



International Justice and Peace
3211 4th Street, NE
Washington, DC 20017
Tel. (202) 541-3160
Fax (202) 541-3339



228 West Lexington Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
Tel. (410) 625-2220
Fax (410) 685-1635

July 5, 2011

Honorable Representative Kay Granger
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
Appropriations Committee
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Representative Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
Appropriations Committee
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Lowey:

As you prepare to mark up the FY 2012 Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) wish to share with you our funding priorities for poverty-focused humanitarian and development assistance. In supporting these life-saving services, we seek to promote integral human development, reduce poverty, and improve stability in the world's poorest countries and communities in morally appropriate ways. Doing so contributes to our long-term security, since poverty and hopelessness can provide a fertile ground for the growth of terrorism.

We acknowledge the difficult challenges that Congress faces to get the nation's financial house in order: fulfilling the demands of justice and obligations to future generations; controlling future debt and deficits; and protecting the life and dignity of those who are poor and vulnerable. However, the United States has a moral imperative to maintain its commitment to assist the poorest people in the poorest places on earth as they face the global impacts of the economic downturn, climate change, and food crisis.

Based on our overseas experience and relationships, the USCCB and CRS have identified critical poverty-focused development and humanitarian accounts that warrant robust funding (please see the attached table). We have also attached testimony submitted to the subcommittee earlier this year that provides more details on the priority programs we support. The enacted FY 2011 Foreign Affairs budget cut these life-saving programs by an average of 8.4% from FY 2010; further cuts would be disproportionate and life-threatening to the world's poorest people.

At stake are a wide range of life-saving and dignity-preserving activities including the following: agricultural assistance to poor farmers; medicines for people living with HIV/AIDS and vaccines for preventable diseases; assistance to orphans and vulnerable children; humanitarian assistance

Letter to Representatives Granger and Lowey
Page 2
July 5, 2011

in cases of famine; emergency health care, shelter, and reconstruction in disaster-devastated places like Haiti; peacekeepers to protect innocent civilians in troubled nations such as Sudan and the Congo; and life-sustaining support to migrants and refugees fleeing conflict or persecution in nations like Iraq.

We welcome appropriate efforts to reduce our nation's deficit and debt, but we urge the Subcommittee to work with other members of Congress to be fiscally responsible in morally appropriate ways. First, insist on balanced contributions across the entire federal budget, including defense, revenue, agricultural subsidies, and fair and just entitlement reform. Second, give priority to those who are poor and vulnerable at home and abroad. Preserve life-saving services to the poor; if necessary, target other foreign affairs accounts not listed on the attached table.

The Subcommittee must cut with great care, eliminating only those expenses unrelated to basic human needs and development—for example, in middle or high income countries that are better able to cope with the consequences. Even within accounts not on the attached list, however, we urge that the needs of the poor be given priority. For example, in the Economic Support Fund, assistance for Sudan and Haiti and other poverty-focused programs must be retained. Of course, as with all accounts, we should subject poverty-focused services to careful scrutiny so as to eliminate waste and duplication.

As you consider appropriations language, we strongly support restoring the Mexico City Policy against funding groups that perform or promote abortion, and denying funding to the U.N. Population Fund which supports a program of coerced abortion and involuntary sterilization in China. It is also important to preserve the Helms Amendment, prohibiting U.S. funding for abortion, and the Kemp-Kasten provision, prohibiting support of organizations involved in programs of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization.

The USCCB, CRS, and many others in the faith community committed to a Circle of Protection (www.circleofprotection.us) stand ready to work with leaders of both parties for a budget that reduces future deficits, protects poor and vulnerable people at home and abroad, advances the common good, and promotes human life and dignity.

Sincerely yours,



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



Mr. Ken Hackett
President
Catholic Relief Services

Encl. 2