

ORGANIZE AN IN-DISTRICT MEETING WITH YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Meeting face to face with your member of Congress or with one of their staff members is one of our most important tools to affect change in U.S. policy on debt and World Bank and IMF reform. We strongly encourage you to choose this option for your action if you live in the strategically important states of Indiana, Oklahoma, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Florida, or Tennessee.

Step 1)

Designate one person to schedule the meeting during the week of February 15th. This is the week of their Congressional “work period”, where they will be in the district. The person who is scheduling the meeting should act quickly as it is sometimes difficult to schedule a meeting on short notice.

(See the helpful tips guide on how to schedule a meeting.)

The person who will schedule the meeting and communicate with the other attendees about timing/scheduling is _____.

MEET YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Step 2)

Designate three to four people to attend the meeting. The people who will attend the in-district meeting from your organizing meeting will be:

	Name	Contact Information
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____

Step 3)

Brainstorm other local leaders who represent different constituencies that you can approach to attend your meeting. Your meeting will be more powerful if you have representatives from a variety of sectors who will join their voices on this issue. Consider clergy, business leaders, community and health organizations, etc.

	Name	Who will contact him/her
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____

Step 4)

Contact Brooke Harper, Jubilee's National Field Organizer (brooke@jubileeusa.org) at the Jubilee USA office to see if there is anyone from our broader alliance of 75 religious denominations, faith-based, environmental, human rights and labor groups who may be able to join you.

Jubilee USA staff will also provide you with background information about your member of Congress, their past involvement on these issues, and more so that you can best target your message and ask to him/her.

The person responsible for contacting the National Field Organizer will be _____.

Step 5)

Set a date for a pre meeting to practice what you will say at your meeting

We will meet at _____ on _____.
(see agenda and talking points for district meeting)

The person who will lead the preparation meeting is _____

The person responsible for printing out the leave-behind packet from the Jubilee USA website and bringing it to the meeting is _____.

Step 5)

Attend the district meeting

Step 6)

Follow up your meeting with a thank you note.

HELPFUL TIPS ON HOW TO SCHEDULE A MEETING WITH YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Every member of Congress has one or more offices in his or her congressional district. Most members of Congress regularly return to their districts and hold meetings with their constituents. You can be one of the people who meets with them — all you have to do is request a meeting, be patient, and be flexible. Meeting with your member of Congress or a staff member is the most effective tool in the activist arsenal. Take advantage of it!



HERE'S HOW:

Find out who handles scheduling. Call the member's Washington, D.C., office through the Capitol switchboard at 202/224-3121, or call the district office and ask for the name of the person who handles in-district scheduling requests.

Ask for the fax number where the person can be reached. You can also go to your member of Congress' web site to find this information. Go to www.congress.gov to find your member of Congress' site.

Write a letter requesting a meeting and address it to the person who handles in-district scheduling requests. Be sure to include who will attend the meeting, your Jubilee USA Network affiliation, which days you are available to meet (keeping in mind that members tend to be in-district on Friday afternoons, weekends, and Mondays), and what issues you would like to discuss. Below is a sample district request meeting letter:

Senator _____

Office Address

Attention: (District Scheduler)

Dear Senator _____,

I am writing on behalf of Jubilee USA, an organization with over 75 coalition partners of religious leaders, labor, and international organizations that work to advocate for global debt relief to help the world's poorest countries. We would like to request a meeting with you to discuss the Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation.

The passage of this legislation would allow 22 more countries to become eligible for debt relief without harmful economic policy conditions and aid these countries in reaching the Millennium Development Goals. It also urges responsible lending in the future to avoid a new debt crisis and paves the way for policies to create a more just global economic system.

We would like to set up a meeting with a group of concerned constituents (if you know who, list their names and affiliations) at your local office to discuss the act preferably on (write date).

I will follow up with your staff over the phone to ensure the receipt of this request and discuss any relevant details.

