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July 10, 2017

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chair
House Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations and Related Programs

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations
and Related Programs

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

In the spirit and words of Pope Francis, we lift our voices on behalf of “the poorest peoples of the earth” with the request that you protect international poverty-reducing humanitarian and development assistance in Fiscal Year 2018. **Please see the attached chart for a list of specific funding requests.**

The Catholic Church has a rich body of social teaching that offers principles to guide international affairs and our engagement with the world as it relates to defense, diplomacy, and development. This teaching calls us to prioritize the protection of life and human dignity; to realize the global common good; to foster solidarity through subsidiarity; to uphold justice and peace; and to promote a preferential option for the poor. Pope Francis exemplifies these principles when he writes, “True mercy, the mercy God gives to us and teaches us, demands justice, it demands that the poor find the way to be poor no longer.”

Although defense is important to protect the common good, our principles and experience teach us that we should elevate development and diplomacy as primary instruments for combatting poverty, promoting peace, and fostering regional stability. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has repeatedly called for robust diplomatic efforts to prevent and mitigate conflicts as well as long-term development programming to address root causes of poverty, violence, and migration.

In our view, the Administration’s Fiscal Year 2018 budget proposal offers a different balance of priorities. Draconian cuts and eliminations to poverty-focused accounts illustrate a shortsighted foreign policy based largely on a narrow view of national security, which neither promotes American values, nor makes us safer in the long-run. These policy priorities also fail to uphold our moral standing, the dignity and livelihoods of those suffering, and the great progress we have made alleviating poverty and promoting human rights. A true foreign affairs vision is one in which the United States demonstrates its moral leadership around the world. Our leadership in turn encourages others to collaborate with us. When the United States makes international assistance a priority, it signals across the world that greatness, in part, means living up to our moral obligations. Since World War II, the United States and its citizens, through our generous contributions to foreign assistance, have been a beacon of justice, peace, and hope.

U.S. government assistance, including programs implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), has made an incredible impact around the world. U.S.-led assistance has stopped the spread of Ebola in West Africa and prevented HIV and AIDs from debilitating countries across Africa; saved lives after hurricanes and typhoons; promoted education in Laos and increased girls’ education across Afghanistan; supported local farmers to gain access to markets in Central America and East Africa; and even helped South Korea become the U.S.’s seventh largest trading partner. In short, aid provides opportunity, and aid works.

Therefore, we urge Congress to demand a thorough and deliberate process of consultation with the Administration and other key stakeholders, particularly implementers and faith-based organizations like CRS, to understand fully the global impact of the potential cuts the Administration has proposed. Implementers, like CRS, can offer on-the-ground expertise regarding how to cut red tape to get U.S. government humanitarian and development funding to beneficiaries more quickly; how to better partner with local civil society organizations so that aid builds local capacity and democracy; and how to create synergies between different programs and funding sources.

For almost 75 years, CRS has gathered private donor support and partnered with the U.S. government to save lives and help lift people out of poverty. Last year CRS served 120 million people in 112 countries. The combination of private and public funds allows CRS to be nimble and innovate while also enabling them to scale up when necessary. We work directly with the local Church and other partners to provide thoughtful, technical assistance based on critical analysis of contexts.

Long-term development assistance that helps stabilize regions and lift people out of poverty embodies the essence of this service. These funds help the poor and the marginalized obtain access to primary education and clean water, grow nutritious food, protect their environment, promote economic development, support good governance, respond to climate change, and create more sustainable, self-sufficient democratic societies. The Administration has proposed eliminating the **Development Assistance** account and merging it with the Economic Support Fund to focus on “countries and sectors that will have the most immediate and direct benefits toward strengthening U.S national and homeland security.” We urge you to protect and maintain funding for the Development Assistance account and maintain its independence from political calculations and its focus on reducing poverty.

The solidarity of the American people with those suffering around the world has garnered Americans a reputation as a generous people. And with 65 million refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people around the world, Congress and the American taxpayer demonstrated their generosity by robustly funding humanitarian accounts in FY17 and providing \$990 million in emergency spending to respond to famine in South Sudan and famine-like conditions in Nigeria, Somalia, and Yemen. USCCB and CRS are grateful for this additional allocation and urge you to protect the humanitarian accounts again in FY18: **International Disaster Assistance, Migration and Refugee Assistance, and Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA)**. The Administration’s proposal made drastic cuts to these accounts, including eliminating ERMA altogether. This account, necessary as a quick drawdown fund to respond to humanitarian crises, must be maintained to react adequately to needs.

The budget proposal also eliminated funding for emergency and development **Title II Food for Peace** programs, which are implemented by USAID. The proposal cuts by more than half funding for programming authorized under the Global Food Security Act and carried out under the auspices of USAID’s **Feed the Future and the Emergency Food Security Programs (EFSP)**. These programs are working together – with commodities from Title II and flexible modalities like vouchers from EFSP – to provide an overall improved response to food emergencies across the globe. Cuts in either program should not come at a time when needs for both kinds of responses are rising. Additionally, the synergies between Food for Peace Development Food Aid Programs that stabilize the poorest and most vulnerable households, and Feed the Future, which can take small farmers whose situations have been improved by Food for Peace to the next level, are moving people out of poverty and into prosperity. Moreover,

maintaining these investments now reduces the emergency burden, strengthens fragile regions of the world, and helps people live the dignity of being able to feed themselves and their children.

Furthermore, while direct assistance is necessary to meet the needs of people fleeing from violence and natural disaster, we also must support mechanisms that prevent and mitigate further conflict while also helping to enable humanitarian access. We urge you to protect the **Complex Crisis Fund**, which has been targeted for elimination in the Administration's budget, to prevent conflict, save lives and assist war torn and traumatized communities with restorative justice and reconciliation. Additionally, we urge you to meet the United States' obligation to **Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities and Peacekeeping Operations**. Humanitarian intervention and peacebuilding efforts would be limited without United Nations coordination and regional peacekeeping efforts. While improvements can and must be made, peacekeeping is essential in many countries in crisis: the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Sudan.

Our **Global Health** investments should continue to address diseases that take a toll on the most vulnerable: **HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria**. The Administration's budget request proposes cutting funding from our bilateral HIV program, the **President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)**, and reducing the U.S. commitment to the **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria**. With the goal of an AIDS Free Generation in sight, now is not the time to step back from American leadership. In 2016, PEPFAR supported life-saving antiretroviral treatment for 11.5 million people, including 1.1 million children, and mitigated the toll of the disease on 6.2 million orphans and vulnerable children and their families. As of mid-2016, programs financed by the Global Fund resulted in 10 million people receiving antiretroviral treatment for HIV and AIDS, 16.6 million people receiving treatment for tuberculosis and the distribution of 713 million insecticide treated nets for the prevention of Malaria.

We also urge Congress to fund robustly the following global health accounts, which save lives and prevent suffering: **Maternal and Child Health, Nutrition, Vulnerable Children, Neglected Tropical Diseases, Malaria, Tuberculosis and Pandemic Influenza and Other Emerging Threats**. A strong investment in these accounts will address the biggest killers of children under five, support children during the critical first 1,000 days of their lives, strengthen family resilience, provide cost effective methods to address infectious diseases affecting more than one billion of the world's poorest people, and prevent future health crises.

The budget request also proposes redirecting **Ebola** funding for communities still recovering from the devastation of that disease to the Malaria and Emerging Threats accounts. In West Africa, due to Ebola, there are now tens of thousands of parents who have lost spouses and thousands more children who are orphaned. These communities are just getting back on their feet and beginning to farm again. They still need our help to recover from this disease which killed 11,325 people and devastated economies.

