

Testimony of Sean Callahan
President and CEO, Catholic Relief Services
 regarding **Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations** to the subcommittee on
State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
 June 8, 2018

Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Leahy: On behalf of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), I respectfully request that you maintain international poverty-focused humanitarian relief and development assistance in Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations under your jurisdiction; specifically, to prioritize the accounts below according to the levels indicated. We deeply appreciate your prioritization of these accounts in Fiscal Year 2018, and your recognition of the critical leadership role the U.S. plays to respond to immense needs around the world every year.

Maternal & Child Health (USAID)	\$829,500,000
Nutrition (USAID)	\$125,000,000
Vulnerable Children (USAID)	\$23,000,000
HIV/AIDS (USAID)	\$330,000,000
Malaria (USAID)	\$755,000,000
Tuberculosis (USAID)	\$261,000,000
Neglected Tropical Diseases (USAID)	\$100,000,000
Combating Emerging Disease Outbreaks	\$142,500,000
HIV/AIDS (DOS/PEPFAR)	\$5,670,000,000
Development Assistance (USAID)	\$3,000,000,000
International Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA)	\$4,285,312,000
Migration and Refugee Assistance (DOS/PRM)	\$3,604,000,000
Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (DOS/PRM)	\$50,000,000
Complex Crises Fund (DOS)	\$30,000,000
Millennium Challenge Account (MCC)	\$905,000,000
Atrocities Prevention Board (ESF & INCLE)	\$10,000,000
Contributions- International Peacekeeping Activities (DOS/IO)	\$2,574,000,000
Peacekeeping Operations (DOS/IO)	\$351,800,000
Green Climate Fund (Treasury)	\$500,000,000
United States Institute of Peace	\$37,884,000
Anti-Trafficking in Persons (DA, ESF, AEECA, INCLE)	\$78,822,000

I. USAID Transformation

As CRS celebrates its 75th anniversary, we are proud to partner with the United States government: in Fiscal Year 2017, we assisted more than 136 million people in 110 countries. With more than 1,950 local partners, many of whom are the local Church, we continue to build local capacity and promote subsidiarity so communities can take responsibility for their own development. CRS, as a trusted partner present in the most remote regions, has done this throughout our history, most significantly when we transitioned out of our role as a Track I implementer of PEPFAR. After almost a decade, CRS' AIDSRelief program transitioned to our

local partners, who are now using the national, regional and local systems we built to achieve even better results. We have learned that effective transitions take time and planning. Local partner capacity-building should be integrated into core program budgets. Local government's regulatory context and governance must also permit civil society, including faith based groups, to thrive. We look forward to collaborating with USAID to ensure adequate criteria to assess transition readiness; we urge Congress to provide for stakeholder involvement in these assessments.

We welcome USAID's efforts to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of assistance. We are grateful for their consultation with partners and stakeholders; and Congress' requirement that USAID consult with it on reforms. In particular, we applaud USAID's emphasis that procurement mechanisms maximize flexibility and local ownership of aid. In CRS' experience, assistance instruments like cooperative agreements facilitate local partnerships and afford the greatest flexibility. Finally, we applaud reforms by USAID to elevate the humanitarian voice in interagency processes: a primary duty of all governments is to protect human life.

The well-being of underserved and vulnerable populations must ultimately be the *raison d'être* for USAID's work. Altruism and the belief in the inherent dignity of each human person motivate the American people, particularly those who donate to CRS. Pope Francis quotes St. Thomas of Aquinas in his recent papal exhortation *Gaudete Et Exsultate*: "We worship God by outward sacrifices and gifts, not for his own benefit, but that for ourselves and our neighbor." CRS is privileged to witness the good will these investments produce. Moreover, we recognize the national security dividend for the American people. But assistance must prioritize need, not political or national security objectives.

II. Humanitarian needs remain at historically high levels.

CRS deeply appreciates Congress' ongoing commitment to address the growing humanitarian crises around the world. **CRS urges Congress to maintain International Disaster Assistance funding in FY19 and to increase Migration and Refugee Assistance to \$3.6 billion, given unprecedented levels of forced displacement.** We urge the committee to continue to respond to new crises without neglecting other smaller, less publicized crises impacting needy populations.

U.S. leadership is critical to address the severe and ongoing hunger and malnutrition in East Africa and Yemen. Years of violence have exacerbated severe drought. CRS applauds Congress for providing emergency funding in May 2017 to address the famine-like conditions then. That decisive action brought much relief to these crises. In South Sudan, where two million people have fled the country and tens of thousands have died, food assistance, cash transfers, and diagnosis and treatment for childhood malnutrition are needed. Furthermore, continued U.S. support is necessary for the efforts of the South Sudan Council of Churches to bring peace, reconciliation and stability there.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, food insecurity and malnutrition have deteriorated and more than 13 million people require urgent assistance; 7.7 million people are food insecure (a 30% increase from 2017), according to OCHA. Over 2 million children are at risk of severe acute malnutrition.

