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July 29, 2011

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman and Ranking Member:

The FY 2012 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill as marked up by the Subcommittee makes morally unacceptable, even deadly cuts to poverty-focused humanitarian and development assistance. These cuts will undermine integral human development, poverty reduction initiatives, and stability in the world's poorest countries and communities. They could also weaken our long-term security, since poverty and hopelessness can provide a fertile ground for the growth of instability, conflict and terrorism.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services have repeatedly acknowledged the difficult challenges that Congress faces to get the nation's financial house in order: fulfilling the demands of justice and obligations to future generations; controlling future debt and deficits; and protecting the life and dignity of those who are poor and vulnerable. However, our nation must be fiscally responsible in morally responsible ways.

The Subcommittee bill cuts dramatically the critical poverty-focused development and humanitarian accounts previously identified by USCCB and CRS (see the attached table). Some of the most egregious cuts are to agricultural assistance for subsistence farmers, adaptation to climate change for vulnerable communities, medicines for people living with HIV/AIDS and vaccines for preventable diseases, assistance to orphans and vulnerable children, disaster assistance in places like Haiti, peacekeeping to protect innocent civilians in troubled areas such as Sudan and the Congo, and support to migrants and refugees fleeing conflict or persecution in nations such as Iraq.

Instead of these disproportionate cuts, we urge you to consider balanced adjustments across the entire federal budget, including defense, revenue, agricultural subsidies, and fair and just entitlement reform. If the State and Foreign Operations budget must be cut, then protect critical poverty-focused development and humanitarian accounts and other parts of the budget focused on the poor. The budget is a moral document that should give priority to those who are poor and vulnerable at home and abroad. This bill reduces foreign operations appropriations by 2%, but poverty-focused international assistance by over 13% in addition to last year's cut of over 8%. This is not a balanced, moral approach to budget reductions.

We do strongly support the bill's language restoring the Mexico City Policy against funding groups that perform or promote abortion, its denial of funds to the U.N. Population Fund (which supports a program of coerced abortion and involuntary sterilization in China), and its

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preservation of the Helms Amendment (which prohibits U.S. funding for abortion) and Kemp-Kasten provision (which prohibits support for organizations involved in programs of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization).

Unfortunately, we are also deeply disturbed by other provisions in the legislation. The co-mingling of funding under the rubric of the Global Health Initiative may compromise conscience protections and non-discrimination measures, potentially reducing the participation of faith-based providers. CRS has already experienced trends that create complications for faith-based partnerships. This has the effect of reducing access to services because, for example, the Church and other faith-based organizations provide 30% to 70% of health care in many African countries, especially in remote areas. The co-mingling of funds may also reduce the focus, effectiveness, and funding of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

The bill undermines our nation's ability to engage in international efforts to address global climate change. Poor communities contribute little to the human causes of climate change, but suffer its worst consequences. Prudence and the common good demand that the U.S. capacity to lead and respond to the impact of climate change on the poorest places be restored.

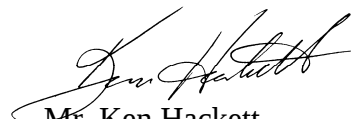
The bill also could damage U.S. efforts to seek a just and lasting peace in the Holy Land, by undermining assistance to Palestinians that is essential for humanitarian purposes and for building the capacity of a future Palestinian state. This is not in the interests of either Israelis or Palestinians who long for a two-state solution: a secure and recognized Israel alongside an independent and viable Palestinian state.

As we have said in the past, the USCCB and CRS stand ready to work with leaders of both parties for a budget that reduces future deficits, protects poor and vulnerable people at home and abroad, advances the common good, and promotes human life and dignity. But we oppose an appropriations bill that places a disproportionate, deadly burden on the poorest people in the poorest places on earth. We urge the Appropriations Committee to reject these disproportionate, unwise, and unjust cuts.

Sincerely yours,



Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard
Bishop of Albany
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace



Mr. Ken Hackett
President
Catholic Relief Services

cc: House Appropriations Committee

Encl.



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



<u>FUNDING ACCOUNT TITLE (\$ in thousands)</u>	<u>FY 2010¹</u>	<u>FY 2011²</u>	<u>FY 2012³</u>	<u>FY10-12 % Diff</u>
Child Survival and Maternal Health (including vaccines)	549,000	unknown*	unknown*	~ -10%
Vulnerable Children (orphans and displaced children)	15,000	unknown*	unknown*	~ -10%
HIV/AIDS (USAID Programs)	350,000	unknown*	unknown*	~ -10%
Other Infectious Diseases (neglected tropical diseases)	981,000	unknown*	unknown*	~ -10%
Global Health and Child Survival (includes PEPFAR)	5,359,000	5,334,310	unknown*	~ -10%
Development Assistance (e.g. Feed the Future, climate change)	2,520,000	2,518,952	2,068,000	-18%
International Disaster Assistance	1,305,000	863,270	757,652	-42%
Transition Initiatives (post-conflict countries)	55,000	54,890	54,890	-0%
Migration and Refugee Assistance	1,850,000	1,686,620	1,496,873	-19%
Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	45,000	49,000	32,000	-29%
Millennium Challenge Account (development projects)	1,105,000	898,200	898,200	-19%
P.L. 480 Title II Food for Peace	1,840,000	1,497,000	1,040,198	-43%
McGovern-Dole International Food for Education	209,500	199,101	180,000	-14%
Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities	2,221,500	1,883,931	1,690,517	-24%
Peacekeeping Operations	331,500	304,390	304,390	-8%
International Development Association (including debt relief)	1,334,500	1,232,530	940,500	-30%
Debt Restructuring	60,000	49,900	unknown	-17%
TOTAL	19,981,000	-8%	-13%	-20%

*Health funding cut 9%, but share of cut of subaccounts unknown. (about 0.6% of budget)

¹ FY 2010 Enacted Budget including Supplemental

² FY 2011 Enacted Budget

³ FY 2012 House State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs proposal