

**OPEN LETTER FROM 19 INTERFAITH ORGANIZATIONS REQUESTING ROBUST FY17 FUNDING
ALLOCATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

September 21, 2016

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chairman
Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

As religious bodies and faith-based organizations committed to ending extreme poverty and promoting the dignity of each human life with a just peace, we ask that you fund international humanitarian, poverty-focused development, and peacebuilding assistance programs in FY 2017 at ***equal or higher*** funding levels as those enacted in fiscal year 2016, as found in the State and Foreign Operations budget. This is a time of extraordinary crisis around the world, and requires an unprecedented response of U.S. leadership and partnership.

Currently, 12.2 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria, while four million people are seeking refuge in neighboring countries, making this the worst refugee crisis since World War II. We are also witnessing adverse effects from El Nino contributing the decline in the agricultural sector and the environment, a threatening outbreak of the Zika virus in the western hemisphere, and more than a billion people living in extreme poverty. For these reasons, we request your moral leadership in support of the highest possible base, in particular, and overall funding levels in the Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations bills for humanitarian accounts including:

- **\$3.2 billion for USAID's Global Health Programs as adopted by the House.**
- **\$3.06 billion for Migration and Refugee Assistance as adopted by the House and Senate. We also ask that you *not* include in the conference bill language currently in the House's State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill that would, for the first time, limit funds used for the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program in the MRA account.**
- **\$2.7 billion for International Disaster Assistance as adopted by House.**
- **\$1.6 billion for Food for Peace as adopted by the Senate.**
- **\$50 million for Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance as adopted by the House and Senate.**

- **\$2.9 billion for Development Assistance Programs as adopted by the Senate.**
- **\$30 million for the Complex Crisis Fund as adopted by the Senate.**

The U.S. government has provided indispensable funding, influence and leadership to launch initiatives, strengthen local capacity, and coordinate humanitarian strategies across national boundaries. America's public contributions overseas deliver results the private sector cannot achieve alone. This poverty-focused development assistance is some of the most effective investments we fund and at troubled times such as these, allowing success to roll backwards is not a wise investment.

We, participants in 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.

Thank you again for your continued support.

Sincerely,

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| 1. American Hindu World Service | 12. Leadership Conference of Women Religious |
| 2. Bread for the World | 13. Partnership for Faith and Development |
| 3. Catholic Medical Mission Board | 14. Presbyterian Church (USA) |
| 4. Children's Medical Ministries | 15. Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism |
| 5. Church World Service | 16. Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America |
| 6. Disabled Children's Fund | 17. The Office of Public Witness, Church of the Brethren |
| 7. The Episcopal Church | 18. United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries |
| 8. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America | 19. World Vision |
| 9. Faiths for Safe water | |
| 10. Friends Committee on National Legislation | |
| 11. Global Citizen | |

CC: Chairman Thad Cochran
 Ranking Member Barbara Mikulski
 Chairman Hal Rogers

