

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

AMENDING THE MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE ACT OF 2003 TO EXTEND THE AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES SEEKING TO BECOME ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES FOR PURPOSES OF THAT ACT

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H. R. 4660) to amend the Millennium Challenge Act of 2003 to extend the authority to provide assistance to countries seeking to become eligible countries for purposes of that Act, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4660

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) On March 14, 2002, the President stated: "America supports the international development goals in the U.N. Millennium Declaration, and believes that these goals are a shared responsibility of developed and developing countries."

(2) Section 201(b)(4) of H.R. 1950, as passed by the House of Representatives on July 16, 2003, states that it is the policy of the United States to support compacts of the Millennium Challenge Account which, among other things, aim "to reduce poverty by significantly increasing the economic growth trajectory of beneficiary countries through investing in the productive potential of the people of such countries".

(3) On May 10, 2004, the President recognized the link between global poverty and the national security of the United States by stating: "In many nations, poverty remains chronic and desperate. Half the world's people still live on less than \$2 a day. This divide between wealth and poverty, between opportunity and misery, is far more than a challenge to our compassion. Persistent poverty and oppression can spread despair across an entire nation, and they can turn nations of great potential into the recruiting grounds of terrorists."

(4) Section 602 of the Millennium Challenge Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7701) states that a purpose of that Act is "the elimination of extreme poverty".

(5) The Report of the Committee on International Relations to accompany H.R. 2441 of the 108th Congress (H. Rept. 108-205) states that "[f]or the Millennium Challenge Account to be successful as an incentive for future reform as well as a reward for past reform, it must offer opportunities for those low-income countries whose institutions do not yet meet all the eligibility criteria but who are demonstrating partial success in meeting the eligibility criteria".

(6) The purpose of section 616 of the Millennium Challenge Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7715),

and the "threshold program" established pursuant to such section by the Millennium Challenge Corporation, in consultation with the United States Agency for International Development, is to provide assistance to the low-income countries described in paragraph (5) in order to assist such countries to become eligible countries under the Act.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to amend the Millennium Challenge Act of 2003 to authorize funding of the "threshold program" under section 616 of such Act for the same duration as the authorization of funding for the overall Millennium Challenge Act of 2003.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN CANDIDATE COUNTRIES.

Section 616(d) of the Millennium Challenge Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7715(d)) is amended by striking "for fiscal year 2004" and inserting "for a fiscal year".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4660 is an amendment to the Millennium Challenge Account, or MCA, of 2003 to extend the authority to provide assistance to countries seeking to become eligible countries for purposes of that act.

Last session, Congress authorized the Millennium Challenge Account to provide substantial development assistance to high-performing, low-income countries through fiscal year 2005. Recently, the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation selected 16 countries that are eligible to receive MCA assistance.

At issue with this resolution is the problem of how to deal with countries that just missed passing the eligibility bar.

The Millennium Challenge Account authorized the MCC to provide limited assistance through a threshold program to these countries for the purpose of improving in the areas where they fell short. This was done partly in recognition of the fact that many threshold countries have limited resources to invest in the well-being of their people.

This amendment will authorize funding of the threshold program and match the duration of the threshold program to that of the MCA. This will allow us to continue to support the preparation of worthy threshold countries for their full participation in the Millennium Challenge Account.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this bill will improve the Millennium Challenge Ac-

count program and advance the interests of the United States. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume and I rise in strong support of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, half of the world's population still lives on less than \$2 a day. What this means is that approximately 3 billion men, women, and children, or a population 10 times the size of ours, awake each morning to little food, dirty water, inadequate shelter, and no health care.

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Alleviating this crushing poverty around the globe is a moral imperative, but it is also related to our national interests.

Persistent poverty has made generations of men, women, and children vulnerable to infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. It has also bolstered the appeal of extremist ideologies which preach hate and intolerance. Mr. Speaker, the Millennium Challenge Account has already begun to mitigate the effects of global poverty and to provide poor citizens around the world with the tools for their advancement.

But for the MCA to succeed fully and to maintain solid congressional support, the Millennium Challenge Corporation must undertake serious efforts to expand the number of countries that will benefit from the millennium initiative.

The lucky 16 countries that are currently eligible to receive MCA assistance represent only about 3 percent of the world's poor. The most effective way to expand the number of poor countries that can receive MCA funds is through a program for threshold countries that just miss clearing the eligibility bar. Unfortunately, the threshold program is only authorized through the current fiscal year. My legislation helps ensure that the millennium initiative continues to be available to as many poor people as possible by reauthorizing the threshold program for as long as the MCA operates.

Mr. Speaker, in order for the MCA to achieve its stated goal of reducing poverty, the CEO of the Millennium Challenge Corporation must focus his attention on more than just stimulating economic growth in eligible countries. Our experience in our own country has made it painfully clear that trickle-down economics tends to push the working poor further into misery rather than provide them with better economic opportunities.

Effective poverty reduction requires investments in education, health, and other sectors which directly contribute to building the human capacity of these countries. It demands policies that close the gap between the rich and the poor in developing nations by providing equal access to assets such as

land, and real poverty reduction requires that special attention be paid to poor farmers and to women who bare a disproportionate burden under poverty.

