

Action Sheet

AUGUST 2021

Loving God, we pray that the United States continues its leadership role in the world to eradicate poverty and care for those most vulnerable.

SKILL AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING ACTION

The Senate will begin to markup and negotiate the twelve Senate appropriations bills during August. To amplify our impact during the August recess, our Action Sheet action this month is to write a letter to the editor urging your U.S. Senators to increase international poverty-reducing development and humanitarian assistance in Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22). 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.

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

Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Timeline and August Recess

We continue to consider the annual budget process to have three key phases: prioritization, negotiation and finalization. Advocacy on the FY22 budget and appropriations process this month continues to fall into the negotiation phase, as members of both the House and Senate compromise to form budget proposals. The House aims to vote on bills on the floor prior to August recess. The Senate will begin to draft and discuss their twelve bills in August. This is a critical period in the Senate to ensure that the priorities you have advocated for remain in the bills during the negotiation phase.

The congressional August recess invites members of Congress to focus on constituent engagement. They are dedicated to constituent visits, events and town halls while they are out of session and in district. Because members of Congress are dedicated to constituent engagement, the August recess is an ideal time to amplify the impact of visits and town hall attendance by submitting letters to the editor to newspapers.

U.S. Global Leadership in Addressing Critical Global Issues

The latest State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report provides an updated estimate that “between 720 and 811 million people in the world faced hunger in 2020 – as many as 161 million more than in 2019. Nearly 2.37 billion did not have access to adequate food in 2020 – an increase of 320 million people in just one year.”¹ Historically, international development and humanitarian programming addressing critical global issues, such as hunger, has received strong bipartisan support. It aligns with U.S. moral values and fosters good will around the globe. Given the United States is the largest donor worldwide for foreign assistance, its investment reflects a commitment to engage and help lead other countries to do the same, which is critical. This investment addresses global hunger and malnutrition by inspiring locally-led immediate and long-term solutions to hunger and malnutrition in communities around the world.

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. When international assistance is driven by this moral imperative, our nation signals that the common good and solidarity with the those experiencing hunger and malnutrition 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.”² 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. 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.

We celebrate International Youth Day on August 12. Continuing to advocate on the FY22 budget and appropriations process works to ensure that young people like [Maria Ana](#) can develop, grow and thrive. CRS programming in Honuras funded by the U.S. government McGovern-Dole account ensures that nutritious meals allow young people to defy odds, serve as catalysts for change in their own communities and live out their dreams.

TAKE ACTION: Write a letter to the editor focused on your U.S. Senators

- 1. Find the local newspaper you will target:** To learn what is required for letters to the editor, Google the following: “(Name of the paper) letters to the editor guidelines.” Identify the word limit and submission method (i.e., via the website or email).
- 2. Think about the placement of the piece:** If you are writing to a daily newspaper, find an article or editorial that provides an entry point to discuss the need to care for vulnerable families and communities amidst this pandemic. If you are writing to a smaller weekly paper, write in a way that would be of interest to local readers.
- 3. Research:** Read a few letters to the editor in the newspaper you are targeting to see how they begin and the general tone.
- 4. Write your letter to the editor:** Using the newspaper’s guidelines and this Action Sheet’s information, identify yourself and share what values or experiences move you to work to support the world’s most vulnerable individuals. Have another chapter member provide some edits for your letter. Find additional guidance in this [letter to the editor training](#) (40:20 mark).
- 5. Include your specific message:** Urge your U.S. Senators 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.
Note: If the word count allows, consider urging your U.S. Senators to take the next step by speaking to the chairs or ranking members of the State, Foreign Operations (SFOPs), Agriculture or Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS) subcommittees.
- 6. Report back and celebrate:** If your letter is published, contact your CRS representative, share it on social media tagging your members of Congress, send it to your members of Congress by email and have your chapter’s liaison call the key aide to make sure they saw it! If it’s not published, consider editing it, if needed and sending it to another newspaper.

¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021](#). FAO Online.

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