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October 27, 2016

United States Senate/United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510/20515

Dear Senator/Representative:

As you work to finalize the State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2017, we ask you to consider the following requests that seek to ensure ongoing U.S. leadership to help those living in situations of poverty, violence, and marginalization. We recognize the budget pressures Congress faces, and appreciate the efforts you have made to protect poor and vulnerable people and communities around the world. U.S. development and humanitarian aid is an investment in both people and peace.

In particular, Congress' consistent support of robust humanitarian funding in recent years is commendable. **We urge you to appropriate the House amount of \$2.794 billion for International Disaster Assistance funding.** The needs have never been greater: the Syrian refugee crisis, the ongoing liberation of Mosul, the Zika outbreak, Hurricane Matthew and the continuing impacts of 2015-16 El Niño, to name a few. The UN Humanitarian appeals call for \$21.7 billion in lifesaving assistance in 2016, but, as of August 31, only 39 percent of this need has been met. This is on top of the 2015 appeal that recorded the largest funding gap ever of \$10.2 billion.

**We also ask that humanitarian funding increases not come at the expense of Development Assistance and encourage Congress to agree on the Senate amount of \$2.959 billion.** The Development Assistance account underwrites key resilience building programs that help the poor become more self-reliant and better able to withstand emergency conditions. A key example of this resilience building are activities of Feed the Future, which will be subsumed under the new strategy called for within the recently passed Global Food Security Act.

The Committee's increased funding for the Northern Triangle of Central America in Fiscal Year 2016 was a critical investment to address the root causes of so much of the violence there: social exclusion; poor governance; and lack of economic opportunity. **We urge you to appropriate another \$750 million as stipulated in the House bill for Fiscal Year 2017.** Catholic Relief Services has led many programs in the region that have had a positive impact to change lives and provide opportunities; scaling them up is exactly what is needed now. To that end, we hope you will press USAID and the Department of State to ensure that the rush to spend down funds does not lead them to use contracts over cooperative agreements when such mechanisms are not otherwise warranted. Faith-based institutions are trusted and rooted in local communities; they are well placed for long term development strategies.

Every year, 5.9 million children die worldwide from preventable disease and malnutrition. We are grateful that Congress has been a long-time leader in addressing this suffering. **Robust funding for Maternal and Child Health expands access to life-saving interventions for some of the most marginalized populations on the planet; we urge you to support the House bill's funding level of \$997 million.**

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Worldwide, over 13.4 million children have lost one or both parents due to AIDS. Millions more children are increasingly vulnerable because their families suffer from the social and economic effects of living in high HIV prevalence communities. PEPFAR is the world's largest donor in this arena, responding to the needs of 5.5 million orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) affected by HIV and AIDS. **We appreciate that the Senate report reiterates the Congressional mandate requiring 10 percent of HIV and AIDS funding be directed to programs for orphans and vulnerable children.** Any shift in PEPFAR funding and programming guidance regarding OVC would adversely affect the millions of vulnerable children our nation has committed to serve. Although we have principled concerns about those PEPFAR prevention activities we find inconsistent with Catholic teaching and do not implement or advocate for these activities, we support PEPFAR's overall lifesaving mission.

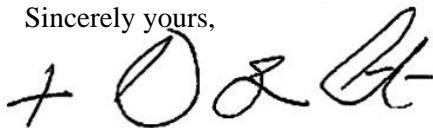
USCCB/CRS appreciate Congress' ongoing and robust commitments to combat human trafficking, a particular priority of Pope Francis. We also welcome the funding for the Atrocities Prevention Board established in both bills this year.

Pope Francis reminds us that "among the vulnerable for whom the Church wishes to care with particular love and concern are unborn children, the most defenseless and innocent among us" Accordingly, we are very concerned that the Senate bill prohibits common sense restrictions on U.S. funds going to international organizations that provide and lobby for abortion. **The House bill includes these prohibitions that respect life and should be enacted into law.** In addition, the House bill puts money towards the health needs of women and children and not towards family planning and keeps it from the UNFPA, which has been implicated in China's coercive family planning programs.

