March 28, 2019

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee of State, Foreign
Operations and Related Programs
HT-2, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations and Related Programs
1016 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Lowey and Ranking Member Rogers:

As you begin consideration of the Department of State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill for fiscal year (FY) 2020, we strongly urge you to allocate robust funding for the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) account—including Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance—and the Nutrition account. This funding is critical to preserving effective, evidence-based, poverty-focused assistance that saves lives and helps strengthen economies in developing countries.

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) MCH and Nutrition programs form the backbone of the U.S. commitment to help end preventable child and maternal deaths globally. While reductions in global mortality rates for mothers and children are two of the biggest success stories in international development, there remain significant gaps that additional investments and continued U.S. leadership can help close.

For example, a growing proportion of under-five deaths occur in the first 28 days after birth, with approximately 7,000 newborns dying each day. And while deaths from illnesses such as malaria, and HIV have dropped significantly, progress in preventing deaths from pneumonia and diarrhea have been much slower, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. While there are vaccines to prevent the deadliest cases, pneumonia and diarrheal diseases are still leading killers for children under five. Finally, recent estimates suggest that more than 300,000 women continue to die annually of preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, almost all in low-resource settings.

To continue progress and address these persistent challenges, MCH programs support the delivery of low-cost, proven, life-saving services in 25 priority countries where the burden of preventable deaths is the highest. USAID’s generous investments help provide access to skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care; training for frontline health workers; clean water, sanitation, and hygiene; life-saving health commodities; and research and development of innovative tools. A critical portion of the MCH account supports Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which provides new and underutilized vaccines to developing countries.
The Nutrition account supports nutrition-specific programs for women and children, focusing on the first 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child’s second birthday. These programs can make a tremendous impact on a child’s ability to learn and, later on in life, secure employment and provide for their families as healthy adults. Absent quality nutrition and early intervention health services, a child’s physical and cognitive development is at risk of being stunted. Almost a quarter of the world’s children never reach their full earning, social, and economic potential because of this.

Again, we urge you to allocate robust funding for MCH and Nutrition programs in FY20, along with continued support for other programs that contribute to the health and well-being of families in developing countries. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the United States maintains its leadership in this global effort.

Sincerely,

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

Susan W. Brooks
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Brian K. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

D. James Vela
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress
John Yarmuth
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

David Scott
Member of Congress

Joseph P. Kennedy III
Member of Congress

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

Ben McAdams
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Roger Marshall, M.D.
Member of Congress

Sean Casten
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

Andy Levin
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Kaja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress

Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress
Adam Kinzinger  
Member of Congress

Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Eliot Engel  
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress

Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Member of Congress

Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress

Wm. Lacy Clay  
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

Ben Ray Luján  
Member of Congress
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger  
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress

Stacey E. Plaskett  
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

Denny Heck  
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

Rosa DeLauro  
Member of Congress

David Cicilline  
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress
Dean Phillips  
Member of Congress

Elissa Slotkin 
Member of Congress

Lucy McBath 
Member of Congress

Donna Shalala  
Member of Congress

Darren Soto  
Member of Congress

Chris Houlahan  
Member of Congress

Sharice Davids  
Member of Congress

Joseph D. Morelle  
Member of Congress

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan  
Member of Congress

Sean Patrick Maloney  
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

Don Young  
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress

Mike Levin
Member of Congress

Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

Jesús G. “Chuy” García
Member of Congress