

# Action Sheet

APRIL 2021

*Loving Creator, we pray that we, and all nations, act to address the 'cry of the earth and the cry of the poor' in this pivotal moment in our world.*

## SKILL AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING ACTION

Discussions around the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) budget and appropriations process are currently taking place. The Administration is now expected to release its budget proposal in April. In Congress, the House and the Senate will review the Administration's proposed budget and start drafting their respective bills. Our Action Sheet action this month is to write a personal email to your U.S. Representative on the FY22 budget and appropriations process urging them to increase international poverty-reducing development and humanitarian assistance in Fiscal Year 2022.

## LASER TALK

Since 1990, 1 billion people have moved out of extreme poverty. U.S. sponsored international humanitarian and development aid has provided opportunities for countless millions around the world to move out of poverty. Of the more than \$4 trillion federal budget, Congress allocates half of 1% towards poverty-reducing international aid with strong bipartisan support. Beyond a belief in the moral imperative, the United States recognizes it is in our best interest to invest resources that foster peace and security and promote the common good.

The World Bank estimates that the impacts of COVID-19 will cause between 143 and 163 million people to fall into poverty in 2021, the first rise in extreme poverty globally in 20 years. Our faith compels us to uphold the dignity of individuals and communities around the world, especially those experiencing forced displacement and hunger. Therefore, it is critically important to increase funding that supports sustainable solutions to poverty, changing climates and disease.

Will you help increase international poverty-reducing development and humanitarian assistance in Fiscal Year 2022? The accounts which do this are outlined in CRS and the USCCB's appropriations chart. The innovative programs that this funding supports can help ensure that decades of development gains are not lost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## BACKGROUND

### CRS and the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget and Appropriations Process

The World Bank now estimates that in 2021, we will see the first rise in global extreme poverty in 20 years. The impacts of COVID-19 are expected to cause between 143 and 163 million people to fall into poverty this year.<sup>1</sup> Supplemental, or emergency funding, and the annual budget and appropriations process are both ways to ensure that the United States leads in the international response to poverty, which is more important than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup> The poverty-reducing development and humanitarian accounts fund programs around the world, including many CRS programs, that work to end hunger and malnutrition.

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<sup>1</sup> The World Bank. [Updated estimates of the impact of COVID-19 on global poverty: Looking back at 2020 and the outlook for 2021](#). 11 January 2021. Blog.

<sup>2</sup> USAGOV. [Budget of the U.S. Government](#). 10 October 2019. Website.

Catholic Relief Services advocates holistically on U.S. funding for poverty-reducing development and humanitarian accounts, using the [CRS/USCCB chart of accounts](#) to outline the specific requests for the accounts that address poverty, hunger and disease. We have principled concerns with providing taxpayer funding for activities inconsistent with our Catholic faith and basic human rights. Therefore, we also strongly urge Congress to maintain the Helms Amendment in Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations, which prohibits the use of U.S. funded foreign assistance for abortion.

### Why Should Our Nation Lead the Way on Addressing Global Poverty?

Historically, international development and humanitarian programming has received strong bipartisan support. It aligns with U.S. moral values and fosters good will around the globe. CRS believes strongly that U.S. international assistance must prioritize integral human development, a model that places the dignity of the human person at the center of saving lives and alleviating suffering, accelerating the end of poverty and cultivating just and peaceful societies. In his remarks for the World Economic Forum last year, Pope Francis reminded us to live by the “principle of placing the human person, rather than the mere pursuit of power or profit, at the very center of public policy.”<sup>3</sup>

Your action demonstrates that many in our nation, inspired by their faith and goodwill, want the government to be a beacon of justice, peace and hope. Our nation wants the U.S. government to engage with every corner of the world to help lead the way on solving global health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, protecting human rights and responding quickly to food insecurity, malnutrition and changing climates. When international assistance is driven by this moral imperative, our nation signals that the common good and solidarity with the those experiencing poverty are critical components of our U.S. global leadership. Pope Francis said, “we are not called to serve merely in order to receive a reward, but rather to imitate God ... to live in serving. Service is thus a way of life.”<sup>4</sup> CRS contends that this “way of life,” prioritizing integral human development, is in line with long-term U.S. goals to create a more peaceful and prosperous world.

International poverty-reducing development and humanitarian funding allows CRS to support people like [María Ana](#) and [Birhan](#) to strengthen their resilience in the face of hunger, malnutrition and climate change and to fulfill their God-given potential.

### TAKE ACTION: Write a personal email your U.S. Representative

- 1. Go to the website of your U.S. Representative and see how they want you to email them** (e.g., by filling out an online form or by emailing a specific email address from the website).
- 2. Introduce yourself:** Provide personal information to root yourself in the community (e.g., I am active in my local parish, I volunteer at our local food bank, etc.) and briefly share why this issue matters to you. Share connections to your faith, activities you’re involved with in your community to help children and families, etc.
- 3. Express gratitude to your U.S. Representative:** Express gratitude for something related to global poverty or for their service in Congress. You can express gratitude that Congress provided \$10.8 billion of emergency funding in the American Rescue Plan for the international response to COVID-19.
- 4. Make the ask:** Urge your U.S. Representative to increase poverty-reducing international development and humanitarian assistance in Fiscal Year 2022. [The accounts which do this are enumerated in the [CRS/USCCB appropriations chart](#).] We strongly urge Congress to maintain the Helms Amendment in Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations, which prohibits the use of U.S. funded foreign assistance for abortion.
- 5. Provide some background to support your argument:** In your own words, share why it is important that the United States is a global leader in funding international humanitarian and development aid and how this funding addresses the root causes of issues such as hunger and malnutrition through innovative and sustainable programs.
- 6. Repeat the ‘ask’, say thank you, and request a response:** Leave your name, address, phone number and email address so the office can get back to you with their decision.

<sup>3</sup> Pope Francis. [Message of the Holy Father to the Executive Chairman of the “World Economic Forum.”](#) 15 January 2020. Vatican Press.

<sup>4</sup> Pope Francis. [Homily of the Holy Father during his Apostolic Visit to Georgia and Azerbaijan.](#) 2 October 2016. Vatican Press Online.