



October 30, 2006

Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

As the Senate and the House consider FY07 funding for Foreign Operations, we write on behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to urge your approval of essential funding for humanitarian assistance and development activities. Our appeal to you *is based on* extensive experience among some of the most vulnerable people around the world. In solidarity with our brothers and sisters in need, we urge you to support the following:

- The amounts approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee for
 1. *Humanitarian and development accounts*, on which many developing countries depend for survival and poverty reduction,
 2. Morally appropriate programs to combat the scourge of *HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis*, and
 3. Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) and Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA); and
 4. *Title II Food for Peace that is urgently required to address hunger and underdevelopment.*
- The amount approved by the House for
 5. The *Millennium Challenge Account*, the President's initiative that promises to unite poverty reduction with better governance in poor countries; and
- The amounts already approved by both the House and the Senate Appropriations Committees for
 6. The *International Development Association (IDA)*, which is necessary to fund the U.S. commitment to debt cancellation for heavily-indebted poor countries as well as development assistance for the world's poorest countries.

We also urge appropriation of substantial funds for *humanitarian assistance to address the poverty and unemployment among the Palestinian people* that is reaching critical proportions.

Letter to Senate Appropriations Committee
October 30, 2006
Page Two

Hamas and the Palestinian Authority ought to be pressured to recognize Israel, renounce terrorism and dismantle terrorist infrastructure, and accept previous agreements with Israel; but the dire humanitarian and economic situation of the Palestinian people compromises human dignity and puts at risk the long-term welfare of both Palestinians and Israelis who long for a just peace.

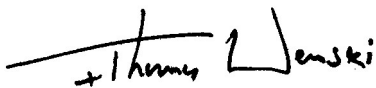
With respect to *Lebanon*, the President's recent announcement that the U.S. would provide over \$230 million in humanitarian, reconstruction and security assistance to that country is welcome. Such assistance can make a crucial difference in the recovery efforts and can contribute to peace and security in the region. *We urge that, to the extent necessary, the funds required to fulfill this commitment be provided in the FY07 appropriations bill, without reducing the amounts provided for other humanitarian and development assistance for poor countries.*

Finally, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is in the process of completing its first democratic elections in four decades. The United States may have a unique opportunity to address some of the most urgent humanitarian and reconstruction needs arising from the longstanding conflict in the DRC. *One of the ways in which the U.S. can begin to help meet these needs is through the appropriation of the \$178 million requested by the President for debt relief for the DRC.* Not only would this represent an important step towards assuring a better future for the people of the DRC, but, as the National Security Strategy clearly indicates, the resolution of regional conflicts through stabilization and reconstruction efforts enhances the security of the American people here at home.


Funding these vital programs will help save lives, promote human dignity and contribute to a more secure and peaceful world. *Accordingly, we urge you to resist any reductions in the recommended amounts above.*

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Bishop Thomas G. Wenski
Bishop of Orlando
Chairman, Committee on International Policy



Ken Hackett
President, Catholic Relief Services



October 30, 2006

House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

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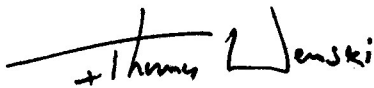
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