

May 16, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chair
State, Foreign Operations
U.S. HSenate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Vice Chair
State, Foreign Operations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chair Graham and Vice Chair Schatz

As you determine priorities for the Fiscal Year 2026 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, we strongly urge you to protect and strengthen the U.S. global health portfolio to ensure continued progress against preventable disease and death worldwide. Within this, we specifically urge you to provide no less than FY24 funding levels for Maternal and Child Health (MCH), Gavi, and Nutrition programs in the FY26 bill—while also recognizing that the need for these life-saving investments continues to grow.

We appreciate this Committee's long-standing commitment to supporting life-saving global child and maternal health and nutrition investments, and the annual reports to your committee show that they are very successful. We urge this Committee to maintain a sense of urgency in protecting these programs that build goodwill with partner countries and most importantly save the lives of moms and babies around the world. Adequate funding for the Nutrition and MCH accounts is critical to saving lives. The Trump Administration has called for smart foreign assistance that enhances America's safety and prosperity. These accounts help protect Americans from the spread of infectious diseases, build goodwill, advance our global health security, and foster better trade relationships with low- and middle-income countries. They also foster long-term stability, influence, and alliances at a fraction of the cost of military interventions – and without putting American lives at risk.

Since 2000, sustained investments have led to a 58% reduction in under-five child mortality and a 42% decrease in maternal mortality across USAID's 25 priority countries. While reductions in global mortality rates for women and children are two of the biggest success stories in international development, progress has slowed for more than a decade. Every year, approximately 5 million children under five die from mainly preventable and treatable diseases, with malnutrition as the underlying cause of roughly half of these deaths. Moreover, nearly 300,000 women die annually of preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. Sustained investments will drive progress against these preventable deaths and continue to build the United States' legacy and leadership in maternal and child health and nutrition.

The MCH account supports delivery of cost-effective, proven services in countries facing the highest burdens of maternal and child deaths. Over the past decade, US-funded programs have saved millions of lives by ensuring women can access health facilities for childbirth and providing necessary care for

newborns. A critical portion of the MCH account supports Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which remains an essential part of the global health landscape. Since 2000, Gavi has been instrumental in halving child mortality in lower-income countries through immunization efforts that have vaccinated more than 1.1 billion children and prevented more than 18.8 million future deaths. Robust support for Gavi is crucial to ensuring that children continue to receive necessary vaccinations and that lower-income countries have access to lifesaving immunization programs. Gavi plays a critical role in strengthening health security for the U.S. and the world.

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, during which targeted high-impact interventions can prevent the worst effects of severe malnutrition, including in conflict situations, and have an outsized impact on a child's development. Essential components of these programs include breastfeeding support, vitamin A and micronutrient supplementation, maternal education on nutrition, malnutrition prevention programming, screening to identify malnourished babies and children early, and malnutrition treatment programming including provision of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) for treating severely malnourished children. When delivered through comprehensive nutrition programs, these products have the power to save millions of children's lives each year. Nutrition is deeply entwined with economic stability, security, and resilience. Severely malnourished children are much more likely to have weakened immune systems and are at risk of permanent physical and mental stunting. In aggregate, malnutrition costs the world \$3.5 trillion in lost productivity and healthcare costs each year. According to UNICEF, at least 14 million children are now expected to face disruptions to nutrition support and services because of recent and anticipated global funding cuts.

To improve maternal and child health and nutrition, and continue to generate strong returns to the American people, we respectfully urge you to maintain FY 2024 funding levels and **provide at least \$165 million for the Nutrition account and \$915 million for the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) account, which includes funding for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, for FY 2026.**

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,

1,000 Days, an initiative of FHI 360
Achvok
Action Against Hunger
Alliance to End Hunger
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Public Health Association
Bread for the World
Campaign for Children
CARE
Centre d'Action pour le Développement Rural
Global Citizen
GlobalPartnersUnited

Helen Keller Intl
International Association for Dental, Oral, and
Craniofacial Research
Nama Wellness Community Centre (NAWEC)
PAI
RISE Institute
Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Network
Shot@Life
SPOON
TIP Global Health
World Vision