

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Financial Services
Washington, D.C. 20515

March 30, 2011

The Honorable Timothy Geithner
Secretary of the Treasury
Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Geithner,

When the House Financial Services Committee met to consider its Views and Estimates on the Administration's FY 2012 budget, it adopted an amendment relating to the multilateral development banks.

The amendment urges Treasury to advocate that governments receiving assistance from the multilateral development institutions do not engage in gross violations of human rights – in particular, the denial of freedom of religion and the physical persecution of people based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Many Americans have been outraged in recent years by disturbing trends in human rights violations in some countries. In some parts of the world there has been a restriction on people's right to practice and choose their own religion. We have seen troubling examples of people being persecuted, imprisoned, and threatened with execution, for example, in Pakistan, simply for converting from one religion to another. Often, it is people being punished for converting to Christianity.

In some African countries, we have seen the physical persecution of people who are members of sexual minorities. In Uganda, which was a major beneficiary of the multilateral debt relief initiatives, there is active persecution of people who are members of sexual minorities.

We recognize that the United States does not set the policies at these institutions, but we do have an influential voice, and we believe it is in our interest to use that voice to support what we view to be fundamental human values, regardless of whether a particular government is fully democratic or not.

We urge you to be mindful of the Committee's views on this matter, and particularly in light of the important authorization requests that Treasury has made this year, we also urge you to relay these views to the executive directors who

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represent the U.S. at these institutions. We believe this is important not only as a matter of public policy and the advancement of American values, but also politically in terms of our ability to generate the necessary support to enable the U.S. to continue to play a significant and influential role at these institutions.



SPENCER BACHUS

Chairman



BARNEY FRANK

Ranking Member

cc: Mr. Ian Solomon, U.S. Executive Director to the World Bank
Mr. Robert M. Orr, U.S. Executive Director to the Asian Development Bank
Mr. Walter Jones, U.S. Executive Director to the African Development Bank
Mr. Gustavo Arnavat, U.S. Executive Director to the IBD
Mr. James Hudson, U.S. Executive Director to the EBRD