



President and CEO
Samuel A. Worthington

Chair
Jo Luck
Heifer International

Vice Chair
Tsehaye Teferra
Ethiopian Community Development Council

Treasurer
Kathy Spahn
Helen Keller International

Board of Directors
Sekyu Chang,
Korean American Sharing Movement
Julius E. Coles, *Africare*
Christopher Elias, *PATH*
Anne Goddard, *ChildFund International*
Susan Hayes, *Interplast*
Benjamin K. Homan, *Food for the Hungry*
Melanie Macdonald, *World Neighbors*
Mary Ellen McNish,
American Friends Service Committee
Steve Mosley, *AED*
Carol Peasley, *CEDPA*
Daniel Pellegrom, *Pathfinder International*
Jonathan Quick,
Management Sciences for Health
Robert Radtke,
Episcopal Relief and Development
Farshad Rastegar, *Relief International*
Jonathan Reckford, *Habitat for Humanity*
William S. Reese,
International Youth Foundation
Carter Roberts, *World Wildlife Fund*
Zainab Salbi,
Women for Women International
Ron Sconyers, *Physicians for Peace*
Alison Smith, *InsideNGO*
Richard Stearns, *World Vision*

1400 16th Street, NW
Suite 210
Washington, DC 20036

Phone: 202.667.8227
Fax: 202.667.8236
E-mail: ia@interaction.org
<http://www.InterAction.org>

InterAction is the largest alliance of
U.S.-based international
nongovernmental organizations
focused on the world's poor and most
vulnerable people.

November 16, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

InterAction, representing 187 member relief and development organizations, seeks to align itself with faith leaders calling on you to emphasize humanitarian assistance and sustainable development as a way forward in Afghanistan.

We have reviewed the letter to you from Jim Wallis of Sojourners and other religious leaders that endorse the role many of our members play in Afghanistan. We agree with the authors' main message and we support their call for a greater emphasis on and investment in humanitarian and development aid to "re-build a broken nation; inspire confidence, trust, and hope among its people; and undermine the appeal of terrorism." We also recognize the important effort by the administration to implement a surge of civilian capacity and funds available for development programs.

As the letter correctly points out, US-based international NGOs have worked in Afghanistan for decades and use development methods that have been proven to work. These efforts are almost entirely staffed by trained Afghans who seek to aid their fellow citizens and rebuild their country. Even critics of large-scale, expensive reconstruction projects in Afghanistan, such as Ashraf Ghani and Andrew Wilder, praise the work NGOs have done at the village and community level to support health clinics, schools, training programs and small-scale infrastructure projects carried out using local labor. Our response to Ambassador Holbrooke's call for greater investment in national institutions and local peoples is: we are already doing just that and we applaud efforts to expand the U.S. engagement with local and international NGOs.

As you deliberate on and formulate your Afghanistan policy, please remember the critical contributions to peace being made on a daily basis by relief and development NGOs. Long-term development efforts, that involve the Afghan people in improving their village or community, need to be a core element of any effective Afghanistan strategy.

Sincerely Yours,

Samuel A. Worthington
President & CEO