

June 7, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members,

We are a diverse group of national faith-based organizations committed to saving lives and advancing the dignity of vulnerable and marginalized persons and communities across the world. We support U.S. investment in international humanitarian and poverty-focused development assistance and peace-building programs that alleviate suffering from hunger, extreme poverty, forced displacement, debilitating illness, natural disasters and violent conflict.

While representing various faith traditions, we all believe that people and nations are accountable for how we treat our brothers and sisters at home and abroad who are vulnerable and in need. The Federal budget is a moral document, which reflects the values of our nation. In the rich history of our country the American people have responded with a hand up to millions of people suffering from hunger, disease, displacement and violence.

We believe that the international affairs budget proposed by the Administration does not reflect this moral and compassionate commitment. Proposing to decrease funding for development assistance, disaster assistance, food aid, migration and refugee assistance, and the bureau of conflict and stabilization operations - compromises our foreign policy strategy, endangers our development and peacebuilding experts, and threatens our position in the world as a leader in global development. It also halts the progress that we have made over the last 20 years eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.

Fortunately, Congress has continued to provide bipartisan support for the international affairs budget, and we applaud concerns that have been expressed in response to the Administration's proposal. We urge Congress to stand firm in its commitment to foreign assistance, and why we join the international advocacy community in support of **\$60 billion for the international affairs budget**. The U.S. must remain the global leader, committed to reducing poverty and increasing opportunity – at home and abroad.

Most of the 150 budget is within the jurisdiction of the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee. As you allocate subcommittee funding we **urge you to protect these programs by providing at or above the current FY17 levels of \$53.1 billion for the SFOPS subcommittee**. Investing in life-saving peace building, humanitarian, and poverty focused development assistance is critical for helping create a healthier world, and generating goodwill toward the United States.

U.S. foreign assistance investments literally mean life or death for millions of people. Almost 800 million people still suffer from hunger, 767 million people still live in extreme poverty, and thousands of children die each day from preventable diseases. We are also facing the largest combined humanitarian crisis since WWII. Currently 60 million persons have been displaced from their homes – the highest number in decades. Famine has been declared in South Sudan, and near famine conditions are in northeast Nigeria, Somalia, and Yemen-threatening starvation for over 20 million people within the next six months. Now, more than ever, we need to think about what our role is in the world.

Again, thank you for considering our request. We look forward to working with you in building a world of hope and prosperity for the future of all God’s children, including our own.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Adventist Development and Relief Agency2. American Jewish World Service3. Bread for the World4. Catholic Medical Mission Board, Inc.5. Children's Medical Ministries6. Christian Connections for International Health7. Church World Service8. Conference of Major Superiors of Men9. Disabled Children's Fund10. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America11. Faiths for Safe Water12. Food for the Hungry13. IMA World Health | <ol style="list-style-type: none">14. International Aid, Inc.15. Islamic Relief USA16. Jewish Council for Public Affairs17. Lutheran World Relief18. Mennonite Central Committee, U.S., Washington Office19. Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America20. Presbyterian Church (USA)21. Union for Reform Judaism22. United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries23. United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society24. World Renew |
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Faiths for Safe Water

