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May 15, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We, the undersigned, write on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committees on International Justice and Peace and Migration, and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to urge you to continue funding poverty-reducing development and humanitarian assistance at Congressionally appropriated levels to the people of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador from Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018. Poverty-reducing programs, like the ones implemented by CRS in partnership with local faith-based agencies in the region, help meet the basic needs of families, offer hope to youth impacted by violence, and provide economic opportunities so that families can thrive on their land and resist the push factors of migration. Furthermore, poverty-reducing and civil-society-building programs directly affect regional security and stability, providing local populations with self-determination and hope in their struggle against corruption and transnational criminal organizations operating in the area. We urge the Administration and Congress to strengthen the U.S. commitment to the Northern Triangle and uphold our country's values as a generous nation that alleviates suffering and cultivates just and peaceful societies.

CRS partners with the U.S. government in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador to help address the root causes of migration – violence and lack of protection, food insecurity, and lack of economic opportunity. Across the region, CRS has partnered with more than 400 businesses and worked with over 9,000 youth, helping roughly 70% of program participants return to school, find a job, or start an entrepreneurial venture. In a recently completed Food for Peace program, the number of people living on less than \$1.25 per day was reduced by more than half and chronic malnutrition in children under five went down more than five times the national average. CRS also works to improve the quality of life for 200 communities in 30 municipalities in rural Guatemala, supporting more than 23,500 community members to design 156 community development plans. Furthermore, with U.S. government support, CRS has served millions of school meals, trained thousands of teachers, and supported hundreds of school infrastructure projects to improve school attendance and literacy among school-aged children and create a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities.

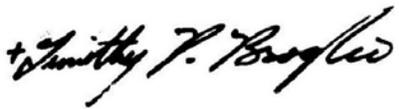
In our hemisphere, the United States has consistently provided crucial leadership in the areas of international humanitarian and development assistance, helping the countries of the Northern Triangle lay the foundation for civil societies to respond effectively to poverty, corruption, and violence. No other country but our own can provide this leadership. If we revoke funding now,

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we run the risk of impeding developmental successes and creating a vacuum for increased poverty, instability, and migration. We must continue to collaborate with local civil societies to improve the conditions in the Northern Triangle. Governments in the region must be held accountable, but civil society and poor and vulnerable communities, dependent as they are on U.S. development leadership, should not suffer more because of these countries' governments.

We urge the Administration to reconsider redirecting poverty-reducing foreign assistance funds from Central America from Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018; and, instead, target funds toward effective programming that promotes human security, good governance, and communal prosperity in the region. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely yours,



Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio
Chairman, USCCB
Committee on International Justice



Most Reverend Joe S. Vásquez
Chairman, USCCB Committee
on Migration



Mr. Sean Callahan
President/CEO
Catholic Relief
Services