



# A Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty



**T r a d e • A i d • D e b t**

## Fighting poverty with just trade, effective aid, and reduced debt

**T**he United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) invite Catholics throughout the United States to join us in our Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty as we advocate for U.S. policies that foster economic and social development for people living in poverty throughout the world.

The campaign focuses on three areas of U.S. economic policy:

- **Trade:** Shaping U.S. trade policies so that overcoming poverty and promoting human development are central priorities
- **Aid:** Supporting effective foreign aid programs that foster long-term development and empowerment of the poor
- **Debt:** Eliminating the debt of the poorest countries in ways that reduce poverty and promote development

All U.S. policy-making ought to promote coordination and consistency among trade, aid, and debt policies to combat poverty and hunger.

### **TRADE: making poverty reduction and development priorities**

When the Honduran government entered a trade agreement that opened its markets to U.S. imports in the early 1990s, Maria Angeles Amaya of Santa Cruz de Yojoa lost her rice farm. Honduran rice farmers could not compete with the low prices of the U.S.-subsidized rice that was flooding their country. Growers such as Maria and her husband lost their livelihoods and had to leave their communities to find work elsewhere. What was once a source of reliable income that allowed farmers to afford education and healthcare and meet other family needs had become a source of poverty. The Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty calls for the United States to make overcoming poverty central to trade policy, starting with agriculture.

**JOIN!**  
**the Catholic Campaign  
Against Global Poverty**

**Visit**

**[www.usccb.org/globalpoverty](http://www.usccb.org/globalpoverty)  
[www.catholicrelief.org/globalpoverty](http://www.catholicrelief.org/globalpoverty)**

### **Trade Policy Goals**

- Reform current U.S. farm programs to reduce overall payments. Remaining payments should be targeted to small and medium-sized U.S. farms. U.S. farm supports that particularly distort trade and make it difficult for farmers in poor countries to compete should be eliminated.
- Include environmental and labor provisions in U.S. bilateral and regional trade agreements to protect vulnerable workers and God's creation.
- Promote rural development that benefits small farmers, farm workers, and rural communities. Support initiatives in the World Trade Organization to preserve and strengthen "special and differential treatment" for poor countries. This would allow exceptions to free trade requirements so that poor countries can strengthen local agricultural systems without full competition from abroad.
- Encourage broad public debate about the human dimensions of trade. Open the negotiations of trade agreements to representatives of the poor and other affected groups. Encourage transparency in all negotiations.

## **AID: Providing adequate funding and improving effectiveness**

For generations, Mulalem Belachew's family and village have struggled with drought in Ethiopia. Through Catholic Relief Services and the U.S. government's Food for Peace program, he and his village have transformed their once-eroded hillside by terracing the land to capture water, cultivating drought-resistant seeds, and building wells that make it easier to care for their farms and animals. This long-term development assistance has helped the families of Mulalem's village turn their lives around. They are less dependent on emergency food and are able to live in dignity with hope for the future.

U.S. foreign assistance is most visible when tragic emergencies happen, such as the brutal tsunami in Asia. However, even when there is no crisis, U.S. aid is essential to help fund long-term strategies to combat poverty and tackle more systemic problems—providing education for children, establishing agricultural practices that help family farmers resist drought and disasters, supporting banking programs that help marginalized women support themselves and their children. U.S. aid to help poor communities both weather emergencies and become self-sufficient for the long term is key to reducing global poverty. The Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty calls for our nation to increase and reform development aid to poor countries to improve the lives of all God's children.

### **Aid Policy Goals**

- Target assistance to the poorest countries and maximize the share of new development assistance to the poorest countries by providing grants, rather than loans.
- Increase and reform assistance to developing countries to help meet the Millennium Development Goals—international targets for reducing by half the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015.
- Support initiatives that combat corruption and improve transparency in aid programs.
- Continue to make care for the sick a priority through increased funding for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.



**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**  
3211 Fourth Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20017-1194  
202-541-3000  
[www.usccb.org/globalpoverty](http://www.usccb.org/globalpoverty)

## **DEBT: Eliminating the debt of the poorest countries**

The mothers who have lined up outside the Consolata Sisters Dispensary in Tanzania are waiting. They are waiting to find out if the babies in their arms are HIV-positive like themselves. They are waiting for medical care. And along with the rest of the 25 million people living with HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa, they are waiting for policies and programs that will help stop the pandemic that is sweeping the continent.<sup>1</sup> But because they live in one of the world's poorest and most indebted countries, these women and their children will wait a long time.

Despite initiatives advocated by our Church and others to reduce the foreign debt of the world's poorest countries over the last several years, many countries still have heavy debt burdens. In 2002, the 34 poorest African nations—a majority of the world's least developed countries—had a combined foreign debt of \$106 billion.<sup>2</sup> Because they must make payments on this debt, it is nearly impossible for many poor countries to invest adequately in HIV/AIDS care and prevention, to feed their people in times of natural disaster and conflict, and at the same time to foster the development that is essential to help people to rise out of poverty. The Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty calls for the United States to promote greater debt relief and reforms that pave the way for development.

### **Debt Policy Goals**

- Eliminate the existing foreign debt of the poorest countries without reducing future assistance to poor countries. Redirect money that would have gone to debt payment to health, education, and other poverty reduction programs.
- Promote transparency and participation by civil society in debt cancellation programs to help ensure that the benefits actually reach poor families and children.
- Make sure there is coordination and consistency among trade, aid, and debt policies.

1 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2004.

2 Ibid.



**Catholic Relief Services**  
209 West Fayette Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201-3443  
410-625-2220  
800-235-2772  
[www.catholicrelief.org/globalpoverty](http://www.catholicrelief.org/globalpoverty)