

May 15, 2008

Honorable Henrietta Fore, Administrator
United States Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523

VIA FACSIMILE, (202) 216-3455; AND VIA U.S. MAIL

RE: Request for Immediate Rescue Response to China Earthquake

Dear Administrator Fore:

Monday's 7.9-magnitude earthquake in China's Sichuan province has left thousands of children in need of assistance. As representative of New York's 12th Congressional District—which includes both of the City's Chinatown communities—I urge your immediate action to ensure the rescue and medical treatment of these children is given our nation's full support. The U.S. has some of the best earthquake rescue units in the world, and they should be dispatched without delay to aid Chinese efforts.

We should waste no time in sending rescue teams to help the Chinese government locate and assist victims of this massive earthquake. The reports of the devastation are harrowing, and American rescue units can provide unique service to a nation that has been ravaged by natural disaster.

USAID has a long history of leading earthquake rescue efforts with great success. Meanwhile, teams such as those Miami-Dade and Fairfax County's Fire and Rescue have proven they have unparalleled skill in finding and treating victims in such disasters. The events in China warrant leveraging both the Agency's expertise and that of our best rescue units. Bringing such assets to China's aid can mean the difference between life and death for countless victims of this tragedy.

Sadly, the announced death toll from the Sichuan earthquake is already more than 12,000—and the number is climbing on an hourly basis. As you are aware, every moment rescue personnel is not on the ground, greatly increases the risk of death for the trapped and injured. It would be unconscionable for the best equipped and trained rescue units in the world to stand by while lives are lost.

I thank you for your time and attention, and ask—once again—that you act swiftly. If you should have any questions about this request, please feel free to contact my staff at (202) 225-2361.

Sincerely yours.

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

Cc: Jeffrey Grieco, Assistant Administrator
Barbara Bennett, Congressional Liaison Officer
Via facsimile: (202) 216-3035