



International Affairs Budget

ABA Urges Increased Funding for the FY08 International Affairs Budget

One of the main goals of the American Bar Association is to promote the rule of law in the world. The International Affairs budget (the function 150 account) is a key component of the United States' role in that effort. This account funds programs and agencies that work toward goals such as the development of trade and economic opportunities abroad, the promotion of international human rights, the protection of refugees, and the establishment of independent judicial and legal systems. In order for the U.S. to continue its longstanding leadership role in the international community, which is needed more so today than ever before, we must devote adequate resources to our International Affairs budget.

The American Bar Association supports funding of the International Affairs budget at or above the \$36.2 billion requested by the Administration for FY2008 because:

- **Totaling just over 1% of the federal budget, the 150 account strengthens our national security, enhances our economic prosperity, and supports our humanitarian and democratic values.** This is a small investment with significant returns for the national security and economic interests of the United States.
- **Adequate funding is necessary to meet our treaty obligations to the United Nations and many other international organizations.** Funding provided through this account enables the US to meet its assessed dues at 45 international organizations, including NATO, the World Health Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations.
- **If we fail to pay our assessed contributions, we do grave damage to our ability to insist that other countries abide by their international agreements, undermine our leadership role in strengthening human rights and erode the nation's commitment to expanding the rule of law in the world.**
- **Due to inadequate funding for international peacekeeping activities, the U.S. is once again falling into significant arrears with the United Nations.** The U.S. ended fiscal year 2006 over \$569 million in debt. In order to meet projections for costs of current peacekeeping obligations, \$500 million must be added to the Administration's FY08 request for the Contributions to International Peacekeeping account.
- **Robust funding for the international affairs budget is essential to supporting programs that strengthen the rule of law, respect for human rights and democratic governance, such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).** UNDP delivers high-quality, high impact assistance to developing countries to strengthen their institutions of governance. UNDP helps promote international security, since stable and democratic governments are less likely to experience internal conflicts that create pressure for international intervention. UNDP also promotes economic development, by assisting countries in establishing transparent legal systems needed to encourage private sector investment and promote trade in goods and services. Sharing these common goals, the ABA and the UNDP in 2000 established the ABA-UNDP International Legal Resource Center. The Center's mission is to provide a legal resource capability to serve UNDP global governance programs and projects supporting legal reform and democratic institution building.