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March 9, 2015

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
Chair  
Senate Subcommittee on State, Foreign  
Operation, and Related Programs

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chair  
House Subcommittee on State, Foreign  
Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Senate Subcommittee on State, Foreign  
Operation, and Related Programs

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
House Subcommittee on State, Foreign  
Operations, and Related Programs

Dear Senator Graham, Senator Leahy, Representative Granger, Representative Lowey:

In the spirit and words of Pope Francis, who will visit our nation in September, we lift our voices on behalf of “the poorest peoples of the earth” with the request that you robustly fund international poverty-reducing humanitarian and development assistance in Fiscal Year 2016. Please see the attached chart for a detailed list.

In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis wrote, “[T]he mere fact that some people are born in places with fewer resources or less development does not justify the fact that they are living with less dignity. We need to grow in a solidarity which ‘would allow all peoples to become the artisans of their destiny’, since ‘every person is called to self-fulfillment’.”

Every day across the globe, religious communities, working with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) as a partner with the U.S. government, help more than 90 million people in nearly 100 countries: among them, Syrian refugees persecuted Yazidis and Christians in Iraq, communities recovering from the trauma of Ebola in Africa.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is in regular contact with bishops’ conferences and local churches in countries around the world. We draw on their experience in defending human rights, promoting peace, resisting extremism and fostering human development. USCCB is proud that CRS and the Church globally bring not only basic assistance, but also hope, to people fleeing violence or yearning to break out of the cycle of poverty.

The number of people affected by humanitarian crises today is staggering. The UN estimates 77.9 million people need humanitarian assistance in 2015. **For this reason we urge you to support International Disaster Assistance, Migration and Refugee Assistance, and Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance.** As you know, not only in Syria and Iraq, but also in surrounding countries, humanitarian organizations, the UN and local communities are struggling to provide adequate humanitarian assistance. Overwhelmed by the influx of refugees, Jordan and Lebanon have begun to tighten their borders, pushing more refugees to flee in rickety boats across the Mediterranean, often losing their lives.

In the Occupied Palestinian Territories, many people rely on the international community for their everyday survival. Unemployment, especially among young adults, is unacceptably high in both the West Bank and Gaza, contributing to suffering and instability. More than 100,000 people are without housing in Gaza as a result of the latest conflict. Poverty and desperation in the Palestinian Territories are not

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good for ordinary Palestinians or for Israeli security. **We urge you to continue funding to assist the poor and marginalized there.**

In places like Central African Republic and South Sudan, humanitarian intervention and peacebuilding efforts would be impossible without United Nations or regional peacekeepers. Those peacekeepers are saving lives and need help to improve their efforts. **We urge you to support the Administration's entire request for peacekeeping, including the Peace Operations Response Mechanism.**

Thanks in part to robust intervention by the United States last fall, the international community is winning the fight against Ebola. Yet much work remains to enable the affected communities to recover and children to return to school. The crisis has taught the international community a valuable lesson: that strengthening health systems globally not only protects the dignity of millions, but also is a valuable investment in preventing and containing future outbreaks. **Support for infectious disease control** is critical for the same reason. And unless we protect and provide for the **children orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV/AIDs and other diseases**, they too may die from the disease or find few opportunities to contribute to their communities.

**We urge you to back the Administration's complete request for Development Assistance, and to support specific aspects of economic support funds that reduce poverty and enhance the dignity of families.** Approximately \$0.5 billion of the Development Assistance request includes a long-overdue scaling up of investments in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, where tens of thousands of children and vulnerable families continue to flee violence and crushing poverty. It is essential that we address these root causes of migration. **Investments in workforce development, education, and rural agriculture** will go a long way to reduce the violence that drives many to migrate. Tragically, these countries are currently the most violent places in the world alongside Syria. Programs like Youthbuilders, as an example, help children from gang-ridden communities to learn valuable life and vocational skills. CRS' USAID-funded program in El Salvador helped more than 4,000 children to find work and/or return to school, and for less than \$1,000 per person. Combined with a strategy to fight corruption and build the capacity of local governments, this effort by our nation can make a major contribution to the well-being of our southern neighbors and provide people the opportunity to thrive in their native countries.

We write knowing the many budget demands and the limitations on financial resources. We support your work with Members across the aisle and with the President to find a long-term solution to our rising debt, but strongly urge that you place a priority on programs that help people living in poverty here at home and abroad. Above all, we ask you to hear the cries of the persecuted and "the poorest peoples of the earth." Please preserve the effort, already less than one percent of the federal budget, that protects them and helps families to live in dignity.

