

May 19, 2017

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on State and Foreign Operations,
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on State and Foreign Operations,
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

We, as members of the Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health Roundtable, support your efforts to preserve effective evidence-based poverty-focused foreign aid that saves lives and creates economic stability in developing countries. **We join the broader global development community to support no less than \$60 billion for the International Affairs Budget. As you begin to craft the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2018 (FY2018), we urge you to allocate at a minimum FY2017 account levels. For greatest impact, we urge you to support \$900 million for Maternal and Child Health (MCH) – including \$290 million for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and at least \$160 million – although the full need is \$250 million – for Nutrition in USAID Global Health Programs.**

U.S. leadership and partnership with developing countries is accelerating progress in ending preventable child and maternal deaths. The annual number of under-five deaths has fallen by more than 50 percent from 12.6 million in 1990 to 5.9 million in 2015. U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) investments are contributing to this incredible reduction in mortality: since 2008 alone, USAID's efforts have contributed to saving the lives of 4.6 million children and 200,000 women.

At this juncture in time, we have the know-how to help end preventable child and maternal deaths by the year 2035. In June 2016, USAID laid out an evidence-based roadmap to save an additional 15 million children's lives and 600,000 women's lives by the year 2020. What once seemed unreachable is now achievable.

But despite remarkable progress and return on investments, the work is not yet done. Every day over 16,000 children under five years old will die of preventable and/or treatable conditions such as prematurity, pneumonia and diarrhea— with malnutrition being the underlying cause in 45 percent of those deaths. Newborn deaths are a growing proportion of child mortality with 1 million children dying on the day they are born.

Every day, approximately 800 women, almost entirely from developing countries, will die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. Twenty million more women experience debilitating, sometimes lifelong complications each year. Moreover, when a mother dies, her children are less likely to go to school, get immunized, have access to good nutrition, and they are up to 10 times more likely to die in childhood than children with mothers.

Reaching the goal of ending preventable maternal, child, and newborn deaths will require continued commitment and resources. U.S. investments in MCH and Nutrition programs build local capacity to allow for the delivery of low cost, life-saving services for newborns, children, and mothers throughout the developing world. These programs provide access to skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care; training for frontline health workers; nutrition education to improve

maternal diets and promotion of exclusive breastfeeding; access to adequate water, sanitation and hygiene services; life-saving health commodities; and research and development of new lifesaving tools.

These accounts also support Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, to provide new and underutilized vaccines to developing countries; and nutrition-specific programs for women and children, especially in the critical 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child's second birthday. **USAID's health programs help to ensure that mothers and children who do survive can thrive**—from skilled birth attendants who can reduce long-term complications from birth such as fistula, good nutrition that strengthens immune systems and reduces the risk of chronic disease, and immunizations for measles and also polio that prevent lifelong disability, caused by irreversible paralysis, and death. These proven and effective programs can make a tremendous impact on children's ability to learn, secure employment, and provide for their families in the future.

Funding for the MCH and Nutrition Accounts is among the most cost-effective, life-saving investments the U.S. can make. We urge you to continue strong support for these programs in FY2018 by building on the U.S. leadership and commitment to end preventable child and maternal deaths in this generation.

To support the goals of ending preventable child and maternal deaths, we urge you to increase support for MCH to \$900 million, including \$290 million for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and \$250 million for Nutrition in Global Health for FY2018. It is vital to make these robust investments, while also maintaining funding for the International Affairs Budget, including support for UNICEF and other critical global health, humanitarian and development programs that support the well-being of women, newborns, and children to enable the United States to reach its goal of ending extreme poverty and creating a more stable, prosperous world.

We look forward to continuing to work with you throughout the 115th Congress and appreciate your commitment to helping end preventable child and maternal deaths.

In partnership,