In March, OCHA announced a new \$951 million appeal to respond to 1.3 million Rohingya in need through the end of the calendar year. With our partner Caritas Bangladesh, we are reaching 360,000 people, creating new sites and upgrading existing sites. We support Caritas Bangladesh in its role as co-lead of the shelter sector and have led the design and piloting of a more resilient shelter. Rapid support and resources for deploying this model, as well as other more resilient community structures, are crucial – otherwise the refugees are under great risk as the cyclone season is upon us. We also urge the Department of State to ensure that any returns to Burma are voluntary and that all measures are in place to ensure their safe return. We join many organizations that assert that return now would be premature.

In Venezuela, economic collapse, food insecurity, health systems collapse and political violence have caused mass migration to surrounding countries. Food production has plummeted and the cost of food has skyrocketed. The health of the population is deteriorating due to a shortage of pharmaceutical products and the challenges in acquiring approval for importing needed medicines and therapeutic foods. More than 1.5 million Venezuelans have fled the country, marking the largest displacement in Latin American history. Receiving countries are challenged by lack of capacity and ability to provide support. U.S. resources are needed and groups such as CRS stand ready to expand.

Around the world, we witness the maxim “war is development in reverse.” Indeed, protracted conflicts around the globe have cost millions of lives and left millions of people to rebuild their lives amidst torn social fabrics. The UN’s “The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2017” report asserts that roughly 489 million of the world’s hungry people live in countries afflicted by conflict. We urge you to work with the Department of State to reestablish the United States’ diplomatic commitment and capacity to address these crises, and to prioritize conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts, including continued engagement with civil society and faith-based groups. **U.S. investments in peacekeeping, the Atrocities Prevention Board, the Complex Crisis Fund, and the U.S. Institute of Peace are significant initiatives to manage conflict and to address the root causes of violence and migration.**

III. Development Assistance is an ounce of prevention worth a pound of cure.

Not only conflict resolution, but also conflict prevention, mitigation, and management should be redoubled to address the root causes of violence. Basic development assistance can help by providing opportunity to people who may otherwise lose hope. We therefore urge you to **maintain critical investments funded by the Development Assistance account in water and sanitation, basic education, democracy promotion and good governance, access to microfinance, and programs to combat trafficking in persons.** We also support those Economic Support Funds that achieve the goal of poverty reduction.

Hunger globally has risen for the first time in a decade, affecting 11% of the world’s population, according to the aforementioned report. Hunger and malnutrition prevent millions of people in developing countries from living healthy, productive lives and stunt the mental and physical development of future generations. Spikes in food prices can drive violence and instability. Development aid provides communities with resiliency in the face of such setbacks.

In Nigeria, agriculture provides a livelihood for approximately 90% of the rural population. CRS' Feed the Future Nigeria Livelihoods project, with USAID funding, has provided comprehensive support to 42,000 households, introducing improved varieties of seeds, new technologies that increase farmer productivity, vocational training, cash grants, and more. Kulu Asarara, 47 years old, is one beneficiary. Previously, her harvests were just enough to feed her family of eight two meals a day. Thanks to a cash grant, Kulu has expanded her farm and begun a second job selling spices and herbs in her village. For the first time, her family now eats three meals a day. **We urge you to allocate \$1 billion of Development Assistance funding for the agriculture, resilience, and nutrition programs authorized by the Global Food Security Act,** which supports small-scale farmers like Kulu. We further request that of this funding, **\$80 million is made available for the Community Development Fund (CDF).** Along with Food for Peace resources, CDF aids small-scale farmers who have fewer resources than even Kulu had to start with.

Climate shocks around the globe affect the livelihoods of millions of people, sometimes sparking conflict and displacement. Adaptation can help people remain in their communities and withstand climate shocks. **Therefore, we urge Congress to provide \$500 million toward the Green Climate Fund to help the poor and vulnerable adapt to climate change.**

IV. Global Health saves lives and prevents the spread of disease.

Investments in life-giving global health not only protect direct beneficiaries, but also manage the spread of disease and therefore protect untold numbers of people around the world. In Fiscal Year 2016, The Presidential Malaria Initiative, for example, provided intermittent preventive treatments to more than 7 million pregnant women; and procured more than 44 million antimalarial treatments, among other accomplishments. Furthermore, recent investments in global health security, including Ebola emergency funding, prevented the spread of Ebola and further loss of life. **We therefore urge you to maintain Fiscal Year 2018 levels for life-giving global health funding. With the recent outbreak of Ebola in the DRC, it is clear this funding is essential.**

The impact of investments in nutrition against preventable diseases for children under five make it one of the best values for our health dollars. A study by the International Food Policy Research Institute estimates that every \$1 invested in improving nutrition in the days between pregnancy and age two generate \$18 in economic returns. **We urge you to fund nutrition at no less than \$125 million** and to include language in the report accompanying your bill directing that Early Childhood Development be incorporated into Maternal and Child Health programs and other programs that touch the lives of pregnant women and children under two years of age.

Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Leahy, allow me to profoundly thank you for your commitment to humanitarian and development assistance. A young Syrian girl participating in CRS' Child-Friendly Space in Turkey asked what "Catholic" meant. My colleague explained. The young girl replied, "oh, I thought it meant, 'help.'" CRS is honored by this assumption, and we believe most Americans take great pride when their flag likewise symbolizes help.