



3211 4<sup>th</sup> 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

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June 9, 2023

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on International Justice and Peace and Catholic Relief Services (CRS), **we write to urge Congress to increase international poverty-reducing humanitarian and development assistance under the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs in Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations to at least the levels indicated in the attached chart.**

As Congressional leaders discuss Fiscal Year 2024 spending, it is important to consider [the moral and human dimensions of the ongoing budget debate](#). We fear the human and social costs of substantial cuts to international assistance, and we caution against reductions to such programs that demonstrate effectiveness in promoting life and dignity and advancing international solidarity and security. As Catholics, we urge you to assess every budget decision on three criteria: whether it protects or threatens human life and dignity, how it affects “the least of these” (Mt 25), and how it promotes the common good.

In Pope Francis' remarks on the World Day of Peace this January, he said “...we are called to confront the challenges of our world in a spirit of responsibility and compassion.... We must promote actions that enhance peace and put an end to the conflicts and wars that continue to spawn poverty and death. We urgently need to join in caring for our common home and in implementing clear and effective measures to combat climate change. ...The scandal of entire peoples starving remains an open wound.”

We once more join the Pope's call to ensure food security for all, promote peace, and combat climate change. The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) estimates 48.9 million people are on the brink of starvation. Extreme hunger has more than doubled since 2019, with surging food, fertilizer, and energy prices, further constraining household purchasing power and agricultural productivity. Food insecurity is exacerbated by conflict, inflation, climate change and war around the globe, most notably amidst the war in Ukraine. To address pressing humanitarian needs and long-term development goals, we recommend the subcommittee increase funding for **International Disaster Assistance**, which supports emergency food security programming, as well as for **Development Assistance**, which provides resources to Feed the Future, a whole-of-government initiative that aims to address the root causes of global hunger, poverty and malnutrition.

Hunger does not exist in isolation. Conflict and forced displacement as well as poor health all drive hunger and scarcity. At a time when many are focused on the war in Ukraine, it is important now more than ever that we continue to show our compassion to the rest of the world, where hundreds of millions of people struggle to deal with the root causes of persistent conflict and unprecedented displacement. Consequently, we urge the subcommittee to increase funding to life saving **Global Health Programs, Migration and Refugee Assistance**, and the **Complex Crisis Fund**, as well as **peacebuilding, atrocities prevention**, and social cohesion programs.

Climate change is a threat multiplier, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable -- by disrupting livelihoods, destroying homes, agriculture, and natural resources. To ensure vulnerable populations can adapt to climate change, we recommend the subcommittee appropriate funds to the **Green Climate Fund** and increase appropriations to **Development Assistance** bilateral funds that support adaptation, clean energy, nature-based solutions, and sustainable landscapes alongside climate-smart agriculture and water, sanitation, and hygiene, always respecting the autonomy of peoples “as the principal protagonists of the destiny of their nation” (Fratelli Tutti, 233).

In closing his World Day of Peace remarks, Pope Francis said, “Only by responding generously to these [global challenges], with an altruism inspired by God’s infinite and merciful love, will we be able to build a new world and contribute to the extension of his kingdom, which is a kingdom of love, justice and peace.” While we are committed to working with Congress to foster such love, justice, and peace, we have grave concerns about providing taxpayer funding for activities inconsistent with right reason and basic human rights that Catholic teaching provides. We therefore strongly urge Congress to maintain the longstanding, bipartisan, and life-saving Helms Amendment and all related pro-life riders in the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill. The USCCB will oppose any bill that expands taxpayer funding of abortion, including any appropriations bill.

We thank Congress for the ongoing support for international poverty-reducing humanitarian and development assistance and we look forward to working with you to tackle our many global challenges in a spirit of responsibility and compassion.

Sincerely,



Most Rev. David J. Malloy  
Bishop of Rockford  
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace



Mr. Sean Callahan  
President and CEO  
Catholic Relief Services



## International Poverty-Reducing Development and Humanitarian Accounts

March 10, 2023



Appropriations Accounts (\$ in thousands)	FY22 Base Approps	FY23 Base Approps	Administration's FY24 Request	USCCB/CRS FY24 Request
<b><i>State, Foreign Operations (SFOPs)</i></b>	<b>23,300,906</b>	<b>24,270,435</b>	<b>29,529,219</b>	<b>30,513,119</b>
Maternal and Child Health (including GAVI)	890,000	910,000	910,000	1,012,000
Nutrition	155,000	160,000	160,000	230,000
Vulnerable Children (orphans and displaced children)	27,500	30,000	30,000	35,000
Malaria	775,000	795,000	780,000	900,000
Tuberculosis	371,050	394,500	358,500	469,000
Neglected Tropical Diseases	107,500	114,500	114,500	114,500
Global Health Security	700,000	900,000	1,245,000	1,245,000
HIV/AIDS (State PEPFAR and USAID)	4,720,000	4,725,000	4,700,000	4,725,000
Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Tuberculosis	1,560,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Development Assistance (including Water, Basic Ed)	4,140,494	4,368,613	5,425,697	5,425,697
International Disaster Assistance	3,905,460*	3,905,460**	4,699,362	4,899,362***
Migration and Refugee Assistance	2,912,188*	2,912,188**	3,912,000	4,112,000***
Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	100*	100	100,000	100,000
Complex Crises Fund	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000
Millennium Challenge Account	912,000	930,000	1,073,000	1,073,000
Atrocities Prevention Fund (ESF & INCLE)	5,000	6,000	---	25,000
Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities	1,498,614	1,481,915	1,940,702	1,940,702
Peacekeeping Operations	455,000	460,759	420,458	420,458
Green Climate Fund (Treasury)	0	0	1,600,000	1,600,000
Anti-Trafficking in Persons (DA, ESF, AEECA, INCLE)	106,000	116,400	---	126,400
<b><i>Agricultural (Ag)</i></b>	<b>1,977,000</b>	<b>1,993,331</b>	<b>2,043,331</b>	<b>2,265,000</b>
Title II Food for Peace	1,740,000*	1,750,000**	1,800,000	2,000,000
McGovern-Dole	237,000	243,331**	243,331	265,000
<b><i>Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS)</i></b>	<b>106,000</b>	<b>116,125</b>	<b>130,525</b>	<b>130,525</b>
Bureau of International Labor Affairs (DOL/ILAB)	106,000	116,125	130,525	130,525
<b>COMBINED TOTAL</b>	<b>25,383,906</b>	<b>26,379,891</b>	<b>31,703,075</b>	<b>32,908,644</b>

