

September 19, 2011

Dear Congressional Leadership, Joint Select Committee Members, Appropriators and members of Congress:

As U.S.-based religious institutions and faith-based organizations we write to urge you to preserve humanitarian and poverty-focused foreign assistance and civilian diplomacy from further cuts as you implement the Budget Control Act of 2011.

Because communities of faith are engaged in humanitarian work with partners around the world, we see first-hand the devastating impact on families and communities of poverty, violent conflict and environmental degradation. Our recommendations are inspired by these experiences and by our faith traditions that place concern for the impoverished and suffering at the center of God's call for human action.

We are deeply concerned that the debt ceiling agreement may have a detrimental impact on international assistance beginning in FY2012 and for many years ahead. Deep cuts to humanitarian and poverty-focused foreign assistance, which totals only one percent of the federal budget, will not make a significant contribution to deficit reduction. But it could cost millions of lives, undermine global human security and harm U.S. and global interests in helping build a more stable and secure world for all people.

We urge you to make deficit reduction decisions that exempt support for impoverished and vulnerable populations at home and abroad.

Cutting this assistance is likely to have detrimental consequences, among others:

- Devastate vital global food security programs (including international agricultural development and food assistance), global clean water and sanitation programs, and international education initiatives.
- Diminish America's ability to effectively respond to disasters such as the earthquake in Haiti and the current famine in the Horn of Africa.
- Halt progress in AIDS education, prevention and treatment, including access to lifesaving medications that would have eliminated mother-to-child HIV transmission by 2015.
- Reduce support for those suffering disproportionately from the impacts of global climate change.
- Undercut important civilian diplomatic, conflict transformation and development capacities.
- Weaken U.S. participation in vital multilateral activities through the United Nations.

Humanitarian and poverty-focused foreign assistance is vital to global human security. It saves lives, helps prevent conflict, saves money, and lays the groundwork for economic growth.

Deficit reduction decisions should be focused on job creation and a mixture of revenue increases and spending cuts that preserve our shared commitment to justice for all God's children.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns for our impoverished and vulnerable sisters and brothers around the world.

Sincerely,

American Friends Service
Committee



**American Friends
Service Committee**

American Jewish World Service



Church of the Brethren



Church of the Brethren

Church World Service



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

Columban Center for Advocacy
and Outreach



Disciples Justice Action Network



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Friends Committee on National Legislation



Islamic Society of North America



Jesuit Conference



JESUITS[®]
Jesuit Conference
of the United States

Lutheran World Relief



Lutheran World Relief

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns



Mennonite Central Committee, Washington Office



**Mennonite
Central
Committee**
Washington Office

Missionary Oblates



Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)



National Council of Churches



NETWORK, A National Catholic
Social Justice Lobby



Office of Social Justice of the
Christian Reformed Church



Unitarian Universalist Service
Committee



United Church of Christ, Justice
and Witness Ministries



United Methodist Church, General
Board of Church and Society

