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April 17, 2012

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair and Ranking Member:

We write at this time with profound concern regarding the budget constraints on FY 2013 appropriations. Our country must be fiscally responsible in morally responsible ways. Therefore, as you allocate funding to the International Affairs accounts, we urge you to ensure full funding of poverty-focused international relief and development accounts (as enumerated in the attached chart).

In a March 2, 2012 letter to the House, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops asserted that “every budget decision should be assessed by whether it protects or threatens human life and dignity. 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, without work or in poverty should come first.” This moral obligation calls our nation to draw “a ‘circle of protection’ around our brothers and sisters at home and abroad who are poor and vulnerable.”

Although we do not support everything in the International Affairs budget, we are alarmed by the likely impact on poor persons of the 11% cut recommended in the House budget. Since poverty-focused assistance is less than 1% of the budget, reduced funding would have negligible impact on deficit reduction, but would have a profound impact on the poorest at a time of increased need.

We are also concerned by some of the policy proposals in the House budget. We especially urge you to refrain from merging USAID’s development assistance into the Millennium Challenge Corporation, cutting disaster assistance, and drastically reducing agricultural development assistance related to Feed the Future.

As we write, the humanitarian community—including CRS and its Church partners-- is working to help millions in the Horn of Africa recover from crisis. We are rushing to address a new emergency in the Sahel region of West Africa. Now is not the time for unstudied funding cuts, structural changes, and program shifts with potentially disastrous impacts.

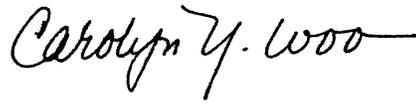
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As the Conference of Bishops wrote: "The moral measure of this budget debate is not which party wins or which powerful interests prevail, but rather how those who are jobless, hungry, homeless or poor are treated. Their voices are too often missing in these debates, but they have the most compelling moral claim on our consciences and our common resources."

Sincerely yours,

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Most Reverend Richard J. Pates
Bishop of Des Moines
Chair, Committee on Justice and Peace
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



Dr. Carolyn Y Woo
President
Catholic Relief Services



**POVERTY-FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT
and HUMANITARIAN ACCOUNTS
SUPPORTED BY USCCB and CRS**



<u>FUNDING ACCOUNT TITLE (\$ in thousands)</u>	<u>Enacted FY 2012</u>	<u>Pres. Req. FY 2013</u>	<u>% Difference FY 2012-2013</u>
<i>State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Budget:</i>			
Maternal and Child Health (including vaccines)	605,550	578,000	-4.5%
Nutrition	95,000	90,000	-5.3%
Vulnerable Children (orphans and displaced children)	17,500	13,000	-25.7%
HIV/AIDS PEPFAR (USAID Funding)	350,000	330,000	-5.7%
Malaria and Other Infectious Diseases (tropical diseases)	1,033,000	963,000	-6.8%
HIV/AIDS PEPFAR (State Funding)	5,542,860	5,350,000	-3.5%
Development Assistance (e.g. Feed the Future, climate change)	2,519,950	2,525,500	0.2%
International Disaster Assistance	975,000	960,000	-1.5%
Transition Initiatives (post-conflict countries)	56,695	57,600	1.6%
Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA)	1,875,100	1,625,400	-13.3%
Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	27,200	50,000	83.8%
Millennium Challenge Account (development projects)	898,200	898,200	0.0%
Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities	1,828,182	2,098,500	14.8%
Peacekeeping Operations	383,818	249,100	-35.1%
International Development Association (including debt relief)	1,325,000	1,358,500	2.5%
Debt Restructuring (Sudan debt relief for FY13)	12,000	*250,000	1983.0%
TOTAL	\$17,545,055	\$17,396,800	-0.8%
	(0.5% of total federal budget)		(-4.2% from FY10)

* Preconditioned on Sudan's fulfillment of Comprehensive Peace Agreement obligations and their respect for human rights.

Summary of Message to Congress and Account Descriptions

In a time of austerity and fiscal restraints, we need to give moral priority to programs that help the poor, both at home and abroad. We urge Congress to **preserve and strengthen funding for poverty-focused international development and humanitarian programs** that save lives and reduce poverty in the FY 2013 budget. The President's Budget Request increased the overall International Affairs Budget by 2.4%, but cut poverty-focused programs. We are concerned about the President's proposed cuts to the following accounts: Migration and Refugee Assistance, HIV/AIDS, other health and nutrition programs, and International Disaster Assistance.

Maternal and Child Health programs provide proven life-saving help, such as newborn care, immunization, community treatment of pneumonia and nutrition programs that address the major killers of mothers and children in the developing world.

Nutrition Programs help women and children to improve their overall nutrition during the most crucial periods of their lives such as pregnancy and the first years of a child's life.

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

HIV/AIDS PEPFAR (USAID Funding) funding focuses on prevention, care and treatment efforts, and the support of children affected by AIDS in over 90 countries.

Malaria and Other Infectious Diseases funding prepares for avian flu response and helps to prevent and treat HIV, malaria, TB, and other neglected tropical diseases. This fund is critical to prevent major health outbreaks.

HIV/AIDS (State Funding) funds PEPFAR, which save millions of lives by providing HIV prevention efforts (with an emphasis on abstinence and behavior change), care for families and children affected by family members with HIV/AIDS, and anti-retroviral treatment efforts that allow people to live productive lives. These programs also treat malaria, immunize people across the globe, and invest in research and development.

Development Assistance programs support an array of activities, including education, agriculture, water and sanitation, small enterprise, climate change, democracy promotion and good governance. These programs help promote human development and stability in poor countries.

International Disaster Assistance funds emergency health, water, shelter and nutrition efforts through the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. It also funds disaster risk reduction, rehabilitation, transitions to development, and emergency food security.

Transition Initiatives help countries in or emerging from conflict to rebuild communities and strengthen government structures; it bridges the gap between emergency relief and longer-term development.

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 programs respond to humanitarian crises in places like Sudan and Iraq.

Millennium Challenge Account provides U.S. funding to countries with a commitment to good governance; in particular, it funds infrastructure projects.

Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities deploy peacekeeping troops to protect civilians in places like Sudan, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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.

International Development Association in the World Bank provides debt relief for some of the poorest countries in the world.

Debt Restructuring funds relieve debt burdens for the poorest countries freeing up resources to invest more in education and health care. The full amount budgeted could be used to forgive all of Sudan's debt to the United States if Sudan fulfills all the requirements.

Accounts in italics are subaccounts of Global Health Programs (USAID).