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THE AIDS AND HEALTH CARE WORKING GROUP

OF THE ADVOCACY NETWORK FOR AFRICA

C/O THE WASHINGTON OFFICE ON AFRICA
212 EAST CAPITOL STREET • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20003, U.S.A.
PHONE: 202/547-7503 • FAX: 202/547-7505 • E-MAIL: WOA@IGC.ORG

Monday, September 11, 2000

President William J. Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton,

We welcome your recent enactment of the Global AIDS and Tuberculosis Relief Act of 2000 into law, and we thank you for highlighting the urgency of the AIDS crisis during your recent trip to Nigeria and Tanzania. As you know, 18.8 million people have died from HIV/AIDS globally. Another 34.3 million are living with HIV and approximately 15,000 more persons become infected each day. As you said in Nigeria, how can we stand by and “watch a child die of AIDS who could have lived if the rest of us had done our part?”

Given a projected surplus of more than \$1.8 trillion over 10 years – \$211 billion in FY 2000 alone – the United States is certainly in a position to seize upon its moral obligation to generously fund global HIV/AIDS programs. The AIDS crisis is a global health catastrophe on a scale unequalled in recent times. The United States simply must commit far more assistance than it currently plans to help the millions now infected and the millions more who will become infected and die from the deadly virus. Recognizing that any solution to the crisis must be a sustainable one, we implore you to pursue the highest possible levels for the HIV/AIDS funding while safeguarding funding for other programs that focus on social development and poverty alleviation.

We and our organizations continue to advocate for a holistic approach to the AIDS crisis, with a focus on the many contributing factors to the present situation: poverty, inadequate health care infrastructure, little to no access to drugs to treat both opportunistic infections and HIV/AIDS, the lack of effective counseling and voluntary testing programs, gender discrimination, denial of basic human rights, lack of clean water, few educational opportunities, and trade practices that do not allow developing countries to negotiate on equal footing with industrialized countries. The Global AIDS and Tuberculosis Relief Act reflects the need for such a holistic approach, and thus, in our view, is an important part of the solution. However, the Act remains mere rhetoric without action on the appropriations side.

In Sub-Saharan Africa alone, where 23 million people are presently infected with HIV, UNAIDS estimates that \$3 billion is needed to tackle the AIDS crisis. At a minimum, we urge your administration to demonstrate your firm commitment to an appropriation of \$570 million for global HIV/AIDS programs in FY 2001, a figure that is significantly higher than that which either the House or Senate has appropriated in the current Foreign Operations budget for FY 2001. While money will not solve the massive

AIDS crisis, it is an essential factor in the solution. Today's Africa does not have the financial resources to cope with the crisis alone. As you yourself said well, "This is not just Nigeria's fight, or Africa's fight. It is America's fight and the world's fight too."

We look forward to working with you in the effort to secure funding for the Global AIDS and Tuberculosis Relief Act of 2000 and on future initiatives that further contribute to addressing the AIDS crisis.

Yours truly,

Larry J. Goodwin, Executive Director
Africa Faith & Justice Network

Salih Booker, Executive Director
Africa Policy Information Center

Bill Jackson, Director of Government Relations
& Policy, the Africa-America Institute

Louis L. Mitchell, President
AIDS Corps.

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Archdiocese of Mombasa CBHC and AIDS
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Sr. Marion Hughes, MM
Youth Matter, Diocese of Musoma, Tanzania

cc: John Podesta, White House Chief of Staff
Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State
Samuel Berger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Susan Rice, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs
Sandy Thurman, Director, White House Office of National AIDS Policy

National Council of Churches / Church World Service
International Development and Global Issues
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Fax

To: Cheryl Baurle

From: Heather Nolen

Fax: 456-2439

Pages: 7

Phone:

Date: October 6, 2000

Re: letters on the Global AIDS and TB Relief Act

COMMENTS:

THE AIDS AND HEALTH CARE WORKING GROUP ← 0

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In Sub-Saharan Africa alone, where 23 million people are presently infected with HIV, UNAIDS estimates that \$3 billion is needed to tackle the AIDS crisis. At a minimum, we urge your administration to demonstrate your firm commitment to an appropriation of \$570 million for global HIV/AIDS programs in FY 2001, a figure that is significantly higher than that which either the House or Senate has appropriated in the current Foreign Operations budget for FY 2001. While money will not solve the massive

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September 2000

Dear Member of Congress,

As the new millennium approaches, we enjoy an historically high budget surplus – more than \$1.8 trillion over 10 years and \$211 billion in FY 2001 alone – while at the same time, we confront the single greatest threat to human life – the HIV/AIDS pandemic. As you know, final negotiations on the Foreign Operations bill will determine what level of commitment the United States will make toward resolving the AIDS crisis. The United States Congress and the President most recently authorized \$570 million per year for FY 2001 and FY 2002 for global HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis programs as part of the Global AIDS and Tuberculosis Relief Act of 2000. This is a laudable accomplishment but remains mere rhetoric without action on the appropriations side.

The people whose lives hang in the balance are our brothers and sisters whose well-being should be of utmost concern to us. They are as well providers of many of our natural resources; they are our business partners; they are present and future consumers of US products. Yet, in reality, they remain captives. As economically, socially, and culturally disempowered individuals in the developing world, they remain captive to a disease that is wiping out entire generations.

Cognizant of this reality, we and our organizations continue to advocate for a holistic solution to the AIDS crisis, with a focus on the many contributing factors to the present situation: poverty, inadequate health care infrastructure, little to no access to drugs to treat both opportunistic infections and HIV/AIDS, the lack of effective counseling and voluntary testing programs, gender discrimination, denial of basic human rights, lack of clean water, few educational opportunities, and trade practices that do not allow developing countries to negotiate on equal footing with industrialized countries.

The Global AIDS and Tuberculosis Relief Act of 2000 is one part of a positive solution. It will provide funding for primary prevention and education, voluntary testing and counseling, medications to prevent the transmission of HIV and AIDS from mother to child, and care for those already living with HIV/AIDS. Additionally, it will establish a trust fund housed at, but not run by the World Bank, with an initial US contribution of \$150 million. This trust fund, with the leveraging power to gain additional international funding, will make grants available to governments and non-governmental organizations in developing countries to address HIV/AIDS. These grants will provide funding for programs that promote best practices and prevention, voluntary HIV/AIDS testing and counseling, measures to stop mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS, ensure a safe blood supply and ensure support and education for AIDS orphans. Separately, the bill authorizes \$50 million for the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations (GAVI), designed to reach children who remain unimmunized to preventable diseases. The International AIDS Vaccine Initiative has been authorized to receive \$10 million for the development of an AIDS vaccine.

The Global AIDS and Tuberculosis Act of 2000, fully funded, marks the beginning of a constructive US contribution in addressing the crisis. In Sub-Saharan Africa alone where 23 million people are presently infected with HIV, UNAIDS estimates that \$3 billion is needed to tackle the AIDS crisis. As members of the wealthiest and most advantaged society on earth, we have a moral obligation to respond with the highest-level commitment possible in addressing the pandemic. Thus as you move into final negotiations around the Foreign Operations bill, we urge you to fully fund the Global AIDS and Tuberculosis Relief Act of 2000.

We look forward to working with you in achieving full funding of this bill.

Yours truly,

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