



April 30, 2019

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

We, the undersigned members of InterAction and partners of the U.S. government, urge the administration to reconsider eliminating poverty-focused assistance programs in the Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Eliminating poverty-focused assistance to the region and abandoning the poor and vulnerable communities with whom we work is short-sighted and counterproductive. It will threaten significant progress made towards a prosperous and more secure Northern Triangle and jeopardize programs that work to address the root causes of migration and displacement.

U.S. investments in the Northern Triangle have a proven impact supporting families and communities across the region. U.S. led programs, in partnership with many of the undersigned agencies, increase access to education, combat malnutrition, support credible democratic processes, improve the quality of life and economic opportunities for citizens, strengthen the rule of law and anti-corruption bodies, and reduce crime and violence. Without U.S. resources, many of these critical programs will not survive. U.S.-sponsored programming is crucial to catalyze investments and effective engagement from other country donors, local civil society, and the private sector.

U.S.-funded programming in the Northern Triangle has helped to increase prosperity in the region and address underlying issues of violence, lack of economic opportunity, and food insecurity:

- ***PUENTES Project***, implemented by ChildFund International in partnership with USAID, worked from 2015-17 in some of the most dangerous neighborhoods in Honduras to educate parents and teachers on violence prevention, resulting in a 56 percent reduction of violent incidents at school and healthier interactions at home. Many current U.S. government programs build upon the success of past programs, like *PUENTES*, and support local efforts to address the underlying causes of violence, migration, and economic instability.
- ***The Community Roots Project*** in Guatemala, a partnership between USAID, World Vision, and additional partners, focuses on violence prevention strategies and helping young people find jobs and start their own businesses.
- ***Farmer-To-Farmer***, implemented in El Salvador and Honduras by NCBA CLUSA in partnership with USAID, Engineers Without Borders, and the National Peace Corps Association, promotes sustainable economic growth and agricultural development.



American volunteers provide technical assistance to help farmers improve productivity, access new markets, and conserve environmental and natural resources.

- ***Feed the Future***, a multifaceted U.S. government interagency initiative, works with partners in targeted countries to develop agriculture sectors, strengthen market systems, reduce poverty and hunger, and encourage self-reliance. As *Feed the Future* target countries, Guatemala and Honduras have been identified by the U.S. government as countries that have a great level of need and the most potential for sustained growth.

These are just a few examples of the many demonstrably successful programs for which committed U.S. investment is essential to sustain progress.

U.S. Administrations and Congress have maintained bipartisan commitments to U.S. development and humanitarian aid to Central America, recognizing that these relatively small investments effectively address the severe poverty, political instability, and human rights concerns at the root of irregular migration. Levels of violence, insecurity, corruption and impunity, and lack of economic opportunity are at risk of increasing if poverty-focused assistance is withdrawn. Ending key poverty-alleviating, institutional-strengthening, anti-corruption, and violence-reducing programs in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras also undermines U.S. national interests and runs counter to American values. **Therefore, poverty-focused assistance must continue in the same manner and at the same level of funding as agreed by the Administration and Congress.**

Given the importance of U.S. funded assistance in Central America, we respectfully request your support and prompt attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact Kevin Rachlin at krachlin@interaction.org for additional information or if you have questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

1. 1,000 Days
2. Alliance for Peacebuilding
3. American Jewish World Service
4. Basic Education Coalition
5. Bethany Christian Services
6. Better World Campaign
7. Bread for the World
8. CARE USA
9. Catholic Relief Services
10. ChildFund International
11. Church World Service
12. Education Development Center
13. Food for the Hungry
14. Global Communities
15. Global Health Council
16. Habitat for Humanity International
17. Heartland Alliance International
18. InterAction
19. International Center for Not-for-Profit Law
20. IntraHealth International
21. Lutheran World Relief
22. Mercy Corps
23. National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International
24. Oxfam America
25. Plan International USA
26. Refugees International
27. RESULTS
28. ReSurge International
29. Save the Children
30. Solidarity Center
31. The Hunger Project
32. U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
33. UNICEF USA
34. Washington Office on Latin America
35. Women's Refugee Commission
36. World Vision