



## **Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development Committee on International Justice and Peace**

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November 10, 2017

The Honorable Hal Rogers  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,  
and Related Programs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,  
and Related Programs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

Earlier this year, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) affirmed “that the federal budget is a moral document with profound implications for the common good of our nation and world.” The belief that the environment is a God-given gift for the good of all has been present from the very beginnings of our nation. As you work through the end of the year appropriations process, we urge you to dedicate \$10 million to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Americans are greatly blessed with bountiful natural resources, gifts from God that we are called to steward. Yet the blessings of God’s creation and the duty to care for the common good overflow beyond our borders, especially when it comes to the air and climate shared with all peoples and creatures living on the planet. As Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudato Si’*, “The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all.”

Recently, the U.S. Senate honored this responsibility to protect the common good by including \$10 million in the state and foreign operations appropriations bill for the UNFCCC, the international body that guides climate policy. Both the State Department and the EPA Administrator, even after U.S. withdrawal from the Paris agreement, insisted on the importance for our nation to remain engaged as a member of the UNFCCC in order to negotiate climate agreements that are beneficial to our nation.

Among the many programs supported by the UNFCCC is the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). This scientific body incorporates a wide range of views and expertise from thousands of scientists worldwide, providing decision-makers with rigorous and balanced scientific information on climate change. Since climate science can be misused in public discourse to further different economic, social, political and ideological agendas, it is in the national interest to support credible scientific research. Restricting funding to the UNFCCC will only weaken the ability of the United States to dialogue in the international arena using a common language based on the best science available. Catholic teaching affirms the importance of placing science at the service of the human person.

It is a healthy sign that the IPCC consciously and carefully defines climate change as caused by both natural variability and human activity. As we stated in our letter to the Secretary of State earlier this year, this nuanced understanding of climate change is consistent with the one offered by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* and “creates space for reasonable people to recognize, without controversy, that the climate is changing.”

The UNFCCC also performs several other important functions for addressing global climate changes. It is encouraging to see a growing emphasis on adaptation policies to complement its longstanding mitigation efforts. While the Church’s support for international mitigation is well established, “from the perspective of Catholic social teaching adaptation ranks among the most important actions we can take” since it assists the poor and vulnerable who disproportionately suffer from hurricanes, floods, droughts, famines and water scarcities. By supporting the UNFCCC, the United States can direct attention and resources towards adaptation measures that help all people, especially the poor, adapt to the effects of climate change globally.

For all these reasons, and to honor America’s longstanding commitment to international climate collaboration and diplomacy, we urge Congress to dedicate \$10 million to the UNFCCC during the appropriations process. By doing so, our nation can better pursue the national interest, support credible climate research and promote the common good within and beyond our borders.

Sincerely yours,



Most Reverend Oscar Cantú  
Bishop of Las Cruces  
Chair, Committee on International Justice  
and Peace  
United States Conference of Catholic  
Bishops



Most Reverend Frank J. Dewane  
Bishop of Venice  
Chair, Committee on Domestic Justice and  
Human Development  
United States Conference of Catholic  
Bishops