

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 23, 2009

The Honorable John Spratt
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
207 Cannon House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman,

As members of the House Budget Committee, we are writing to express our support for significant increases for State Department Operations and International Affairs programs. As the Committee prepares the House budget resolution for Fiscal Year 2010, we wish to protect the increases in President Obama's budget request for State Department Operations and International Affairs. The President has pledged to put the nation on a path to double foreign assistance. An important first step to achieve this goal is to protect, at minimum, his \$51.7 billion request for the International Affairs Budget (function 150) for FY10.

The International Affairs Budget invests in the strategic tools that are essential to protecting our national security, building economic prosperity, and demonstrating our moral values. Despite modest increases, the International Affairs budget remains underfunded, hindering the ability of our civilian agencies to adequately participate in meeting our foreign policy goals.

We fully recognize the difficult economic times our country is facing and the hard work ahead of us to craft a framework for spending that is consistent with our goal of fiscal responsibility and economic recovery. However, like the President, we firmly believe that efforts to fight poverty and disease must not be sacrificed and that our expenditures will have a multiplier effect, not only in saving and improving the daily lives of the world's most vulnerable people, but also on our country's long-term security and reputation on the world stage.

During his inauguration speech on January 20, 2009, President Obama once again spoke of our leadership role in partnering with impoverished countries, "To the people of poor nations, we pledge to work alongside you to make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow; to nourish starved bodies and feed hungry minds." We, and millions around the world bore witness to his words, and it is important for the restoration of our reputation as trusted leader in the international community, that we keep our promise.

We have long been champions of robust funding for our international priorities and programs. Many of us have travelled to the poorest nations and seen firsthand the positive effects these programs are having on the ground. They are critical to our efforts to rebuild and restore America's reputation in the world and help other nations lift themselves out of poverty. It is with that knowledge that we support the President's \$51.7 billion request for International Affairs programs, in addition to funding for international food assistance, in the FY10 International Affairs Budget.

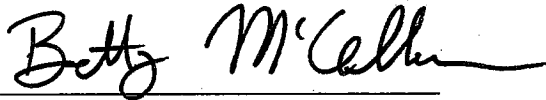
Sincerely,



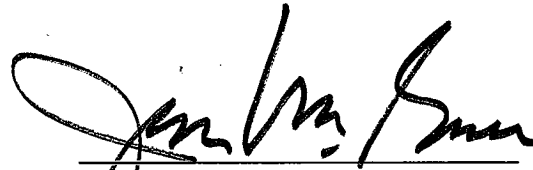
Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



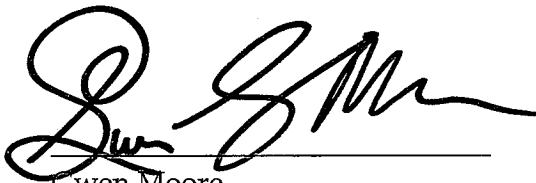
Gerald Connolly
Member of Congress



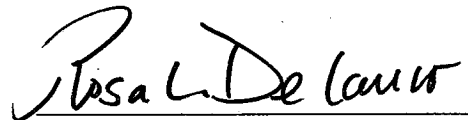
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



James McGovern
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress