

A FAITHFUL BUDGET FOR INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AND POVERTY-FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCEⁱ

Introduction:

1. The Imperative of Compassion, the Wisdom of Aid

Many of our global neighbors experience daily struggles for basic food, shelter, and health care upon which their lives depend. Sixty million are forcibly displaced from their homes. Americans who have visited impoverished countries know the challenging and sometimes horrific conditions facing populations and the incredible courage of our sisters and brothers living in such circumstances. As we have seen their pain, so, too, have we experienced their generosity -- sharing their limited homes and food with their American guests. Our own generosity must not fail them.

Even in challenging economic times, the wealth of the United States enables us to express love for our neighbors by reaching out in compassion and justice to children, women, and men around the world who are impoverished, hungry, thirsty, and homeless. In one form or another, all our faith traditions tell us that “to whom much is given, much shall be required.”

International humanitarian and poverty-focused development assistance (PFDA) is vital to global human security. It helps prevent conflict, saves money, and lays the groundwork for economic growth. Robust, well-targeted foreign assistance will save millions of lives, build self-reliance among the world’s most vulnerable, and benefit the United States by helping create a more secure world. International assistance also facilitates democratic governance accountable to its populace. By helping developing nations address issues such as hunger, health, and education, it empowers a productive constituent base to which the government becomes accountable. True human and global security exist when good governance sustains the development made possible by foreign assistance.

Increasing America’s commitment to our neighbors in need here at home and around the world means making choices about our national priorities. Certainly, we cannot do everything. But our priorities should seek to restore our country’s historic commitment to lifting up our neighbors in need and making the world a more secure place for everyone.

2. How Much Should the U.S. Give?

Public opinion surveys show that most Americans think that foreign aid is 20-30 percent of the U.S. federal budget. When asked how much the U.S. should give, most people answer 5 to 10 percent. Others say that the U.S. should give a tithe, or 10 percent, to help lift up the world’s hungry and impoverished people. The real figure for total foreign aid is just over 1 percent of the federal budget. Aid focused on assisting the most vulnerable and impoverished sister and brothers around the world is less than that – only about ½ of 1 percent.

The United States is the richest country in the world. While we lead other nations in the dollar amount of international assistance that it provides, America is at the bottom of developed countries in the percentage of its resources given to help alleviate international hunger and poverty. Our faith tells us that it is not the specific amount given that pleases God but the proportion of what we give to what we have (Luke 21:1-4). America can afford to increase its commitment to international humanitarian and

poverty-focused development assistance. Yet, since 2010 the international affairs budget has been reduced. At the very least, it must not be cut any further.

3. Aid Works!

Over the last 20 years, the world has seen extreme poverty cut by almost half. 2.6 billion people have gained access to clean water. Since 1990 the number of hungry people worldwide dropped by 216 million to 795 million. And 6.4 million fewer children die annually before their fifth birthday (down from more than 12 million annually). Despite this progress, more needs to be done. Almost 800 million people suffer from hunger, 767 million people still live in extreme poverty. We are also facing the largest humanitarian crisis since WWII. Currently 60 million persons have been displaced from their homes – the highest number in decades. Famine has been declared in South Sudan, and near famine conditions are in northeast Nigeria, Somalia, and Yemen-threatening starvation for over 20 million people within the next six months. If there has ever been a time for us to think about what is our role in the world, now is that time.

Development Assistance:

1. Global Hunger, Agricultural Development, and Nutrition

Hunger and nutritional deficiency kill millions of children and stunt many who survive. Infants who don't have adequate nutrition in the first 1,000-days (from conception to 2 years old) experience impaired brain development that adversely impacts their entire lives. Hunger hampers learning, increases disease and renders people unable to work. Hunger impoverishes societies and undermines development.

Food and nutrition security means having access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Emergency food aid is a life-or-death matter for millions of children, women, and men in crisis situations around the world, and a Faithful Budget should respond with compassion and generosity. The goal of a Faithful Budget must be ending hunger and malnutrition by addressing the underlying causes.

A Faithful Budget will:

- Increase funding for agricultural development with a priority on smallholder and women farmers.
- Support nutrition programs that help ensure pregnant mothers and infants receive extra nutrition when they need it.
- Provide robust funding for food aid, including provisions for local and regional purchase.

