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## Principles for Public Private Partnerships in Food Security

### *The Interfaith Working Group on Global Hunger and Food Security*

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*“Private sector activity must start with the smallholder farmers whose future prosperity is the focal point of all our effort....”*

-- Secretary of State Hillary Clinton<sup>1</sup>

As faith communities and allied organizations we have long worked throughout the world to alleviate human suffering and to support individuals and societies striving to meet basic human needs. Our common traditions encourage us to walk alongside those who suffer seeking to respond to their challenges in ways that are culturally, economically and environmentally sustainable. For these reasons, and many others, our organizations often have deep and trusted relationships with communities affected by hunger and food insecurity around the world.

As we monitor the U.S. response to food insecurity through initiatives such as the “Feed the Future” program, the G8 “New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition” and the multilateral Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) we have watched the number, scope and scale of Public-Private Partnerships grow. Because we know that *how* donors invest in agriculture is as important as the investments themselves, we urge the U.S. Government, as it partners with the private sector for the purpose of increasing food and nutrition security, to adopt the following principles:

1. ***Do no harm (to other public investments):*** Public resources for agriculture remain critically important in efforts to reduce global hunger and improve food and nutrition security for marginalized communities. Public resources are often more accountable to the public at large. At the most basic level, public-private partnerships should complement, not substitute for public investments in agriculture or public commitments to invest in agriculture (for example, the commitments made under the L’Aquila accords).
2. ***Respect the dignity of the human person:*** Public-private partnerships should reflect a “right to food” approach, addressing not only access to food, but also availability to diverse communities, nutritional adequacy and sustainability. Participating firms should affirm their commitment to the full spectrum of human rights and establish due-diligence processes to be aware of, prevent and address violations. Partnerships should enhance smallholders’ capacity to meet their immediate household food and nutrition needs.
3. ***Provide measurable benefits to smallholders:*** Public-private partnerships must demonstrate specific benefits for truly smallholder farmers. Such benefits should be identified in advance and endorsed by community organizations and producer associations during consultation processes. These benefits should include locally appropriate measures and tailored programs to ensure the empowerment and participation of women farmers. However, the short-term benefits should also be weighed against systemic threats and costs. Government investment in public-private partnerships should not serve to unduly consolidate or expand a firm’s share of the market in a given country.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.interaction.org/sites/default/files/3526/Hillary%20Clinton%20Remarks%20on%20Global%20Food%20Security.pdf>

4. **Ensure sustainability:** Public-private partnerships should focus on long-term sustainability, prioritizing the development of agricultural approaches that respond to specific agroecological conditions and that build local self-reliance, rather than unnecessarily expanding industrial production strategies or creating dependence on external inputs, techniques or technologies.
5. **Provide transparency and mechanisms for ongoing civil society participation:** Public-private partnerships should include targets and measures to allow observers to monitor their progress against indicators. They should include mechanisms to guarantee appropriate civil society consultation in project planning, implementation and evaluation, such that the public can quickly and easily access information about the investments and the partners.
6. **Protect and prioritize local private sector actors:** Public-private partnerships should have an impact consistent with USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah's affirmation that the *local* private sector is critical to the success of food security investments.<sup>2</sup> Food produced and sold locally by small-scale farmers keeps cash flowing locally and serves to strengthen the local economy. Agricultural partnerships focused on food availability and access should seek to ensure local food production that is culturally appropriate, diverse and adequate for meeting the nutritional needs for active and healthy lives.

Thus far, the vast majority of private-sector partnerships highlighted by Feed the Future and the G8 alliance have been with some of the largest agribusiness corporations in the world. Although each of these partnerships should be judged on its own merits, we remain concerned that, in the rush to leverage high profile private investment, governments not unwittingly under invest in smallholder producers, household food and nutrition security and sustainable local economies.

ActionAid

American Humanist Association

American Jewish World Service

Bread for the World

Center of Concern

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

Church World Service

Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach

Conference of Major Superiors of Men

Dominican Sisters of Spark Hill

Franciscan Action Network

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ

Holy Name Province Franciscans (OFM) Office for Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility

Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Lutheran World Relief

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

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<sup>2</sup><http://www.usaid.gov/press/speeches/2011/sp111020.html>

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office  
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation  
NETWORK, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
Muslim Public Affairs Council  
Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church  
Presbyterian Church (USA) Office of Public Witness  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas – Institute Justice Team  
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
United Methodist General Board of Church and Society  
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations  
Week of Compassion, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)