

May 2, 2008

Senator Barack Obama
Obama for America
P.O. Box 8102
Chicago, IL 60680

Senator Hillary Clinton
Hillary Clinton for President
4420 North Fairfax Drive
Arlington, VA 22203

Senator John McCain
John McCain for President
P.O. Box 16118
Arlington VA 22215

Dear Senators:

We, the undersigned Indiana religious leaders, wish to emphasize our full support for an approach to US foreign policy that is grounded in compassion and justice, in accordance with our faith traditions.

As you develop and refine your own foreign policy proposals, we urge you to consider backing the establishment of a US Department of Global Development, in order to ensure the full success of a compassion-centered approach.

US assistance to address poverty and disease has saved millions of lives around the world – as shown, for instance, by the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Yet, US foreign aid is executed by at least 12 departments, 25 different agencies, and almost 60 government offices, which can lead to confusion and competing agendas. Cost-inefficiencies in aid delivery and poor coordination hamper US efforts, and US procedures undermine the sense of local ownership needed for development to succeed.

To solve these and other problems, we need a Department of Global Development to ensure that the funds allocated to reduce poverty across the globe are spent intentionally, wisely and with full accountability.

A Cabinet-level Department of Global Development would bring together the numerous U.S. government agencies and departments now working to reduce poverty throughout the world. It would have a streamlined organizational structure with empowered, high-level leadership and a clear mission focused on poverty alleviation.

Establishing a U.S. Department of Global Development would permit the U.S. government to put global assistance where it belongs -- on an equal footing with national security and diplomatic relations – thereby making development a key priority for the President.

It would give the President a stronger voice in negotiations with Congress for the resources and policies needed to ensure the US lives up to its international commitments on poverty reduction. And, on the basis of a unified effort on global poverty, the US could better leverage resources for development from Europe, Japan and other key donors and support effective international institutions.

This is not a new idea. Several commission reports have recommended that we move in this direction. A new presidential administration provides the opportunity to make a change of this magnitude.

Please consider making the establishment of a U.S. Department of Global Development a central component of your foreign policy plan.

Sincerely,

- Sister Ann Oestreich IHM, Congregation Justice Coordinator, Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, IN
- Dr. M. Kent Millard, Lead Pastor, St. Luke's United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, IN
- Rev. Richard Hamilton, Retired Pastor, North United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, IN
- Rev. Kevin Armstrong, North United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, IN
- Rev. Lisa Marchal, Indianapolis, IN
- Rev. Stuart Erny, Director of Campus Ministries, Co-Director of AU-East Africa, Anderson, IN
- Rev. LaMarco A. Cable, Associate for Advocacy & Education, Division of Overseas Ministries / Global Ministries, a common witness of the Division of Overseas Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Wider Church Ministries, United Church of Christ, Indianapolis, IN
- Rev. Larry Kleiman, St Peter's United Church of Christ, Indianapolis, IN
- Rev. Lori Bievenour, St Peter's United Church of Christ, Indianapolis, IN
- Rev. Philip W. Rieman, Northview Church of the Brethren, Indianapolis, IN
- Rev. Louise Baldwin Rieman, Northview Church of the Brethren, Indianapolis, IN

(Organizational Affiliation for Identification Purposes Only)