







INTERFAITH STATEMENT TO END GLOBAL POVERTY

The World Bank estimates that 1.1 billion people live in extreme poverty. These people get by on less than \$1 per day.¹ This means they cannot meet basic needs for survival. They are chronically hungry; unable to get health care, lack safe drinking water and sanitation, cannot afford rudimentary shelter and basic articles of clothing. This is poverty that kills. According to Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Earth Institute, an estimated eight to ten million people die each year as the world does too little to help them stay alive. UNICEF reports that more than 26,000 children under the age of five die around the world each day,² mostly from preventable causes.

Fortunately, President Bush signed the 2002 Monterrey Consensus, which urged all developed countries that have not done so to provide 0.7% of income as official developmental assistance. Five nations are already at or above that level. (The United States is currently at 0.16%.) The phrase “Point 7 Now” refers to the commitment made by developed countries to increase foreign aid to poor countries to 0.7% of a developed country’s national income. At the same time, poor developing countries have promised reforms to improve transparency, democracy and anti-corruption efforts to ensure that increased foreign aid would reduce poverty.

We are asking our federal legislators for real and effective support for increasing the amount of aid that the United States provides so that the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals can be implemented and the goal of eliminating the worst of the world’s poverty can be accomplished by 2015.

The United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were set by 189 world leaders at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000. They are an eight-point road map with measurable targets and clear deadlines for improving the lives of the world’s poorest people. World leaders have agreed to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

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|  | Goal 1 | Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. |
|  | Goal 2 | Achieve universal primary education. |
|  | Goal 3 | Promote gender equality and empower women. |
|  | Goal 4 | Reduce child mortality. |
|  | Goal 5 | Improve maternal health. |
|  | Goal 6 | Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. |
|  | Goal 7 | Ensure environmental sustainability. |
|  | Goal 8 | Develop a global partnership for development. |

Our faith traditions emphasize the brotherhood and sisterhood of the human family. When one of us suffers, all suffer. We cannot stand idly by while our sisters and brothers on our planet, especially the children, are dying for the lack of life’s basic necessities.

¹ On August 26, 2008, because of rising food and fuel prices, the World Bank released a new poverty line at US\$1.25 per day, and estimates 1.4 billion people living below it.

² On September 10, 2009, UNICEF released its estimate that in 2008, 24,000 children under age five died per day.

As a nation, we spend 1.5 billion dollars a day for war. 1.5 billion dollars would be equal to five years of malaria protection for all of Africa.

We, as people of faith, hear the call of these people and we urge all of our memberships to join in asking Congress to keep America's promise and raise the amount of aid we provide to these poorest of the poor to 0.7% of our national income.

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