May 19, 2022

The Honorable Christopher Coons
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Coons and Ranking Member Graham,

As you develop the State and Foreign Operations and Related Programs (SFOPs) Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) appropriations bill, we respectfully request your support for robust funding for international agricultural research and development (R&D) through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) R&D account. The international agricultural research under the Global Food Security Act includes the land grant university-led Feed the Future Innovation Labs and the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Center (CGIAR). Together, these programs address the root causes of global food insecurity related to fragile supply chains and international conflict.

International agriculture and food R&D investments through the Innovation Labs (ILs) and CGIAR system are fundamental to developing locally connected economic and social mechanisms that increase food access while decreasing malnutrition. There are 21 ILs in the U.S. led by 14 universities that partner with 60 other U.S. colleges and universities, including 14 Minority Serving Institutions. Research leadership at U.S. public universities work with USAID missions to develop higher education institutions, and local networks to address issues that disrupt the global food supply, including post-harvest losses, food safety and quality, and pest and disease challenges. Public investments in USAID R&D are urgently needed to address these issues.

The benefits of U.S. agriculture research investments extend well beyond developing countries, as growth in these countries results in increased market opportunities for U.S. exports. In 2018, developing countries accounted for two-thirds—more than $90 billion—of total U.S. agricultural exports. These exports supported 800,000 U.S. jobs. Investment in agricultural research, and the development of novel innovations, are critical to the U.S. strategy to promote economic development in low-income countries and to grow U.S. export markets. USAID R&D provides a return on investment that ranges from $4-$10 for every public dollar invested, transforming developing economies and opening new U.S. trading opportunities.
Thank you for considering our request for robust funding for USAID R&D in the FY23 SFOPs appropriations bill. We appreciate your consideration and support of scientific research and its contributions to global development.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Roger W. Marshall
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Alex Padilla
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator