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Press Release

U.S. Representative Betty McCollum Visits Guatemala



U.S. Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN) visits Guatemala between September 18 and 21 to conduct oversight on the USAID (United States of America Agency for International Development) development program. U.S. Ambassador Stephen G. McFarland and USAID/Guatemala Director Wayne Nilsestuen accompany Congresswoman McCollum on her visit to Sacatepéquez, Chimaltenango and Sololá and in her meeting with other international donors and the diplomatic corps.

During the tour of three highland departments, Representative McCollum will visit programs that take an integrated approach to poverty reduction, food security, and basic health for families, particularly mothers and children. She will also be briefed on political and governance issues in Guatemala, including the security situation.

Congresswoman McCollum is deeply concerned about devastating effects of chronic malnutrition on Guatemala's children and the current food security crisis only highlights that urgent action is required to eliminate hunger in a country that has the ability to feed all its citizens. The Congresswoman's tour of communities and institutions where U.S. foreign assistance is being implemented by USAID, USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) and Peace Corps will provide her with personal insight and information with which the U.S. Government can respond to the immediate malnutrition crisis.

Congresswoman McCollum is serving her fifth term in the U.S. Congress representing the families of Minnesota's Fourth District. She is a member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on the State Department and Foreign Operations and believes that U.S. foreign policy must reflect the values of the American people. Congresswoman McCollum is working to promote the effective U.S. leadership in confronting the global AIDS pandemic while supporting investments that reduce extreme poverty and hunger while improving the status and health of women and children around the world.

In June 2009, Congresswoman McCollum introduced the Global Food Security Act of 2009 and made the following statement on her Website: *"Agricultural productivity and rural infrastructure needs to once again be a priority for American foreign policy. Global hunger is a moral issue and a security problem too big to ignore. It undermines U.S. foreign assistance investments and threatens the political and social stability of vulnerable countries. My bill makes bold and innovative investments to strengthen the lives of the world's poorest families."*