

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 18, 2008

The Hon. David Obey
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
US House of Representatives
H-218 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
US House of Representatives
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on State-Foreign Operations
Committee on Appropriations
US House of Representatives
HB-26 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Frank Wolf
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State-Foreign Operations
Committee on Appropriations
US House of Representatives
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey, Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Lewis, and Ranking Member Wolf:

Thank you for your strong leadership in balancing the many competing foreign aid needs in the FY09 State-Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. As the bill moves through the House process and to conference with the Senate, we respectfully urge your continued support for global poverty reduction by funding the Millennium Challenge Account at no less than the subcommittee-passed level of \$1.54 billion.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation's (MCC) model of combating global poverty through initiatives that remove barriers to economic growth has not only been hailed as innovative, it has provided an effective complement to existing development aid streams. Since 2004, the MCC has signed compacts with 18 countries and committed nearly \$6 billion toward economic growth and poverty reduction.

The low level of funding currently being recommended by the Senate would hinder the innovative foreign assistance model currently being implemented by the MCC. Should the recommended Senate funding level prevail, it would not only derail our commitment to long-term development aid, it would send a dangerous mixed signal to the international community that the United States' rhetoric does not match its commitments.

This would be a step backwards. Countries such as the Philippines, Malawi, Jordan, Senegal, and Moldova that are currently developing compact proposals would be deferred as would countries that have developed plans for responsible and sustainable development in the hopes of signing compacts in future years.

The uniqueness of the MCC model resides in its ability to identify and reward countries that are making significant progress on good governance, promoting economic freedom, and upholding the rule of law. As you know, the MCC's mission enjoys bipartisan support and has been heralded by many development experts as a critical component of our foreign aid strategy, alongside existing diplomatic and humanitarian efforts.

We appreciate and support your leadership in the House version of the FY09 Foreign Operations bill to recognize this important approach. Insisting on the House bill's funding level for MCC will go a long way toward making certain that taxpayer funds for development continue to be invested in a methodical, transparent, and accountable manner.

Sincerely,

/s/
ADAM SMITH
Member of Congress

/s/
CHRISTOPHER SHAYS
Member of Congress

/s/
TAMMY BALDWIN
Member of Congress

/s/
HOWARD BERMAN
Member of Congress

/s/
EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress

/s/
JOHN BOOZMAN
Member of Congress

/s/
MADELEINE BORDALLO
Member of Congress

/s/
KEVIN BRADY
Member of Congress

/s/
CORRINE BROWN
Member of Congress

/s/
RUSS CARNAHAN
Member of Congress

/s/
EMANUEL CLEAVER
Member of Congress

/s/
JOSEPH CROWLEY
Member of Congress

/s/
BARBARA CUBIN
Member of Congress

/s/
MICHAEL DOYLE
Member of Congress

/s/
ELIOT ENGEL
Member of Congress

/s/
CHAKA FATTAH
Member of Congress

/s/
GENE GREEN
Member of Congress

/s/
ALCEE HASTINGS
Member of Congress

/s/
RUBEN HINOJOSA
Member of Congress

/s/
BOB INGLIS
Member of Congress

/s/
SHEILA JACKSON-LEE
Member of Congress

/s/
WILLIAM JEFFERSON
Member of Congress

/s/
EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON
Member of Congress

/s/
EDWARD MARKEY
Member of Congress

/s/
JIM McDERMOTT
Member of Congress

/s/
JAMES McGOVERN
Member of Congress

/s/
GREGORY MEEKS
Member of Congress

/s/
BRAD MILLER
Member of Congress

/s/
GWEN MOORE
Member of Congress

/s/
DONALD PAYNE
Member of Congress

~~/s/~~
CHARLES RANGEL
Member of Congress

~~/s/~~
JANICE SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress

~~/s/~~
DAVID SCOTT
Member of Congress

~~/s/~~
JOSEPH SESTAK
Member of Congress

~~/s/~~
ALBIO SIRES
Member of Congress

~~/s/~~
CHRISTOPHER SMITH
Member of Congress

~~/s/~~
JAMES WALSH
Member of Congress

~~/s/~~
ROBERT WEXLER
Member of Congress