

**From the Committee of Reference
General Assembly of the National Council of Churches and Church World Service
November 10-12, 2009**

Message to the Member Churches from the NCC/CWS General Assembly

Whereas, 25,000 children around the world die every day from preventable causes, and

Whereas, a recent study by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace cited a Defense Department estimate that at least \$52 billion was spent in 2008 on nuclear weapons and weapons-related programs,¹ and

Whereas, international health experts estimated in 2005 that an additional \$5.1 billion a year in global assistance for proven child survival interventions could save the lives of 6 million young children each year,² and

Whereas, practical ways must be found to reduce unproductive military spending and increase effective spending on human needs, and

Whereas, House Resolution 278, the Global Security Priorities Act, introduced on a bi-partisan basis on March 24, 2009, calls for deep reductions in U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals, saving at least \$13 billion annually, with some of the savings from these reductions directed toward a well-targeted international effort aimed at addressing the Millennium Development Goals of reducing child mortality and eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, and

Whereas, the United States and the Russian Federation are now engaged in serious negotiations to extend strategic arms reduction agreements and to consider paths to further reductions as well as strengthening verification measures, and

Whereas, bipartisan defense experts agree that this resolution would enhance U.S. security by reducing the nuclear threat as well as address vital issues of the well-being of poor children at a time of global economic crisis, and

Whereas, more than two dozen churches and other religious organizations endorsed the Global Security Priorities Act in 2008, and

¹ **Nuclear Security Spending Assessing Costs, Examining Priorities**, Stephen I. Schwartz with Deepti Choubey, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009.

² **The Lancet** 25 June 2005 (Vol. 365, Issue 9478, pages 2193-2200).

Whereas, the Global Priorities Campaign, an international, interreligious initiative that is facilitating practical ways to reduce military spending and increase spending to meet human needs, was bestowed a “Blessed Are the Peacemakers” award in 2008 by the U.S. Conference of the World Council of Churches for its efforts to promote this resolution and related initiatives, and

Whereas, Members of Congress are being encouraged to co-sponsor this Act and have been asked to do so on November 2, 2009 by the chairman of the committee on International Justice and Peace of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops,

Therefore, be it resolved that, the 2009 General Assembly of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and Church World Service,

Commends the bold leadership shown by Representatives James McGovern and Dan Lungren in introducing the Global Security Priorities Act,

Calls upon its member communions to urge their members to contact their Members of Congress urging them to co-sponsor the Global Security Priorities Act and support subsequent Congressional and international measures of a similar nature,

Calls upon its member communions to consider additional ways it may sustain the efforts of the Global Priorities Campaign toward these ends, and

Calls upon the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches to transmit this message to the member communions.