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June 28, 2022

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 2023 appropriations to at least the levels indicated in the attached chart.**

On the World Day of Peace this past January, Pope Francis reminded us that “the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth constantly make themselves heard, pleading for justice and peace.” Communities and families impacted by COVID-19; conflict and crises from Afghanistan to Ukraine; and devastating extreme weather events cry out for help and hope to lift themselves out of poverty. Each year, USCCB and CRS assess federal spending on how it responds to the “cry of the poor,” supports the human dignity of each person, and fosters the common good.

As we enter the 3rd year of the pandemic, the true cost of COVID-19 and its toll on poor and marginalized communities remains unknown. According to the World Bank and World Economic Forum, 1.6 billion children have had their learning disrupted, reducing their lifetime earning expectancy by \$17 trillion. More than 10 million children have lost a primary or secondary caregiver. The number of people living in poverty has increased for the first time in 20 years. Acute food insecurity has more than doubled since 2019, while surging food, fertilizer, and energy costs are constraining household purchasing power and agricultural productivity. Increased investments in life-saving **Global Health Programs, Development Assistance, and poverty-focused Economic Support Funds** are critical to bolster essential health services; support children, youth, and their families; address root causes of poverty, food insecurity, and malnutrition; and reverse learning loss. Additional resources will allow the U.S. to help lead a sustainable recovery from the pandemic, fight against development backsliding, build resilience to future shocks, and enable life-changing results to families and communities.

Even while the impacts of COVID-19 and development backsliding harm many communities, conflict, political and economic crises, and extreme weather events have plunged tens of millions into humanitarian despair, further endangering development goals. U.S. sponsored humanitarian aid is critical to save lives and provide hope to communities in need. Increased investments in **International Disaster Assistance and Migration and Refugee Assistance** will be necessary to respond to crises from Ukraine and Afghanistan to Gaza, the Horn of Africa region and Haiti.

In addition to humanitarian assistance, we must focus on long-term solutions to crises. Increased investments in the **Complex Crisis Fund** and strong funding for **peacebuilding, atrocities prevention, and social cohesion** are vital. In his World Day of Peace remarks, Pope Francis said, “Today the *path of peace*...remains sadly distant from the real lives of many men and women....

[T]he deafening noise of war and conflict is intensifying.” In 2021, a CRS study investigated the underlying determinants of social cohesion and conflict in the Philippines, Ghana, and Guatemala. The study found that vertical and horizontal social cohesion have been frayed by COVID-19 restrictions imposed by governments, the decimation of livelihoods with limited social protections, the unique COVID-19 impacts on women and girls, and the widespread presence of misinformation and its consequences. In these countries and many other complex crisis regions, the local Catholic Church, often in partnership with CRS, represents the biggest, most stable civil society organization able to address conflict and promote peace. Funding and a stronger focus on social cohesion, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding not only saves lives, but also betters them.

Like conflict and political and economic crises, climate change is a threat multiplier that destroys agriculture and natural resources, disrupts livelihoods, contributes to mass displacement, and increases the risk of conflict. As the world experiences increases in storms, record temperatures, and rising sea levels, Congress must provide appropriations to the **Green Climate Fund** and other multilateral accounts and bilateral development funds that support adaptation, clean energy, nature-based solutions, and sustainable landscapes alongside climate-smart agriculture and water, sanitation, and hygiene.

Pope Francis has said that “In every age, peace is both a gift from on high and the fruit of a shared commitment.” We commit to working with Congress to uphold human dignity, to stand in solidarity with the poor, to be good stewards of the earth, and to prioritize the common good. We have grave concerns about providing taxpayer funding for activities inconsistent with the Catholic faith and basic human rights. Therefore, we strongly urge Congress to maintain the Helms Amendment 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 look forward to conversations with you and your staff on how we can work together to advance peace, justice, and the common good.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ David J. Malloy". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Most Reverend David J. Malloy
Chairman
Committee on International Justice and Peace
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean Callahan". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Mr. Sean Callahan
President
Catholic Relief Services



International Poverty-Reducing Development and Humanitarian Accounts



Appropriations Accounts (\$ in thousands)	FY 20 Enacted***	FY 21 Enacted**	FY 22 Enacted*	Administration's FY23 Request	USCCB/CRS FY23 Request
<i>State, Foreign Operations (SFOPs)</i>	22,786,693	22,942,035	23,300,906	28,835,943	30,866,081
Maternal and Child Health (including GAVI)	851,000	855,000	890,000	879,500	1,012,000
Nutrition	150,000	150,000	155,000	150,000	230,000
Vulnerable Children (orphans and displaced children)	25,000	25,000	27,500	25,000	35,000
Malaria	770,000	770,000	775,000	780,000	900,000
Tuberculosis	310,000	319,000	371,050	350,000	469,000
Neglected Tropical Diseases	102,500	102,500	107,500	114,500	114,500
Global Health Security	100,000	190,000	700,000	995,000	1,000,000
HIV/AIDS (State PEPFAR and USAID)	4,700,000	4,700,000	4,720,000	4,700,000	4,850,000
Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Tuberculosis	1,560,000	1,560,000	1,560,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Development Assistance (including Water, Basic Ed)	3,400,000	3,500,000	4,140,494	4,769,787	4,769,787
International Disaster Assistance	4,395,362	4,395,362	3,905,460*	4,699,362	4,900,000
Migration and Refugee Assistance	3,432,000	3,432,000	2,912,188*	3,912,000	4,700,000
Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	100	100	100	100,000	300,000
Complex Crises Fund	30,000	30,000	60,000	40,000	60,000
Millennium Challenge Account	905,000	912,000	912,000	930,000	1,000,000
Atrocities Prevention Fund (ESF & INCLE)	5,000	5,000	5,000	--	25,000
Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities	1,526,383	1,456,314	1,498,614	2,327,235	2,327,235
Peacekeeping Operations	457,348	440,759	455,000	463,559	463,559
Green Climate Fund (Treasury)	0	0	0	1,600,000	1,600,000
Anti-Trafficking in Persons (DA, ESF, AEECA, INCLE)	67,000	99,000	106,000	--	110,000
<i>Agricultural (Ag)</i>	1,945,000	1,970,000	1,977,000	1,970,112	2,265,000
Title II Food for Peace	1,725,000	1,740,000	1,740,000	1,740,000	2,000,000
McGovern-Dole	220,000	230,000	237,000	230,112	265,000
<i>Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS)</i>	96,125	96,125	106,000	128,965	136,000
Bureau of International Labor Affairs (DOL/ILAB)	96,125	96,125	106,000	128,965	136,000
COMBINED TOTAL	24,827,818	25,008,160	25,383,906	30,942,055	33,267,081

* Supplemental funding for Afghanistan and Ukraine: \$3.05B for IDA, \$1.815B for MRA, \$2.28B for ERMA, and \$100M for Title II. ** Supplemental funding for COVID-19: \$4B to GAVI, \$600M for MRA, \$8.675B for ESF, and \$800M for FFP. ***Supplemental funding for COVID-19: \$435M to GH-USAID, \$558M to IDA, \$350M to MRA, and \$250M to ESF.

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).

Migration and Refugee Assistance protects refugees and internally displaced persons, helps them to repatriate when conflict ends or natural disaster responses permit, and supports resettlement to safe countries like the U.S. This level would fund the admission process for 125,000 refugees to the U.S.

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

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 \$1.079 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 \$98 million.

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

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.