



President-Elect Donald Trump
Trump Tower
721 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10022

January 9, 2017

Dear President-elect Trump:

As faith-based organizations committed to ending extreme poverty and promoting the dignity of each human life with a just peace, we are writing to offer our prayers, best wishes and collective expertise as you and your transition team prepare your Administration's policy agenda and set funding priorities.

The Interfaith Working Group on Foreign Assistance (IWGFA) was formed in April 2013, bringing together Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Hindu communities to advocate for robust humanitarian and poverty-focused foreign assistance within the U.S. Government. The IWGFA currently includes more than 40 national faith-based organizations. While faith-based organizations have advocated persistently and effectively each year on behalf of such investments, this is the first time since the early 2000s that they have reunited to amplify their voice among elected representatives in Washington. We support U.S. investments in international humanitarian and poverty-focused assistance and peace building programs that alleviate suffering from hunger, extreme poverty, debilitating illness, complex emergencies and violent conflict. As people of faith we are committed to saving lives and advancing the dignity of vulnerable and marginalized persons and communities across the world.

U.S. faith-based organizations contribute significantly to the well-being of communities overseas. Many work closely with the U.S. government as trusted partners, and effectively leverage public funds. In FY 2014, for instance, the 71 largest U.S. faith-based NGOs raised over \$6 billion to finance overseas development work, of which less than 12% was from public funds. Our faiths tell us that all humanity is interconnected; thus our nation's peace, security and well-being is intimately bound up with that of our global neighbors, especially those who are struggling to overcome poverty and vulnerability. On the basis of our broad U.S. and international network of committed partners, supporters and constituents, and our deep practical experience implementing humanitarian response and development projects, we look forward to working with you. The faith community's experience and moral voice remind lawmakers and the Executive Branch that these investments promote the dignity of all people and therefore express U.S. values and support our country's interest in peace and prosperity.

The U.S. government and faith based organizations share a common goal: invest in programs that assist the poor and vulnerable, while fostering economic growth and opportunity for the people we serve. Lifesaving humanitarian and poverty focused development assistance is an investment for the future. While this foreign assistance funding is less than one percent of the federal budget, it's a small investment that goes a long way to improving the lives of millions. Past Republican and Democratic presidents alike have incorporated global development and foreign assistance as vital components of their foreign policy strategy. Initiatives such as Feed the Future and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) led by the U.S. Agency for

International Development and the Department of State demonstrate U.S. moral leadership, and support the long-term investments that create economic opportunity for all, advance the goal of ending extreme poverty, and enhance U.S. and global human security.

The IWGFA engages in regular Congressional visits, produces sign-on letters, organizes national call-in days and brings local and state faith leaders to Washington for advocacy days, and holds Congressional briefings in support of foreign assistance. It also liaises with religious groups and leaders in cities and states across the country to organize in-district events with faith leaders and Members of Congress. As trusted partners and implementers of USAID, USDA, and the Department of State and other agencies, we look forward in the coming months to continued information-sharing with USAID for instance, and discussion with OMB concerning the Administration's budget requests dealing with foreign assistance.

Top Priorities:

- Support robust funding for humanitarian, poverty-focused development assistance, and peace building programs within the International Affairs budget, as outlined below.
- Protect base International Affairs funding, particularly poverty-focused development assistance programs from cuts.
- It is our preference that humanitarian aid be removed from the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) account and moved back into the base allocation, elevating its importance to respond to natural disasters, instability, and conflict. However, recognizing fiscal constraints, we ask that current (OCO) levels are maintained.
- Preserve space for diverse faith voices and organizations in the United States as they mobilize resources to carry out humanitarian and development programs for the poor and vulnerable overseas.
- Continue decades-long U.S. support to refugees and displaced persons abroad and refugee re-settlement in the U.S. as part of U.S. global leadership, to save lives, promote regional stability and encourage other countries to keep their doors open to people needing protection.

Humanitarian, Poverty- Focused Development Assistance, and Peace Building Accounts:

- **Development Assistance:** Builds long-term, sustainable capacity, such as improvements in agriculture; safe, reliable water; and basic education and training.

Example: Supporting smallholder farmers to withstand shocks and increase sustainable production while connecting them to storage facilities and access to markets so they can easily transport and sell their products for a better price and increase household income.

- **Global Health Programs:** Expands basic health services and strengthens national health systems to improve people's health and nutrition, especially that of women, children, and vulnerable populations.

Example: Training community health workers on healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies or prevention and treatment of basic birth complications to drastically reduce the rate of mother and infant deaths during childbirth.

- **Migration and Refugee Assistance:** Responds to needs of refugees by protecting people from conflict, providing humanitarian relief, and promoting sustainable solutions through established organizations.

Example: Providing safe shelter, food, clean water, education, and job training and reestablishing livelihoods to assist refugees of conflicts such as those in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.

- **Food for Peace:** Provides food assistance during emergencies and disasters, and funds non-emergency development programs to address the underlying issues of food security.

Example: Providing food assistance for countries experiencing food shortages such as Ethiopia and South Sudan.

- **International Disaster Assistance:** Provides relief and rehabilitation to nations struck by natural or manmade disasters and emergencies.

Example: Providing emergency aid and technical support to victims of earthquakes and hurricanes, such as those in Nepal and Haiti.

- **Complex Crises Fund:** Allows USAID to respond to emerging or unforeseen crises with projects aimed at the root causes of conflict or instability.

Example: In Central African Republic, CCF funding was used to improve access to timely and accurate information, and lay the framework for a peaceful political transition by working to prevent further atrocities and rebuild social cohesion through community peacebuilding.

We, participants of the Interfaith Working Group on Foreign Assistance, are committed to ending extreme poverty and promoting the dignity of each human life, and we deeply appreciate your consideration of these life-saving and life-giving priorities that benefit all of us. In doing so, we will continue to build a just peace and a more hope-filled world, where all God’s children can pursue a future reflective of great promise and opportunity and be empowered to play an active role in building a better future.

For more information, contact:

Eric Mitchell, Director of Government Relations, Bread for the World, emitchell@bread.org, 202-639-9401

Martin Shupack, Director of Advocacy, Church World Service, mshupack@cwsglobal.org, 202-481-6934

Taylor Amos, International Policy Analyst, Bread for the World, tamos@bread.org, 202-688-1016

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. ADRA International | 15. Islamic Relief USA |
| 2. American Hindu World Service | 16. IMA World Health |
| 3. Bread for the World | 17. International Orthodox Christian Charities |
| 4. Children’s Medical Ministries | 18. Leadership Conference of Women Religious |
| 5. Christian Connections for International Health | 19. Lutheran World Relief |
| 6. Church World Service | 20. Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church |
| 7. Church of the Brethren, Office of Public Witness | 21. Presbyterian Church (USA) |
| 8. Conference of Major Superiors of Men | 22. World Renew |
| 9. Disabled Children’s Fund | 23. Union for Reformed Judaism |
| 10. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America | 24. United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries |
| 11. Faiths for Safe Water | 25. United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society |
| 12. Franciscan Action Network | |
| 13. Friends Committee on National Legislation | |
| 14. Food for the Hungry | |