



International Justice and Peace
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June 3, 2010

The Honorable John Kerry
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kerry:

We welcome your leadership and hard work, along with Senator Joseph Lieberman, to develop and offer important legislation to address the moral and environmental challenges of climate change. Serious and effective measures to address global climate change are both urgent and necessary. We are encouraged by provisions in the American Power Act that seek to protect the poor and vulnerable at home and abroad. However, we are very concerned about the inadequate funding to help the poorest people in the most vulnerable places on earth to adapt to the devastating impacts of global climate change.

As articulated in the bishops' statement, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good*, "At its core, global climate change is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest group pressures. It is about the future of God's creation and the one human family." We are not experts on the science, technical remedies and particular provisions of the legislation. Rather our efforts seek to link care for creation and care for "the least of these." The Catholic bishops insist that, "Action to mitigate global climate change must be built upon a foundation of social and economic justice that does not put the poor at greater risk or place disproportionate and unfair burdens on developing nations."

For the United States Catholic bishops and Catholic Relief Services a fundamental moral measure of climate change legislation is how it affects the poor in our own country and around the world. We applaud your efforts to provide adequate resources to protect low-income individuals and families in the U.S. from increases in energy costs associated with necessary climate legislation. We welcome the language and the mechanisms established by the legislation to provide adaptation assistance for poor and vulnerable populations internationally. However, we are deeply disappointed by the delayed and inadequate resources provided to help the poorest communities in the most vulnerable countries adapt to the impacts of climate change. This proposal delays any funding to help the world's poor adapt until 2019 and then offers less than one billion dollars a year, which increases over time, but too slowly to meet the growing needs of those living in poverty around the world.

Communities served by Catholic Relief Services are already experiencing the tragic consequences of climate change in the lives of people living in poverty. Increasingly limited access to water, reduced crop yields, more widespread disease, and increased frequency and intensity of droughts and storms, are all making the lives of the world's poorest people even more precarious. CRS, through its work in over 100 countries, is helping communities adapt to the consequences of climate change and mitigate its effects through health, agriculture, water, and emergency preparedness programs.

We urge the Senate to substantially increase the resources for international adaptation and to provide this funding in a timely manner. Until the resources for international adaptation are substantially increased the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services cannot support the Senate legislation's treatment of the poor. Leaving poor persons who have contributed least to causing this problem without the needed resources to confront it is unacceptable. In addition, United States leadership and increased international resources to address this global challenge will be essential in the negotiations to come. Without substantial and assured United States investment to help the poorest people in the poorest countries to adapt to and mitigate climate change, there will be no global climate agreement.

We appreciate your leadership and commitment and your efforts to address this urgent global issue and move this process forward. The Catholic Bishops' Conference and Catholic Relief Services remain ready to work with you, Senator Lieberman, Senator Graham and others in the Senate and in the Administration to ensure that needed climate legislation both cares for creation and protects "the least of these" in our nation and around the world.

Sincerely yours,



Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard
Bishop of Albany
Chairman,
Committee on International Justice and Peace



Ken Hackett
President
Catholic Relief Services



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