

August 19th, 2019

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

As members of the Interfaith Working Group on Foreign Assistance, a network of over 50 Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and multi-faith organizations, we are committed to saving lives and advancing the dignity of vulnerable and marginalized persons and communities across the world. We support robust U.S. investment in international humanitarian and poverty-focused development assistance and peacebuilding programs that bolster human rights and alleviate suffering from hunger and thirst, extreme poverty, forced displacement, debilitating illness, natural disasters and violent conflict.

We thank you for your commitment to advancing effective U.S. foreign assistance. We write, however, with grave concern regarding recent actions by the Office of Management and Budget to rescind foreign aid funds and ask for your utmost attention and commitment to preserving stable and effective funding for U.S. foreign aid.

We urge you to push back against any proposed rescissions and require the Administration to distribute all funds as originally intended.

As organizations operating around the globe, we have seen first-hand the critical value of U.S. foreign assistance funding, influence and leadership. We know these funds are essential for improving humanitarian, development, and health outcomes in the world's most marginalized and vulnerable communities. We know how these funds save lives, help stabilize regions, and create economic opportunity. This life-affirming investment benefits the United States as well.

U.S. leadership and investment have had historic impact around the globe over the last 30 years, contributing to halving the number of preventable under-five child deaths, halving the number of people living in poverty and halving the number of children and adolescents out of school. Results like these and much more show that U.S. government engagement matters, and it is consistent with the values of our faith traditions and the American people.

U.S. government programs and partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) are ongoing with multi-year commitments that span all sectors, including food security, education, economic stability, credible democratic processes, violence prevention, global health, and labor and trade. These partnerships are crucial. Though FBOs collectively receive more than 80 percent of their funding

from non-governmental sources, if the U.S. government fails to fund poverty-focused development assistance commitments, faith-based implementers cannot rely on private donations to fill gaps. Abrupt rescissions can be doubly damaging to local groups with whom we partner to reduce poverty and violence as they make numerous long-term decisions, such as hiring, based on the understanding that this funding will continue according to the agreements the Administration has made, and the parameters set by Congress.

U.S. government engagement is critical to success. It encourages many other stakeholders and investors, and contributes to the ultimate goal: long-term sustainability and human security in a more flourishing world.

We urge you to preserve this commitment and require the Administration to distribute all funds as originally intended.

Sincerely,

1. Adventist Development and Relief Agency
2. American Jewish World Service
3. Bread for the World
4. Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation
5. Catholic Medical Mission Board
6. Christian Connections for International Health
7. Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice
8. Church World Service
9. Disabled Children's Fund
10. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
11. Faiths for Safe Water
12. Food for the Hungry
13. IMA World Health
14. Islamic Relief USA
15. Lutheran World Relief
16. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
17. Mennonite Central Committee, US Washington Office
18. Presbyterian Church (USA)
19. Tearfund USA
20. The Union for Reform Judaism
21. The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society
22. United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
23. World Relief
24. World Renew
25. World Vision
26. Zakat Foundation of America