



## Department of Social Development and World Peace

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June 1, 2005

The Honorable Jim Kolbe  
Chairman  
House Foreign Operations Subcommittee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kolbe:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the relief and development agency of the bishops, we write regarding Fiscal Year 2006 Foreign Operations Appropriations. We ask for your support for the following priorities, which reflect the tremendous needs of the millions of people in Africa and elsewhere throughout the world whose lives and dignity are threatened daily by poverty, disease, natural disasters, conflict and persecution.

In working to address the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, we urge Congress to not only keep the President's commitments on the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) and Global AIDS initiatives, but also to strengthen existing core development and humanitarian programs. In the world's poorest countries that fall outside the MCA and Global AIDS initiatives, strengthened development and humanitarian assistance will be crucial to meeting the needs of the poor and oppressed and preventing fragile societies from falling into further chaos and instability. We also urge you to build on the President's refugee protection requests, as well as on your actions in recent years, by approving enough funding in the Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) and Emergency Refugee Migration Assistance (ERMA) accounts so that the United States can admit 90,000 refugees in fiscal year 2006 and provide urgently needed subsistence assistance to the great bulk of the world's refugees for whom resettlement in the United States is not an option.

In FY2006, we ask for your leadership in providing the following:

- **Core Accounts:** a \$1 billion increase above current spending levels for core development and humanitarian accounts, with particular attention to the urgent needs in Africa and Latin America.
- **Millennium Challenge Account:** \$3 billion for the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), with priority consideration for poverty reduction needs in the poorest countries.
- **Global Health:** \$3.7 billion for morally appropriate, comprehensive programs to combat global HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, including \$800 million for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.
- **Transition Initiatives:** at a minimum, the President's request of \$325 million for development and transitional assistance in Haiti, Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia, Sudan, Liberia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other countries in need of conflict resolution and peace-building. Experience demonstrates that it is precisely at fragile moments of transition from

conflict to democracy that foreign aid can play a critical strategic and integral role as a catalyst for the promotion of peace and security.

- **Economic Support Fund:** at a minimum, the President's request of \$3.036 billion to strengthen institutions necessary for sustainable democracy and economic growth in fragile countries, including \$150 million in aid for the Palestinians.
- **International Disaster and Famine Assistance:** at a minimum, the President's request of \$655.5 million to provide critical humanitarian relief and reconstruction assistance to Sudan, Haiti and other countries devastated by natural disasters and human conflict.
- **Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities:** at a minimum, the President's request of \$1.036 billion to alleviate the conflict and instability that has claimed thousands of innocent lives in Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi.
- **Migration and Refugee Assistance:** \$982 million for Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) and \$50 million for Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA) to meet the needs of the ever-increasing global refugee population.
- **International Development Association:** \$950 million for the International Development Association (IDA) to enable it to increase critical assistance to the poorest countries.
- **Debt Relief:** \$100 million for debt relief and for heavily-indebted poor countries (HIPC).
- **Mexico City Policy:** Retention of the "Mexico City policy," which prevents our foreign aid program from being misused to subsidize organizations that perform or promote abortions in developing nations, and the Kemp-Kasten amendment that helps prevent U.S. support of coercive population programs.

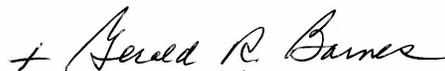
We recognize that Congress is making budgetary decisions in a difficult fiscal environment this year, but responding to the needs of the poor and the vulnerable, and working to uplift human life, dignity and hope in the world is not only a moral responsibility, it is a critical investment in fostering international security and peace.

We thank you for your continued leadership in the fight against poverty and injustice, and look forward to working with you on these important matters over the coming months.

Sincerely,



Most Reverend John H. Ricard S.S.J.  
Bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee  
Chairman, International Policy Committee



Most Reverend Gerald Barnes  
Bishop of San Bernardino  
Chairman, Migration and Refugee Services



Ken Hackett  
President and CEO  
Catholic Relief Services

## *Brief Discussion of Specific Foreign Assistance Needs*

**Development and Humanitarian Assistance:** Core development and humanitarian accounts form the bedrock of U.S. foreign assistance, providing for health, education, agriculture, and emergency relief programs in some of the world's poorest countries. While the global need for investment in poverty reduction remains great, the administration's FY 2006 budget proposal would reduce by \$116 million funding for Development Assistance and Child Survival (not related to HIV/AIDS). Poor countries that are unlikely to qualify for MCA funds, but who can nevertheless use development aid effectively, rely on this assistance to help address the food, health and education needs of their people. Therefore, we urge that you increase funding for core development and humanitarian programs by \$1 billion above current levels, with particular attention to the needs of Africa and Latin America.