2. Clean Water and Sanitation

The United States is providing millions of people with improved, life-saving access to water and sanitation every year. Since 2005, USAID has enabled 31 million people with safe drinking water, and 12 million people with improved sanitation. The World Health Organization concludes that every dollar invested in clean water and sanitation yields \$8 of increased productivity and decreased health costs. Still, 748 million people still lack access to clean, safe drinking water, and 2.5 billion (one-third of the earth's population) do not have access to a toilet or latrine. In 2012, an estimated 842,000 people died – including 361,000 children – from diarrhea caused by inadequate drinking water, sanitation, and hand-washing.

A Faithful Budget will:

- Invest in increased access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene throughout the world.

3. Education

The percentage of children not in school in less-developed countries fell from 1 in 6 in 1999 to 1 in 10 in 2012. This remarkable accomplishment means 46 million more children are receiving an education. In 2012 and 2013 U.S. aid made it possible for around 21 million children and adolescents to attend school and around 325,000 teachers and 43,000 administrators to be trained annually. In 2011, 2012 and 2013, U.S. aid provided more than 83 million textbooks and other materials and funded the construction of more than 7,000 classrooms. Yet more needs to be done. 121 million children and adolescents still are not in school.. Nearly 40% of children of primary school age – 250 million -- cannot read, write or do basic math. Education is the key to development:171 million people could lift themselves out of poverty if all children in impoverished countries graduated from primary school knowing how to read and write.

A Faithful Budget will:

- Robustly fund educational programs through the U.S. Agency for International Development and other venues.

4. Climate Change

U.S. leadership is necessary to ensure a strong international response to climate change. U.S. multilateral climate investments, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and U.S. bilateral programs, address the devastating impact of global temperature rise and extreme weather events. Low income and vulnerable communities in the United States and abroad are disproportionately affected.

The World Health Organization estimates that each year climate change causes150,000 additional deaths from malaria, malnutrition, diarrhea, flood, and heat waves in least developed countries. Climate change associated the rise in sea level could displace tens of millions of people. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), by 2030 climate change could increase the number of people living in poverty by between 35 and 122 million people.

A Faithful Budget will:

- Provide robust funding for bi-lateral and multi-lateral efforts to address climate change in by reducing carbon emissions and assisting vulnerable developing countries to adapt to climate change.

Humanitarian Assistance:

1. The ***Migration and Refugee Assistance*** (MRA) account helps meet the needs of refugees and other displaced people. 60 million persons have been displaced from their homes – the highest number in decades, if not in history. Refugees often lack access to basic elements of survival: health care, safe shelter, clean water, and education. 86% of the world’s refugees are hosted in developing countries

that are unable to provide adequate support. U.S. aid helps these countries' efforts to provide for the most vulnerable.

We are helping developing countries bear the brunt of resettlement, but the U.S. should do our part here at home as well. The **Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)** funds refugee resettlement in the United States. Our nation should increase, not diminish, the number of refugees resettled in our land.

A Faithful Budget will:

- Provide robust funding for Migration and Refugee Assistance programs.
- Provide robust funding for the Emergency Refugee and Migration account.
- Provide robust funding for increasing the number of refugees resettled in the U.S. through the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

2. *International Disaster Assistance* (IDA) provides lifesaving assistance following natural and man-made disasters, including violent conflicts, earthquakes, floods, and droughts. IDA also funds disaster risk reduction programs to help communities avoid, prepare for and lessen the impact of disasters. People living in poverty, especially women and children, are disproportionately injured and killed when disasters occur. IDA also assists internally displaced persons (IDPs), numbering 40.8 million, or more than 62 percent of the total population of forcibly displaced persons.

A Faithful Budget will:

- Provide robust funding for the International Disaster Assistance account to ensure resources are in place both to provide life-saving aid in ongoing disasters and conflicts and to meaningfully respond to future disasters.

Global Health:

1. *Mother and Child Health Program (MCH)*. Since 1990, 90 million children have been saved due to global efforts to reduce child mortality. USAID has played a leading role in providing low-cost, user-friendly, highly effective interventions to save lives and improve the health of vulnerable children and mothers. USAID's interventions address the main causes of under-5 death -- pneumonia, diarrhea, malnutrition, prematurity, asphyxia, malaria and newborn sepsis – in addition to the needs of mothers.

Between 1991 and 2011 in USAID's 24 priority MCH countries annual deaths of children under 5 decreased from 7.7 million to 4.8 million; newborn mortality rates declined 33 percent; and women's death rates from childbirth or pregnancy decreased an average of 5 percent per year – faster than the global average. Nutrition assistance, primarily provided in USAID global health programs, has played a critical role. USAID nutrition programs have assisted 46 million children under the age of five since 2010.

