

November 25, 2009

Dear President Obama:

We write to you as leaders of faith and faith-based organizations, from across the United States and around the world, to express our deep concern about proposed flat funding for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Flat or decreased funding will have a devastating impact on the strong US response to date to the global HIV and AIDS pandemic. Many people living with HIV world-wide will be denied life-saving antiretroviral therapy, succumbing to AIDS, dying prematurely, increasing resistance to existing antiretroviral drugs, and leaving more orphans.

US efforts to address HIV/AIDS must not be allowed to falter as the world seeks to achieve Universal Access in 2010 to HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment services, and a goal to which the United States has committed itself. We must also maintain the pace of funding in order to meet the reauthorized mandated U.S. global AIDS response through PEPFAR, including increasing the healthcare workforce by 140,000 new health professionals, strengthening health systems, and expanding services to 5 million orphaned and vulnerable children.

We welcome and support your call for the development of a new Global Health Initiative. We also acknowledge the need for increased funding for programs to address neglected tropical diseases and maternal and child health. However, we urge you to ensure funding for these new priorities does not come at the expense of the commitments and progress already made through the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008.

America's global health programs have scored tremendous accomplishments in recent years. Bipartisan support in the Congress and White House leadership have led to tangible gains in saving lives in many impoverished countries across the globe. These programs have demonstrated to the world the great value the American people place on compassion and good neighborliness.

We are called, as people of faith and as a country, to console those who suffer, provide care for those that are sick and give solace and hope to the marginalized and outcast. Guided by our faith, we seek to walk with the people most affected and call on ourselves and leaders at all levels, to intensify efforts to care for the sick, provide treatment and increase prevention efforts for HIV, TB and malaria.

We cannot afford to lose momentum in the fight against these diseases. TB, for instance, is having a major impact on women. TB is the third leading cause of morbidity and mortality combined in women of reproductive age in developing countries. Drug resistant strains of TB are already posing significant challenge to our efforts, and this will only worsen if TB programs fail to get the resources at the level envisioned under Hyde-Lantos.

Yet, the success of our HIV/AIDS programs is now threatened by a slow-down in the pace of funding. Concern is now rising in affected countries about the impact of a slowdown in US funding on HIV/AIDS

prevention, treatment and care and support. Ambassador Eric Goosby, the US Global AIDS Coordinator, recently said that, “a flat or slightly rising PEPFAR allocation is what we are looking at for at least two years, maybe longer.” A report recently issued by Doctors Without Borders, called “Punishing Success”? Early Signs of a Retreat from Commitment to HIV/AIDS Care and Treatment,” documents the potential impact of a troubling slowdown and cutbacks of HIV and TB services.

While countries themselves must do more to maintain their own health programs, they must also be able to trust that the US will be a reliable partner. We believe it is deeply in the interest of the United States to fully fund the programs authorized under Hyde-Lantos, at the specified level, and we urge you to include this funding in your Global Health Initiative.

We stand ready to work with you to ensure these programs have maximum support. The commitment we seek is one that fully embraces all God's children who are infected and affected with the scourge of disease and poverty. Mr. President, we are counting on your leadership.

Sincerely,

**United States Signatories:**

All Believers Network  
American Jewish World Service  
AME-SADA  
The Balm In Gilead  
Catholic Medical Mission Board  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Africa Office, Global Ministries  
Christian Reformed World Relief Committee-US (CRWRC)  
Christian Relief and Development, Inc.  
Church World Service  
Crossroads Presbyterian Church  
Drugs for AIDS and HIV Patients (DAHP)  
The Episcopal Church  
Food for the Hungry  
Global Justice Ministry, Metropolitan Community Churches  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Medical Teams International  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office  
Metropolitan Community Churches  
Moravian Church in America, Central Moravian Church,  
Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
United Church of Christ, Africa Office, Global Ministries  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society  
World Concern  
World Relief  
World Vision

**African Statement Supporters:**

Affordable Medicines For Africa (AMFA), South Africa  
African Christian Homes & Rehabilitation, Ghana  
Catholic AIDS Action, Namibia  
Christian AIDS Bureau For Southern Africa (CABSA), South Africa  
The Christian Health Association of Kenya, Kenya  
Conseil Des Eglises Protestantes Du Cameroun, Cameroon  
The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Dev. & Services (EECMY-DASSC), Ethiopia  
Human Development Trust, Tanzania  
INERELA+, Malawi  
INERELA+, Sierra Leone  
Life Builders Ministry International, Nigeria  
Living Hope Health Care, Uganda  
Manerela+, Malawi  
Pan African Christian AIDS Network (PACANet), Uganda  
WORLD COMMUNITY COUNSELLING CENTRE, Botswana

**Global Statement Supporters:**

Christian Aid, UK  
Christian AIDS National Alliance (CANA), New Delhi, India  
Christian Medical, London UK  
Maryknoll Sisters, Bolivia  
Maryknoll Sisters, Taiwan  
Share and Care Nepal

**Individual Religious Leaders Statement Supporters:**

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, South Africa  
Canon Gideon B Byamugisha, Uganda  
Reverend Canon Alice Medcof, Canada  
Reverend Janel Rice, USA  
Reverend Lisa Marchal, USA  
Reverend Samuel Nixon, Jr., USA  
Ruth W. Messinger, USA