

**OPEN LETTER FROM 32 FAITH ORGANIZATIONS EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER POTENTIAL CUTS TO
INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

October 13, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hal Rodgers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairpersons Mikulski and Rodgers, Ranking Members Shelby and Lowey,

As communities of faith and faith-based organizations committed to advancing the dignity of all God's children, we would like to thank your Committees for supporting US leadership to combat poverty, hunger, and disease around the world.

In 2013 alone, US international health and development assistance programs have improved the lives of more than 135 million people worldwide. And, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the number of chronically undernourished people in the world's poorest countries has fallen by nearly 10% over the past two decades.

Yet, despite this remarkable and positive progress, one in four sub-Saharan Africans still face food shortages, and this situation appears especially dire in South Sudan, where the threat of famine increases daily. And, aside from food insecurity, other significant challenges remain, most evidenced by the worsening humanitarian and refugee crises in Syria, Iraq, and Ukraine to the growing Ebola epidemic in West Africa, which in many countries, have spiraled out of control due to weak and underdeveloped health care systems.

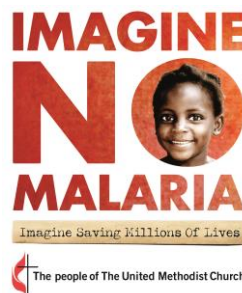
In this context, as your Committees finalize the FY2015 Agriculture and State-Foreign Operations Appropriations bills and/or draft another FY2015 Continuing Resolution/Omnibus, we urge you to provide the maximum level of funding possible for humanitarian and poverty-focused development assistance accounts. Many of these programs are funded through Development Assistance, USAID Global Health programs, International Disaster Assistance, Migration and Refugee Assistance, and Food for Peace accounts. As your partners in the faith community, we remain committed to further leveraging these U.S. investments in order to save lives, improve human health, promote economic prosperity, and advance environmental sustainability.

Our faith traditions affirm that nations and governments have an indispensable role in feeding the hungry, healing the sick, providing opportunities to the impoverished, and inspiring hope within our neighbors near and far. As committed partners, we look forward to further collaborating with you in these efforts.

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Sincerely,

1. American Jewish World Service
2. Bread for the World
3. Catholic Medical Mission Board
4. Christian Connections for International Health
5. Church of the Brethren, Office of Public Witness
6. Church World Service
7. Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
8. Conference of Major Superiors of Men
9. Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice
10. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
11. Faiths for Safe Water
12. Franciscan Action network
13. IMA World Health
14. Imagine No Malaria, United Methodist Church
15. International Care Ministries
16. Islamic Society of North America
17. Leadership Conference of Women Religious
18. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
20. Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office
21. Muslim Public Affairs Council
22. National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
23. National Council of Churches
24. Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church
25. Presbyterian Church (USA)
26. The Episcopal Church
27. The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
28. Union for Reform Judaism
29. Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
30. United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
31. Week of Compassion, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
32. World Renew



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“Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers you did it to me,” (Matthew 24:40);

“Speak out, judge righteously, defend the cause of the poor and needy,” (Prov. 31:9);

“The saving of one life is like the saving of the whole of humanity.” (Qu-ran 5:32).