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Urge Key Senators to Fund International Assistance Priorities in FY 2006 THIS WEEK

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WHY THIS ISSUE IS IMPORTANT: The Foreign Operations Appropriations bill provides important funding for international assistance programs that save lives and promote self-sufficiency by fighting devastating diseases such as HIV/AIDS, relieving poor country debt, and investing in human development, peace-keeping and humanitarian relief. Robust foreign aid funding is one of the key objectives of the Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty. (For more information, visit our website: www.usccb.org/globalpoverty.)

The House of Representatives and the Senate have each passed a foreign operations appropriations (ForOps) bill for the next fiscal year that has fallen far short of what the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) are calling for to meet pressing needs. The two Houses are in the process of resolving differences between the bills in a Conference Committee. This is the final opportunity to influence the outcome of the FY06 ForOps legislation, and our voices need to be heard.

TAKE ACTION NOW! If your Senator or Representative is a member of the Senate/House Conference Committee (see list below), please contact him/her this week and urge robust funding of international assistance programs in FY 2006 and, in particular, to fund the following priorities at the levels shown:

1. **Global Health:** Support \$3.0 billion for combating HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Such funding is urgently needed because infectious diseases are ravaging the world's poorest countries and pose threats to economic stability and global security.
2. **International Development Association (IDA):** Appropriate \$950 million for the U.S. contribution to the IDA. Anything less will fail to provide the necessary leadership to the global community and may jeopardize the recent G8 agreement on new IDA debt cancellation for poor countries.
3. **Development Assistance:** We urge you to support the Senate-approved funding levels for core development accounts. It is our experience that these programs help enhance skills and provide opportunities and basic services in education, health care, agriculture, rural development and microenterprise/microfinance. The many poor countries that fail to qualify for the Millennium Challenge Account depend upon the core development programs for human development and poverty reduction.

4. **Aid to Palestinians:** Fully fund the President's request for \$150 million for the Palestinians to help them build capacity for the peace process and eventual statehood, but remove onerous conditions attached to the aid that will limit its effectiveness and delay its delivery.
5. **Sudan:** Adopt the House-approved appropriation of \$367 million for Sudan and the Senate-approved appropriation of \$50 million for the African Union Mission in Sudan. This funding is essential to support critical peace and humanitarian efforts in the Darfur region and the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Southern Sudan.
6. **Haiti:** Support the Senate-approved appropriation of \$116 million for Haiti. As the poorest country in the hemisphere, Haiti deserves our special assistance to help deal with ongoing political and social unrest and to support upcoming elections.

TARGETS: Members of the Senate/House Conference on Foreign Operations Appropriations:

Senators: Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Arlen Specter (R-PA), Thad Cochran (R-MS), Judd Gregg (R-NH), Richard Shelby (R-AL), Robert Bennett (R-UT), Christopher Bond (R-MO), Mike DeWine (R-OH), Sam Brownback (R-KS), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Daniel Inouye (D-HI) Tom Harkin (D-IA), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Tim Johnson (D-SD), Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Robert Byrd (D-WV).

Representatives: Jim Kolbe (R-AZ), Joseph Knollenberg (R-MI), Jerry Lewis (R-CA), Roger Wicker (R-MS), Henry Bonilla (R-TX), David Vitter (R-LA), Ander Crenshaw (R-FL), Mark Kirk (R-IL), Nita Lowey (D-NY), Jesse Jackson (D-IL), Carolyn Kilpatrick (D-MI), Steven Rothman (D-NJ), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH).

For more information, contact:

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