

# **What is the Global Poverty Act?**

## **Better Poverty Focused Development Assistance**

In 2000, the United States joined with every country in the world in committing to the Millennium Development Goals to improve life for the world's poorest people by 2015. We are now half-way to 2015 and legislation has been introduced to strengthen the United States' commitment to these goals.

The first goal is to cut in half the number of people who live on less than \$1 a day by 2015. In 2007, the Global Poverty Act, was introduced in Congress to focus U.S. efforts to meet this goal. If signed into law, the legislation would for the first time make it official U.S. policy to achieve this first Millennium Development Goal. Additionally, the Act requires the President to develop and implement a coordinated strategy of U.S. aid, debt relief, and trade policies to achieve this goal. This strategy would emphasize cooperation with other countries, international institutions, civil society groups and the private sector and is required to include specific, measurable goals, benchmarks and timetables. The President will report back to Congress on the progress of the strategy.

The Global Poverty Act (H.R.1302) was introduced in the House of Representatives by Reps. Adam Smith (D-WA) and Spencer Bachus (R-AL) and collected eighty-four cosponsors before it was passed on September 25, 2007. A companion bill (S.2433) was introduced in the Senate by Senators Barack Obama (D-IL), Chuck Hagel (R-NE), and Maria Cantwell (D-WA) on December 7, 2007.

The Global Poverty Act breaks new ground in three important ways:

1. For the first time achieving one of the Millennium Development Goals will be included in U.S. law.
2. Over twenty government agencies currently participate in development activities, often at cross purposes. The Global Poverty Act would ensure the maximum benefit to those in greatest need by coordinating the efforts of each agency that administers aid.
3. Thirteen of the world's major donors have reported on their progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals, while the U.S. has not. This legislation would require a regular report to Congress on U.S. progress towards meeting the first Millennium Development Goal.

Join Bread for the World in pushing for better development assistance by urging your Senators to support the Global Poverty Act.



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