

**OPEN LETTER FROM 26 INTERFAITH ORGANIZATIONS CALLING FOR THE PROTECTION OF FUNDING
FOR INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

December 23, 2013

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Department of State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Chairman Granger, Ranking Member Graham, and Ranking Member Lowey:

Thank you for your commitment and support of life-saving humanitarian and poverty-focused development assistance accounts through the International Affairs Budget.

As faith-based organizations concerned about the most vulnerable among us, we are very concerned about the significant humanitarian needs across the globe this year. We write to urge the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs to robustly support funding for international humanitarian and poverty-focused development assistance. Such continued investments in life-saving programs will help to maintain past gains combatting global poverty and enhancing human security. These successes include a reduction in global hunger by 34% since 1990, an effort our nation has significantly supported through funding of various food assistance and agricultural development programs.

As you know, the UN recently released its largest global humanitarian appeal in history for \$13.5 billion. The complex Syrian conflict leaves 9.3 million Syrians in need and the entire region struggling to provide. Threatened by starvation at the start of a third harsh winter, U.S. leadership is needed now more than ever in this volatile region. And in places like the Central African Republic, new peacekeeping forces are critical to prevent an escalation of the conflict. These programs are a small investment to avoid costlier military or other interventions.

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As people of faith we recognize that these programs promote the inviolable dignity of each human person, a powerful motivation that underlies all of our efforts. The people of faith in our congregations illustrate their support for these programs through their personal contributions to humanitarian and development organizations operating overseas. Therefore, we urgently request that within the FY2014 State-Foreign Operations (SFOPS) bill, international humanitarian and poverty-focused development assistance programs receive the highest funding levels possible, in order to protect and promote the dignity of all God's children.

Thank you for your efforts in supporting critical funding for these programs and your continued leadership.

Sincerely,

- 1.) Bread for the World
- 2.) Catholic Medical Mission Board
- 3.) Catholic Relief Service
- 4.) Children's Medical Ministries
- 5.) Christian Connections for International Health
- 6.) Church of the Brethren Office of Public Witness
- 7.) Church World Service
- 8.) Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
- 9.) Conference of Major Superiors of Men
- 10.) Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- 11.) Faiths for Safe Water
- 12.) Food for the Hungry
- 13.) Friends Committee on National Legislation
- 14.) IMA World Health
- 15.) International Care Ministries
- 16.) Leadership Conference of Women Religious
- 17.) Lutheran World Relief
- 18.) Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
- 19.) National Council of Churches
- 20.) Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church
- 21.) The Presbyterian Church, USA
- 22.) The Union for Reform Judaism
- 23.) Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
- 24.) United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
- 25.) United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
- 26.) World Renew