

July 22, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy,

On behalf of the Credit Union National Association (CUNA), I am writing in strong support of H.R. 7608, the State, Foreign Operations, Agriculture, Rural Development, Interior, Environment, Military Construction, and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2021. CUNA represents America's credit unions and their 115 million members. There are over 85,000 credit unions in 118 countries with \$2.1 trillion dollars in total assets serving 274 million members. CUNA is also a member of the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU), which is the leading trade association and development organization for the international credit union movement.

Since 1971, WOCCU has offered nearly 300 technical assistance programs around the globe – all while serving the mission of improving lives through credit unions and other cooperative financial institutions. WOCCU's programs provide education and international networking for the exchange of information and ideas. Through these projects, WOCCU promotes the sustainable development of credit unions and other financial cooperatives around the world to empower people through access to high quality, affordable financial services.

With U.S. government and private U.S. foundation support, WOCCU is working to promote economic freedom and growth, increase financial inclusion, expand rapidly financial access using mobile technology, help farmers and artisans obtain better prices for their goods, and fill the agricultural lending gap to improve food security.

We support the funding level of \$17 million for the Cooperative Development Program, administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development, in fiscal year 2021. A main source of funding for WOCCU has been the Cooperative Development Program (CDP) of the Development Assistance account in the State-Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations bill. In fiscal year 2020, Congress provided an appropriation of \$17,000,000 to be available for cooperative development programs of USAID. The CDP is a global initiative that focuses on building capacity of cooperative businesses and cooperative systems for self-reliance, local ownership, and sustainability. **This year, we respectfully urge you to maintain the funding for these programs to \$17 million as included in the bill under consideration.**

With their specialized expertise, CDP's implementing partners have advanced cooperative businesses and systems in more than 18 countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Activities are targeted to strengthen cooperative businesses in several ways including improved governance, capitalization, gender empowerment, youth engagement, financial management, market performance, and advocacy. The program also prioritizes collaboration among partners through working groups, cooperative research, learning, and dissemination of cooperative development resources. During the life of the program, activities have supported more than 500 cooperatives and credit unions with a combined savings of \$495 million. During this time period, the program has also:

- Provided health insurance and services to more than 42,000 people in Uganda
- Leveraged more than \$95 million of investments for cattle cooperatives in South Africa

- Increased member equity among cacao cooperatives in Ecuador, Peru, and the Dominican Republic by more than \$4 million
- Reformed cooperative law and regulation in Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, and Ukraine.

On behalf of credit unions and their millions of members, thank you for considering our views and assistance in ensuring much-needed funding for the Cooperative Development Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Nussle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the word "Nussle".

Jim Nussle  
President & CEO