**Global Health.** Communicable diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, continue to ravage populations of the world's poorest countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. New threats to large populations in India, China and the former Soviet Republics pose additional threats to global security and economic stability. We ask that you support at least \$3.7 billion in funding in FY 2005 for morally responsible programs for combating HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. This increase takes into account the need to develop a well-coordinated, sustainable, and effective HIV/AIDS strategy. At the same time, it reflects the scale of the pandemic, the urgency of the action required, and the need to strengthen national health infrastructures, while providing increased support to effective programs managed by faith-based and other private voluntary organizations. The Congressional Budget Resolution Report noted the importance of robust funding for HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases through the Global Fund.

**Millennium Challenge Account (MCA):** We support the President's request for \$3 billion for the MCA in FY 2006, including up to 10 percent of this amount for "threshold" countries. This amount, together with the \$1 billion appropriated in FY 2004 and the \$2.5 billion in FY 2005, should provide sufficient funds for the commitments necessary to get this major new initiative underway. We welcomed the signing of the first two compacts between the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and Madagascar and Honduras as important signs of progress. In the allocation of MCA funds, we urge that priority consideration be given for poverty reduction needs in the poorest countries, especially in Africa. We also urge that funding for the MCA will be in addition to, not a substitute for, funding for other critical humanitarian and development programs.

**Reconstruction and Peace-building:** Recent events in Haiti, Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia, Sudan, Liberia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Israel-Palestine, and in countries in other parts of the world, demonstrate the need for effective, appropriate and flexible strategies for conflict resolution and peace-building. In these situations, foreign aid not only helps lift people out of poverty, but also plays an important strategic role as a catalyst for the promotion of peace and security. Therefore we urge adequate funding for reconstruction and peace building needs, especially in Haiti and Sudan. We also ask that priority attention be given to basic humanitarian and security needs, disarmament, and reintegration of soldiers into civil society in Liberia, and increased attention to the long-term peace-building needs of Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In order to take advantage of a unique opportunity for peace in the Middle East, we support the President's request for \$150 million to help the Palestinians sustain political and economic reforms.

**Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA):** We ask the subcommittee to appropriate \$982 million for the MRA account. Of the \$982 million, we ask that the subcommittee allocate at least \$315 million to fund the admission of at least 90,000 refugees in Fiscal Year 2006. This number reflects the gravity of

the need for greater refugee resettlement protection throughout the world and is consistent with the target established by the Administration. We also ask that the subcommittee allocate \$608 million for overseas assistance to address both new and long-standing refugee situations, to help fund repatriation efforts, and to address severe funding shortfalls that have developed as a result of a reduction of funding in previous fiscal years.

The U.S. Catholic bishops continue to be concerned about the state of the U.S. refugee admissions program. Refugee admissions have declined sharply since Fiscal Year 2002, with only 52,319 refugees being admitted in Fiscal Year 2004. For each of the last several fiscal years, the President authorized the resettlement of as many as 70,000 refugees, a level that was not met. We appreciate the instrumental role you and your subcommittee colleagues have played in enhancing the United States' ability to identify and process refugee populations for resettlement in the United States. We urge you to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Department of State develops the necessary tools to expeditiously accomplish this important mission.

**Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA):** We ask the subcommittee to appropriate \$50 million for the Department of State's ERMA account. The ERMA is a no-year account that funds efforts to address emerging refugee crises throughout the world. Most recently, the United States has used the account to help repatriate refugees in Angola and southern Sudan. It has also been used to address crises in Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, and the Darfur region of Sudan.

**International Debt Relief:** We support at a minimum, the President's request for \$100 million to provide debt relief through the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative in FY 2006. The Catholic Community has been very engaged in the question of debt relief since the call of Pope John Paul II in 1994 to reduce substantially, if not cancel outright, the debt that threatens the future of many poor nations.

**International Development Association:** We urge you to fully fund the commitment of the United States to the 14<sup>th</sup> replenishment of the International Development Account at \$950 million. IDA is a key source of funding for poor country development. At a time when other major donor countries are making substantial increases in their contributions to IDA, the United States needs to provide sufficient resources to maintain a leadership role in the future of this institution.

**Mexico City Policy:** Finally, we would like to reiterate our strong support for retaining the Mexico City policy, which prevents our foreign aid program from being misused to subsidize organizations that perform or promote abortions in developing nations. The Kemp-Kasten provision preventing the support of organizations involved in coercive population programs should also be retained. Under this provision, funding is denied to any organization determined by the President to be supporting or participating in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization. To ensure that the President is free to make this determination, the subcommittee should not earmark funds to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), whose support for the coercive program in the People's Republic of China has rendered it ineligible for U.S. funds in recent years.