



Hill Notes - February 2012 PRESERVE POVERTY-FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE



What is the Church's position on U.S. international assistance programs?

The Church views international assistance as an essential tool to promote human life and dignity, advance solidarity with poorer nations, and enhance human security in our world. Foreign assistance is not simply an optional commitment; it is a moral responsibility to assist “the least of these.” Especially in a time of austerity and fiscal restraints, we should give priority to programs for the poorest people in the poorest places on earth.

What does the Church bring to the issue of international assistance?

First, the Church in the United States has broad **experience** reaching out to our brothers and sisters in need through Catholic institutions, including Catholic Relief Services, our official relief and development agency that works in about 100 countries. Second, the Catholic Church in our nation has strong **relationships** with the Church in many developing countries and is guided by their everyday experience. Third, our Church has a rich body of **teaching** that offers principles that can help our nation focus limited resources.

Why is foreign assistance important to the United States?

Generous and effective foreign assistance is a moral imperative. It expresses our values as a nation and is a requirement of United States leadership in the world. Poverty-focused assistance improves global security and stability, thus contributing to the security of our own nation. As Pope Benedict XVI taught in his 2009 World Day of Peace Message, “to fight poverty is to build peace.”

What are current levels of funding for poverty-focused development and humanitarian assistance?

In 2012, the U.S. budgeted **\$19.1 billion** for poverty-focused development and humanitarian assistance programs that USCCB and CRS support. These funds support life-saving programs, including: development, humanitarian, and emergency assistance; child survival and maternal health; HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment; agriculture and food security; water and sanitation; health; peacekeeping; migration and refugee services; and infectious disease control. Contrary to popular perception, the \$19 billion in poverty-focused development and humanitarian assistance represents just over **one-half percent (.6%) of the federal budget**.

What does the future look like for poverty-focused international assistance funding?

Large federal budget deficits have led the Congress and the President to consider deep cuts. Some in Congress proposed cutting the FY 2012 budget by 13%, on top of an 8% cut made in FY 2011. The debate on funding levels will continue. The Church supports fiscal stewardship and reducing future unsustainable deficits, but preserving programs that save lives and reduce crushing poverty are essential moral priorities.

What guidance does Catholic Social Teaching offer about budget priorities?

The federal budget is more than just numbers; it is a moral document, reflecting our moral priorities. Catholic Social Teaching insists people living in poverty or suffering from diseases or disasters have compelling moral claims. Although U.S. international assistance is the largest among donor countries in absolute terms, our nation consistently ranks at or near the bottom of donor nations as a percentage of U.S. gross national product (about 0.2%). International assistance delivered by USAID and the State Department only amounts to 1% of the federal budget while the core poverty-focused development and humanitarian accounts supported by the USCCB and CRS represent about one-half of that. Budget cuts that target the poorest people on earth will deepen global inequalities that can threaten stability and security and will produce great pain with little gain. Our nation must not unfairly balance its budget on the backs of the poor overseas.

Can U.S. poverty-focused development assistance be improved?

The U.S. Government can and should make its programs more efficient, accountable, and transparent; it is working to do that. Cuts to poverty-focused foreign assistance would undermine international assistance reform. It is particularly important to partner more with local civil society and faith-based groups who assist the poor directly. These groups help the poor take charge of their own development and are often led by trusted leaders in their societies. In the developing world, faith-based development institutions offer health care, education and community development in areas where government often has no effective presence. They also

help hold government leaders accountable for results and reduce corruption. In partnership with American faith-based institutions, like Catholic Relief Services, local faith-based and civil society groups have produced effective, low cost, and sustainable development successes throughout the developing world. It is important to preserve consciences clauses in assistance programs so faith-based groups can serve the common good.

How does poverty-focused assistance relate to conflict prevention?

The poorest countries of the world are often the most vulnerable to civil violence and war. U.S. international assistance is an investment in peace and stability. In addition, the United States must support peacekeeping missions designed to stop the violence. The successful transition to independence for South Sudan, in which the U.S. played a key role, demonstrates the importance of proactive conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives. These programs can save lives and avoid the need to fund large emergency response programs.

The United States must maintain its commitment to conflict prevention programs that promote peacebuilding, civil society participation, and strong democratic government institutions that are accountable to their people. Long-term progress and human security demand building the capacity of civil society and faith-based institutions that promote human development, protect human rights, and help build stable, vibrant societies.

Aren't other priorities more urgent?

The current famine in the Horn of Africa is a grim reminder of the lives at stake. Developing countries need assistance at times of devastating and destabilizing natural disasters, such as earthquakes, droughts, or floods, and over time with building more resilient societies that are less vulnerable. Millions are migrating to find food; millions more are at risk of starvation. Ironically the emergency and humanitarian accounts that address these needs have in recent years been targeted for major reductions.

Can't we save money by cutting assistance to the Palestinians?

To "punish" the Palestinians for seeking UN recognition, some in Congress have put a hold on funding for the Palestinian people. This action damages U.S. efforts to seek a just and lasting peace in the Holy Land by undermining assistance to Palestinians that is essential for humanitarian purposes and for building the capacity of a future Palestinian state. This is not in the long-term interests of either Israelis or Palestinians. A successful two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem would also greatly reduce tensions in the region and weaken those who use that conflict to recruit insurgents. About \$150 million in humanitarian assistance remains on hold from FY 2011, including funds for CRS programs that train youth in nonviolence, employ impoverished parents, and help traumatized children.

What is our message to Congress?

In a time of austerity and fiscal restraints, we need to give moral priority to programs that help the poor, both at home and abroad. We need to draw a "Circle of Protection" around efforts to serve the "least of these." Urge Congress to preserve and strengthen funding for poverty-focused development and humanitarian programs that save lives and reduce crushing poverty in the FY 2013 budget. [See accompanying chart.] The current famine in the Horn of Africa is a grim reminder of the lives at stake.

