



March 19, 2008

The Honorable Dave Obey
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-218 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

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Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you begin consideration of the FY'09 Budget, we urge you to consider and give priority to the needs of the most vulnerable people in our world. It is critical to provide life-lengthening medicines and life-saving education practices for people across the globe. Without these much needed funds even more people will die unnecessarily.

We urge the Appropriations Committee to support and fully fund, at a minimum, the President's \$39.5 billion request for the International Affairs Budget. After a decade of dangerous under-funding, the Administration and Congress have made important strides in restoring funding for International Affairs programs. Despite this critical re-investment, there are escalating, unmet needs across the globe including the pandemic of HIV/AIDS and other health threats such as extremely drug resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB). The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has identified XDR-TB as an "emerging threat to the homeland."

We encourage you to seize this opportunity to save lives and we also request funding to reach U.S. goals in several specific areas:

AIDS: Appropriate \$10.4 billion for overall U.S. global AIDS efforts; in particular \$8.4 billion for bilateral programs including \$650 million for healthcare workers and health systems; \$550 million for tuberculosis programs; \$500 million for programs to combat malaria. This will be in accord with the bipartisan agreement reached by the House and Senate Foreign Relations Committees.

GLOBAL FUND: Provide no less than \$2 billion for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in order to provide the full U.S. share of the Global Fund's needs for the coming year. This would place the U.S. in a better position to leverage increased contributions from other countries and meet the targets established by the G8 on funding the global AIDS fight.

OVC: The Global AIDS legislation passed by Congress requires that "not less than 10 percent of the amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under section 401 for HIV/AIDS shall be expended for assistance for orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS..." We request the following language:

"The Committee directs that \$800 million be designated for programs to meet the needs of these children. This requirement complies with The United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-25), which requires that 10 percent of overall global HIV/AIDS funding be expended for orphans and vulnerable children programming."

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EDUCATION: We urge you to direct a total of \$1 billion for overall basic education programs, with at least \$500 million of that directed to countries with approved Fast Track Initiative National Education Plans. We request the following language:

“The Committee directs a total of \$1,000,000,000 from Title II of this bill for basic education. The Committee notes that a number of developing nations have committed to achieving universal basic education by 2015, and have developed National Education Plans in coordination with the Education for All Fast Track Initiative, to which the United States is a party. The Committee directs that not less than \$500,000,000 of the overall basic education appropriation shall be directed to countries with approved Fast Track Initiative National Education Plans.”

FAMILY PLANNING: We request \$1 billion for international family planning and reproductive health (FP/RH) programs; both bilateral and multilateral. This level of funding is required in order to provide the appropriate U.S. share of the total financial resources necessary to meet the need for contraception of an estimated 201 million women in the developing world today.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: As the international community attempts to tackle the staggering numbers of people living with HIV/AIDS and to formulate and finance essential HIV/AIDS programs, relatively little attention is being paid to the need to address violence against women and girls. Violence against women and girls is at epidemic proportions and is linked to HIV; women who have experienced violence may be up to three times more likely to acquire HIV. The International Violence against Women Act of 2007 (I-VAWA) introduced in the Senate and referred to the Foreign Relations Committee, would establish a comprehensive strategy to prevent violence against women and girls and ensure that foreign assistance programs incorporate measures that prevent violence against women and girls. We support this bill and hope it will become law and accordingly request \$275.8 million to implement it, of which \$5 million should be directed to the UNIFEM Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women.

MICROENTERPRISE: Microenterprise is one of the most cost-effective poverty-reduction interventions available. In addition, microfinance schemes have been shown to reduce participating women's experiences of domestic violence, an important risk factor of HIV and also a barrier to seeking HIV/AIDS testing and treatment. We request that no less than \$500 million be expended on microenterprise activities, with half devoted to very poor people living on less than \$1 a day, and with \$20 million allocated to microfinance institutions that work with communities impacted by HIV/AIDS. We also urge you to provide \$30 million for the central microenterprise development office at USAID, and \$10 million for capacity building of retail microfinance institutions in sub-Saharan Africa.

Our nation can ill afford to shortchange these vital programs. We will continue to utilize all the tools and vast resources our country has to meet the goals of our international programs and foreign policy objectives. Your support for these programs ensures America will remain engaged in the world. Thank you for your attention. Please contact us with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Dr. Paul Zeitz
Executive Director