



United States  
Conference of  
Catholic Bishops



April 23, 2026

Dear Representative/Senator:

On behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on International Justice and Peace, Committee on Migration, and Catholic Relief Services (CRS), we urge Congress to fund international lifesaving and life-affirming humanitarian and development assistance under the jurisdiction of the House Subcommittee on National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs/Senate Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, in Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27), to at least the levels indicated in the attached chart.

Each year, the USCCB and CRS implore Congress to assess budget decisions using three criteria: protection of human life and dignity, impact on the most vulnerable, and advancement of the common good. In a May 2025 address, Pope Leo XIV reflected that, "If you want peace, prepare institutions of peace...this cannot simply involve political institutions, whether national or international, but requires all institutions – educational, economic, and social." Given that government institutions and the Church are jointly called to create a more just world, a Catholic vision for lifesaving and life-affirming assistance invokes both parties as essential partners in fostering peace through solidarity, subsidiarity, and respect for the inherent dignity of all people. Therefore, in alignment with Catholic teaching and a common interest in a safer, stronger, and more prosperous U.S. and world, we urge Congress to prioritize the following in FY27 appropriations:

- **Disaster and Humanitarian Response:** Standing in solidarity with our global family starts with accompanying our brothers and sisters in times of emergency. CRS and USCCB ask Congress to provide a robust allocation for **International Humanitarian Assistance** and level funding for **Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance**, given the focus of these accounts on lifesaving health, water, shelter and nutrition efforts in the wake of conflict, disasters, and displacement. To prevent instability and advance peace, the U.S. government must stand in solidarity with those who are facing acute need. To the extent funding is being used to respond to forced displacement and migration generally, we call on Congress to ensure it is obligated in a manner that upholds the principle of *non-refoulement*, including through the purposes laid out in the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962.
- **Economic and Integral Human Development:** Church teaching is clear that peace through solidarity cannot be achieved with emergency assistance alone but requires life-affirming investments in current and future generations. In a 2026 joint statement by the USCCB and the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), the two Church bodies call for thoughtful partnership in support for the family, youth employment,

care for creation, dignified trade in critical minerals, and peacebuilding. They go on to assert that “we flourish when we freely share [our] material resources [and] human capacities.” To that end, we urge Congress to robustly fund **National Security Investment Programs and Contributions to the International Development Association** to ensure resources for human flourishing. True human flourishing, or integral human development, will not only advance U.S. economic and security objectives but also promote the international common good.

- **Global Health:** The U.S. government has made substantial contributions to the health of women, children, and families around the world. CRS and our local partners have supported many of these efforts over the years – ensuring that children in remote villages receive their HIV medications, providing pregnant women with preventive malaria treatments – and our experiences reinforce the imperative of a solidarity-based approach for successful health programming. Therefore, CRS and USCCB ask Congress to fund the **Global Health Programs** account, which facilitates health-systems strengthening work and other pro-life initiatives, such as those that improve care for pregnant women and ensure adequate nutrition for young children. The Catholic Church has principled concerns about certain health activities that are inconsistent with Catholic teaching, including artificial family planning and the promotion of gender ideology, and have long advocated for maintaining the Helms Amendment and other related pro-life provisions. The USCCB will oppose any bill that expands taxpayer funding of abortion, including any appropriations bill. Nevertheless, we support strong funding for morally appropriate, life-affirming Global Health Programs given the scale at which they advance the dignity and well-being of our collective family.
- **Economic Growth and the Private Sector:** International assistance is most effective when paired with strong local institutions and a vibrant private sector—an approach that ultimately contributes to a safer, stronger, and more prosperous America and world. In this spirit, we urge Congress to provide robust funding for the **U.S. International Development Finance Corporation** and the **Millennium Challenge Corporation**, which mobilize private investment, promote good governance, and address essential infrastructure needs. When paired appropriately with support to local communities and mechanisms to advance good governance and accountability, these investments can lay the foundation for long-term growth and stability.

In addition to funding the accounts listed, we encourage Congress to push for relevant staff capacity and expertise across the Administration’s international assistance mechanisms. Government officials who play a critical role in advancing peace at home and abroad must have the tools to ensure continuity of lifesaving emergency assistance pipelines; facilitate bilateral assistance that leverages the strengths of U.S. faith-based actors; and carry out proper oversight and disbursement of all funds, including allocations to multilateral organizations. CRS and USCCB also urge Congress and the Administration to pursue meaningful collaboration with local civil society organizations – especially local Church actors – who are best placed to engage and be true stewards of lasting and sustainable peace.

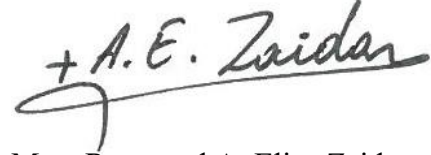
Pope Leo XIV proclaimed that “...the dignity of every human person must be respected today, not tomorrow...,” and in doing so, he urgently calls for each of us to serve our brothers and sisters

across the globe. CRS looks forward to continued engagement with our government partners to pursue the common goals of dignity, security, and justice, and appreciates Congress' steadfast commitment to a more peaceful world.

Sincerely,



Most Reverend Brendan J. Cahill  
Bishop of Victoria  
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration



Most Reverend A. Elias Zaidan  
Bishop of the Maronite Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon  
Chairman, USCCB Committee on International Justice and Peace



Sean Callahan  
President and CEO  
Catholic Relief Services

## Lifesaving and Life-affirming International Humanitarian and Development Assistance

April 10, 2026

Appropriations Accounts (\$ in thousands)	FY25 CR*	FY26 Enacted	FY27 President's Budget Request	FY27 USCCB/CRS Request
<b><i>National Security, State (NSRP)/State, Foreign Operations (SFOPs)</i></b>	<b>29,829,856</b>	<b>24,577,083</b>	<b>11,908,857</b>	<b>25,180,020</b>
Global Health Programs Includes maternal and child health, nutrition, vulnerable children, HIV/AIDS, Global Fund, global health security, malaria, tuberculosis, neglected tropical diseases	10,030,450	9,415,775	5,123,000	9,518,712
International Humanitarian Assistance**	8,669,400**	5,400,000	4,000,000	5,400,000
Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	100	100,000	500,000	100,000
National Security Investment Programs***	7,821,400***	6,766,874	0	6,766,874
Millennium Challenge Account	930,000	830,000	609,000	830,000
Contribution to the International Development Association	1,380,256	1,066,184	866,657	1,066,184
Green Climate Fund	0	0	0	500,000
U.S. International Development Finance Corporation	998,250	998,250	810,200	998,250
<b><i>Agricultural (Ag)</i></b>	<b>1,927,583</b>	<b>1,440,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,740,000</b>
Title II Food for Peace	1,687,583	1,200,000	0	1,500,000
McGovern-Dole	240,000	240,000	0	240,000
<b>COMBINED TOTAL</b>	<b>31,757,439</b>	<b>26,017,083</b>	<b>11,908,857</b>	<b>26,920,020</b>

### Catholic Vision for U.S. Humanitarian and Development Assistance

Each year, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) implore Congress to assess budget decisions using three criteria: protection of human life and dignity, impact on the most vulnerable, and advancement of the common good. The Catholic Church has long recognized that helping those in need, regardless of nationality or faith, is a moral imperative. Humanitarian and development aid are an integral part of the Church's commitment to human life and dignity. As the Church pursues a more peaceful world through dialogue and diplomacy, lifesaving and life-affirming assistance act as necessary complements that allow for sustainable solutions to take root. A comprehensive pro-life, Catholic vision for U.S. humanitarian and development assistance recognizes that the U.S. government, alongside the Church, shares a responsibility to advance the common good. As taught in *Deus caritas est* (2005), the pursuit of a just social order "must be a fundamental norm of the State." *Gaudium et spes* (1965) elaborates on the global nature of this responsibility, noting that wealthier nations have a duty to assist poorer countries. Given that government institutions and the Church are jointly called to create a more just world, a Catholic approach to U.S. international assistance invokes both parties as essential partners in the promotion of human life. Therefore, the USCCB and CRS urge Congress to prioritize these accounts to save lives, reduce poverty, alleviate the drivers of forced migration, and invest in peace.