Mr. Speaker, Congress granted the executive branch unprecedented flexibility in how the MCA funds were to be expended, because the executive branch promised us that it would make it easier to achieve the program's objectives. Poverty reduction is one of the primary goals of the MCA. Early signs indicate that the administration may be squandering its opportunity to meet this goal. It may erode bipartisan congressional support for the program. I hope that this is not the case and that Presidential support for my legislation will allay these concerns. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4660.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HENSARLING). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4660, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF MAJORITY RULE IN REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 436) celebrating 10 years of majority rule in the Republic of South Africa and recognizing the momentous social and economic achievements of South Africa since the institution of democracy in that country, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 436

Whereas the Republic of South Africa peacefully and successfully held democratic elections and transitioned to a democratic, nonracial form of government in 1994;

Whereas South Africa helped initiate and frame the New Partnership for Africa's Development as a new partnership between Africa and the rest of the world in order to place the continent of Africa on the path to sustainable development and to further the values of democracy and economic reform throughout Africa;

Whereas South Africa actively supports the South African Development Community, which promotes regional economic cooperation and higher standards of living in Southern Africa;

Whereas South Africa has made significant advances in housing by constructing 1,600,000 houses for the poor of South Africa;

Whereas, since 1994, 9,000,000 people in South Africa have gained access to clean water;

Whereas, before 1994, 22,000,000 people in South Africa did not have access to adequate sanitation, but 63 percent of households in South Africa now have access to adequate sanitation;

Whereas, before 1994, 60 percent of people in South Africa did not have electricity, but more than 70 percent of households in South Africa now have electricity;

Whereas, from 1994 to 2004, secondary school enrollment in South Africa increased from 70 percent to 85 percent, and students in South Africa now learn in a racially integrated school system;

Whereas the Government of South Africa has established nutritional and educational programs to benefit the youngest and poorest people in South Africa;

Whereas South Africa is experiencing the longest period of consistent positive growth, as measured by its gross domestic product (GDP), since growth in GDP was properly recorded in the 1940s;

Whereas F.W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela share a Nobel Peace Prize for their work in ending apartheid in South Africa and establishing a representative government;

Whereas Desmond Tutu led the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to repair injustices among South Africans and improve race relations in the country, and was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts;

Whereas South Africa has contributed troops to peacekeeping efforts in Burundi, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, and Eritrea;

Whereas South Africa President Thabo Mbeki has forged a relationship with President George W. Bush, making three state visits to the United States and hosting President Bush during his visit to Pretoria, South Africa;

Whereas South Africa has served as an inspiration for other African nations striving for democracy and the peaceful cooperation of many ethnic groups;

Whereas, after being isolated for many years because of the odious system of apartheid, South Africa has since 1994 become a premier location for large international conferences, a leading tourist destination, and the locale for numerous films; and

Whereas, in 1993, the Government of South Africa voluntarily halted its biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons programs and, in 1994, hosted the first conference in Africa on the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition on the Development, Production, Stockpiling, and Use of Chemical Weapons and On Their Destruction, with annexes, done at Paris January 13, 1993, and entered into force April 29, 1997: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) applauds the Republic of South Africa for the remarkable transition to a democratic government and the tremendous progress achieved during 10 years of majority rule;

(2) looks forward to a continued partnership with South Africa focused on a sustained commitment to the health of South Africans; and

(3) anticipates continued social development and economic growth in South Africa.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 436.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) for bringing before us this resolution, celebrating 10 years of majority rule in the Republic of South Africa and recognizing the momentous social and economic achievements of South Africa since the institution of democracy in that country.

In April 1994, nearly 19 million South Africans went to the polls to elect South Africa's first democratic government. The African National Congress, or ANC, which had led the struggle against white majority rule in the apartheid system of state-enforced racial segregation, won control of the national assembly and elected Nelson Mandela, who had been in prison for 27 years for the crime of advocating democracy, president.

President Mandela was succeeded by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki in June 1999, and Mr. Mbeki was re-elected in April 2004.

Since the end of apartheid, South African leaders have faced the daunting task of meeting the great expectations of the black electorate while fulfilling the economic potential of the country. Half a century of apartheid and years of sanctions have decimated the economy and left most black South Africans poor and undereducated. High rates of unemployment and crime, as well as the specter of HIV/AIDS, continue to pose significant challenges. Still, South Africa's transition has been remarkable and serves as an example to all nations striving for democracy, reconciliation, and development.

This is a bipartisan resolution which has been given full consideration during a hearing and a markup by the Committee on International Relations, and I urge the support of this body.

But, again, before yielding to the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), let me thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) for his prominent leadership on this and so many other issues; and I would also like to recognize a former Member, Mr. Ron Dellums, for his leadership in Congress on antiapartheid efforts. And there are few Members in my career that I have been prouder to stand behind on an issue of such fundamental human rights significance.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I strongly support this resolution, and I urge all of my colleagues to do so as well.

When I first came to the Congress in 1981, the nation of South Africa suffered under the yoke of the brutal apartheid system. Few things in modern history were as palpably evil as