

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 15, 2022

Secretary Antony Blinken  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C St. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Administrator Samantha Power  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Secretary Blinken and Administrator Power:

We write to urge you to dedicate funding to scale up the procurement and distribution of ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) on a sustained and multi-year basis to address the global food security crisis that has been significantly exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Congress has appropriated \$7.22 billion to-date to provide humanitarian relief in Ukraine and countries impacted by the situation in Ukraine, including countries impacted by the spiraling global food security and malnutrition crisis[1]. As you both noted in recent statements to Congress and the United Nations Security Council, 10 million people are thrust into poverty for every percent increase in food prices. Food prices have already increased by 34 percent in recent months.

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has prevented 25 million tons of grain from leaving Ukrainian ports over the past three months. This is putting a huge stress on the global food system, with the most pronounced impacts on low-income countries that rely on food imports. The eight countries that are most dependent upon Ukrainian and Russian wheat are all in Sub-Saharan Africa, with Tanzania and Sudan importing 74% and 58% respectively of their wheat from Ukraine and Russia.

While there are many global needs that must be addressed with the emergency food assistance resources provided by Congress, the United States must help provide life-saving treatment to the millions of children whose lives have been put at risk by the most severe form of acute malnutrition, known as wasting.

A perfect storm of the coronavirus pandemic, the conflict in Ukraine, extreme drought, global supply chain disruptions, and global inflation is driving rapid increases in famine-like conditions and deaths from malnutrition. The numbers of wasted children are soaring, and experts estimate that the effects of COVID-19 disruptions to food systems and health systems alone may have caused up to a 20 percent increase in wasting globally.

The Horn of Africa is experiencing its worst drought in decades. Without increased resources to treat wasting 350,000 children are expected to die from malnutrition in Somalia alone this summer. In Yemen, half a million children under five are facing deadly malnutrition. In

Afghanistan, more than half the country's population — 22.8 million people — is at risk of starvation. UNICEF warns that without urgent action, over 1 million Afghan children under the age of 5 are at risk of dying from wasting. Wasting has reached similar emergency levels in regions of Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Madagascar, and the Sahel.

We urge you to dedicate no less than \$200 million from the Additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act<sup>1</sup> to scale up the procurement and distribution of ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) to address the current crisis. We also urge you to request and to dedicate increased resources for RUTF procurement in future budgets. The effects of the conflict in Ukraine and the shocks to the global food system will continue for years, and because there already was an unacceptable shortfall in RUTF supply for severely malnourished children before the emergence of the COVID pandemic and the Ukraine conflict.

Despite being ranked as one of the most effective child survival interventions, RUTF is vastly underfunded and under-prioritized by the international community. Globally, only 25 percent of children suffering from wasting have access to this life-saving treatment.

The United States is already one of the world's largest and most cost-efficient producers of RUTF and the agricultural inputs needed to produce it, which include peanuts, soy protein, dairy, vegetable oil and sugar from across the country. American farmers have the capacity to expand production to begin meeting more of the emergency global need, but we need a strategy and additional resources to do so.

As global food prices continue to rise and millions of children's lives are newly put at risk, we urge you to take immediate action to ensure that the U.S. is leading a global effort to scale up the production and distribution of RUTF treatment. It is imperative that the administration rises to meet this critical moment.

Sincerely,



Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



Austin Scott  
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



Chris Stewart  
Member of Congress

<sup>1</sup> Additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act, Pub.L. 117-128, Title V.



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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



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Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress



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Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress



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Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress



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Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



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Tom Malinowski  
Member of Congress



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Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



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Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



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Karen Bass  
Member of Congress



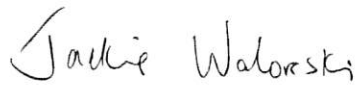
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Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Maria Elvira Salazar  
Member of Congress



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Jackie Walorski  
Member of Congress



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Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress



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Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress



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Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



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Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress



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Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



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Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress



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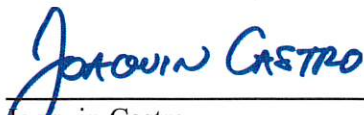
Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



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Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress





Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress



Grace Meng  
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress



Alma S. Adams  
Member of Congress  
Vice Chair, Committee on  
Agriculture



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Troy Carter  
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Al Lawson  
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Mary Gay Scanlon  
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Mike Levin  
Member of Congress

  
Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress

  
Ron Estes  
Member of Congress