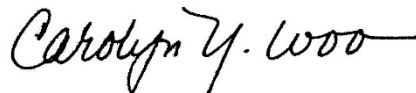
Finally, our world is experiencing more frequent droughts, severe storms and floods, rising sea levels and other climactic shocks that are impacting agricultural yields of small farmers, expanding the geographic scope of disease, and exacerbating migration. These shocks impact developing countries disproportionately and they need help to adapt to these changes. We urge you to heed Pope Francis' call to a renewed and authentic stewardship of the resources God has entrusted to us by **supporting the Senate bill's funding of the Green Climate Fund, which provides multilateral funding for climate adaptation programming.**

The above international assistance priorities do not exhaust all of the Church's concerns in the appropriations process. Other Conference committee and Catholic organizations will be highlighting other areas of appropriations. But we thank you again for your commendable leadership on the life-saving and life-transforming programs that make up U.S. international assistance as outlined in the accompanying chart.

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

Encl.



## International Poverty-Reduction Development and Humanitarian Accounts

Appropriations Requests (\$ in thousands) (OCO included)	FY 16 Omnibus	FY 17 President's Request	USCCB/CRS asks	House bill	Senate bill
<b>State, Foreign Operations (SFOPs)</b>					
Maternal Health and Child Survival (including vaccines)	750,000	814,500	814,500	997,000	814,500
Nutrition	125,000	108,500	230,000	125,000	125,000
Vulnerable Children (orphans and displaced children)	22,000	14,500	30,000	22,000	23,000
HIV/AIDS (USAID)	330,000	236,000	330,000	330,000	330,000
Malaria, TB, Global Health Security & Neglect'd Trop. Dis.	1,082,500	1,095,000	1,095,000		1,151,500
HIV/AIDS (DOS/PEPFAR)	5,670,000	5,670,000	5,670,000	5,670,000	5,670,000
Development Assistance (including water, education)	2,780,971	2,959,573	3,100,000	2,780,971	2,959,573
International Disaster Assistance*	2,794,184	1,957,000	2,794,184	2,794,184	2,394,184
Migration and Refugee Assistance	3,059,000	2,798,600	3,600,000	3,059,000	3,059,000
Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	50,000	50,000	100,000	50,000	50,000
Complex Crises Fund	30,000	30,000	50,000	0	30,000
Millennium Challenge Account	901,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	901,000	905,000
Atrocities Prevention Board (ESF & INCLE)				25,000	25,000
Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities	2,460,662	2,394,930	2,394,930	1,949,536	2,369,930
Peacekeeping Operations	600,630	475,391	475,391	624,523	388,441
Green Climate Fund (Treasury)	0	750,000	750,000	0	500,000
Anti-Trafficking in Persons (DA, ESF, AEECA, INCLE)	85,000	28,099	56,000	65,000	85,000
<b>SFOPs TOTAL</b>	<b>20,740,947</b>	<b>20,532,093</b>	<b>22,640,005</b>		<b>20,880,128</b>
<b>Agricultural (Ag)</b>					
Food for Peace (Title II)	1,716,000	1,350,000	1,716,000	1,466,000	1,600,000
McGovern-Dole	201,626	182,045	201,626	201,000	201,000
Local and Regional Procurement	0	15,000	80,000	0	0
<b>Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS)</b>					
Dept of Labor International Labor Affairs (DOL/ILAB)	86,000			32,000	91,125
*Senate version permits an additional \$400 million to be transferred to this account from ESF.					

## Summary of Message to Congress and Account Descriptions

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)** focuses on prevention, care and treatment, and the support of children affected by AIDS. Although we have principled concerns about those PEPFAR prevention activities we find inconsistent with Catholic teaching and do not implement or advocate for these activities, we support PEPFAR's overall lifesaving mission.

**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** programs 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.

**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.

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

**Atrocities Prevention Board (APB)** improves collaboration, analysis and information sharing to mobilize U.S. efforts to prevent future atrocities and crises.

**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.

**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 \$425 million appropriated to Food for Peace be designated for development programs.

**McGovern-Dole** provides school lunches and take-home food rations 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).*