

April 13, 2021

The Honorable Christopher Coons  
State Foreign Operations Subcommittee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
State Foreign Operations Subcommittee  
U.S. Senate  
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Dear Chair Coons and Ranking Member Graham:

As you begin consideration of the Department of State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill for fiscal year (FY) 2022, **we strongly urge you to allocate \$300 million for the Global Health Nutrition account.** This funding is critical to ending preventable child deaths, safeguarding children's futures, and building the resilient communities that are foundational to global health security.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, malnutrition was a leading cause of child deaths. Even though malnutrition-related child deaths are entirely preventable, malnutrition contributes to 3 million childhood deaths every year - one child every 10 seconds. Those who do survive malnutrition in early childhood - at least one in three people worldwide - are much more likely to suffer from lifelong illness and impaired cognitive development, including up to an 18-point reduction in expected IQ and a 33 percent lower chance of escaping poverty as adults. At scale, these losses cost the world \$3.5 trillion in lost productivity and healthcare costs every year. To the individuals who experience them, the costs are immeasurable.

In the face of COVID-19 related disruptions to global food and health systems, the prevalence of malnutrition is skyrocketing. The most recent estimates project that the number of people around the world facing acute hunger will double over the course of the pandemic, and by 2022 an additional 12 million children will suffer from severe malnutrition. In many parts of the world, malnutrition will likely be the most deadly and long-lasting consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic - killing more people than the virus itself.

Investing in the Global Health Nutrition account will prevent thousands of maternal and child deaths and give millions of children the opportunity to grow and develop to their full potential. Funding to the Nutrition account supports many specific and vital nutrition interventions such as Vitamin A supplementation, nutrition education to improve maternal diets, nutrition during pregnancy, exclusive breastfeeding, improved infant and young child feeding practices, and treatment for children who are dangerously thin (wasted). Increasing FY22 funding in the Nutrition sub-account to \$300 million would allow the US government to scale up these high impact interventions in USAID priority countries, saving over 800 thousand lives over 5 years.

In addition to being high impact, leading economists consistently rank these nutrition interventions as among the most cost-effective ways to save and improve lives around the world. Not only are many nutrition interventions relatively inexpensive to implement, they also have an extremely high return on investment, with every \$1 invested yielding up to \$35 in economic returns. These economic returns accrue to individuals and society, setting both up for future success. If the U.S. aims to

maximize the return on its investments across development and humanitarian assistance, nutrition is a smart place to start.

This year is the Nutrition for Growth Year of Action which is a year-long effort to build momentum to tackle malnutrition in the lead up to the December 2021 Nutrition for Growth Summit. The Year of Action provides a historic opportunity to transform the way the world tackles the global challenge of malnutrition and for the US Government to lead the way for donor governments and host country governments alike to make strong commitments for nutrition. The Government of Japan will host the third Nutrition for Growth summit, where donors and host country governments have an opportunity to make financial and policy commitments to address the global scourge of maternal and child malnutrition. Leaders from around the world have already pledged over \$3 billion to global nutrition over the next five years, but more resources are needed. The United States is well-positioned to lead the increasingly dire global fight against malnutrition at Nutrition for Growth, galvanizing action across the board. This leadership needs to start with a strong prioritization of nutrition in the FY22 budget.

An increase to \$300 million for this account will send a clear signal that the United States is committed to evidence-based nutrition-specific interventions that are critical to ensuring that children not only survive but thrive and that their mothers will live to see it. In a post-COVID world, addressing malnutrition will be a key pillar in building community resilience to future pandemics and improving global health security. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the United States can effectively lead this global effort.

Sincerely,

1,000 Days, an initiative of FHI Solutions  
Action Against Hunger  
Alliance to End Hunger  
Bread for the World  
CARE  
CORE Group  
Edesia  
Farm Journal Foundation  
Food for the Hungry  
Global Citizen  
Global Communities  
Grandmother Project - Change through Culture  
HarvestPlus  
Helen Keller International  
John Snow, Inc. (JSI)  
PATH  
Pathfinder International  
PCI, a Global Communities Partner  
People In Need  
RESULTS

RISE Institute