is different about the 2012 G8—how does its food security and nutrition focus relate to the 2009 commitments, and what's happened since?

Ambassador Steinberg: L'Aquila was a pivotal moment for hunger and poverty reduction. It put the global spotlight back on agriculture and food security, and spurred our commitment as donors to support agricultural development with our partner countries abroad. In 2012, we're keeping that focus on agriculture, food security, and nutrition, and renewing our emphasis on engaging the private sector, civil society institutions, and the research community.

With the foundation set by the L'Aquila commitments, it is time to spur wider engagement and ownership of the future of global food security. In this fight for food security, no one entity has a monopoly on good ideas, financial and human resources, ground truth, or moral authority.

Building on the foundation set by the L'Aquila commitments, it is time to spur wider engagement and ownership of the future of global food security. The private sector has a vital role as a partner in making progress toward food and nutrition security in an innovative, sustainable, and responsible manner.

What will it take in the years ahead to advance food and nutrition security?

Ambassador Steinberg: No one country, institution, or leader can resolve such complex problems alone. G8 countries are coming together to fight poverty in part by convening and connecting global private sector investors with developing country markets to drive long-term investment and growth.

Developing countries will have to take the lead in ensuring that public and private investments can flourish and that regulatory environments promote growth and investment. We believe this new approach will become a new way of doing business in development in Africa and that, together, we can create a more stable, peaceful and prosperous world.

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