

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

December 11, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States of America  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden –

We write regarding a recent proposal before the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization's Council, which would alter governance and leadership arrangements at the Food and Agriculture Organization, strengthen the People's Republic of China's position, and weaken American agricultural leadership on the world stage.

Last month, following the election of Donald J. Trump as the 47th President of the United States, Qu Dongyu, former People's Republic of China (China) vice minister and current Director-General of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) submitted a proposal<sup>1</sup> to the FAO Council.<sup>2 3</sup> The proposal would extend the Director-General's current maximum tenure from eight years to a decade, increase the Director-General's \$300,000 annual salary and allowance, and exert more control over the U.S.-led World Food Programme. When as many as 700 million people face hunger globally<sup>4</sup> and manmade global conflicts are on the rise,<sup>5</sup> this proposal de-emphasizes any of FAO's successful efforts to achieve food security<sup>6</sup> and allows China to expand its global influence by taking advantage of America as it transitions political administrations.

Let us be clear, the nationality of any FAO Director-General alone is not of concern; rather, our concern remains with policy initiatives<sup>7</sup> and personnel appointments<sup>8</sup> which could advance foreign policy goals which pose a threat to America. Since 2019, China's involvement in FAO has eclipsed several United Nations' policy goals with initiatives which serve China's foreign policy agenda.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, the number of Chinese appointees to high-level divisions at FAO

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<sup>1</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Council, 176<sup>th</sup> Session, *FAO@80: Proposals for Institutional Renewal*, <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/c1379056-1d76-4312-8c48-187ec147562c/content>. Accessed 1 December 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Carrer, Gabriele. "Beijing's FAO chief pushes for more power and money." *Decode 39*, 21 November 2024, <https://decode39.com/9720/beijing-s-man-at-fao-pushes-for-greater-authority/>.

<sup>3</sup> Runde, Daniel. "US – China Competition: Food Security and the FAO." *The Jerusalem Strategic Tribune*, 2 December 2024, <https://jstribune.com/runde-us-china-competition/>.

<sup>4</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*, <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd1254en>. Accessed 1 December 2024.

<sup>5</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, *Global Conflict Tracker*, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/>. Accessed 1 December 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *About FAO*, <https://www.fao.org/about/about-fao/en/>. Accessed 1 December 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Wax, Eddy. "Chairman FAO: Western powers pressure China's UN food boss to grip global hunger crisis." *Politico Defense*, 23 December 2022, <https://www.politico.eu/article/un-fao-qu-dongyu-chinese-un-food-boss-missing-in-action-amid-global-hunger-crisis/>.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

has nearly doubled, including to areas which China and the United States have conflicting policy positions.<sup>10</sup>

While we understand that this week's FAO Council could not reach an agreement on this specific proposal and forwarded it to a state of informal consultation, we remain concerned that it or other proposed reforms like it could advance to the next Council, comprised of 49 member states, including the United States, and then to the Plenary Conference in July 2025, where all 195 members could consider the proposal.

America cannot afford to sit idly by – even in a time of political transition – while China positions itself to expand its influence over a body to which our nation belongs. **We urge you to reject any proposal that could undermine efficiency in food and agriculture-related organizations, strengthen China's position, or weaken America's leadership on the world stage. Further, we urge you to position American farmers, ranchers, foresters, and agricultural producers as the global leader in food and agriculture and to represent our country's production and ideals across the globe.**

Sincerely,



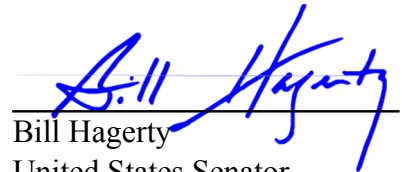
Tracey Mann  
Member of Congress



Brad Finstad  
Member of Congress



Roger Marshall, M.D.  
United States Senator



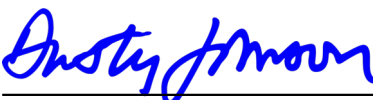
Bill Hagerty  
United States Senator



John R. Moolenaar  
Member of Congress



Austin Scott  
Member of Congress



Dusty Johnson  
Member of Congress



David Rouzer  
Member of Congress

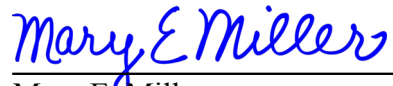
<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

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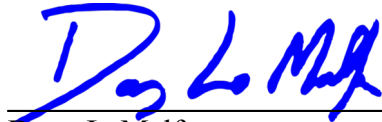
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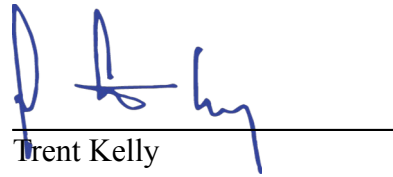
Ronny L. Jackson  
Member of Congress



Mary E. Miller  
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



Trent Kelly  
Member of Congress



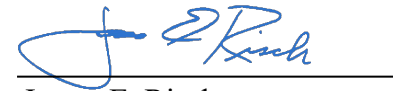
Mark Alford  
Member of Congress



Ashley Hinson  
Member of Congress



Joni Ernst  
United States Senator



James E. Risch  
United States Senator



Rick Scott  
United States Senator

Cc: The Honorable Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State, U.S. State Department  
The Honorable Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Ambassador of the United States Mission to the United Nations  
The Honorable Jeffrey Prescott, Ambassador of the United States to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture