



Department of Social Development and World Peace Office of International Justice and Peace

Background on Development Assistance February 2007

The worsening scandal of hunger is unacceptable in a world which has the resources, the knowledge, and the means available to bring it to an end. It impels us to change our way of life, it reminds us of the urgent need to eliminate the structural causes of global economic dysfunction and to correct models of growth that seem incapable of guaranteeing respect for the environment and for integral human development, both now and in the future .--Pope Benedict XVI, January 8, 2007

Poverty, hunger and disease devastate the lives and dignity of most of our brothers and sisters in the world. Of the world's 6 billion people, 5 billion live in developing countries with access to only 20% of the world's resources. Nearly 3 billion continue to struggle on less than \$2 per day. Health crises such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria threaten the existence of whole generations, and poor countries continue to face enormous development and humanitarian challenges.

Fighting poverty, hunger and disease by adequately funding foreign assistance is not simply an optional commitment. This action invests in solidarity with poor nations, creates the prosperity that improves our own national security, and promotes the human dignity of the poorest in the world.

Congress is still considering changes to the FY 2007 budget as it takes up a Continuing Resolution. USCCB asked Congress to take the following positions on the FY 2007 Budget:

Global Health: Support appropriation of at least \$4.0 billion for morally appropriate, comprehensive programs to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

Development and Humanitarian Assistance: Provide \$5 billion for core development and humanitarian assistance accounts. These programs help enhance skills and provide basic services in the areas of education, health care, agriculture, rural development and microenterprise/ microfinance, as well as urgent assistance to victims of natural disasters and other emergencies.

Debt Relief/International Financial Institutions: Appropriation of at least \$950 million for the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) is crucial not only to provide badly needed development assistance to the world's poorest countries, but also to fulfill the U.S. commitment to the new international debt cancellation program for poor countries that USCCB worked for and welcomed.

Millennium Challenge Account (MCA): Support \$3 billion for the MCA. Without significant funding for the MCA, any hope for the success of this innovative approach to foreign assistance will remain far off. Also urge focusing of MCA funding on the poorest countries.

In addition to the above priorities and in addition to funding for other health, development and humanitarian assistance programs, USCCB urges action to help countries with these critical needs:

Sudan: Support \$100 million for the African Union peacekeeping mission and increased funding for critical humanitarian efforts in the Darfur region and the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Southern Sudan.

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Colombia: Include basic standards for the protection of human rights in all U.S. aid to Colombia. Support multilateral efforts for a negotiated peace process. Increase development and humanitarian aid. Phase out aerial fumigation and increase alternative development. (See Colombia Backgrounder.)

Haiti: Support the appropriation of at least \$100 million for Haiti. As the poorest country in the hemisphere and now that elections have taken place successfully, Haiti deserves special consideration to help the country deal with ongoing political and social unrest.

Indonesia: As was done last year, adopt language conditioning military assistance to Indonesia upon certification by the Secretary of State that certain well-defined human rights improvements have been made by the Indonesian Armed Forces.

Food Aid: \$2 billion for Title II Food for Peace and authorize up to 25% for local purchase of food to help meet some of the chronic situations of hunger and underdevelopment.

Population Policy: Support continuing U.S. policies on United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Mexico City Policy:

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA): Support the Kemp-Kasten amendment that prohibits funding to organizations involved in coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization.

Mexico City Policy: Support the Mexico City policy, which prevents U.S. funding of NGOs that perform or promote abortion as a family planning method in developing nations.

Possible Future Budget Actions:

In December 2006, Congress passed a “continuing resolution” (CR) to keep funding the government until February 2007. The new leadership announced that they would abandon attempts to complete work on the unfinished spending bills for FY 2007. Instead, they will support a “continuing resolution” that largely funds foreign aid programs at the FY 2006 levels.

If this were to happen, USCCB is concerned that there would be a cut in essential funding to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis in poor countries. The United States has been at the forefront of a major international effort to expand programs to address these devastating diseases. In spite of important gains achieved through this effort, however, HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis continue to wreak havoc on the lives and well-being of millions of people around the world, and the impact is most severe among the very poor. It would be tragic if the momentum that has been built up through U.S. leadership were lost through a failure to provide the necessary funds. USCCB is urging Congress to approve \$4.36 billion, the amount proposed by the Senate Appropriations Committee, for morally appropriate HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis programs in FY2007.

In addition, the Administration is expected to submit an Emergency Supplemental Request in February 2007 that could be as much as \$270 billion, touching on a number of foreign aid concerns.

[See “Campaign Update” of the Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty for current action items at www.usccb.org/globalpoverty or www.catholicrelief.org/globalpoverty.]

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