

**The
BLACK
C o M M e n t a t o r**
Commentary, analysis and investigations
on issues affecting African Americans
www.blackcommentator.com

July 30, 2009 - Issue 335

[Contents of Issue](#)

[Click here](#)

[Home](#)

Why African Americans Should Care About Foreign Assistance Reform
By Rev. Don Williams, Bread for the World
BlackCommentator.com Guest Commentator

Click on the back button of your browser to return to non printer friendly page of this article

[Click here](#) to get helpful hints for viewing and printing this printer friendly plain text page

During President Barack Obama's recent trip to Ghana, he advised Africans to take responsibility for their destiny and stand up against corruption. In turn, African leaders urged the Obama administration to strengthen and improve U.S. foreign assistance.

When I think of my brothers and sisters in Africa, I think about their struggles, past and present. A people who first struggled as slaves on foreign soil now struggle with AIDS, hunger, and poverty. I ask myself, are we rich nations using food as a weapon against our kin? Are they willing to sell their birthright for a bowl of pottage like Esau? Are we coveting their gold, diamonds, oil and other valuable birthrights, or will we find ways to help our brothers and sisters rise up against hunger and poverty?

A good first step is the bipartisan legislation H.R. 2139 (the Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act of 2009), which is designed to reform foreign assistance to better serve the U.S. commitment to reducing global poverty and hunger. H.R. 2139 currently has 93 cosponsors, including 14 African American members of Congress.

Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA), who chairs the Congressional Black Caucus, is among the growing list of supporters of H.R. 2139. "Setting clear goals and strategy for alleviating poverty, improving global health, and encouraging sustainable development will be essential to strengthening America's foreign assistance capacity. H.R. 2139 would take a significant first step towards attaining these goals," said Lee.

House Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Howard Berman (D-CA) and Rep. Mark Kirk (R-IL) introduced the bill in April. It would require President Obama to develop and implement a comprehensive national strategy for global development, to improve evaluation of development programs, and to increase the transparency of U.S. foreign assistance to developing countries.

U.S. global development programs are designed to reduce hunger and poverty in poor countries through projects such as agriculture, nutrition, clean water, education, and

health care. For example, Ghanaian farmers are being trained in sustainable farming and business development through a U.S.-funded program run by the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Currently, more than 16,750 farmers have received training; by the end of 2010, the program will have trained more than 60,000 farmers. Despite the fact that foreign aid programs account for only one-half of one percent of our annual budget, the United States is still the world's largest contributor of development assistance to poor countries.

Currently global development policies and programs are scattered across 12 departments, 25 different agencies, and nearly 60 government offices. U.S. foreign assistance is still largely governed by a law passed in 1961 under President John F. Kennedy.

We need 100 cosponsors to move H.R. 2139 forward. Ask your representative to cosponsor the bill, and make a difference for our African brothers and sisters.

Rev. Don Williams works in the Church Relations department at Bread for the World, a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. By changing policies, programs and conditions that allow hunger and poverty to persist, we provide help and opportunity far beyond the communities where we live.

[Click here to comment on any article
in this issue or see what others are saying in the](#)
The BlackCommentator Readers' Corner Blog

BlackCommentator.com Guest Commentator, the Reverend Don Williams works in the Church Relations area of [Bread for the World](#) as the Racial/Ethnic Outreach Associate. Bread for the World has been striving to end hunger at home and abroad since 1972. Click [here](#) to contact the Rev. Williams.

Contact
Congress Now
to Support
Single Payer
HealthCare


Click [here](#) to
locate your
representatives


Get Breaking
News Updates From
BC_Nation
on
twitter
Twitter account is not
needed to read or listen
[Click here](#)

[Contents of Issue](#)

[Click here](#)

[Home](#)

Click Here To
CONTRIBUTE TO  NOW

Click Here To
CONTACT 

Your comments are always welcome.

e-Mail re-print notice

If you send us an e-Mail message we may publish all or part of it, unless you tell us it is not for publication. You may also request that we withhold your name.

Thank you very much for your readership.

Website Design and Hosting provided by



Copyright © 2002-2009
www.BlackCommentator.com
All Rights Reserved