September 7, 2011

Dear Leadership, Joint Select Committee Members, Chairmen and Ranking Members,

We, the undersigned organizations, strongly urge you to oppose further deep and disproportionate cuts to the International Affairs Budget when considering deficit reduction plans. We recognize the imperative of reducing the deficit, but our choices must support the economic, strategic and moral values of our country and reflect a balanced approach that considers all aspects of the federal budget.

The International Affairs Budget funds the essential tools of development and diplomacy, which reflect American values and advance our interests in addressing the global challenges of the 21st century. It is a strategic and moral investment that spurs our own economic growth, protects our national security and saves millions of lives. International Affairs programs tackle extremism, conflict and despair by addressing the root causes of poverty. They also build new markets for U.S. goods and services by providing the tools people need to pull themselves out of poverty. Yet, despite its vital role and valuable contributions, the International Affairs Budget shouldered nearly 20% of all discretionary spending cuts in fiscal year 2011. Further deep and disproportionate cuts to International Affairs programs will not balance the budget, but they will jeopardize our country's future security and prosperity.

Most importantly, the International Affairs Budget tangibly demonstrates what America stands for by reflecting our moral and humanitarian values and by building goodwill for our nation around the world. We know from our diverse experiences — as humanitarian workers, social service providers, development professionals, and community and faith leaders — that these programs meet the economic and strategic needs of America by bettering lives and recognizing the dignity of people who are often relegated to the margins. Poor and vulnerable people abroad do not have powerful lobbies, but they have a claim on our national conscience and play a critical role in securing our country's future.

The moral measure of the debate will be determined by how the most vulnerable fare. We come together to ask that programs serving the most vulnerable in our nation and around the world be protected within the Joint Select Committee's recommendations or in any other deficit reduction plan.

We stand as a broad coalition to express our support for the following:

- The substantial reduction of future deficits, but not at the expense of those most vulnerable at home or abroad.

- The protection and improvement of sustainable poverty-focused development and humanitarian assistance, domestically and internationally, to promote a better, safer world.

- A balanced and sustainable approach to solving our nation's fiscal problems. Committee members and national leaders must review and consider tax revenues, military spending and entitlements in search for ways to share sacrifice and cut deficits.

We, the undersigned organizations, respectfully urge you as Congressional leaders to give moral, economic and strategic priority to programs that help secure America's future by protecting the life and dignity of people around the world.

Sincerely,

3P Human Security
Action Aid USA
Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)
African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF)
African Wildlife Foundation
Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance
Air Serv International
Alliance to End Hunger
American Refugee Committee
Americans for Informed Democracy
Americans for UNFPA
AmeriCares
America's Development Foundation
Association for International Agriculture and Rural Development
Basic Education Coalition
The Borgen Project
Bread for the World
CARE
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)
The Center for Victims of Torture
The Centre for Development and Population Activities
Chaldean Federation of America
CHF International
ChildFund International
Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
Church of the Brethren
Colomban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Concern America
Concern Worldwide US
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
Congressional Hunger Center
Consortium of Universities for Global Health
Counterpart International
Creative Associates International

Creative Learning, Inc.
Destiny Resource Center
Eastern Mennonite University, Center for Justice and Peacebuilding
Education Development Center
Environmental and Rural Mediation Centre (ENVIRUMEDIC)
Episcopal Church
Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc.
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
FHI360
Food for the Hungry
Friends of the Global Fight
Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
Global Alliance To Prevent Prematurity and Stillbirth
Global Health Council
Global Links
Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ
Global Washington
Habitat for Humanity
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights
Heifer International
Helen Keller International
HelpAge USA
The Hunger Project
IMA World Health
Initiative for Global Development
INMED Partnerships for Children
Institute for Sustainable Communities
International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)
International Foundation for Electoral Systems
International Housing Coalition
International Medical Corps
International Relief and Development, Dr. Arthur Keys, President & CEO
International Rescue Committee
International Youth Foundation
Intrahealth International
Islamic Relief USA
Juarez & Associates, Inc. (J&A)
Kurdish Human Rights Watch
Land O'Lakes
Lutheran World Relief
Management Sciences for Health
Medical Emergency Relief International (MERLIN) USA, Inc
Medical Teams International
Medicines for Malaria Venture
Mercy Corps
Millennium Water Alliance

Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network
National Association of Social Workers
National Council of Jewish Women
National Organization for Women
National Peace Corps Association
ONE
Oxfam America
Pact
PATH
Perkins School for the Blind
Plan International USA
Plant with Purpose
Population Action International
Population Institute
Positive Community Impact
Professional Services Council
The Public Health Institute
Refugees International
RESULTS
ReSurge International
Save the Children
Self Help Africa
St. Francis Health Care Service
TB Alliance
Trickle Up
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
U.S. Fund for UNICEF
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
United Church of Christ
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
United Methodist Committee on Relief
VCU Institute for Women's Health
WASH Advocacy Initiative
Washington Office on Latin America
WaterAid
WellShare International
Werner Consulting
White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood
Winrock International
Women Thrive Worldwide
Women's Refugee Commission
World Concern
World Food Program USA
World Learning
World Vision
World Wildlife Fund