

# Development Assistance

*February 2005*  
**(Updated June 2005)**

*The poverty of billions of men and women is “the one issue that most challenges our human and Christian consciences.”*

Pope John Paul II, World Day of Peace Message, 2000

Poverty, hunger and disease have devastating impacts on the lives and dignity of most of our brothers and sisters in the world. Of the world’s 6 billion people, a vast majority—5 billion—live in developing countries with access to only 20% of the world’s resources. Nearly 3 billion continue to struggle on less than \$2 per day. Health crises such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria threaten the existence of whole generations, and poor countries continue to face enormous development and humanitarian challenges.

Fighting poverty, hunger and disease by adequately funding foreign assistance is not simply an optional commitment. This action invests in solidarity with poor nations, creates the prosperity that improves our own national security, and promotes the human dignity of the poorest in the world.

## **Did you know?**

- ? In Africa, one-third of people live in hunger and about one-sixth of children die before the age of five.
- ? 115 million primary school-aged children in developing countries do not attend school; three-fifths are girls.

Source: 2003 UN Human Development Report

***For 2006, the President is proposing \$22.8 billion for foreign operations funding.*** As in 2005, the 2006 request includes important increases in assistance to the poorest in the world. We are encouraged by this trend, but it is essential that the United States continue to increase funding to fight global poverty and health crises. The President’s budget requests higher funding levels for HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis as well as for the new development program, the Millennium Challenge Account. While the proposed amounts for these initiatives are substantial, they are less than the President had previously committed. And other important development and humanitarian programs would either remain the same or be reduced. Moreover, financing the conflict in Iraq and the large budget deficit are putting pressure on appropriators, who may scale back foreign aid. While this situation makes for a challenging budget debate on foreign aid priorities, sustained advocacy on behalf of the poor and vulnerable will make a vital difference in the coming months. Areas of particular concern to USCCB include the following:

**GLOBAL HEALTH** (For more information, see the Global Health Backgrounder.)

***What is the U.S. doing to fight global AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria?*** President Bush announced, and Congress approved, a U.S. commitment of \$15 billion to fight HIV/AIDS and other infectious

diseases during fiscal years 2004-2008. Congress has so far provided a total of \$5.2 billion. The President has requested another \$3.2 for 2006.

***What should the U.S. contribute in 2006?*** Experts estimate the global need to be between \$10 and \$15 billion a year. The U.S. commitment would provide 25 to 30 percent of this amount over 2004-2008. The United States needs to step up its annual contribution if it is to reach a total of \$15 billion by 2008. Therefore we urge Congress to appropriate \$4 billion for morally appropriate programs to fight global health crises in 2006.

We urge Congress to:

- ? provide at least \$4 billion in 2006 for morally appropriate programs to combat HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, with particular attention to Africa;
- ? seek additional resources for Title II Food for Peace program to provide better nutrition for HIV/AIDS patients; and
- ? protect those provisions of law, including the conscience clause, that help provide a more effective, morally appropriate global health program.

## **MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE ACCOUNT (MCA)**

***What is the MCA?*** The MCA is a new initiative that promises a substantial increase in development aid to poor countries. For a country to be eligible for MCA funds, it must rule justly, have economic openness, and invest in its people. Congress provided \$1 billion for the MCA in 2004 and \$1.5 billion in 2005, in each case short of the President's request. The President had promised that the annual amounts committed to the MCA would reach \$5 billion by 2006, but has actually requested \$3 billion.

***What should the U.S. contribute in 2006?*** Despite the President's earlier promise, we believe it is appropriate to support his request for \$3 billion because the MCA is still in the early stages of implementation. It has qualified 17 countries for the program, including 8 from Sub-Saharan Africa, and is likely to qualify additional countries in 2006; but the MCA has yet to approve its first grant and has \$2.5 billion available from prior year appropriations.

***How should the MCA be implemented?*** USCCB and CRS will continue to monitor MCA implementation to ensure that priority is given to the poorest countries, especially in Africa, and that the funds are directed to poverty reduction through a transparent process involving civil society participation.

We urge Congress to:

- ? provide \$3 billion for the MCA in 2006 in addition to funding for core development accounts, and give priority in the allocation of MCA funds to the poorest countries, notably in Africa.

## **OTHER DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE**

The President's 2006 budget requests funding for core development and humanitarian accounts at the same, or in some cases lower, levels than in 2005. Core accounts fund important programs such as education, health and food aid and are crucial for the many poor countries that do not qualify for the MCA. They also provide critical refugee assistance and humanitarian relief during emergencies, as well as post-conflict peace-building, reconstruction and refugee assistance in countries such as Sudan, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi. We urge that funding for core accounts be increased by at least \$1 billion over the 2005 amounts.

We urge Congress to:

- ? provide an increase of at least \$1 billion for development and humanitarian assistance for poor countries, especially those in Africa.

### June 2005 Update

In February, USCCB and CRS began our advocacy effort on the President's FY 2006 Budget. USCCB followed the budget and appropriations processes closely in the House and Senate, writing letters to Members, issuing Action Alerts to dioceses, and supporting the President's request of \$33.63 billion for international affairs funding in the 2006 Budget resolution.

As the House and Senate Foreign Operations Subcommittees begin to meet to appropriate funding in the International Affairs budget ("150 Account") for various priorities, USCCB urges Congress to do the following:

- ✍ **provide at least \$3.7 billion in 2006 for morally appropriate programs to combat HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases for the 15 targeted countries and other countries facing HIV/AIDS crises, particularly in Africa. This sum includes \$800 million for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.**
- ✍ **seek additional resources for Title II Food for Peace programs to provide better nutrition for HIV/AIDS patients**
- ✍ **protect those provisions of law, including the conscience clause, that help provide for a more effective, morally appropriate global health program.**
- ✍ **provide \$3 billion for the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) in 2006 in addition to funding for core development accounts, and give priority in the allocation of MCA funds to the poorest countries.**
- ✍ **provide an increase of at least \$1 billion above the President's request for development and humanitarian assistance for poor countries, especially those in Africa and Latin America**
- ✍ **support the President's request for \$950 million for the International Development Association (IDA), the major source of development funding for poor countries, to enable it to increase critical assistance to the poorest countries**
- ✍ **provide adequate funding for reconstruction and peace building needs, with special attention to Haiti, Sudan, Liberia, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo**
- ✍ **provide \$100 million for debt relief for heavily-indebted poor countries (HIPC)**
- ✍ **support the President's request for \$150 million to help the Palestinians build a capacity for the peace process and statehood**

Earlier in the year, USCCB and CRS also worked extensively on the FY 2005 Emergency Supplemental Bill that provided funds mainly for the Iraq war and tsunami relief, but included important peacekeeping and humanitarian funding. We worked closely to ensure increased funding for Title II Food Aid (\$240 million) as well as humanitarian and peacekeeping resources for troubled spots in Africa and Haiti. The tsunami relief funding received strong support. Aid for the Palestinians was included, but onerous conditions on this aid may undermine support for the new Palestinian leadership and may result in limiting direct funding and delaying aid to those who need it the most.

*For more information, please see: [www.usccb.org/globalpoverty](http://www.usccb.org/globalpoverty) or <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/foreignind.htm>.*

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