Sincerely yours,



Most Reverend Oscar Cantú  
Bishop of Las Cruces  
Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace



Dr. Carolyn Y. Woo  
President  
Catholic Relief Services

Enclosure

cc: Members of Committees



## International Poverty-Reduction Development and Humanitarian Accounts



Account Title (\$ in thousands) (Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding included)	FY 15 Final	FY 16 President's Request	USCCB/CRS FY 16 Request
<i>State, Foreign Operations Appropriations (SFOPs)</i>			
Maternal Health and Child Survival (including vaccines)	715,000	770,000	770,000
Nutrition	115,000	101,000	120,000
Vulnerable Children (orphans and displaced children)	22,000	14,500	30,000
HIV/AIDS (USAID Programs)	330,000	330,000	330,000
Malaria, Tuberculosis, and Other Infectious Diseases	1,078,000	1,001,500	1,078,000
HIV/AIDS (State Funding/PEPFAR)	5,670,000	5,426,000	5,670,000
Development Assistance (including water, education)	2,507,001	2,999,694	2,999,694
International Disaster Assistance*	1,895,000	1,741,000	2,100,000
Migration and Refugee Assistance	3,059,000	2,453,595	3,300,000
Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	50,000	50,000	100,000
Millennium Challenge Account	899,500	1,250,000	1,250,000
Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities	2,188,891	2,930,223	2,930,223
Peacekeeping Operations	473,691	495,200	495,200
Green Climate Fund	-	500,000	500,000
<b>SFOPs TOTAL</b>	<b>19,003,083</b>	<b>19,712,712</b>	<b>21,323,117</b>
<i>Agricultural Appropriations (Ag)</i>			
Food for Peace (Title II)	1,466,000	1,400,000	1,550,000
McGovern-Dole	191,626	191,626	200,000
Local and Regional Procurement	0	20,000	80,000
<b>AG TOTAL</b>	<b>1,657,626</b>	<b>1,611,626</b>	<b>1,830,000</b>
<b>COMBINED TOTAL (~0.5% of budget)</b>	<b>20,660,709</b>	<b>21,324,338</b>	<b>23,503,117</b>

\*Does not include \$1.46 billion for Ebola response in FY 15.

## Summary of Message to Congress and Account Description

The Church views international assistance as an essential tool to promote human life and dignity, advance solidarity with poorer nations, and enhance human security. The USCCB and CRS prioritize the accounts below because they are most focused on saving lives and reducing poverty. This assistance is just over one-half percent of the federal budget, not the 20-25% many Americans believe it constitutes. We urge Congress to **strengthen funding for international poverty-reduction development and humanitarian programs to meet urgent needs and invest in peace that military action alone cannot achieve.**

**Maternal and Child Health** these programs provide proven life-saving help, such as newborn care, immunization, community treatment of pneumonia and nutrition programs that address the major killers of mothers and children in the developing world.

**Nutrition** helps to improve overall nutrition during the most crucial periods of life such as pregnancy and the first years of a child's life.

**Vulnerable Children** programs address the special needs of displaced children and orphans.

**HIV/AIDS PEPFAR (USAID Funding)** funding focuses on prevention, care and treatment, and the support of children affected by AIDS.

**Malaria and Other Infectious Diseases** funding prepares for avian flu response and helps to prevent and treat HIV, malaria, TB, and other neglected tropical diseases and pandemic diseases. This fund is critical to prevent major health outbreaks.

**HIV/AIDS (State Funding)** funds PEPFAR, which saves millions of lives by providing HIV prevention efforts, care for families and children affected by family members with HIV/AIDS, and anti-retroviral treatment efforts. These programs also treat malaria, immunize people, and invest in R&D.

**Development Assistance** programs support an array of critical development activities, including education; agriculture; water and sanitation; microfinance climate change adaptation and mitigation; feed the future; democracy promotion and good governance, and conflict management and mitigation.

**International Disaster Assistance** funds emergency health, water, shelter and nutrition efforts through the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. It also funds disaster risk reduction, rehabilitation, transitions to development, and emergency food security.

**Migration and Refugee Assistance** protects refugees and internally displaced persons, helps them to repatriate when conflict ends or natural disaster responses permit, and to resettle to safe countries like the U.S.

**Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance** programs respond to humanitarian crises in places like Syria and Iraq.

**Millennium Challenge Account** provides U.S. funding to countries with a commitment to good governance, focusing on infrastructure projects.

**Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities** deploy peacekeeping troops to protect civilians in places like Sudan and Somalia.

**Peacekeeping Operations** finances the training and equipping of peacekeeping troops before they deploy to conflict countries and the professionalization of militia groups into formal military forces committed to protecting their people.

**Green Climate Fund** Provides assistance to developing countries to adapt to, and mitigate, impacts of climate change; funded through ESF and Treasury.

**Food for Peace (Title II)** provides international food assistance to address emergency needs and long-term development programs that that help small farmers to be more self-sufficient and resilient to shocks. It is recommended that \$425 million appropriated to Food for Peace be designated for development programs.

**McGovern-Dole** provides school lunches and take-home food rations to encourage students, especially girls, to attend school, and other school support efforts.

**Local and Regional Purchase** will provide local and regionally procured commodities for sustainability in the McGovern-Dole program.

*Accounts in italics are subaccounts of Global Health Programs (USAID).*