



International Justice and Peace
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April 24, 2017

Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

As you finalize funding priorities for the Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations, **we write to urge you to protect international poverty-reducing humanitarian and development assistance programs in the FY 2017 and FY 2018 State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs appropriations.**

We are concerned by the prospect of a dramatic increase in defense spending coupled with simultaneous and severe reductions to non-defense discretionary spending. The Administration has proposed a 17% rescission in FY 2017 and a 32% cut in FY 2018 in funding for our diplomatic and development agencies. We believe these deep cuts pose a threat to the security of our nation and world, and would harm vulnerable people facing dire circumstances such as famine, war and political instability.

In previous letters to the Committee, we laid out our specific requests and justifications for poverty-reducing humanitarian and development accounts. Please refer to the accompanying chart for the list of sub-accounts that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) urge you to protect.

Conflict and drought in South Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen have created famine-like conditions. USCCB and CRS have asked Congress to allocate an additional \$1 billion in the FY 2017 appropriations to save lives in these four countries. The United Nations is seeking \$4.4 billion by June to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe.

Related to these conflicts are the unprecedented numbers of forcibly displaced persons throughout the world. Of these 65 million displaced persons, more than 21 million are refugees. International Disaster Assistance, Migration and Refugee Assistance, and Food for Peace are vital programs that save lives and foster stability in countries that host large numbers of refugees. Longer term, sustainable development activities supported by sub-accounts, like Development Assistance, are crucial to build prosperous and peaceful communities that will resist the forces of extremism, division and conflict.

USCCB and CRS acknowledge the importance of national security, but security cannot be achieved through military means alone. Diplomacy and development remain indispensable to preventing, mitigating and resolving conflict and instability. As Pope Francis wrote in *The Joy of the Gospel*: “Today in many places we hear a call for greater security. But until exclusion and inequality in society and between peoples are reversed, it will be impossible to eliminate violence” (59).

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The longstanding teaching of our Church warns us that military buildups and corresponding cuts to programs for poor persons at home and abroad are unlikely to make us more secure. We risk an “arms race.” Sadly, the teaching of the Second Vatican Council remains true today:

“[T]he arms race in which an already considerable number of countries are engaged is not a safe way to preserve a steady peace, nor is the so-called balance resulting from this race a sure and authentic peace. Rather than being eliminated thereby, the causes of war are in danger of being gradually aggravated. While extravagant sums are being spent for the furnishing of ever new weapons, an adequate remedy cannot be provided for the multiple miseries afflicting the whole modern world” (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 81).

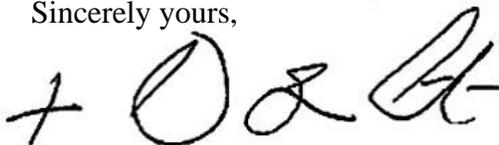
U.S. diplomatic efforts to address conflicts from Syria to South Sudan and to improve governance in places like Nigeria and Central America, together with U.S. international assistance, can go a long way to manage and ameliorate the impact of migrant flows and food insecurity before many more lives are at risk. Investments in peacekeeping, the Atrocities Prevention Board, the Complex Crisis Fund and other initiatives to manage conflict and the root causes of migration are essential.

USCCB and CRS evaluate budgets in light of two moral principles: first, every budget decision should be assessed by whether it protects or threatens human life and dignity; second, a central moral measure of any budget proposal is how it affects “the least of these” (Matthew 25). The needs of those who are hungry or homeless, vulnerable or at risk, without work or in poverty, forced to flee their home or country, should come first.

Americans have led the world in responding to the needs of vulnerable persons and communities for decades. This legacy remains a part of our vital national interest as well as our moral obligation. Catholic Relief Services has been privileged to partner with the United States government to serve more than 100 million people in more than 100 countries last year alone. CRS can attest first-hand to the significant impact of poverty-reducing international assistance, and to the gratitude, resilience and stability it produces.

We thank you for your leadership and service. Once again we urge you to protect funding in Fiscal Year 2017 and 2018 appropriations for these critical, life-saving accounts.

Sincerely yours,



Most Reverend Oscar Cantú
Bishop of Las Cruces
Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



Mr. Sean Callahan
President/CEO
Catholic Relief Services



International Poverty-Reducing Development and Humanitarian Accounts



Appropriations Requests (\$ in thousands) (OCO included)	FY 16 Omnibus	USCCB/CRS FY17 Request	FY 17 CR
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Maternal and Child Health (including vaccines)	750,000	814,500	750,000
Nutrition	125,000	230,000	125,000
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Malaria	674,000	674,000	674,000
Tuberculosis	236,000	236,000	236,000
Neglected Tropical Diseases	100,000	100,000	100,000
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Development Assistance (including water, education)	2,780,971	3,100,000	2,780,971
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Millennium Challenge Account	901,000	1,000,000	901,000
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Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities	2,460,662	2,394,930	2,460,662
Peacekeeping Operations	600,630	475,391	650,630
Green Climate Fund (Treasury)	0	750,000	0
Anti-Trafficking in Persons (DA, ESF, AEECA, INCLE)	85,000	56,000	85,000
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McGovern-Dole	201,626	201,626	201,626
Local and Regional Procurement	0	80,000	0
<i>Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS)</i>	86,000	91,125	86,000
Dept. of Labor International Labor Affairs (DOL/ILAB)	86,000	91,125	86,000
COMBINED TOTAL (~0.5% of budget)	22,744,573	24,578,756	23,710,673

Summary of Message to Congress and Account Descriptions

The Church views international assistance as an essential tool to promote human life and dignity, advance solidarity with developing 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-reducing development and humanitarian programs to meet urgent needs and invest in peace.**

Maternal and Child Health programs provide low-cost life-saving interventions, such as micronutrient supplementation, nutritional support, newborn care, immunization, and treatment of pneumonia and diarrheal disease – addressing the biggest killers of mothers and children in the developing world.

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Development Assistance programs support an array of critical development activities, including primary education; food security; clean water and sanitation; microfinance, climate change adaptation and mitigation; democracy promotion and good governance, and conflict management and mitigation.

International Disaster Assistance funds emergency health, water, shelter and nutrition efforts, as well as disaster risk reduction and rehabilitation through the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). It also supports emergency food security through the Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP).

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Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance is a \$100 million drawdown account used, with Presidential authority, to respond to humanitarian crises.

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

Atrocities Prevention Board (APB) improves collaboration, analysis and information sharing to mobilize U.S. efforts to prevent future atrocities and crises.

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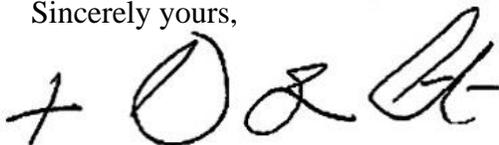
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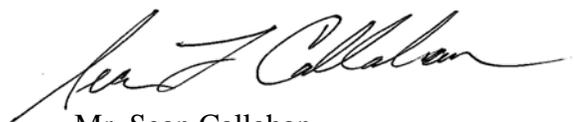
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