



*"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the land.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for
righteousness,
for they will be satisfied."
(Mt 5:3-6)*

***Urge your Senators:
Our nation must lead the world to confront global poverty!***

The Senate is expected to consider proposals that could drastically cut life-saving poverty-focused international assistance even though it makes up less than 1% of the U.S. federal budget. **Join advocates from around the country over the next several days and [urge your Senators](#)** to maintain the levels of life-saving poverty-focused international assistance for FY 2012 as passed by the Senate Appropriations Committee and to oppose any amendments that would cut poverty-focused international assistance.

What's the issue? Your Catholic faith calls on you to care for your brothers and sisters who are hungry, thirsty, seeking refuge from war and famine. Life-saving poverty-focused international assistance that fights hunger, disease and poverty makes up less than 1% of the U.S. federal budget. Join the urgent call to protect poor and vulnerable communities around the world. Right now, **12 million people in East Africa who are facing malnutrition and starvation are relying on your voice and our nation's leadership to save their lives.**

Why now? The Senate is expected to consider a range of appropriations bills over the next several days that could include funding levels for international assistance. Bishop Howard Hubbard, Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace, and Ken Hackett, President, Catholic Relief Services, [wrote the Senate on November 2](#) urging them to preserve funding for life-saving poverty-focused development and humanitarian assistance. **Now, more than ever, we must tell our Senators that we care about our nation's efforts to support poor and marginalized communities around the world.** Your action is particularly important because the funding levels for FY 2012 will set the stage for funding levels over the next decade. Poverty-focused international assistance doesn't have a large, vocal constituency unless you speak up now. Cutting less than 1% of the federal budget will not balance the budget or solve the deficit but it will cost lives.

Will my one action make a difference? Yes! More and more congressional offices are hearing from constituents that poverty-focused international assistance is important to them and they're paying attention. Your voice made a difference earlier this year when we limited cuts to these life-saving accounts. [Take Action Today!](#)

**Send your e-mail
to your Senators
now!**

**Call your Senators:
Dial 1-866-596-
7030 for talking
points & to be
connected.**

<p>United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 3211 4th St., NE, Washington, DC 20017 www.usccb.org/globalpoverty globalpoverty@usccb.org • (202) 541-3160</p>	<p>Catholic Relief Services 228 W. Lexington St., Baltimore, MD 21201 www.crs.org/globalpoverty globalpoverty@crs.org • 1-866-608-5978</p>
---	---

Dear Senator:

As your constituent and supporter of the Catholic Relief Services/United States Conference of Catholic Bishops initiative, Catholics Confront Global Poverty, I urge you to maintain the levels of life-saving poverty-focused international assistance for FY 2012 as passed by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

It is morally unacceptable for our nation to balance its budget on the backs of poor people at home and abroad. While I recognize that fiscal responsibility is important, it must be achieved in morally responsible ways. A just budget framework cannot rely on disproportionate cuts in essential services to poor people. It requires shared sacrifice by all, including raising adequate revenues, eliminating unnecessary military and other spending, and addressing the long-term costs of health insurance and retirement programs fairly.

The crisis unfolding in East Africa where more than 12 million of our brothers and sisters face malnutrition and starvation in the midst of the region's worst drought in decades illustrates the urgent need to protect poverty-focused international assistance. The International Disaster Assistance account provides lifesaving services to people such as those in Kenya and Ethiopia who are in dire need of nutrition, health services, water, and sanitation. The Emergency Refugee and Migration account is helping people who have fled famine in Somalia to survive. Meanwhile, some proposals in Congress would cut these disaster and refugee accounts by 40% and nearly 30% respectively in FY 12 compared to FY 10 levels.

Furthermore, long-term development assistance programs are proven, effective and efficient; these programs funded by the State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill address the silent emergencies that kill millions of people every day. These accounts help to prevent and mitigate crises like the one unfolding in the Horn of Africa. While a famine has been declared in parts of Somalia, neighboring states suffering from the same drought have been more resilient because of well coordinated safety net and mitigation strategies and well targeted poverty-focused international assistance. The difference is real: 8 million fewer Ethiopians are at risk of starvation now than during the 2002 drought.

Especially in a time of austerity and fiscal restraints, we need to give priority to programs that help the poorest people in the poorest places as a clear and effective demonstration that we are "our brothers' keeper." Therefore, I urge you to maintain the levels of life-saving poverty-focused international assistance for FY 2012 as passed by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent life or death issue.