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April 24, 2017

Senate Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

As you finalize funding priorities for the Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations, **we write to urge you to protect international poverty-reducing humanitarian and development assistance programs in the FY 2017 and FY 2018 State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs appropriations.**

We are concerned by the prospect of a dramatic increase in defense spending coupled with simultaneous and severe reductions to non-defense discretionary spending. The Administration has proposed a 17% rescission in FY 2017 and a 32% cut in FY 2018 in funding for our diplomatic and development agencies. We believe these deep cuts pose a threat to the security of our nation and world, and would harm vulnerable people facing dire circumstances such as famine, war and political instability.

In previous letters to the Committee, we laid out our specific requests and justifications for poverty-reducing humanitarian and development accounts. Please refer to the accompanying chart for the list of sub-accounts that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) urge you to protect.

Conflict and drought in South Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen have created famine-like conditions. USCCB and CRS have asked Congress to allocate an additional \$1 billion in the FY 2017 appropriations to save lives in these four countries. The United Nations is seeking \$4.4 billion by June to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe.

Related to these conflicts are the unprecedented numbers of forcibly displaced persons throughout the world. Of these 65 million displaced persons, more than 21 million are refugees. International Disaster Assistance, Migration and Refugee Assistance, and Food for Peace are vital programs that save lives and foster stability in countries that host large numbers of refugees. Longer term, sustainable development activities supported by sub-accounts, like Development Assistance, are crucial to build prosperous and peaceful communities that will resist the forces of extremism, division and conflict.

USCCB and CRS acknowledge the importance of national security, but security cannot be achieved through military means alone. Diplomacy and development remain indispensable to preventing, mitigating and resolving conflict and instability. As Pope Francis wrote in *The Joy of the Gospel*: “Today in many places we hear a call for greater security. But until exclusion and inequality in society and between peoples are reversed, it will be impossible to eliminate violence” (59).

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The longstanding teaching of our Church warns us that military buildups and corresponding cuts to programs for poor persons at home and abroad are unlikely to make us more secure. We risk an “arms race.” Sadly, the teaching of the Second Vatican Council remains true today:

“[T]he arms race in which an already considerable number of countries are engaged is not a safe way to preserve a steady peace, nor is the so-called balance resulting from this race a sure and authentic peace. Rather than being eliminated thereby, the causes of war are in danger of being gradually aggravated. While extravagant sums are being spent for the furnishing of ever new weapons, an adequate remedy cannot be provided for the multiple miseries afflicting the whole modern world” (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 81).

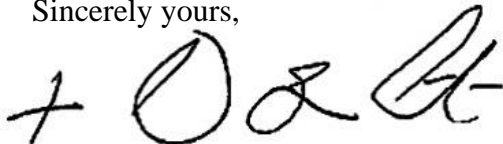
U.S. diplomatic efforts to address conflicts from Syria to South Sudan and to improve governance in places like Nigeria and Central America, together with U.S. international assistance, can go a long way to manage and ameliorate the impact of migrant flows and food insecurity before many more lives are at risk. Investments in peacekeeping, the Atrocities Prevention Board, the Complex Crisis Fund and other initiatives to manage conflict and the root causes of migration are essential.

USCCB and CRS evaluate budgets in light of two moral principles: first, every budget decision should be assessed by whether it protects or threatens human life and dignity; second, a central moral measure of any budget proposal is how it affects “the least of these” (Matthew 25). The needs of those who are hungry or homeless, vulnerable or at risk, without work or in poverty, forced to flee their home or country, should come first.

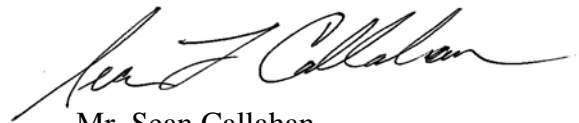
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We thank you for your leadership and service. Once again we urge you to protect funding in Fiscal Year 2017 and 2018 appropriations for these critical, life-saving accounts.

Sincerely yours,



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



Mr. Sean Callahan  
President/CEO  
Catholic Relief Services



## International Poverty-Reducing Development and Humanitarian Accounts



Appropriations Requests (\$ in thousands) (OCO included)	FY 16 Omnibus	USCCB/CRS FY17 Request	FY 17 CR
<b><i>State, Foreign Operations (SFOPs)</i></b>	20,740,947	22,640,005	20,740,947
Maternal and Child Health (including vaccines)	750,000	814,500	750,000
Nutrition	125,000	230,000	125,000
Vulnerable Children (orphans and displaced children)	22,000	30,000	22,000
HIV/AIDS (USAID)	330,000	330,000	330,000
Malaria	674,000	674,000	674,000
Tuberculosis	236,000	236,000	236,000
Neglected Tropical Diseases	100,000	100,000	100,000
HIV/AIDS (DOS/PEPFAR)	5,670,000	5,670,000	5,670,000
Development Assistance (including water, education)	2,780,971	3,100,000	2,780,971
International Disaster Assistance	2,794,184	2,794,184	3,410,284
Migration and Refugee Assistance	3,059,000	3,600,000	3,359,000
Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	50,000	100,000	50,000
Complex Crises Fund	30,000	50,000	30,000
Millennium Challenge Account	901,000	1,000,000	901,000
Atrocities Prevention Board (ESF & INCLE)			0
Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities	2,460,662	2,394,930	2,460,662
Peacekeeping Operations	600,630	475,391	650,630
Green Climate Fund (Treasury)	0	750,000	0
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<b><i>Agricultural (Ag)</i></b>	1,917,626	1,997,626	1,917,626
Food for Peace (Title II)	1,716,000	1,716,000	1,716,000
McGovern-Dole	201,626	201,626	201,626
Local and Regional Procurement	0	80,000	0
<b><i>Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS)</i></b>	86,000	91,125	86,000
Dept. of Labor International Labor Affairs (DOL/ILAB)	86,000	91,125	86,000
<b>COMBINED TOTAL (~0.5% of budget)</b>	<b>22,744,573</b>	<b>24,578,756</b>	<b>23,710,673</b>

## 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-reducing development and humanitarian programs to meet urgent needs and invest in peace.**

**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 in the developing world.

**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.

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

**HIV and AIDS PEPFAR (USAID & State Funding)** funding focuses on prevention, care and treatment, and the support of children affected and infected by HIV and 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** programs treat, prevent, and control this deadly disease with the vision of ending preventable child and maternal deaths. The programs also build government capacity to treat and prevent malaria.

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**Neglected Tropical Diseases** programs focus on scaling up integrated treatment to prevent parasitic and bacterial diseases that cause morbidity and mortality.

**Development Assistance** programs support an array of critical development activities, including primary education; food security; clean water and sanitation; microfinance, climate change adaptation and mitigation; democracy promotion and good governance, and conflict management and mitigation.

**International Disaster Assistance** funds emergency health, water, shelter and nutrition efforts, as well as disaster risk reduction and rehabilitation through the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). It also supports emergency food security through the Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP).

**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** is a \$100 million drawdown account used, with Presidential authority, to respond to humanitarian crises.

**Complex Crisis Fund** enables rapid investments to catalyze peace and mitigate conflict in the face of unforeseen crises or violence.

**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.

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

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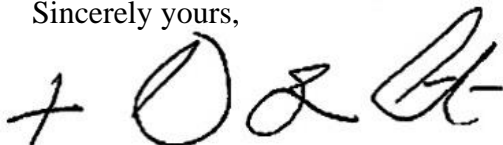
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