



## *Committee on International Justice and Peace*

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3160

WEBSITE: WWW.USCCB.ORG/JPHD • FAX 202-541-3339

April 20, 2009

The Honorable John Spratt  
Chairman  
House Budget Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Ranking Member  
House Budget Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Spratt and Ranking Member Ryan:

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) appreciate in advance the work the House and Senate will conduct in conference to approve a consensus federal budget resolution for Fiscal Year 2010. We respectfully urge you to retain the Senate version of the Function 150 International Affairs Account which included \$5.3 billion more than the House version. This additional funding would put the United States on a path towards the Administration's needed goal of doubling U.S. foreign assistance.

USCCB and CRS recognize that the Conference Committee is operating under constraints in the midst of the economic crisis. However, increased support for humanitarian and development assistance is crucial to help the poorest people in developing countries, who are also suffering even more as a result of the global economic downturn. Without the funding included in the Senate version, USCCB and CRS fear that millions of people will needlessly suffer and fail to reach their potential because critical increases in the following poverty-focused programs will be impossible:

- a. HIV/AIDS programs, especially the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR);
- b. Development and Humanitarian assistance and emergency programs with a special attention to the most vulnerable people like women and children;
- c. Title II Food Aid Program for development and emergency programs;
- d. Millennium Challenge Account;
- e. Debt relief for poor developing nations; and
- f. Peacekeeping programs.
- g. Refugee funding under the Migration and Refugee Assistance Account (MRA) and the office of Refugee Resettlement

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The Bishops' Conference and CRS support foreign assistance based on our belief that each person is created in the image of God and has dignity. Aid to poor people overseas protects human life and dignity by promoting human development and reducing crushing poverty, deadly diseases and malnutrition. We stand willing to work with you to increase and improve the United States' support to the poorest people living in the world today.

Sincerely yours,



Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard  
Bishop of Albany  
Chairman  
Committee on International Justice and Peace



Ken Hackett  
President  
Catholic Relief Services

Cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker, House of Representatives  
The Honorable Steny Hoyer, Majority Leader, House of Representatives  
The Honorable John A. Boehner, Minority Leader, House of Representatives  
Members of the House Budget Committee