

Support Robust Funding for Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition in Global Health in FY2023

Please join Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) in the call for robust funding for the global Maternal and Child Health Account, including Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the Nutrition Account in fiscal year 2023. For more information, or to sign onto the letter, please contact Mike (Collins) at Mike_Wakefield@collins.senate.gov or Daisy (Shaheen) at Daisy_Bledsoe-Herring@shaheen.senate.gov.

May XX, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Coons
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chairman Coons, and Ranking Member Graham:

As you determine priorities for the Fiscal Year 2023 State, Foreign Operations and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, we respectfully request that you provide **robust funding for the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and Nutrition Accounts within the Global Health Programs account at USAID**. Adequate funding for the MCH and Nutrition accounts is critical to preserving effective, evidence-based, poverty-focused assistance that saves lives and helps strengthen economies in developing countries.

This Committee has a long-standing record of supporting critical, life-saving investments in global child and maternal health and nutrition. In 2020 alone, USAID helped more than 92 million women and children access essential—and often lifesaving—health services, reaching 27 million children under five years old and 8 million pregnant women with high impact, life-saving nutrition interventions.

While reductions in global mortality rates for women and children are two of the biggest success stories in international development, there remain significant gaps that additional investments

can help close. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, 5.2 million children under age five died from mainly preventable and treatable diseases each year, with malnutrition as the underlying cause of roughly half of these deaths. Additionally, 300,000 women die annually of preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. COVID-19 continues to interrupt routine and necessary health and nutrition services.

The MCH account supports delivery of cost-effective, proven, life-saving services in countries where the burden of preventable deaths is the highest. USAID's investments provide access to skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care, training for frontline health workers, life-saving health commodities, and nutrition services like breastfeeding support. A critical portion of the MCH account supports Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, a public-private partnership that has helped to immunize a whole generation – more than 888 million children – and prevented more than 15 million deaths, helping to halve child mortality in 73 lower-income countries. As Gavi bolsters efforts to continue routine immunization and deliver COVID-19 vaccines to lower-income countries, USAID's technical support is essential to support these efforts and enable more equitable access to vaccines.

The Nutrition account supports nutrition programs for women and children, focusing on the first 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child's second birthday. Severely malnourished children are much more likely to die than their well-nourished peers and are at risk of permanent physical and mental stunting, which prevents them from reaching their full educational, social, and earning potential. Twenty-five percent of the world's children are stunted, which accounts for billions in lost economic activity. Pandemic-related disruptions to food and health systems threaten to undo years of progress, with experts estimating that by the end of 2022, an additional 17 million children will be severely malnourished.

The significant and dire impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had and continues to have on the world's most vulnerable children requires significantly increased funding. These accounts have received only the most modest increases for years. We respectfully urge you to **provide robust funding for the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and Nutrition Accounts for FY 2023.**

Thank you for your serious consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the United States maintains its leadership in this global effort.

Sincerely,