

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of the Congress and to the American people the plight of the western hemisphere's second oldest republic, Haiti. The Haitian people are being negatively affected by market forces out of their control that have driven food prices up drastically. Haiti, where about 4 out of 5 people live at or below poverty, is an island nation that consists of approximately 8.7 million people. To put this in perspective, imagine the city of New York; now imagine that same city with 80 percent of its citizens in poverty.

The American people and Congress have already assisted Haiti with the HOPE and HOPE II (Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement) Acts. HOPE was the tip of the iceberg. It provided jobs to allow Haitians to overcome poverty. HOPE II will create even more gainful employment and more sustainable jobs for Haitians and create a self-sustaining infrastructure. These acts will provide jobs needed to help more Haitian citizens emerge from poverty and gain employment which will lead to a more prosperous Haiti.

However, there is much more work to be done Madam Speaker. Right now the World Food Program is in need of \$755 million to meet immediate demands and USAID also needs an additional \$240 million. Increases in these programs will ensure that school food programs in the developing world are not eliminated due to current food price inflation. The food price escalation is also affecting the region as a whole.

Due to escalating market prices, in rural El Salvador, with the same amount of money today, people can purchase 50 percent less food than they did 18 months ago. This means that, in principle, their nutritional intake, on an already poor diet, is being cut by half.

In Nicaragua the price of tortilla went up 54 percent between January 2007 and January 2008.

We cannot let our neighbors suffer due to circumstances out of their control. We have taken small steps but now the government of the United States must be an active agent in the development of the third world. We must follow the lead of our philanthropic and non-profit sectors.

Too often those in government see aid to developing nations as a waste of money, throwing taxpayers dollars down a well. India is a great example of the benefits of foreign aid. In the 1960s American dollars funded fertilizer subsidies and high yield seed varieties led India out of poverty and famine into self-subsistence. India is now entering the developing world, so much so that their demand for processed foods is now decreasing the supply of food aid available to countries such as Haiti.

This can happen in Haiti if the United States focuses on delivering basic goods to the hemisphere's poorest people. By increasing vaccines, textbooks, water pipes, and medical care we will not make countries dependent, we will be giving Haitians the basic inputs they need to improve their lives. We must invest in high-yield, proven, and scalable strategies to empower the Haitian people and those suffering throughout the world.

Mr. POMEROY. Madam Speaker, we are in the midst of a global food crisis. Rising food prices are negatively affecting the world's poorest people, who frequently spend 80 per-

cent of their income on food. As a result, the world's most vulnerable populations, including an entire generation of children, are fighting malnutrition every day. Riots and social unrest all over the world over food prices are indicative of the acute nature of this problem. The time to act is now.

Over the last 50 years, the United States has been the leader in international food aid. We have been able to sustain this role even during eras that were extremely tough on foreign aid. This doesn't mean that the structure can't be improved, but I do believe it is a strong testament to the current structure.

Through the Food, Conservation and Security Act of 2008, also known as the farm bill, we look to address this global crisis by helping to fight hunger and provide food assistance around the world. The farm bill does this by increasing oversight and monitoring of food aid programs. It requires the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to increase the use of program monitors, conduct more evaluations of food aid impact, and implement best practices for food aid delivery. The farm bill will also allow USAID to pre-position more food overseas to respond to disasters more quickly. With greater attention toward identifying food shortages earlier, the food aid programs can reach people in need and respond before crises worsen.

I am also very proud to say that the farm bill establishes a \$60 million pilot program for local or regional purchases of food aid. This pilot program provides the opportunity for local purchases of food aid commodities while ensuring that the purchases do not cause dramatic price increases or exacerbate shortages overseas.

While I am extremely proud of what we have been able to accomplish through the farm bill, this is a serious situation that we must continue to address. As a member of the House Hunger Caucus, I look forward to working with my colleagues to address the issue of world hunger.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, every five seconds, a child dies from hunger-related causes. That's the equivalent of 21 school busses full of children being killed every day. With the current food crisis, even more people are being put at risk of starvation as the prices of daily food staples move out of reach. This is not just tragic; it is shameful. We have the resources necessary to end hunger. What we need is the political will to do so.

Madam Speaker, I've never heard any Member of Congress declare that he or she is pro-hunger. But regrettably, too few are actively working to rid our Nation and the world of this terrible scourge. I am very proud of the members of the bipartisan House Hunger Caucus who have taken up the task of raising the profile of this domestic and global issue and helping to educate their colleagues about how we can address and end not just the crisis caused by rising food costs, but hunger itself.

As the world faces a crisis of hunger, it is increasingly more important that Members of Congress speak out against hunger and take action to ensure that action is taken to truly address the crisis. Thank you to YVETTE CLARKE and SHEILA JACKSON-LEE for their leadership in organizing this Special Order Hour and for all those participating tonight. The time to end hunger is now. We cannot wait while more children and families go without food, or even starve to death.

Tonight, in the aftermath of the earthquake in China and the cyclone in Burma, we hold the victims of these disasters in our thoughts. We see, once again, the generosity of the world in reaching out to these victims of natural catastrophe.

But the children of Haiti, the urban poor of Manila, the refugees in Darfur—and, literally, the hundreds of millions of people around the world and in our own country who do not know whether there will be food on the table tonight or tomorrow—our thoughts and our prayers are with them, too. But more importantly, we send to them our commitment to take action on their behalf, and to take action in support of their own efforts to help themselves. Together we can overcome this current crisis, and together we can end hunger in our lifetime.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. GILCHREST (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of illness.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of a family commitment.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. SCOTT of Georgia) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ALLEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. POE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. WELLER of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today and May 21.

Mr. TANCREDO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. TIAHRT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DUNCAN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FLAKE, for 5 minutes, today and May 21.

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. KUHL of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Ms. Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 2419. An act to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes.