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March 17, 2017

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

Year upon year, the State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs subcommittee has had a bipartisan commitment to meeting our country's moral obligation to the growing humanitarian poverty reduction needs overseas. As you contemplate fiscal year 2018 appropriations for programs and activities under the Subcommittee's jurisdiction, **we urge you to maintain that leadership by protecting funding for poverty-focused humanitarian and development assistance** as well as by maintaining adequate levels of funding for assistance, protection, and durable solutions for those who are forcibly displaced. (See the FY 2017 chart attached for your reference.)

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) evaluate budgets in accord with two critical guidelines: 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 and homeless, vulnerable and at risk, without work or in poverty, forced to flee their home or country, should come first. Americans have led the world in responding to the immense needs of vulnerable persons and communities for decades. Privileged to serve more than 100 million people in more than 100 countries last year, Catholic Relief Services can attest first-hand to the significant impact of poverty-reducing international assistance; and to the gratitude it engenders. USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services, likewise, was privileged to work with the U.S. Departments of State, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, thirty-seven states, and numerous local communities across the country to welcome and resettle over 23,400 people through the U.S. refugee admissions program last year.

Our world is experiencing more food emergencies now than we have seen in decades, and the related phenomenon of forced displacement is at an all time high. Nearly 20 million people face starvation in the next six months, according to the UN. A famine has already been declared in South Sudan's Unity State, which could spread to other areas of the country. Large areas of Yemen, Nigeria, and Somalia are on the brink of famine. The lives of as many as 1.4 million children are at "imminent risk." We appreciate the fact that Congress has increased the International Disaster Assistance account in recent years to respond to the significant needs of refugees and internally displaced persons. That same funding is now being tapped to respond to the food insecurity. **We urge you not to reduce the allocations to International Disaster Assistance (IDA), Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA), nor Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA);** all humanitarian accounts which are critical to responding to the 65 million displaced and hungry around the world.

The MRA account funds life-saving overseas humanitarian assistance for refugees, and facilitates the admission of some of the most vulnerable of those refugees into the United States. These programs and activities thereby support crucial allies, such as Jordan, that host large numbers of refugees.

Humanitarian assistance is likewise an important strategic response to conflict, failures of governance, and forced migration. The United States' diplomatic efforts -- to address conflicts from Syria to South Sudan and to improve governance in places like Nigeria -- can go a long way to manage and ameliorate the impact of refugee 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 a critical part of these diplomatic efforts.** We support efforts to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our priority programs funded through the Department of State and USAID. Moreover, we welcome ongoing partnership with the U.S. government, leveraging private money and our long-standing partnerships with local actors, especially the extensive network of Catholic institutions and organizations that enjoy the trust of local populations in many countries.

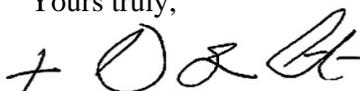
Both diplomacy and development are critical tools in America's foreign policy toolbox. **Investments in water and sanitation, resilience to droughts, and education through the Development Assistance account can help to prevent humanitarian crises at a fraction of the cost.** Climate change magnifies the challenges vulnerable people face overseas -- like longer droughts and more intense storms. Investments in climate adaptation efforts through bilateral programming and multilateral mechanisms, like the **Green Climate Fund**, can help to address the human impacts of these shocks. For example, over the last few years CRS and USAID have partnered to build small farmers' resilience to drought in areas of Eastern and Southern Africa. Those investments helped many communities to manage the 2016 El Nino-led drought, which has been described as the worst in a generation.

**The recent Ebola and Zika outbreaks remind us that investments in life-saving global health are not only the right thing to do, but they are also an imperative to protect people at home and abroad.** Small investments in health achieve major impacts. Malaria, one of the most significant killers of children under five worldwide, can be treated for \$1. Long-lasting insecticide treated bed nets costing \$5 per family can reduce transmission of malaria by up to 90 percent in areas of high coverage. Most neglected tropical diseases can be treated for 50 cents per person. It's hard to imagine a more impactful use of taxpayer dollars.

Again, thank you for your leadership to maintain these critical accounts in recent years. We urge you to protect this funding in Fiscal Year 2018 to protect human life and dignity, reflect our values as a nation, and defend our national security.

We leave you with the words from a Catholic colleague in South Sudan. He says of the refugees, "If they have a piece of bread, however small, they break it into as many pieces as they can and say: help yourself." He continues, "We don't just keep people alive. We bring their dignity back." As Americans, "we have big obligations and it's an opportunity to express our values in a most fundamental way. We *can* help and that's why we *have to* help."

Yours truly,



Bishop Oscar Cantu  
Chair, Committee on  
International Justice and Peace



Bishop Joe Vasquez  
Chair, Committee on  
Migration



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
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Nutrition	125,000	230,000	125,000
Vulnerable Children (orphans and displaced children)	22,000	30,000	22,000
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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
Anti-Trafficking in Persons (DA, ESF, AEECA, INCLE)	85,000	56,000	85,000
<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.

**Tuberculosis** programs screen, diagnose, and treat millions of people each year affected by the leading infectious disease killer globally in order to cure and prevent the spread of TB.

**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.

**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 U.S. food aid for emergencies and funds long-term development programs that support nutrition and build resilience. We recommend a minimum of \$350 million for development programs and permitting the use of the Community Development Fund (CDF) for them.

**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.



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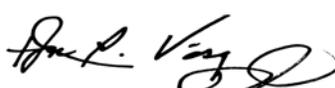
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