Globally 17,000 fewer children died every day in 2012 than in 1990. This is an incredible success that clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of U.S. foreign aid. We must build on this success.

Despite tremendous progress on addressing child mortality, in 2012, 6.6 million children died before their fifth birthday – around 18,000 per day. Nearly 3 million – almost 8,000 per day – were babies who died in their first 28 days of life. In 2013, nearly 800 women died every day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. As of 2012 malnutrition is still responsible for nearly 3 million deaths per year of children under the age of 5, and the stunting of 161 million children annually, resulting in often life-long physical and cognitive damage.

2. *HIV-AIDS & PEPFAR*. Between 1997 and 2013 new HIV infections fell 42 percent. Between 2005 and 2013 AIDS related deaths fell 35%. More than 1.2 million babies of HIV-positive mothers were born HIV-free because of PEPFAR's support for services to prevent mother-to-child transmission. As of September 2014 PEPFAR was supporting lifesaving antiretroviral treatment for 7.7 million men, women and children worldwide. In 2014 PEPFAR supported HIV testing and counseling for more than 56.7 million people.

Despite this progress, 1.5 million people still died from AIDS-related causes worldwide in 2013. More than 35 million people worldwide were living with an HIV infection at the end of 2013, including 3.2 million children under the age of 15. Of those living with HIV, only about 38% of adults and 24% of children are receiving the medicines they need to live and thrive.

3. *Tuberculosis*. With U.S. support, between 2000 and 2013 an estimated 37 million lives were saved through effective diagnosis and treatment strategies. Still, TB is the second leading infectious killer, right behind HIV/AIDS. TB killed 1.5 million people in 2013, 80,000 of whom were children.

4. *Malaria*. The U.S. is the largest donor to the *Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria*, which has supported distribution of 450 million insecticide-treated bed nets and spraying in 44 million dwellings. Still, every 60 seconds a child dies from malaria. It is estimated that malaria has reduced the GNP per capita in countries it afflicts by more than 50 percent.

5. *Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs)*. More than 1 billion people – disproportionately the world's poorest -- are affected by NTDs – with conditions such as river blindness, snail fever, and hookworm. These diseases result in sickness, disability, blindness, disfigurement and impact physical and mental development. With a public-private partnership, the U.S. government has supported the delivery of 969 million treatments for NTDs over 7 years, reaching millions of people in 25 countries.

A Faithful Budget will:

- Provide robust funding toward ending childhood nutritional deficiencies, stunting and deaths from preventable and treatable diseases;
- Include the highest levels of funding for AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), malaria and neglected tropical diseases.

Conclusion:

When asked, "Who is my neighbor," Jesus response was unequivocal. Our neighbor is the person who needs us, whatever his nationality or faith tradition. A ***Faithful Budget*** will respond with compassion and justice for our neighbors in need around the world.

President Trump's proposed budget abysmally fails this test. Overall, it would cut U.S. foreign assistance by approximately 30 percent. It would completely zero-out the Development Assistance Account, USAID

Global Health Programs, climate funding, Emergency Refugee and Migration assistance (ERMA) and international food aid. It would unconscionably reduce International Disaster Assistance and the Migration and Refugee Assistance.

We understand that Congress is unlikely to implement the President's budget proposal as submitted. However, this budget puts pressure on Congress to reduce spending on international aid, even if the final amount of the reduction is less than what is called for by President Trump. We urge Congress robustly fund this aid, and to reject any reduction.

Our faith traditions challenge us that our nation – the richest in the world -- should increase its commitment to vulnerable, displaced and impoverished children, women and men around the world. Certainly no further reductions should be made. For FY2018, we urge Congress to fund key accounts at the following levels:ⁱⁱ

- At or above \$3.4 billion for Development Assistance Programs
- At or above \$3.3 billion for USAID's Global Health Programs
- At or above \$3.6 billion for Migration and Refugee Assistance
- At or above \$500.5 million for the Green Climate Fund
- At or above \$750 million for the U.S. Global Climate Change Initiative
- At or above \$50 million for Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance
- At or above \$3.4 billion for International Disaster Assistance
- At or above \$1.875 billion for Food for Peace Title II
- At or above \$100 million for the Complex Crisis Fund
- At or above \$1.6 billion for Refugee and Entrant Assistance in Labor / Health and Human Services

ⁱ The analysis and factual information in this Section (IV) are drawn largely from InterAction's *Aid Works* and *Choose to Invest* resources.

ⁱⁱ These recommendations are the wide consensus of faith-based and non-governmental organizations advocating for robust humanitarian and poverty-focused international aid.