

FUTURE OF FOOD

GLOBAL ALLIANCE STATEMENT ON U.S. DIETARY GUIDELINES 2015

TO:

**Secretary Sylvia
Mathews Burwell, U.S
Department of Health
and Human Services
and Secretary Tom
Vilsack, U.S.
Department of
Agriculture**

DATE:

6 May 2015

Dear Secretaries Burwell and Vilsack:

The *Global Alliance for the Future of Food* supports the recommendations related to sustainability in the Scientific Report of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. We feel it is important and indeed ground-breaking that the Committee's recommendations go far beyond individual dietary needs to focus on population-level policy changes, and on the near-and long-term sustainability of food systems.

As the Scientific Report states, the global production of food is responsible for 80 percent of deforestation, more than 70 percent of fresh water use, and up to 30 percent of human-generated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. It is also the largest cause of species biodiversity loss. The capacity to produce adequate food in the future is constrained by land use, declining soil fertility, unsustainable water use, and over-fishing of the marine environment.

By including recommendations in the guidelines aimed at improving the health of communities and ecosystems, the United States will be setting a precedent that will have positive impact globally as all countries face the need to feed their populations, and feed them well. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines set the standard not just in the U.S., but have great influence on public health policy and dietary guidance in countries around the world. Therefore, the potential impact of these guidelines is significant worldwide.

The *Global Alliance* is a unique coalition of over 20 philanthropic foundations committed to leveraging our resources to help shift food and agriculture systems towards greater sustainability, security, and equity. Plurality is the strength of the *Global Alliance*, bringing together foundations, despite differences, from

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countries across the globe with diverse interests and expertise, spanning health, agriculture, food, conservation, cultural diversity and community well-being.

We believe that many of the problems we face – diabetes, obesity, water scarcity, eroding rural livelihoods, etc. - do not stand alone but are intimately connected, and jeopardize our collective aims to promote food access, food security, food equity, human health, and a sustainable environment. We thus believe that improved food security requires a multi-faceted, holistic approach within the context of healthy and well-functioning food and agricultural systems that are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable, nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy, while optimizing natural and human resources.

Paramount to achieving a sustainable, equitable, and secure food future is the need for policies which promote health and environmental sustainability across sectors and in multiple contexts. By providing recommendations which change not just what people eat but the systems through which food is produced and distributed, the U.S. Department of Health Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture can together begin setting a new trend worldwide. The ripple effects of such a policy could be tremendous, improving the health of future generations due both to better diets and to reduced water pollution and healthier ecosystems.

We applaud the systems approach taken by the advisory committee on the U.S. Dietary Guidelines, and urge you to adopt the sustainability recommendations of the Scientific Report of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee both for the health and well-being of the American people and as a model for other nations around the world.

Signed:

The Global Alliance for the Future of Food (<http://www.futureoffood.org/>)