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Fact Sheet

The Truth About the Global Poverty Act (S. 2433)

April 2008

MYTH: The Global Poverty Act would commit the U.S. to spending 0.7 percent of its gross national product on foreign aid. This would require a new tax on all Americans.

TRUTH: The legislation neither authorizes nor obligates the federal government to spend more money. Rather, it seeks to put our current foreign aid programs into a comprehensive strategy involving trade policy, debt cancellation, and private sector efforts to ensure that existing U.S. programs are more effective and efficient. The legislation calls for a strategy to determine the right mix of aid, trade and debt policies and investment. The strategy also includes the private sector, civil society organizations, and the developing countries themselves as critical components in global development. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated the bill would cost less than \$1 million to implement.

MYTH: The bill subordinates U.S. foreign policy and foreign aid spending to the United Nations.

TRUTH: The Global Poverty Act would ask U.S. agencies and departments headed by the Secretary of State, to develop a comprehensive strategy for U.S. programs and policies to eliminate extreme global poverty. This would be a U.S. strategy for U.S. agencies. The legislation does not prejudge what the details of the strategy should be—only what components should be included in its creation. Decisions on U.S. policy and spending would remain exclusively with the U.S. government.

MYTH: U.S. development efforts have not been effective in reducing poverty.

TRUTH: The U.S. should be proud of its efforts on behalf of the world's poor and hungry people. The U.S. partnered with the Rockefeller Foundation to launch the Green Revolution in Asia that quadrupled food yields and prevented predicted famine and widespread hunger. Assistance from the U.S. and other donors eradicated smallpox and is close to wiping out polio. Twenty-nine million more children in sub-Saharan Africa are in school than a decade ago. The U.S. is currently providing HIV/AIDS treatment for approximately 1.45 million men, women, and children worldwide, allowing them to help build their communities and countries. The Global Poverty Act would build on this record of success to help our efforts be even more efficient.

MYTH: The Global Poverty Act is only about foreign aid.

TRUTH: The Global Poverty Act seeks to bring greater coherence to our development policy by integrating U.S. foreign aid programs with U.S. trade policy, debt cancellation, and public-private partnerships. Each of these areas is critical to the fight against extreme poverty. Currently, U.S. global development policies and programs are implemented by 12 departments, 25 different agencies, and almost 60 government offices. Increased coordination is sorely needed to be effective. The Global Poverty Act does not establish any new foreign aid programs.

MYTH: The Global Poverty Act would make the eradication of extreme poverty the exclusive goal of U.S. foreign policy or U.S. foreign assistance.

TRUTH: The Global Poverty Act states that it would be “the policy of the United States to promote the reduction of global poverty, the elimination of extreme poverty, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal of reducing by one-half the proportion of people worldwide, between 1990 and 2015, who live on less than \$1 per day.” The legislation does not state that the eradication of extreme poverty would become the exclusive goal of U.S. foreign assistance or seek to change other existing U.S. foreign assistance goals.

MYTH: The Global Poverty Act would place pressure on the U.S. to ban small arms and weapons, and ratify the International Criminal Court Treaty, the Kyoto Protocol, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

TRUTH: The Global Poverty Act addresses only the eradication of extreme poverty and the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG), which aims to halve the proportion of people worldwide who live on less than \$1 per day. The treaties referenced are from another document, the Millennium Declaration, signed by the U.S. in 2000 along with all the countries of the world. The Global Poverty Act does not address the issues in the Millennium Declaration and only focuses on U.S. efforts to alleviate extreme poverty

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