



A Journey to Justice

with the Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty



Foreign Aid and Point 7

Diocese of Oakland

This Week:
Foreign Aid and Point 7

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Faces of Hope



For generations, Mulalem Belachew’s family and village struggled with drought in Ethiopia. Through Catholic Relief Services and the U.S. government’s Food for Peace program, their village transformed their once-eroded hillside by terracing the land to capture water, cultivating drought resistant seeds, and building wells that made it easier to care for their homes and animals. This long-term development assistance helped the families of Mulalem’s village improve food security and embrace hope for the future.

U.S. Aid Policy

U.S. foreign assistance is most visible when tragic emergencies happen, such as the tsunami in Asia. However, even when there is no crisis, U.S. aid is essential to help fund long-term strategies to combat poverty and tackle more systemic problems—providing education for children, establishing agricultural practices that help family farmers resist drought and disasters, supporting lending programs that help women support themselves and their children. U.S. aid to help poor communities both weather emergencies and become self sufficient for the long term is key to reducing global poverty.

The Catholic Campaign against Global Poverty calls for our nation to increase and reform development aid to poor countries to improve the lives and dignity of all God’s children.

Policy Goals

- Target assistance to the poorest countries and maximize the share of new development assistance to the poorest countries that is provided as grants, rather than loans.
- Increase and reform assistance to developing countries to help meet the Millennium Development Goals, international targets for reducing by half the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015.
- Support initiatives that combat corruption and improve transparency in aid programs.
- Make sure there is coordination and consistency among trade, aid and debt policies to help overcome poverty and combat hunger.

At the same time, poor developing countries have promised reforms to improve transparency, democracy and anti-corruption efforts to ensure that increased foreign aid will reduce poverty.

Point 7: Keeping America’s Promise

In 1970, the richest countries in the world committed themselves to giving 0.7 percent of their Gross National Income (GNI) to overseas aid. Today only Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Luxembourg and Sweden are fulfilling their promises and meeting this target. However, Britain, France, Ireland, Finland, Spain and Belgium have all set a clear timetable for reaching this target soon. Unfortunately, the United States seriously lags behind in meeting its commitment of giving 0.7% of GNI. It is second to last amongst the 22 donor nations. In real terms 0.7% of Gross National Income is a mere 7cents out of every \$10 of income.

As people of faith we must call upon our elected officials and policy makers to make genuine human development for the poorest people and nations a top U.S. policy priority. Only with a concerted effort by all of the wealthier nations, can extreme poverty be eliminated.

Test Your Knowledge

1. How many of the 22 nations have reached the target assistance level of 0.7 percent of Gross National Income?
a) 5 b) 12 c) 18 d) 22
2. Which country is the largest donor of official development aid as a percentage of its GNI?
a) Switzerland b) Japan c) Norway d) United Kingdom
3. What percentage of Gross National Income does the United States give?
a) 0.53% b) 0.41% c) 0.34% d) 0.22%
4. Which country has received the most official development assistance from the US in recent years?
a) Israel b) Sudan c) Iraq d) Congo

Learn More

- Congressional Research Service Report For Congress on Foreign Aid: Understanding Data Used to Compare Donors (June 7, 2006): <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/68816.pdf>
- How Development Dollars Make a Difference: Bread for the World: www.bread.org/learn/global-hunger-issues/development.html
- Catholic Campaign to End Poverty-campaign packet: www.usccb.org/sdwp/globalpoverty/agppacket/index.shtml
- Attend a Hunger Banquet online at Oxfam: www.hungerbanquet.org/
- *Answers to quiz: 1(a), 2(c), 3(d), 4(c)*

Pray and Celebrate: Making a Place at the Table

“The call to overcome poverty and to uphold human dignity is not new. It is as old as the prophets and as current as today's headlines. Today this challenge is especially compelling because we have the capacity to make a difference and because the impact of rapid globalization makes it more urgent. Building on past progress and new opportunities, **we can make this a time for hope**. Hope offers the promise that, with God's help, shared sacrifice, wise investment, and renewed commitment, we can actually reduce substantially the levels of poverty, hunger, and human deprivation in our own land and around the world. The First Letter of John calls us to the task: ‘If anyone is well-off in worldly possessions and sees his brother in need but closes his heart to him, how can the love of God be remaining in him? Children, **our love must be not just words or mere talk**, but something active and genuine.’ (3:17-18) This is a time not for ‘just words or mere talk’ but for ‘active and genuine’ commitment by Catholics in the United States to work with others to make a place at the table for all God's children.”

Making a Place at the Table, U.S. Bishops, 2002

Prayer to End Hunger

God, food of the poor, Christ, our bread, give us all a place at the table.

Let us share the gifts of the earth that comfort us and nourish us.

The sacrament of your body: may breaking bread together

Remind us that we are all equal in your eyes.

The sacrament of your blood: may sharing the cup together

Remind us we that we must sustain each other.

Fill us with life, with hope and love. Grace us with your bountiful goodness,

Let us taste and see that the Lord is good and that we are one. Amen

(from Education for Justice)

Transformation: Becoming an Advocate

Get involved in a legislative advocacy network:

- The Diocesan Social Justice specialist provides a local advocacy network and newsletter for local and global issues. Email your name, address, zip code and parish to mdoyle@oakdiocese.org
- Join NETWORK – A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby: <http://www.networklobby.org>
- Join the Catholic Relief Services Advocacy Network: <http://actioncenter.crs.org> U.S. aid to help poor communities weather emergencies and become self sufficient for the long term is key to reducing global poverty.