

**STATEMENT OF LYNN STRATFORD
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UNITED STATES FUND FOR UNICEF**

**BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND
RELATED PROGRAMS
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

MARCH 3, 2015

Madam Chairwoman and members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of nearly one million American supporters of the United States Fund for UNICEF, I appreciate this opportunity to testify before you regarding the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). I respectfully ask the Subcommittee to provide at least \$132 million as the U.S. Government's voluntary contribution to UNICEF under the International Organizations and Programs Account for fiscal year 2016. This maintains the contribution of \$132 million to UNICEF provided by the U.S. Congress in the Omnibus Appropriations for fiscal year 2015. This also is the amount recommended for UNICEF in the Budget Request for fiscal year 2016.

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

Since its creation in 1946, UNICEF has saved 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, 30 percent of UNICEF's total funding comes from non-government sources.

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 to 6.3 million today. Almost one-third of the 50 least-developed countries have reduced child mortality rates by 40 percent or more since 1990 – proof that progress for children is possible even in poor countries.

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,” 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.

The U.S. Fund for UNICEF is also proud of its partnerships with the private sector to save children’s lives. Among many examples:

- American Airlines supports UNICEF’s Change for Good program, raising \$1.05 million in donations of foreign and domestic currency to fund HIV/AIDS programs, maternal and neonatal health in Bolivia, and emergency relief and recovery following Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.
- UPS provided more than \$1 million of grant funding, logistical expertise and in-kind assistance, and delivered 20,000 winter clothing kits to Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Iraq to help children survive the winter.
- This year, Disney provided more than \$3.4 million in support of UNICEF’s innovative work and programming for children.

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.

UNICEF procures and supplies over 5,000 products to address the needs of children. In 2013, UNICEF procured \$2.84 billion worth of supplies and services from all over the world, ensuring high quality and good value through fair and open procurement. UNICEF’s Supply Division has improved transparency around the prices it pays for strategic essential supplies, including vaccines, RUTF, and bed nets. The publishing of prices supports governments and partners in making more informed decisions about procurement.

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 2013, UNICEF supplied vaccines worth nearly \$1.3 billion, providing 2.8 billion doses of vaccines for 100 countries, including polio eradication, elimination of neonatal and maternal tetanus, and measles control. UNICEF procures vaccines for Gavi; and also buys all vaccines and related items for global campaigns not covered by Gavi. 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 one of the largest buyers of mosquito nets in the world, delivering more than 29 million bed nets to 38 countries in 2013.

Globally, 161 million under-five year olds suffered from stunting due to malnutrition in 2013, and malnutrition contributes to up to half of all child deaths. We know that therapeutic foods can help to bring a child back from the verge of starvation. In 2013, UNICEF provided 34,000 tons of ready-to-eat therapeutic foods (RUTF), and 509 million Vitamin A capsules to prevent Vitamin A deficiency in 50 countries.

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.

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 58 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. For example, in Bolivia's silver-mining region, many children aged 5 to 14 work in mining rather than attend school. At the Cerro Rico mines in Potosí, UNICEF supports a community school that not only provides children an education, but also keeps them from being put to work in the mines, provides basic hygiene instruction and nutritional support, and materials for the development of artistic talents in music and drawing.

UNICEF's established presence in developing countries makes it a critical partner for the U.S. Government in responses to major crises. In 2013, UNICEF responded to 289 emergencies in 83 countries.

For example, UNICEF provides health, nutrition, water/sanitation, and child protection interventions for hundreds of thousands of children affected by the violence in Syria, both within Syria and for refugees in surrounding countries. UNICEF provided 16.5 million people with safe and clean drinking water, and hygiene supplies were given to 850,000 refugees and displaced persons. In addition, 112,000 children received access to sanitation in their schools. In a region that had not seen polio for nearly a decade, a polio outbreak led UNICEF and partners to mount a massive response, vaccinating more than 20 million children in Syria and neighboring countries. For UNICEF, saving the lives of those children is not enough; UNICEF wants to protect their futures as well. UNICEF is working to ensure that the children of Syria have safe education; protection from exploitation, abuse, and violence; psychological care and support; and opportunities for social cohesion and stability in a volatile region.

Because of its decades-long presence in West Africa, UNICEF is a leading partner for the United States in the battle against the Ebola epidemic. By the end of last year, UNICEF had delivered its largest ever supply and logistical response in an emergency: around 4,000 metric tons of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other Ebola-related supplies, including home hygiene and hand-washing kits. In addition to procuring health equipment and supplies, UNICEF works with faith groups in Liberia and Sierra Leone to provide support to children and families affected by Ebola, and to promote safe burial practices to stem the outbreak. With USAID's strong support, UNICEF is helping to restart education for Ebola-affected children in Liberia.

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, the U.S. Fund for UNICEF supports the funding requested by our partners for Iodine Deficiency Disorders, 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 provide \$850 million for the Maternal and Child Health Account and \$200 million for nutrition in fiscal year 2016.

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.

Madam Chairwoman, 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, 6.3 million children under five still die every year, mostly from preventable causes; half of those deaths occur in the first week after birth. Put another way, a child is dying every five seconds. 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 million under the International Organizations and Program Account for UNICEF's regular resources for fiscal year 2016.