Sincerely,

You name and contact info

Fax it

Fax your request to the person responsible for in-district scheduling. Faxing is a more timely method of delivery than standard mail but still holds the formality of a hard copy that the member of Congress' staff can use for internal purposes.

Confirm the request was received

Call your contact person to confirm receipt of your request. Ask if the member of Congress is available for a meeting, and if not, ask to meet with the district or state director. (Keep in mind that it likely will take several follow-up calls to get a meeting scheduled. Don't get discouraged!)

Follow up

Call to follow up every few days to see if your meeting has been scheduled.

Confirm the meeting

Once a meeting is scheduled, call the day before to confirm. This also will give you the opportunity to confirm who else will be in attendance.

IN-DISTRICT MEETING AGENDA AND MEETING GUIDE

REINTRODUCING THE JUBILEE ACT FOR RESPONSIBLE LENDING AND EXPANDED DEBT CANCELLATION AGENDA

- I. Introductions
- II. The Opportunity: Fighting Global Poverty
- III. The Time for Debt Relief is Now
- IV. Debt Relief Works
 - A. Overall Impacts
 - B. Country Case Studies
 - 1. Ghana
 - 2. Burundi
 - 3. Tanzania
- V. The Debt Boomerang
 - A. Debt and Climate Change
 - B. Debt and American Jobs
 - C. Debt and National Security
- VI. How Debt Relief Works
- VII. The Unfinished Agenda
- VIII. The Ask
- IX. Wrap Up and Thank You

AGENDA GUIDE AND TALKING POINTS

I. Introductions (Meeting Leader, < 5 mins) Go around the room and allow everyone to quickly introduce themselves. Everyone should say their name and where they live, if you have a member of clergy or another organization accompanying you please have them state the name of their church and/or organization they are representing and if appropriate how many people are involved.

II. The Opportunity: Fighting Global Poverty (Meeting Leader, 5 mins)

Lack of access to health care, education, and clean water means millions of the world's poorest suffer in extreme poverty. Large debts run up by dictatorial regimes long gone from power has left dozens of poor countries crushed by unpayable debts.

But under pressure from the global Jubilee debt cancellation movement, world leaders at the G-8 summits in 1999 and again in 2005 agreed to cancel billions in unpayable poor country debt, freeing up billions of dollars towards investment in social services.

To date, 26 countries in Africa and Latin America have seen most of their debts cancelled. The United States and other rich countries have helped to provide more than \$100 billion in debt cancellation to promote economic development and poverty-reduction programs in the developing world.

III. The Time for Debt Relief is Now

The United Nations Millennium Campaign is warning that the ongoing economic crisis is likely to bring the economies of many developing countries to the brink of collapse and threatens the very survival of their citizens. According to the African Development Bank, countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Kenya could run out of foreign reserves to purchase goods necessary for survival in a matter of weeks. At the same time, countries including Laos, Senegal, Uganda, and Cape Verde are cutting expenditures on poverty alleviation for desperately poor citizens. Experts predict that spending on core development, including the Millennium Development Goals, could decline by \$200 billion as a result of the crisis.

Our Southern neighbors watch as their countries slip further and further into debt, as they work harder and harder only to find that their efforts are in vain. In the world's most impoverished nations, the majority of the populations do not have access to clean water, adequate housing or basic health care. These countries are still paying \$100 million per day in debt service to wealthy nations and institutions at the expense of providing these basic services to their citizens. Debt service payments take resources that impoverished countries could use to cure preventable diseases. Debt cancellation frees up resources to reverse this devastating reality.

VI. . Debt Relief Works

A. Overall Impacts

- ◇ According to the World Bank, countries that have received debt cancellation have seen a 75% increase in spending on social services.
- ◇ Debt relief has had a direct impact on reducing child mortality. According to the World Bank, "the poor experience improvements in the socio-economic conditions when their countries have received debt cancellation."
- ◇ Debt cancellation has been shown to improve progress towards achieving universal primary education. According to a study by the World Bank, after debt cancellation, drop-out rates for primary school students in countries that received relief decreased significantly.