Also ask members to urge the leadership of the House Foreign Affairs Committee to release the hold on FY 2011 assistance to the Palestinian people in order to address their humanitarian needs, reduce economic desperation, and strengthen their capacity to build institutions for a future state. This is in the best interests of both Israelis and Palestinians who need a two-state solution to the longstanding conflict, a secure and recognized Israel living in peace alongside a viable and independent Palestinian state.

If cuts are mandated in the broader Foreign Assistance budget, we urge Congress to make cuts in programs that do not serve the poorest persons and communities, and instead to give priority to those elements of programs that serve the poorest. For example, in the Economic Support Fund, assistance for Sudan/South Sudan and Haiti must be retained. In addition, the civilian capacity at the U.S. Agency for International Development needs to be maintained to effectively carry out these programs. If cuts are contemplated in other assistance programs, please preserve essential help for the poorest people in the poorest places on earth.

Where can I find more information on foreign assistance?

Visit www.usccb.org/globalpoverty/ and www.usccb.org/about/international-justice-and-peace/ or contact: Steve Hilbert, Office of International Justice and Peace, USCCB, 202-541-3149, shilbert@usccb.org.



**POVERTY-FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT
and HUMANITARIAN ACCOUNTS
SUPPORTED BY USCCB and CRS**



<u>FUNDING ACCOUNT TITLE (\$ in thousands)</u>	<u>FY 2010¹</u>	<u>FY 2011²</u>	<u>FY 2012³</u>	<u>FY10-12 %Diff</u>	<u>FY 2013⁴</u>
<i>State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Budget:</i>					
Child Survival and Maternal Health (including vaccines)	549,000	unknown	unknown	~ 4%	
Vulnerable Children (orphans and displaced children)	15,000	unknown	unknown	~ 4%	
HIV/AIDS (USAID Programs)	350,000	unknown	unknown	~ 4%	
Other Infectious Diseases (neglected tropical diseases)	981,000	unknown	unknown	~ 4%	
Global Health and Child Survival (includes PEPFAR)	5,359,000	5,334,310	5,542,860	3%	
Development Assistance (e.g. Feed the Future, climate change)	2,520,000	2,518,952	2,519,950	0%	
International Disaster Assistance	1,305,000	863,270	975,000	-25%	
Transition Initiatives (post-conflict countries)	55,000	54,890	56,695	3%	
Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA)	1,850,000	1,686,620	1,875,100	1%	
Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	45,000	49,000	27,200	-40%	
Millennium Challenge Account (development projects)	1,105,000	898,200	898,200	-19%	
Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities	2,221,500	1,883,931	1,828,182	-18%	
Peacekeeping Operations	331,500	304,390	383,818	15%	
International Development Association (including debt relief)	1,334,500	1,232,530	1,325,000	-1%	
Debt Restructuring	60,000	49,900	12,000	-80%	
<i>Agricultural Appropriations Budget:</i>					
P.L. 480 Title II Food for Peace	1,840,000	1,497,000	1,466,000	-20%	
McGovern-Dole International Food for Education	209,500	199,101	184,000	-12%	
TOTAL	\$ 20,131,000	-8%	\$19,071,817	-5%	
	(about 0.6% of budget)				

Unknown as of February 1, 2012

¹ FY 2010 Enacted Budget including Supplemental

² FY 2011 Enacted Budget. Unknown sub-accounts flat-funded in FY 2011.

³ FY 2012 Enacted Budget. Unknown sub-accounts assume same change as overall account.

⁴ FY 2013 President's Proposed Budget.

Summary of Message to Congress and Account Descriptions

In a time of austerity and fiscal restraints, we need to give moral priority to programs that help the poor, both at home and abroad. We urge Congress to **preserve and strengthen funding for poverty-focused development and humanitarian programs** that save lives and reduce poverty in the FY 2013 budget. The current famine in the Horn of Africa is a grim reminder of the lives at stake.

Child Survival and Maternal Health 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.

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

HIV/AIDS funding focuses on prevention, care and treatment efforts, and the support of children affected by AIDS in over 90 countries.

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

Global Health and Child Survival (Department of State) funds PEPFAR, which save millions of lives by providing HIV prevention efforts (with an emphasis on abstinence and behavior change), care for families and children affected by family members with HIV/AIDS, and anti-retroviral treatment efforts that allow people to live productive lives. These programs also treat malaria, immunize people across the globe, and invest in research and development.

Development Assistance programs support an array of activities, including education, agriculture, water and sanitation, small enterprise, climate change, democracy promotion and good governance. These programs help promote human development and stability in poor countries.

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.

Transition Initiatives help countries in or emerging from conflict to rebuild communities and strengthen government structures; it bridges the gap between emergency relief and longer-term development.

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 Sudan and Iraq.

Millennium Challenge Account provides U.S. funding to countries with a commitment to good governance; in particular, it funds infrastructure projects.

Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities deploy peacekeeping troops to protect civilians in places like Sudan, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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.

International Development Association in the World Bank provides debt relief for some of the poorest countries in the world.

Debt Restructuring funds relieve debt burdens for the poorest countries freeing up resources to invest more in education and health care.

P.L. 480 Title II Food for Peace provides food to people struck by emergencies and disasters around the world. It also provides development-oriented resources to help improve the long-term food security of needy people.

McGovern-Dole International Food for Education funds preschool and school feeding programs; supports maternal, infant, and child nutrition programs for pregnant women, nursing mothers, infants and children.

Accounts in italics are subaccounts of Global Health & Child Survival (USAID).