

**OPEN LETTER FROM 24 FAITH ORGANIZATIONS EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR ROBUST
FUNDING OF CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE, HUMANITARIAN, AND
GLOBAL HEALTH PROGRAMS**

March 17, 2015

The Honorable Mike Enzi
Chairman
Budget Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Price
Chairman
Budget Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member
Budget Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Member
Budget Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Enzi, Chairman Price, Ranking Member Sanders, and Ranking Member Van Hollen:

Thank you for your leadership in addressing our nation's budget priorities. We are a network of faith-based organizations with members working around the world to eliminate hunger, poverty and child mortality with the support and generosity of tens of thousands of Americans. As such, we are privileged to witness every day the tremendous good done by U.S. humanitarian and poverty-focused development assistance programs which complement our own work.

In order to ensure robust support for these critical international assistance, humanitarian, and global health programs, we urge you to provide **\$48.8 billion base funding for the 150 account**, equal to the FY12 enacted level, and **\$7 billion for the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) account**.

Strong base funding is especially important for our on-the-ground partners, allowing them to plan effective programs and build sustainable partnerships to successfully combat poverty and disease. Continued OCO funding is also necessary for humanitarian response to protracted conflicts in countries such as Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic as well as in the aftermath of unforeseen natural disasters and violent conflict. All of these critical and effective programs provide strong return to the U.S. taxpayer, help create a more secure world, and generate goodwill toward the United States.

Within the 150 account, we specifically request your support for humanitarian and poverty-focused development assistance programs. We urge you to robustly fund **USAID's Global Health, Development Assistance, International Disaster Assistance, and Migration and Refugee Assistance** accounts. Such funding is essential to maintain the momentum that is leveraging increased investment from host nations and private-sector organizations.

To give just one example, six million fewer children died before their fifth birthday in 2014 than in 1990, due in significant part to effective U.S. foreign assistance programs. USAID's Global

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Health Programs which have reduced malaria, polio, HIV/AIDS, TB and neglected tropical diseases, while strengthening maternal and child health and nutrition have produced impressive, life-saving results documented most recently by USAID in its [50 Years of Global Health](#) report.

Similarly, the Development Assistance Account- through investments in agriculture, microfinance, education, biodiversity, and water and sanitation- has helped to reduce extreme poverty, human suffering and environmental degradation. Importantly, within the President's FY16 budget request is additional development assistance funding that will help to address the root causes driving children and families to flee violence, hunger, and lack of economic opportunities in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. We offer our support for this funding and point to the [cumulative results](#) achieved across other development sectors as well, noted by InterAction an alliance of U.S.-based international nongovernmental organizations, including many faith-based partners.

As political crises in countries like Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic continue, the needs of refugees and internally displaced persons remain. Therefore, we urge you to significantly increase the Migration and Refugee Assistance and International Disaster Assistance accounts so that these programs can appropriately respond to the plight of these individuals.

As people of faith motivated by our collective desire to promote human dignity and the common good, we urge you to support a strong International Affairs budget in the FY16 budget resolution, ensuring our vital investments in humanitarian, development, and global health efforts continue.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

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|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Bread for the World | 14. Leadership Conference of Women Religious |
| 2. Catholic Medical Mission Board | 15. Lutheran World Relief |
| 3. Children's Medical Ministries | 16. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns |
| 4. Christian Connections for International Health | 17. Mennonite Central Committee (Washington Office) |
| 5. Church of the Brethren, Office of Public Witness | 18. Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office |
| 6. Church World Service | 19. National Council of Churches |
| 7. Disabled Children's Fund | 20. Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church |
| 8. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America | 21. Presbyterian Church (USA) |
| 9. Faiths for Safe Water | 22. The Episcopal Church |
| 10. Franciscan Action network | 23. Union for Reform Judaism |
| 11. IMA World Health | 24. World Vision |
| 12. Imagine No Malaria, United Methodist Church | |
| 13. Islamic Relief USA | |

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