

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 63

Expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should provide, on an annual basis, an amount equal to at least 1 percent of United States gross domestic product (GDP) for nonmilitary foreign assistance programs.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 25, 2009

Ms. LEE of California (for herself, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia, Mr. HONDA, Mr. HOLT, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. FILNER, and Mr. STARK) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should provide, on an annual basis, an amount equal to at least 1 percent of United States gross domestic product (GDP) for nonmilitary foreign assistance programs.

Whereas, on April 3, 1948, President Harry Truman signed into law the Economic Recovery Act of 1948, inspired by a plan of economic trade and assistance for European countries proposed by Secretary of State George C. Marshall, otherwise known as the Marshall Plan;

Whereas, from the years 1947 to 1951, the United States gave \$13 billion, equivalent to \$137 billion in 2007, in

economic aid and technical assistance to assist in the economic recovery of 16 European countries;

Whereas the Marshall Plan, among other objectives, sought to assure global peace and defend the national security of the United States through direct foreign assistance programs aimed at combating economic, social, and political degradation;

Whereas poverty, lack of opportunity, and environmental degradation are recognized as significant contributors to socioeconomic and political instability, as well as to the exacerbation of disease pandemics and other global health threats;

Whereas elevating the United States standing in the world represents a critical and essential element of any strategy to improve national and global security by mitigating the root causes of conflict and multinational terrorism, strengthening diplomatic and economic relationships, preventing global climate change, curbing weapons proliferation, and fostering peace and cooperation between all nations;

Whereas the Foreign Assistance Act, signed into law on September 4, 1961, reaffirms “the traditional humanitarian ideals of the American people and renews its commitment to assist people in developing countries to eliminate hunger, poverty, [and] illness”;

Whereas Congress created the Peace Corps in 1961 and the United States has since sent 187,000 volunteers to 139 nations to promote the Peace Corps’ mission of world peace and friendship through service in the developing world;

Whereas, on November 3, 1961, President John F. Kennedy established the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) with the aim of providing direct support to developing countries in a manner free of political and military influence;

Whereas over the last 8 years Congress and the Bush Administration have more than doubled foreign assistance and implemented a number of new foreign aid initiatives to support global health, development, human rights, and good governance including the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), the President's International Education Initiative, the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR);

Whereas President Obama has expressed his commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of cutting extreme poverty and hunger around the world in half by 2015, as well as his intent to double the level of foreign assistance to meet that goal;

Whereas the United States has pledged its support, along with every United Nations member state and numerous international organizations, to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals in order to reduce extreme poverty, support sustainable development, and address the needs of the world's most vulnerable populations;

Whereas the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, derived from the United Nations Millennium Declaration signed on September 8, 2000, seek to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/

AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development;

Whereas the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs indicates that in June 2008, progress was either insufficient, absent, or deteriorating for more than half of key targets related to compliance with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals;

Whereas the World Bank estimates that in 2005, 1.4 billion people across the globe were experiencing extreme poverty, living on less than \$1.25 a day;

Whereas the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that the number of undernourished people in the world rose to 963 million in 2008, an increase of 40 million people from 2007;

Whereas the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat has indicated that by 2030, the cost of adapting to global climate change could amount to more than \$100 billion annually, with \$28 billion to \$67 billion per year required to meet the needs of the developing world;

Whereas in 2007, net official development assistance by the United States, totaling \$21.8 billion, decreased by 9.9 percent (in real terms) from fiscal year 2006;

Whereas in 2007, as a percentage of gross national income (GNI), the United States was tied for last among the world's 22 wealthiest countries in official development assistance funding, at 0.16 percent;

Whereas, on November 26, 2007, United States Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates stated that funding for non-military foreign affairs programs “remains disproportion-

ately small relative to what we spend on the military and to the importance of such capabilities” and called for a “dramatic increase in spending on the civilian instruments of national security—diplomacy, strategic communications, foreign assistance, civic action, and economic reconstruction and development.”;

Whereas a principal objective of the foreign policy of the United States, as codified in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, is “the encouragement and sustained support of the people of developing countries in their efforts to acquire the knowledge and resources essential to development and to build the economic, political, and social institutions which will improve the quality of their lives”;

Whereas individuals, businesses, and philanthropic organizations across the United States continue to play a vital and increasing role in international efforts to create a more peaceful and prosperous world for all individuals through direct and indirect assistance;

Whereas studies indicate that a majority of the individuals in the United States, whose tax dollars fund Federal expenditures, support increasing funding to meet the Millennium Development Goals and to committing a higher percentage of GDP to address global poverty; and

Whereas a firm and significant financial commitment to enhance United States foreign assistance programs exemplifies the compassion and resolve of the people of the United States to benefit and empower all peoples of the world for the betterment of humankind: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
- 2 *concurring), That Congress—*

1 (1) recognizes that foreign assistance programs
2 are of critical importance in promoting national se-
3 curity, demonstrating the humanitarian spirit of the
4 people of the United States, and improving the
5 credibility and standing of the United States in
6 world affairs; and

7 (2) expresses its support for attaining the goal
8 of providing, on an annual basis, an amount equal
9 to no less than 1 percent of United States gross do-
10 mestic product (GDP) for nonmilitary foreign assist-
11 ance programs.

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