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February 17, 2016

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chair
Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs

Dear Chairman Graham and Ranking Member Leahy:

In the spirit and words of Pope Francis, we lift our voices on behalf of “the poorest peoples of the earth” with the request that you robustly fund international poverty-reducing humanitarian and development assistance in Fiscal Year 2017. **Please see the attached chart for a list of specific funding requests.**

In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis wrote, “[T]he mere fact that some people are born in places with fewer resources or less development does not justify the fact that they are living with less dignity. We need to grow in a solidarity which ‘would allow all peoples to become the artisans of their destiny’, since ‘every person is called to self-fulfillment’.”

Every day across the globe, religious communities, working with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) as a partner with the U.S. government, help more than 90 million people in nearly 100 countries. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is in regular contact with bishops’ conferences and local churches in countries around the world, and we draw on their experience in defending human rights, promoting peace, resisting extremism and fostering human development. USCCB is proud that CRS and the Church globally bring not only assistance in meeting basic needs, but also hope, to people fleeing violence or yearning to break out of the cycle of poverty.

The number of people affected by humanitarian crises today is staggering. The images of Syrian, Iraqi, and Afghan refugees washing up on the shores of Greece and struggling to find refuge in Europe are heartrending. Less visible, but no less terrible, the scale of displacement in Africa, in places like South Sudan, Eritrea, and Burundi, is extremely high and straining neighboring countries. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates the total number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) has surpassed 60 million. Even worse, the severity of conflicts in the world causing this massive wave of displaced people is not subsiding, as indicated by the fact that the voluntary return rate of those displaced from their homes of origin is at the lowest point in three decades. USCCB and CRS urge you to fund vigorously once again humanitarian accounts: **International Disaster Assistance, Migration and Refugee Assistance and Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance.**

In countries like the Central African Republic and South Sudan, humanitarian intervention and peacebuilding efforts would be impossible without United Nations or regional peacekeepers. **We urge you to support the Administration’s entire request for peacekeeping, including the Mechanism for Peace Operations Response.**

These fragile countries that require peacekeeping troops point to the need for U.S. strategies and funding to prevent the descent into conflict and to help countries halt the violence, negotiate ceasefires,

Letter to Senators Graham and Leahy
February 17, 2016
Page 2

rebuild their governments, stimulate the private sector and re-establish vibrant civil societies. We urge you to **fund the Complex Crises Fund** to assist countries to deal with the long term effects of violence by promoting restorative justice and reconciliation among those traumatized by civil war.

While emergencies abound, we cannot lose sight of the ongoing efforts made through wise investments in long-term development programming that help to stabilize countries and lift people out of poverty. **We urge you to fund strongly the Development Assistance account to address critical development programs, and to support specific aspects of the Economic Support Fund that reduce poverty and enhance the dignity of families.** It is important to provide additional funding in this critical account for: the ongoing flight of children and families from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador; the significant educational needs of Syrian refugee children; the continued progress made in furthering agricultural development; and the need to provide access to clean drinking water.

As Pope Francis has stated, “We cannot think that a society has a future when it fails to pass laws capable of protecting families and ensuring their basic needs.” We urge the continued leadership and investment of the United States in critical interventions that support the health and well-being of children and families, particularly through the **Maternal and Child Health, Nutrition, and Orphans and Vulnerable Children** (OVC) accounts. Poor nutrition is the underlying cause of 45% of deaths of children under five years old. OVC programs serve as a lifeline for children affected by HIV/AIDs and improve prevention and treatment outcomes among children, youth, and adults, contributing to the global goal of an AIDS-free generation. We must also continue to build on the tremendous progress in combating infectious diseases through programs funded by the **HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis** accounts. The outbreak of Ebola in West Africa proved that strengthening health systems globally not only protects the dignity of millions, but also is a valuable investment in preventing future outbreaks.

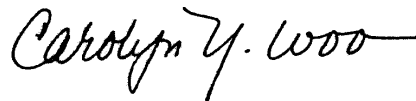
Finally, our world is experiencing more frequent droughts, severe storms and floods, rising sea levels and other climactic shocks that are impacting agricultural yields of small farmers, expanding the geographic scope of disease, and exacerbating migration. These shocks impact developing countries disproportionately. If help is not provided, they could lead to more conflicts over scarce resources. **The United States should heed Pope Francis’ call to a renewed and authentic stewardship of the resources God has entrusted to us by supporting the Green Climate Fund.**

Thank you for your consideration and for the generosity you have shown to millions of people around the world. We look forward to working with you to strengthen humanitarian and development assistance again this year.

Sincerely yours,



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



Dr. Carolyn Y. Woo
President
Catholic Relief Services



International Poverty-Reduction Development and Humanitarian Accounts



Appropriations Account Title (\$ in thousands) (OCO included)	FY 16 Omnibus	FY 17 President's Request	USCCB/CRS Request
<i>State, Foreign Operations (SFOPs)</i>			
Maternal Health and Child Survival (including vaccines)	750,000	814,500	814,500
Nutrition	125,000	108,500	230,000
Vulnerable Children (orphans and displaced children)	22,000	14,500	30,000
HIV/AIDS (USAID)	330,000	236,000	330,000
Malaria, TB, Global Health Security & Neglected Tropical Diseases	1,082,500	1,095,000	1,095,000
HIV/AIDS (DOS/PEPFAR)	5,670,000	5,670,000	5,670,000
Development Assistance (including water, education)	2,780,971	2,959,573	3,100,000
International Disaster Assistance	2,794,184	1,957,000	2,794,184
Migration and Refugee Assistance	3,059,000	2,798,600	3,600,000
Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	50,000	50,000	100,000
Complex Crises Fund	30,000	30,000	50,000
Millennium Challenge Account	901,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities	2,460,662	2,394,930	2,394,930
Peacekeeping Operations	600,630	475,391	475,391
Mechanism for Peace Operations Response	0	150,000	150,000
Green Climate Fund*	0	750,000	750,000
Combatting Trafficking in Persons (in all accounts)	85,000	28,099	56,000
SFOPs TOTAL	20,740,947	20,532,093	22,640,005
<i>Agricultural (Ag)</i>			
Food for Peace (Title II)**	1,716,000	1,350,000	1,716,000
McGovern-Dole	201,626	182,045	201,626
Local and Regional Procurement	0	15,000	80,000
AG TOTAL	1,917,626	1,532,045	1,997,626
<i>Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS)</i>			
Department of Labor International Labor Affairs (DOL/ILAB)	86,000	101,000	101,000
COMBINED TOTAL (~0.5% of budget)	22,744,573	22,180,138	24,738,631

*Administration expected to transfer funds as none were appropriated in FY 16. **Inclusive of \$375 million for the Safe Box development programs.

Summary of Message to Congress and Account Description

The Church views international assistance as an essential tool to promote human life and dignity, advance solidarity with developing nations, and enhance human security. The USCCB and CRS prioritize the accounts below because they are most focused on saving lives and reducing poverty. This assistance is just over one-half percent of the federal budget, not the 20-25% many Americans believe it constitutes. We urge Congress to **strengthen funding for international poverty-reduction development and humanitarian programs to meet urgent needs and invest in peace.**

Maternal and Child Health these 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.

Nutrition helps to improve overall nutrition during the most crucial periods of life such as pregnancy and the first years of a child's life.

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

HIV/AIDS PEPFAR (USAID Funding) funding focuses on prevention, care and treatment, and the support of children affected by AIDS.

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

HIV/AIDS (State Funding) funds PEPFAR, which saves millions of lives by providing HIV prevention efforts, care for families and children affected by family members with HIV/AIDS, and anti-retroviral treatment efforts. These programs also treat malaria, immunize people, and invest in R&D.

Development Assistance funds support an array of critical development activities, including education; agriculture; water and sanitation; microfinance; climate change adaptation and mitigation; feed the future; democracy promotion and good governance, and conflict management and mitigation; and peacebuilding.

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.

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 Syria and Iraq.

Complex Crises Fund funds prevents and resolves conflict by promoting reconciliation and justice and building social cohesion.

Millennium Challenge Account provides U.S. funding to countries with a commitment to good governance, focusing on infrastructure projects.

Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities deploy peacekeeping troops to protect civilians in places like Sudan and Somalia.

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.

Mechanism for Peace Operations Response provides emergency response funds to send peacekeeping forces to new fast breaking conflicts.

Green Climate Fund Provides assistance to developing countries to adapt to, and mitigate, impacts of climate change.

Combatting Trafficking in Persons: US assistance helps other nations to prevent trafficking, prosecute perpetrators, and provide assistance to victims.

Food for Peace (Title II) provides international food assistance to address emergency needs and long-term development programs that that help small farmers to be more self-sufficient and resilient to shocks. It is recommended that \$375 million appropriated to Food for Peace be designated for development programs.

McGovern-Dole provides school lunches and take-home food to encourage students, especially girls, to attend school, and other school support efforts.

Local and Regional Purchase will provide local and regionally procured commodities for sustainability in the McGovern-Dole program.

International Labor Bureau funds programs to combat the worst forms of child labor, forced labor, and trafficking in persons.

Accounts in italics are subaccounts of Global Health Programs (USAID).