B. Country Case Studies

1. Ghana

30% of Ghana's population lives on less than \$1 a day. But debt cancellation provided to Ghana has helped enable the government to increase spending on poverty reduction dramatically since the country entered the debt relief program.

- ◇ Debt relief helped to reduce Ghana's poverty rate from 40 to 29% between 1999 and 2006.
- ◇ Relief helped increase enrollment in primary school to 91% of students by 2006.
- ◇ With debt relief, schools which had previously operated under trees were moved into new classrooms, classroom congestion was reduced, and the quality of teaching and learning was improved.
- ◇ A SEND Foundation study found that a total of 836 HIPC funded projects were undertaken from 2002-2005 in 42 resource-poor districts in Ghana in the areas of education, health, water, and sanitation.
- ◇ Debt relief has financed the development of 268 new classrooms, 36 new clinics, 10 new hospital wards, and 87 water boreholes

2. Burundi

In Burundi, a small east African Nation, more than 80% of the population lives on less than \$1 a day and almost 60% is illiterate. Because of debt relief, Burundi will be able to save up to \$50 million a year in 2009. These funds are enabling Burundi to:

- ◇ Devote more resources to building health centers in rural areas and promoting free health care to

expectant mothers and children under five.

- ◇ Increase funding for education, with a push to recruit more teachers, build more schools and provide better education materials.

- ◇ Improve food security and increase access to potable water.

3. Tanzania

Tanzania struggles with high rates of HIV/AIDS, illiteracy, and a high infant mortality rate of 69 deaths for every 1000 births. Yet, the country was one of the first nations in Africa to receive debt cancellation in 2001.

In Tanzania:

- ◇ Debt relief has increased the number of children in schools by over 50%. In addition, almost 2,500 new schools have been built as well as 28,000 new teachers recruited.

- ◇ With debt relief savings in 2002 and 2003, Tanzania built 31,825 classrooms and the number of primary schools increased from 11,608 in 2000 to 12,689 in 2003, a net increase of 1,081 schools. Also in these two years, 17,851 new Grade A teachers were recruited and 9,100 science-teaching kits were supplied. The pass rate in primary school exams rose from 19.3 percent in 1999 to 40.1 percent in 2003.

- ◇ With proceeds from debt relief, Tanzania has increased funding for poverty reduction by 130 percent over the last six years.

V. The Debt Boomerang: Debt Relief Abroad Effects Our Lives At Home

The burden of debt on countries negatively affects our environment, floods our markets with cheap goods while our exports dwindle, accentuate the drug trade, and threatens national security by escalating violence abroad.

A. Debt and Climate Change

In order to reach a global climate deal, developing countries will need to invest in climate adaptation technology, but currently debt service takes needed funds away from these types of investments.

B. Debt & American Jobs

As Third World countries struggle to pay back their debts, they have to export as many goods as possible and cut back on imports. This might seem like a good way to earn money. In fact they don't earn as much as they should, because many Third World countries are exporting similar products, flooding the market. So prices have been plummeting over the last few years.

It is not only debtor countries who lose out by the 'earn more, spend less' principle. The countries demanding repayment also suffer economically. Western countries are losing out on earnings from some factory and farm produced goods because it is so much cheaper to import them from the Third World. At the same time they are not able to export equipment and other manufactured goods to Third World countries which used to be trading partners, because these countries have no money to buy them. So jobs are lost and unemployment rises.

C. Debt and National Security

In 2002, the US National Security Strategy asserted that global poverty is important to U.S. security. Colin Powell stated that "sustainable development is a security imperative. Poverty, destruction of the environment and despair are destroyers of people, of societies, of nations, a cause of instability as an unholy trinity that can destabilize countries and destabilize entire regions." Debt-burdened countries that cannot respond to the needs of their people have often faced social unrest. As desperation mounts, social conflict and war can result. As the debt crisis broke in the early 1980s, violence in many indebted countries around the Third World erupted into war or escalated dramatically.

