

**STATEMENT OF MARTIN S. RENDON
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BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND
RELATED PROGRAMS
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JUNE 2, 2017

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of nearly one million American supporters of UNICEF USA, I appreciate this opportunity to submit testimony to you regarding the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). I respectfully ask the Subcommittee to provide \$132.5 million as the U.S. Government's voluntary contribution to UNICEF under the Department of State for fiscal year 2018. This maintains the contribution of \$132.5 million to UNICEF provided by the U.S. Congress in the fiscal year 2017 Omnibus Appropriations bill. This also was the amount recommended in the fiscal year 2016 Omnibus Appropriations measure.

I commend the bipartisan leadership this Subcommittee has taken to champion programs that help children around the world.

The Administration's proposed fiscal year 2018 Budget Request includes many troubling reductions in international assistance. These reductions include the elimination of funding under the Department of State for voluntary contributions to international organizations, including a specific funding request for UNICEF. The fiscal year 2017 Omnibus Appropriations provided \$339 million for voluntary organizations, including \$132.5 million for UNICEF.

Since its creation in 1946, UNICEF has helped to save more children's lives than any humanitarian organization in the world. UNICEF staff work on the ground in developing and transitional countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. UNICEF supports prenatal care, child health and nutrition, clean water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and protecting children from violence, exploitation, and HIV/AIDS.

All of UNICEF's funding comes from voluntary contributions from governments, businesses, foundations, and individuals. In fact, 29 percent of UNICEF's total funding comes from non-governmental sources. The U.S. Government's support of UNICEF leverages private sector funding from corporations, foundations, and other donor governments. This structure is unique among UN agencies.

UNICEF works with the private sector to achieve change by harnessing their business power. For example, UNICEF is one of the largest buyers of supplies for children – in 2015 procuring over \$3.4 billion in supplies and services, including \$500 million from U.S.-based suppliers.

As an organization completely funded by voluntary contributions, UNICEF makes sure that its operations are efficient and focused on results where they matter – for vulnerable children around the world. More than 90 per cent of UNICEF’s funds support program activities.

Thanks to strong support from the U.S. Congress for UNICEF and for child survival, the number of children dying before age five has dropped by more than half since 1990, from an estimated 12.7 million deaths per year in 1990 to 5.9 million currently. We saw progress even in poorer countries: 24 out of 81 low- and lower-middle income countries cut under-five mortality rates by two thirds or more from 1990 to 2015.

We believe that it is possible to end preventable child deaths globally in a generation, with continued investment in cost-effective, coordinated interventions for children and mothers. UNICEF’s efforts around the world implement the compassion of the American people by helping children and families. That is why UNICEF enjoys incredible backing from Americans for its mission of child survival and development, from children participating in “Trick or Treat for UNICEF” and “Kid Power,” to major corporations donating money and products. That private support is critical to UNICEF’s success in saving children’s lives from measles and cholera, providing access to clean water, helping children stay in school, and thwarting child traffickers trying to exploit vulnerable children.

UNICEF USA is also proud of its partnerships with the private sector to save children’s lives. Among many examples:

- For 20 years, American Airlines has supported UNICEF’s Change for Good program, raising more than \$10 million in donations of foreign and domestic currency since 1994. Last year American Airlines helped fund nutrition and child health in Haiti, earthquake relief in Nepal, and Ebola response in West Africa.
- The GE Foundation donated \$1.1 million to support innovations in maternal and child health in East Africa, such as technology that enables community health workers to track maternal and child health care.
- The Walt Disney Company provided \$3.8 million through *StarWars: Force for Change* for UNICEF Innovation Labs and Programs, which have helped 1.5 million children in more than a dozen countries.

The U.S. Government’s longstanding and generous support of UNICEF allows it to leverage private sector funding and work with U.S. Government programs to make a real difference in saving children’s lives.

For more than 50 years, UNICEF has been a world leader in immunizations, and is the world’s largest provider of vaccines for developing countries. In 2015, UNICEF procured 2.8 billion doses of vaccines for 95 countries, protecting 45 percent of the world’s children under age 5 from deadly diseases. UNICEF is a major partner with the United States in fighting vaccine-preventable diseases, including polio and measles. UNICEF is responsible for procuring vaccines for Gavi, and also buys all vaccines and related items for global campaigns not covered by Gavi. UNICEF’s market power helped it cut in half the cost of the pentavalent vaccine that will protect tens of millions of children from potentially deadly infections caused by diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, hepatitis B and Haemophilus influenza type b. In addition, UNICEF works in-country to ensure that vaccines reach even the poorest children and communities.

Malaria remains a major threat to children. UNICEF is a founding member of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership to support malaria treatment and research, and expand prevention measures such as long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets. UNICEF is one of the largest buyers of mosquito nets in the world, delivering more than 22.3 million bed nets to 30 countries in 2015.

Malnutrition contributes to nearly half of all child deaths, and causes stunting that affects a child's physical and cognitive development. We know that therapeutic foods can help to bring a child back from the verge of starvation. In 2015, UNICEF provided nearly 35,000 metric tons of therapeutic foods to treat 2.9 million severely malnourished children around the world.

