

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 19, 2011

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on State and Foreign Operations
Russell Senate Office Building, 437
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on State and Foreign Operations
Russell Senate Office Building, 290
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Graham:

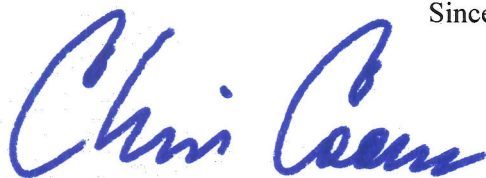
As you and your colleagues consider the Fiscal Year 2012 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, we are writing to express our strong support for the Development Assistance and the USAID Operating Expense Accounts. We believe that development assistance is a critical pillar of U.S. foreign policy and a reflection of America's core moral and humanitarian values. We therefore urge you to continue to support these vital accounts.

The Development Assistance Account and USAID Operating Expense Account allow USAID to implement key long-term development assistance programs in regions facing instability, humanitarian crises, and the influence of extremism and terror. Development assistance is a reflection of our moral imperative to assist others in need, a critical demonstration of American leadership in the world. The work of USAID has inspired other countries to deepen their own international development work and has buttressed American private sector and philanthropic development activities. Consequently, we believe that U.S. global leadership in this area should continue with a budget at or above previously funded levels.

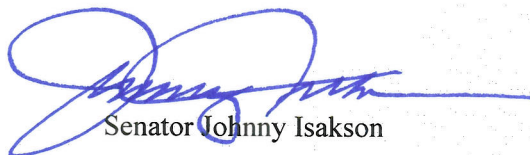
Development assistance complements our broader diplomatic and defense goals, and we are concerned that disproportionate cuts to these accounts could have far-reaching implications for U.S. interests pertaining to security, economics, and health. The work of USAID continues an American bipartisan policy tradition strengthened by the Bush Administration to assist others in need, especially in the area of health. As pointed out by numerous U.S. military officials, it also complements traditional defense activities, and helps the U.S. avoid costly military interventions in the future. Proposed cuts will hamper USAID's efforts to counterbalance the impact of increased foreign aid funding from strategic competitors, and potentially undermine efforts to expand markets for U.S. businesses.

We are keenly aware of the budgetary pressures facing Congress, but as the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs, we are concerned that reductions to development assistance will undermine U.S. priorities in Africa and throughout the developing world. It is with this in mind that we urge you to support funding for the Development Assistance and the USAID Operating Expense Accounts, as this funding enables the United States to effectively promote its interests throughout the world. We thank you for your leadership and look forward to working with you on this matter of mutual concern.

Sincerely,



Senator Christopher A. Coons



Senator Johnny Isakson