In his encyclical *Laudato Si, On Care for Our Common Home*, Pope Francis called on the world to come together to address the challenge of climate change, both by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and by helping developing nations adapt to the more frequent droughts and powerful storms they face because of climate change. The budget request eliminates all funding for the multilateral **Green Climate Fund**, as well as for the bilateral Global Climate Change Initiative funded through the Development Assistance account and implemented by USAID. We urge you to respond to Pope Francis' call by providing

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multilateral and bilateral funding to help the poor overseas adapt to climate change, and to support measures that reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

Finally, combatting human trafficking, forced labor, and child labor has been a priority of the Catholic Church for a long time; and Pope Francis has tirelessly advocated for an end to modern slavery. The United States has been a global leader in preventing human trafficking, protecting victims, and prosecuting traffickers. We hope this leadership, especially partnerships with NGOs, like CRS, to prevent trafficking, will continue. We urge you to fund strongly **Anti-Trafficking in Persons** programming, which helps countless women, men, girls, and boys to have an opportunity at life.

Thank you for your consideration and for the generosity you have shown to hundreds of millions of people worldwide. The legacy we leave for future generations will be reflected in how we treat and serve the least of our brothers and sisters. We look forward to working with you to strengthen humanitarian and development assistance again this year.

Sincerely yours,



Most Reverend Oscar Cantú
Bishop of Las Cruces
Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



Mr. Sean Callahan
President/CEO
Catholic Relief Services



International Poverty-Reducing Development and Humanitarian Accounts



Appropriations Requests (\$ in thousands) (OCO included)	FY 17 Enacted	Administration FY 18 Request	USCCB/CRS FY 18 Request
<i>State, Foreign Operations (SFOPs)</i>	22,622,129	14,390,492	22,840,265
Maternal and Child Health (including vaccines)	814,500	749,600	814,500
Nutrition	125,000	78,500	125,000
Vulnerable Children (orphans and displaced children)	23,000	0	23,000
HIV/AIDS (USAID)	330,000	0	330,000
Malaria ⁱ	755,000	674,000	755,000
Tuberculosis	241,000	178,400	241,000
Neglected Tropical Diseases	100,000	75,000	100,000
Pandemic Influenza and Other Emerging Threats ⁱⁱ	142,500	72,500	142,500
HIV/AIDS (DOS/PEPFAR)	5,670,000	4,975,000	5,670,000
Development Assistance (including water, education) ⁱⁱⁱ	2,995,465	0	2,995,465
International Disaster Assistance	4,427,786*	2,508,200	3,437,786
Migration and Refugee Assistance	3,359,000**	2,746,141	3,604,000
Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	50,000	0	50,000
Complex Crises Fund	30,000	0	30,000
Millennium Challenge Account	905,000	800,000	905,000
Atrocities Prevention Board (ESF & INCLE)	10,000	0	25,000
Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities	1,907,564	1,195,886	2,398,000
Peacekeeping Operations	659,014 [^]	301,400	609,014
Green Climate Fund (Treasury)	0	0	500,000
Anti-Trafficking in Persons (DA, ESF, AEECA, INCLE)	77,300	35,865	85,000
<i>Agricultural (Ag)</i>	1,801,626	0	1,997,626
Food for Peace (Title II) ^{iv}	1,600,000	0	1,716,000
McGovern-Dole	201,626	0	201,626
Local and Regional Procurement	0	0	80,000
<i>Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS)</i>	86,125	19,000	91,125
Dept. of Labor International Labor Affairs (DOL/ILAB)	86,125	19,000	91,125
COMBINED TOTAL (~0.5% of budget)	24,509,880	14,409,492	24,929,016

ⁱIDA enacted funding for 2017 includes \$616 million in emergency spending from the December 2016 CR; and \$990 million in emergency spending from the omnibus. The omnibus level is \$3.8 billion.

^{**}MRA enacted funding for 2017 includes \$300 million in emergency spending from the December 2016 CR. The omnibus level is \$3.059 billion.

[^]PKO enacted funding for 2017 includes \$50 million in emergency spending from the December 2016 CR. The omnibus level is \$609 million.

Summary of Message to Congress and Account Descriptions

The Church views international assistance as an essential tool to promote human life and dignity, advance solidarity with developing nations, and enhance human security. The USCCB and CRS prioritize the accounts below because they are most focused on saving lives and reducing poverty. This assistance is just over one-half percent of the federal budget, not the 20-25% many Americans believe it constitutes. We urge Congress to **maintain funding for international poverty-reducing development and humanitarian programs to meet urgent needs and invest in peace.**

Maternal and Child Health programs provide low-cost life-saving interventions, such as micronutrient supplementation, nutritional support, newborn care, immunization, and treatment of pneumonia and diarrheal disease – addressing the biggest killers of mothers and children in the developing world.