\* Congress rescinded \$500M in Global Health Programs, \$2.5B in DA, \$496M in IDA, \$800M in MRA, \$1.65B in ESF, and \$43M in the Complex Crises Fund.

\*\* The FY26 Enacted Bill merged International Disaster Assistance and Migration and Refugee Assistance. The FY25 base bill designates \$750 million as an emergency requirement for IDA and MRA, respectively. The Administration did not approve these funds after the CR passed but the funding is still available to be designated.

\*\*\* The FY26 Enacted Bill merged multiple accounts, including Development Assistance and the Economic Support Fund. The FY25 CR level is the sum of ESF and DA.

## Account Descriptions

### State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

**Global Health Programs** support multiple health activities. We do have principled concerns about certain health activities we find inconsistent with Catholic teaching, including artificial family planning, and do not implement or advocate for these activities.

**Maternal and Child Health** programs provide low-cost, life-saving interventions such as micronutrient supplementation, nutritional support, newborn care, immunization, and treatment of pneumonia and diarrheal disease – addressing the biggest killers of mothers and children. This account provides funding for the U.S. contribution to GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, which purchases vaccines for children in poor countries.

**Nutrition** programs provide interventions such as micronutrient supplementation and growth monitoring, which combined with an adequate diet and clean water and sanitation, improves outcomes during the first critical years of a child's life. Malnutrition is the underlying cause of 45 percent of preventable child deaths.

**Vulnerable Children** funding promotes family care for vulnerable children and seeks to reduce violence against children.

**HIV and AIDS PEPFAR** supports HIV and AIDS efforts in 50 countries to achieve epidemic control. Ten percent of PEPFAR funding focuses on mitigating the negative impact of HIV on orphans and vulnerable children affected and infected by HIV and AIDS. Also included is funding for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria which works to prevent, treat, and care for people with HIV, TB and Malaria and build health systems.

**Malaria** programs treat, prevent, and control this deadly disease which is one of the biggest killers of children under five worldwide.

**Tuberculosis** programs screen, diagnose, and treat millions of people each year. TB is the leading infectious killer globally.

**Global Health Security** programs prevent, prepare for, and respond to unanticipated and emerging global health threats.

**International Humanitarian Assistance** provides for life-saving humanitarian assistance under a new consolidated account which includes the funding and authorities previously made available under International Disaster Assistance and Migration and Refugee Assistance. This includes authorities to support emergency health, water, shelter and nutrition efforts; disaster risk reduction and rehabilitation; and protection for refugees and internally displaced persons.

**National Security Investment Programs** merges Development Assistance and the Economic Support Fund to carry out an array of development and economic growth activities, including agriculture and rural development, education, environment, water and sanitation, democracy and governance, microfinance, anti-trafficking in persons, and peacebuilding. We support a poverty-focused use of these funds.

**Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance** is a drawdown account used, with Presidential authority, to respond to humanitarian crises.

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

**Contribution to the International Development Association** help the World Bank provide concessional loans, grants, and debt relief to the lowest-income countries. In addition to IDA, Congress should consider funds to support other multilateral development banks that support poverty-reduction.

**Green Climate Fund** provides resources to developing countries to help governments carry out their expressed climate adaptation and mitigation priorities and protect their populations from the adverse impacts of a changing climate. In addition to GCF, Congress should consider funding other multilateral programs that protect families from adverse climate impacts, including the Adaptation Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund.

**U.S. International Development Finance Corporation**, created by the BUILD Act, utilizes financial tools such as loans and loan guarantees, technical assistance, feasibility studies, political risk insurance, and equity investments to promote private investment that bolsters health, agriculture, energy security, infrastructure, and small businesses in less-developed countries. We support a use of these funds for economic and integral human development, and urge Congress to ensure that investments result in tangible development benefits for local families and markets.

### Agriculture

**Title II Food for Peace** provides U.S. food aid for emergencies and provides \$365 million that can help address chronic hunger crises and transition families from food aid to self-reliance.

**McGovern-Dole** provides school lunches and take-home food rations that use U.S. food aid to encourage school attendance, improve literacy, and other nutrition and education support efforts. No less than \$24 million should be provided for local and regionally procured commodities for sustainability.