

May 20, 2010



URGE KEY SENATORS TO SUPPORT AN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS BUDGET THAT REDUCES POVERTY

TAKE ACTION NOW! [Visit the Action Center](#) now and urge your U.S. Senators to sign on to the bipartisan [Kerry-Lugar letter](#) to the Senate Appropriations Committee leadership. The letter supports a strong international affairs budget in order to preserve funding for poverty-focused programs that uphold the life and dignity of our brothers and sisters living in poverty throughout the world.

WHY IS THE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS BUDGET LEVEL IMPORTANT NOW? The overall U.S. government budget environment has made it increasingly difficult to sustain essential funding for poverty-focused international assistance. As a result, the Senate Budget Committee recently recommended a \$4 billion cut from President Obama's total request for international affairs. We want to urge the Senate Appropriations Committee to reject this proposed reduction in order to preserve funding for essential poverty-focused international humanitarian and development assistance programs.

The international affairs budget determines overall funding levels for initiatives essential to confronting global poverty. If funding for the international affairs budget is drastically reduced in the proposed manner, we will fail in our moral responsibility to assist people in need around the world. While budget constraints are serious and must be dealt with, through foreign assistance reform and other measures, our nation should not balance its budget on the backs of people living in poverty around the world.

HOW DO KEY PARTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS BUDGET CONFRONT GLOBAL POVERTY? The international affairs budget encompasses lifesaving programs such as: provision of food and clean water; treatment of people affected by HIV and other deadly diseases; promotion of agriculture and microfinance to help people support themselves and their families, and delivery of education and health services to poor people. At this point in the congressional budget process, a strong international affairs budget level is critical to ensure that adequate resources are available to assist poor and vulnerable people around the globe.

WHAT DOES THE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS BUDGET HAVE TO DO WITH MY FAITH? Our Catholic faith calls on us to uphold the life and dignity of the human person by alleviating human suffering and promoting justice and solidarity worldwide. As Pope Benedict XVI said in his recent encyclical letter, *Caritas in Veritate*, "[...] more economically developed nations should do all they can to allocate larger portions of their gross domestic product to development aid, thus respecting the obligations that the international community has undertaken in this regard."

By insisting that our government assist our brothers and sisters around the world who need a hand up to lift themselves out of poverty, we are acting on our faith.

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