The relatively small investment we can make in debt relief will have a large payoff in terms of global stability and our own national security. In addition, many Third World countries became deeply indebted because of high military spending. And as wars escalate, they are less able to repay the money they owe. One estimate suggests that between 1960 and 1987 Third World governments borrowed around \$400 billion dollars to fund arms imports from industrial states. The Third World arms trade has declined after a peak in the late 1980s. Most of the dictators who invested so heavily in arms are no longer in power and today's governments are not buying as many arms as they once did. But the debts are still left to pay.

VI. How Debt Relief Works

How do we ensure funds freed up by debt cancellation get to the people who need it most?

In order to qualify for debt relief and cancellation, countries must go through a rigorous process called the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative of the World Bank. Countries have to meet strict criteria around public financial management, transparency, and have to detail how they plan to utilize funds freed up by debt cancellation.

Many countries, including Ghana, Tanzania, Nicaragua, Uganda, and Nigeria have established "Virtual Poverty Funds" – a tracking system for revenues released by debt relief and other revenues within the context of the country's full budget. Some countries such as Cameroon and Honduras have taken a different approach and track debt relief resources by setting up separate funds with independent oversight including civil society and independent actors.

Civil society groups in the poorest countries also play a critical role in holding their own governments to account for how they use the proceeds from debt relief. Groups in countries like Zambia, Tanzania, Ghana, and Nigeria monitor government use of debt relief funds and engage in advocacy with government officials to ensure debt relief reaches those who need it most. Civil society in the United States and elsewhere help support calls from civil society in beneficiary countries when it is needed to ensure accountability

VII. The Unfinished Agenda

Debt relief is not a silver bullet, nor is it always perfectly delivered.

While there has been significant progress in poor countries that are benefiting from debt relief towards better public financial management and budget tracking, intensified efforts to help civil society engage with their governments to ensure greater transparency and accountability are clearly needed. More regular reporting, and independent monitoring of the impacts of debt relief and its uses, would also be extremely helpful – currently nearly all the literature and analysis on the topic comes from the IMF, World Bank, or poor countries themselves.

The Jubilee Act -- that would (1) make the way debt relief is delivered even more effective and beneficial to the poorest people and (2) expand eligibility for debt cancellation to up to 22 additional impoverished nations that need relief to fight poverty in their countries.

The Jubilee Act would expand debt cancellation to an additional 22 poor countries that have been excluded from debt relief to date, if these countries meet strict criteria around transparency, public financial management, and use of the funds. The legislation would also create a framework for responsible lending, so countries won't get back into debt in the future.

VIII. The Ask

The Ask: Support / Co sponsor the Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation(Pitcher, 5 minutes)

This is a sample. Contact the Jubilee USA staff for the specific ask for your member of Congress. The Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation passed on the floor of the House with a 2/3 majority and passed through the Foreign Relations Committee in the Senate in the last Congress. We were pleased to have Senator X as a cosponsor on the Jubilee Act in the last Congress, and are excited to build on that positive momentum. Senator Casey is moving toward reintroduction of the Jubilee Act and we hope that Senator X will sign on as an original cosponsor.

As you may know, the Jubilee Act would:

1. Establish a Framework for Transparent Responsible Lending
2. Prohibit the Harmful Economic and Policy Conditions
3. Expand Debt Cancellation for Qualified Countries
4. Call for Debt Audits to address the problem of odious and unjust debt

If the staffer is not familiar with it, you can walk through the contents of the attached 'Summary of the Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation.' Then, ask:

“Will Senator X commit to being an original cosponsor for the Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation.

IX. Wrap-up and Thank You (Meeting Leader, < 5 minutes)

Thank the person for having a meeting with you, and leave him or her with the Jubilee Act Leave Behind Packet. Make a plan to be in touch to follow up on your meeting, and express your interest in working together in the future.