
THE WASHINGTON OFFICE ON AFRICA

0.7% and the Millennium Development Goals: Development assistance for Africa

At our December 2003 Board meeting the WOA endorsed two key foci for the next several years

- one on development assistance,
- the other on US-Africa trade relations.

In January 2004, representatives of our partner organizations convened at WOA to consider how two frameworks -- the launch of the UN Millennium Development Goals Campaign and a 0.7% Initiative -- might enhance our collective advocacy work. Our community expressed consensus that we should work collaboratively to in support of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and that the MDG/0.7% frameworks provide our community a new opportunity to advance a more visionary agenda for development assistance. We will seek to use this opportunity to seek to change the terms of the foreign aid debate, and to offer a new context in which Congress and our grassroots can consider global needs and the call for more substantive foreign assistance. This document summarizes how WOA, along with our advocacy colleagues, can effectively raise issues of development assistance.

Our general message will focus on these points:

- development assistance to Africa matters to us;
- given the wealth of our nation, we need to be more generous in our contributions to the needs of the world;
- the 0.7% initiative is an appropriate goal;
- the UN Millennium Development Goals articulates a vision and an agenda that validates the 0.7% ambition; and
- our government -- administration and Congress -- should take a significant step toward that goal in the budget for each of the coming years.

WOA notes in particular that the revival of the 0.7% vision -- 0.7% of our GNP to *global* development assistance -- permits us to advance the idea of human dignity and economic and social justice more broadly than advocacy for specific needs and negotiations of specific appropriations figures allows; and that the *time-sensitive targets* of the UN Millennium Development Goals provide a solid foundation for an appeal for development assistance. We also remain convinced that it remains crucial for Africa to continue to secure appropriate development assistance, and for the US to do its share. For ourselves and our colleagues, such a campaign would still permit us to continue to be engaged in HIV/AIDS, peace-keeping, and other issues, for they will continue to involve advocacy over appropriations.

Justifications, further, include

- it would direct energy to an aspect of Africa advocacy (vis-à-vis structures such as InterAction that consist of those engaged in programmatic work in Africa) that is not currently being addressed in its broad dimensions (as opposed to on particular issues, such as HIV/AIDS), especially after Faith Action became inactive; and
 - it would draw upon and complement initiatives by several churches, notably the Presbyterian Church USA and the Episcopal Church.
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