\* Total enacted with supplemental funding for Afghanistan/Ukraine: IDA-\$11.3B; MRA-\$5.1B; ERMA-\$2.28B; FFP-\$1.84B.

\*\* Total enacted thus far with supplemental funding for Ukraine/globe: IDA-\$4.837B; MRA-\$4.447B; FFP-\$1.8B; FFE-\$248M.

\*\*\* Due to budgetary constraints in FY22/FY23, Congress augmented base funding with additional funding in a supplemental title of the omnibus. Should Congress, again, simultaneously appropriate supplemental funding along with base funding for FY24, these requests would be amended to better reflect ongoing needs.

## 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 low and middle-income 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. We urge Congress to **fund international poverty-reducing development and humanitarian programs to alleviate suffering 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. This account also provides funding for the U.S. contribution to GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, which purchases vaccines for children in poor countries. Programs such as these have helped reduce the number of preventable child deaths worldwide from 12.6 million in 1990 to 5.3 million today.

**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. Malnutrition is the underlying cause of 45 percent of preventable child deaths.

**Vulnerable Children** funding promotes family care for vulnerable children and seeks to reduce violence against children.

**HIV and AIDS PEPFAR (USAID & State Funding)** supports HIV and AIDS efforts in 50 countries to achieve epidemic control. Ten percent of PEPFAR funding focuses on mitigating the negative impact of HIV on orphans and vulnerable children affected and infected by HIV and AIDS. Also included is funding for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria which works to prevent, treat, and care for people with HIV, TB and Malaria and build health systems. The Global Fund is working in over 100 countries and has saved 32 million lives. 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 and urge robust funding for the Global Fund.

**Malaria** programs treat, prevent, and control this deadly disease which is one of the biggest killers of children under five worldwide.

**Tuberculosis** programs screen, diagnose, and treat millions of people each year. TB is the leading infectious killer globally.

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

**Global Health Security** programs prevent, prepare for, and respond to unanticipated and emerging global health threats.

**Development Assistance** programs support an array of critical development activities, including basic education; Global Food Security Act implementation; 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 Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA). It also supports cash and voucher-based Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP). *Due to budgetary constraints in FY22 and FY23, Congress reduced the base funding number and included what is ostensibly base appropriations in a supplemental title in the omnibus bill.*

**Migration and Refugee Assistance** protects refugees and internally displaced persons, helps them to repatriate when conflict ends or natural disaster responses permit, and supports admissions to safe countries like the U.S. *Due to budgetary constraints in FY22 and FY23, Congress reduced the base funding number and included what is ostensibly base appropriations in a supplemental title in the omnibus bill.*

**Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance** is a drawdown account used, with Presidential authority, to respond to humanitarian crises. ERMA is capped at \$100M.

**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 Fund** provides resources to the Department of State for the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities, including by acting on the recommendations of the Atrocity Early Warning Task Force.

**Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities** deploy peacekeeping troops to protect civilians in places like Sudan and Somalia. Based on UN assessed rates of contribution, the U.S. is currently in arrears estimated at more than \$1.28 billion.

**Peacekeeping Operations** finances the training and equipping of peacekeeping troops and the professionalization of militia groups committed to protecting their people. The U.S. is currently in arrears estimated at \$108 million.

**Green Climate Fund** provides assistance to developing countries to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. In addition to GCF, other multilateral and bilateral programs to address climate change adaptation and mitigation should be considered, including the Adaptation Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund.

**Anti-Trafficking in Persons** assistance helps other nations to prevent trafficking, prosecute perpetrators, and support victims.

**Title II Food for Peace** provides U.S. food aid for emergencies and funds \$350 million in long-term development programs that support nutrition and build resilience.

**McGovern-Dole** provides school lunches and take-home food rations to encourage students, especially girls, to attend school, and other school support efforts. No less than \$26.5 million should provide for local and regionally procured commodities for sustainability.

**Bureau of International Labor Affairs** funds programs to combat the worst forms of child labor, forced labor, and trafficking in persons.