

April X, 2013

The Honorable Barbara A. Miksulski
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations and Related Programs
127 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations and Related Programs
127 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to improve the health of women and children in the developing world. As you begin to prepare the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2014, we respectfully request that you include robust funding for the Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition programs.

U.S. leadership and funding to improve the health and survival of mothers and children has delivered unprecedented success worldwide, effectively halving the number of deaths of children under the age of five in just 30 years, from 15 million in the 1980s to 6.9 million in 2011. Additionally, in the 19 countries where U.S. involvement has been the greatest, maternal mortality has declined by 30 percent over the last 20 years.

However, while great strides have been made, much work remains to be done. Every day approximately 800 women will die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, and almost 19,000 children under five will die of preventable and treatable diseases such as pneumonia and diarrhea.

U.S. funded Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition programs allow for the delivery of life-saving services for newborns, children, and mothers throughout the developing world at a low cost. These programs support critical initiatives that impact millions—from providing access to skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care to training community health-workers to treat preventable but deadly illnesses such as polio, pneumonia, and diarrhea. U.S. funding also supports the Global Alliance for Vaccinations Initiative (GAVI) and child nutrition programs.

Funding for maternal and child health and child nutrition is among the most cost-effective, life-saving investments the U.S. can make. We applaud your longstanding leadership on these important issues and urge you to continue to provide strong support for the Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition programs in the FY 2014 Appropriations bill.

Thank you for your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,