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BOARD FOR INTERNATIONAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION

RESOLUTION

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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Times are tough, and Americans rightfully question government spending priorities, including those for foreign aid.

At this time when our government is intensively reviewing our foreign aid program, this Board wishes to record its view that international development cooperation is critically important to America's future.

What happens abroad increasingly concerns us. We want to live in a world that is prosperous, enjoys political and economic freedom, and is secure from conflict. As a world leader, the United States has the most to gain, to lose, and to offer as we build such a world for our children.

We are convinced that fundamental American concerns have important international elements: our dedication to freedom; our need for a growing economy with more jobs; our attention to problems of the environment, population growth and migration; and our concern to lessen suffering resulting from disasters.

We address these concerns at home and we must do so abroad in effective ways which also benefit the American people. A development cooperation program promoting sustainable growth and development and addressing global problems we all share will contribute in essential ways to our own national goals.

Promoting democratic governance and respect for human rights builds political stability abroad and heightens our ability to trade, travel, and live in peace and tranquility.

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This nation has a strong self-interest in economic development. Economic growth benefits Americans directly. It also provides resources to solve pressing global problems and helps maintain the political stability necessary for free societies to develop peacefully. An expanding global economy offers opportunities for trade and investment, directly benefiting the U.S. economy. We need increasing markets abroad for our goods and services to assure our own prosperity. Some of our best export customers today -- South Korea and Taiwan are examples -- were foreign aid recipients yesterday.

We have good reasons to lead global efforts to address widely shared problems. Many of them require international cooperation for their resolution, such as those affecting the environment, AIDS, and population growth. We will gain if such global issues are well managed; we will lose if they are not.

Most Americans want to alleviate poverty, disease, hunger and the suffering caused by natural and man-made disasters for all people. However, humanitarian efforts often represent well-meaning but costly band-aids on problems which could be prevented or cured at much less expense. Our efforts must emphasize sustainable development goals that enhance capacity to deal with such problems, thereby gradually reducing the need for emergency and other humanitarian assistance.

None of the above requires large amounts of money, but rather the collaborative application of science and improved technology, improved policies and institutions that promote free market economies and democratic governance, and selected investments in people. Furthermore, much of the money we spend will, of necessity, be spent in the U.S. And, if we do it right, we will build productive, enduring relationships with developing countries that will serve our nation well long into the future.

This Board strongly believes that a program of international development cooperation carefully tuned to changed world conditions clearly will benefit the people of the United States. Such cooperation offers great promise for the future of the world we will pass on to our children. It is well worth the small portion of our public revenues to be devoted to it. We should not lose the opportunity which the end of the Cold War presents to our nation.

April 29, 1993