Kiwanis International, with its more than 600,000 members, partners with UNICEF for *The Eliminate Project*, the current Kiwanis global campaign to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus (MNT). This project will protect more than 200 million women and their newborn children from the deadly disease. UNICEF also continues its work with Kiwanis to eliminate iodine deficiency. This partnership has protected 84 million newborns from brain damage caused by iodine deficiency.

Across the globe, UNICEF helped reach more than 70 million people with water and sanitation (WASH) interventions in 2015, including more than 45 million people in humanitarian crises. UNICEF provided direct support for improving WASH facilities and programs in nearly 26,000 schools globally.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative, a partnership led by UNICEF, Rotary International, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and others, has helped reduce polio cases by more than 99 percent since 1988. UNICEF and its partners have immunized more than 2.5 billion children by working with over 200 countries and 20 million volunteers. This is incredible progress and the end of polio is within reach – but we can't stop now. UNICEF and its partners continue to support massive immunization campaigns to eradicate once and for all this terrible disease. In addition, UNICEF engages with manufacturers to maximize availability and manufacturing capacity, and keeps polio vaccine prices as low as possible.

Education is a critical need for children's futures, especially for girls: education helps protect girls from exploitation, child marriage, and abuse. An estimated 57 million children of primary school age are out of school globally, and another 63 million adolescents between the ages of 12 to 15 years are not able to receive an education. UNICEF works with countries to identify children out of school, why they are out of school, and what strategies will help these children get into school. In 2015, UNICEF provided learning materials for 14.9 million children and teaching materials for more than 348,000 classrooms.

Birth registration is critically important to ensure that children have access to social services and education. In 2015, more than 9.7 million births were registered in 54 countries with support from UNICEF. In addition, UNICEF supported advocacy efforts aimed at strengthening national plans or strategies to end child marriage in 30 countries.

UNICEF's established presence in developing countries supported by the U.S. Government contribution makes it a critical partner for the U.S. Government in responses to major crises. In 2015, UNICEF and its partners assisted in 310 humanitarian situations across 102 countries and reached millions of vulnerable children and their caregivers. UNICEF helped 25.5 million people in crises to access safe drinking water; delivered 23 million measles vaccinations to

children; provided 7.5 million children aged 3 to 18 with access to formal or non-formal basic education; treated 2 million young children for severe acute malnutrition; and provided important psychosocial support to 3.1 million children. Through the support of the U.S. Government contribution to UNICEF, UNICEF is on the front line during health emergencies like Ebola, Zika and measles, while working in nations in crisis like Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Somalia, and Nigeria.

Through innovative procurement, market strategies and partnerships, UNICEF drove down supply prices, resulting in \$1 billion in savings in three years. In 2015 alone, reduced prices resulted in savings of \$422 million, which enabled UNICEF to buy \$346 million more in supplies. UNICEF ranked third out of 46 organizations worldwide in the 2016 Aid Transparency Index. UNICEF is committed to achieving value for the dollar, and promoting sustainability and security in supply chains to save children.

UNICEF's ability to partner with the U.S. Government, and with important nonprofit partners like Kiwanis, Rotary, the American Red Cross, and Gavi, depends on a strong U.S. contribution to UNICEF, as well as maintaining U.S. support for its bilateral child health programs. In this regard, UNICEF USA supports the funding requested by our partners for Iodine Deficiency Disorders, Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus, Polio Eradication, and Gavi. Because of the importance of U.S. child survival and health programs, our organization also asks the U.S. Congress to sustain funding for the Maternal and Child Health Account and for nutrition in fiscal year 2018. UNICEF USA is concerned about the proposed cuts to international assistance in the Administration's Budget Request for fiscal year 2018, particularly the reductions that would be made to the Maternal and Child Health Account. We respectfully encourage the Subcommittee to continue its strong record of support for this account.

Annual government contributions to UNICEF's regular resources budget constitute the single most important funding source for UNICEF worldwide. The U.S. Government's voluntary contribution to UNICEF's regular resources provides the foundation for UNICEF's work to save children's lives and improve their futures. Resources provided by this Subcommittee are critical to UNICEF's ability to help the United States in international humanitarian crises, conflict areas, and emerging threats to the well-being of children.

Mr. Chairman, this Subcommittee has long been a champion for the well-being of the world's children, ensuring that children are a priority of U.S. foreign assistance funding. American advocates of UNICEF's work for the world's children salute the bipartisan support this Subcommittee has provided for child survival and for UNICEF. We thank you for working to put children first.

We believe that UNICEF is an indispensable partner of the United States on initiatives to save lives and protect vulnerable children around the world. We cannot rest on our past successes. Unfortunately, 5.9 million children under five still die every year, mostly from preventable causes; half of those deaths occur in the first week after birth. We believe that number should be zero. A strong commitment from the United States will strengthen UNICEF's capacity to meet the needs of vulnerable children, in partnership with Americans who care about children everywhere.

I respectfully ask the Subcommittee to provide \$132.5 million for UNICEF's regular resources for fiscal year 2018.