Nutrition programs provide interventions such as micronutrient supplementation and growth monitoring, which combined with an adequate diet and clean water and sanitation, improves outcomes during the first critical years of a child's life.

Vulnerable Children programs address the special needs of displaced children and orphans.

HIV and AIDS PEPFAR (USAID & State Funding) funding focuses on prevention, care and treatment, and the support of children affected and infected by HIV and AIDS. Although we have principled concerns about those PEPFAR prevention activities we find inconsistent with Catholic teaching and do not implement or advocate for these activities, we support PEPFAR's overall lifesaving mission and urge robust funding for the Global Fund.

ⁱ **Malaria** programs treat, prevent, and control this deadly disease with the vision of ending preventable child and maternal deaths. The programs also build government capacity to treat and prevent malaria. The Administration's FY18 Request reprograms \$250 million from Ebola emergency appropriations in FY15.

Tuberculosis programs screen, diagnose, and treat millions of people each year affected by the leading infectious disease killer globally in order to cure and prevent the spread of TB.

Neglected Tropical Diseases programs focus on scaling up integrated treatment to prevent parasitic and bacterial diseases that cause morbidity and mortality.

ⁱⁱ **Pandemic Influenza and Other Emerging Threats** programs prevent, prepare for, and respond to unanticipated and emerging global health threats. The Administration's FY18 Request reprograms \$72.5 million from Ebola emergency appropriations in FY15 and renames the account.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Development Assistance** programs support an array of critical development activities, including primary education; food security; clean water and sanitation; microfinance, climate change adaptation and mitigation; democracy promotion and good governance, and conflict management and mitigation. The Administration's FY18 Request combines the DA and ESF accounts into a new Economic Support and Development Fund account, and reduces overall funding compared to preexisting funding levels for DA and ESF.

International Disaster Assistance funds emergency health, water, shelter and nutrition efforts, as well as disaster risk reduction and rehabilitation through the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). It also supports emergency food security through the Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP).

Migration and Refugee Assistance protects refugees and internally displaced persons, helps them to repatriate when conflict ends or natural disaster responses permit, and to resettle to safe countries like the U.S. This level would fund resettlement of 75,000 refugees in the U.S.

Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance is a drawdown account used, with Presidential authority, to respond to humanitarian crises.

Complex Crisis Fund enables rapid investments to catalyze peace and mitigate conflict in the face of unforeseen crises or violence.

Millennium Challenge Account provides U.S. funding to countries with a commitment to good governance, focusing on infrastructure projects.

Atrocities Prevention Board (APB) improves collaboration, analysis and information sharing to mobilize U.S. efforts to prevent future atrocities and crises.

Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities deploy peacekeeping troops to protect civilians in places like Sudan and Somalia.

Peacekeeping Operations finances the training and equipping of peacekeeping troops before they deploy to conflict countries and the professionalization of militia groups into formal military forces committed to protecting their people.

Green Climate Fund provides assistance to developing countries to adapt to, and mitigate, impacts of climate change.

Combatting Trafficking in Persons US assistance helps other nations to prevent trafficking, prosecute perpetrators, and provide assistance to victims.

^{iv} **Food for Peace (Title II)** provides U.S. food aid for emergencies and funds long-term development programs that support nutrition and build resilience. The Administration's FY18 Request eliminates all funding for Food for Peace and shifts programming to IDA and Economic Support and Development Fund.

McGovern-Dole provides school lunches and take-home food rations to encourage students, especially girls, to attend school, and other school support efforts. The Administrations FY18 Request eliminates all funding for the program.

Local and Regional Purchase will provide local and regionally procured commodities for sustainability in the McGovern-Dole program.

International Labor Bureau funds programs to combat the worst forms of child labor, forced labor, and trafficking in persons.