

March 21, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House of Representatives
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, and Leaders McConnell, Schumer, and Pelosi:

As leaders of Christian health networks across Africa we write to express our views about America's foreign assistance leadership. Collectively, we represent many Christian churches, hospitals, clinics and universities aligned with traditional Christian values that provide a significant percentage of health services in our respective countries. We are a critically important part of the health system, and a part that is constantly improving and working well with the resources we have.

We wish to express our appreciation to the American people for their consistent generosity to help improve the health and well-being of our people. The lives of millions of Africans have been saved through the support of countless American churches, Christian non-profits and U.S. Government-sponsored programs such as PEPFAR, the President's Malaria Initiative, maternal and child health assistance (including healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies) and food security programs. Congressional leadership in particular is to be commended. Thank you.

We recognize that the United States is in a season of difficult budget constraints, and there are many priorities for the new Administration and Congress to sort out. We consider support from our American friends to come from noble humanitarian motives and for many a Christian calling to help those in need. We know it is also a strategic investment paying dividends for the American people: a healthy and stable Africa is good for the world, as is a prosperous and strong America.

As you make decisions on the budget in the coming months, we ask that you consider progress that has been made in Africa and the enormous good will American support has generated for the United States. No amount of money could buy this type of good will, and one cannot put a price tag on the lives saved through American humanitarian efforts. We know your budget decisions will take this into account. We respectfully ask that you protect funding for critical lifesaving programs.

We further request that each of you work closely with us and our governments to ensure that whatever changes may come to U.S. foreign assistance, whether it be budget decreases or reforms or changes in priorities, that these occur in an orderly way and, most importantly, do no harm to the most vulnerable who have benefited so greatly from American assistance.

Thank you for your kind consideration of our concerns and requests. May God bless each of you, and the United States of America.

Sincerely,



Africa Christian Health Associations Platform



Christian Health Association of Lesotho



Baptist Hospital of Ferkessedougou (Ivory Coast)



AEST (Evangelical Health Association of Chad)



Christian Health Association of Liberia



Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops



CMSBT (Baptist Social Medical Center of Torgokaha) Ivory Coast



Christian Health Association of Malawi



SANRU[®] Santé Rurale (Rural Health DR Congo)



Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon



Christian Health Association of Nigeria



Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau



Christian Health Association of Ghana



Churches Health Association of Zambia



Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau



Christian Health Association of Kenya



Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network



Zimbabwe Association of Church-related Hospitals