



## U.S. Foreign Assistance: Saving Lives and Building a Safer World for All

As a global humanitarian and development organization working in more than 90 countries around the world, CARE knows firsthand how U.S. foreign assistance programs are critical to saving millions of lives of each year, addressing the root causes of poverty, increasing independence and building stronger, more resilient societies.

Foreign assistance is also an important tool for protecting our own peace and prosperity and promoting global stability. CARE knows: It's the right thing to do and the smart thing to do. However, the Trump administration continues to propose drastic and disproportionate cuts to foreign assistance at a time when these investments are needed more than ever.

The foreign assistance budget comprises roughly one percent of the federal budget – just one cent of every budget dollar – and delivers immeasurable benefits by alleviating suffering and decreasing poverty to create a more prosperous and safe world for everyone. Foreign assistance embodies the generosity and human dignity that Americans believe in. *It's a hand up, not a handout.*

CARE has witnessed the profound difference foreign assistance makes, especially in the lives of women and girls. Over the past six decades, global maternal and child mortality have dropped sharply, literacy rates have increased and economic opportunities have expanded. *We know this investment is worth the penny.* Cuts to these programs will put lives at risk.

### The Problem:

The world is currently facing the biggest refugee crisis in modern history with more than 65 million people displaced from their homes and countries. Additionally, over 30 million

people are at risk of famine conditions in South Sudan, Yemen, Nigeria and Somalia; and new crises are emerging in the Horn of Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo and across the Sahel. Violent conflicts continue to emerge and climate-related disasters are more frequent and more destructive. Now is not the time for the U.S. to pull back from its leadership role in the global community.

While tremendous progress has been made in recent decades, billions of people still live in extreme poverty and millions die each year from entirely preventable causes. All of these factors leave entire nations trapped in poverty and can create desperate, insecure and potentially volatile situations. Without robust investments from the U.S., these statistics will worsen, lives will be lost and America will abdicate its role as a global leader.

Proposed cuts from the administration would strip U.S. development and diplomacy programs back to pre- 9-11 levels. Congress knows that the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) must keep pace with the challenges we face overseas. However, Congress is under a new two-year budget deal that has slated reductions for foreign assistance programs. While Congress has the ability to replace this funding and make foreign assistance whole in Fiscal Year 2019, they must have the political will to do so!

For CARE and other humanitarian organizations, cuts would mean the end of many emergency relief and development programs that have helped to *cut global poverty in half since 2000*. Reducing the funding that's helped achieve these gains would put millions of lives at stake and would be in direct opposition to America's best interests and values.

### The Solution:

Challenges facing America and the world today require American leadership that includes smart investments in effective and lifesaving U.S. foreign assistance. In order to address current crises and prevent future ones, robust funding for critical U.S. foreign assistance programs is essential.

Since 1977, increases to U.S. defense spending have generally been supported by increases to foreign assistance programs. This is because lifesaving foreign assistance provides a national security dividend. CARE knows, investments in development and humanitarian programs save lives and ultimately keep us all safer. Our nation's top generals and admirals are the first to remind us that military power alone cannot keep us safe or make the world more peaceful. U.S. foreign assistance provides hope and sustainable solutions during the world's darkest times. Most importantly, the U.S. leads globally by saving lives and by providing the tools for people to sustainably lift themselves out of poverty. By continuing to improve the effectiveness,



accountability and transparency of U.S. foreign assistance, we can combat poverty and get assistance quickly to those who need it most.

Diplomatic and development programs will continue to represent the best investment we can make when it comes to saving lives, advancing economic prosperity and creating a safer world for us all. In extraordinary times, when U.S. leadership is needed most and lives are on the line, America shouldn't step aside. America must step up.

### Next Steps:

#### CARE advocates to:

Support a strong foreign assistance budget of \$60 billion in Fiscal Year 2019 – roughly the same level that was provided in Fiscal Year 2017. CARE is deeply concerned by proposals and budget decisions that could leave lifesaving programs vulnerable to cuts.

Congress must protect and fully fund the foreign assistance budget in order to save lives, promote peace and stability and provide a sustainable path toward self-sufficiency for families and communities around the world. CARE calls on Congress to oppose any cuts to U.S. foreign assistance programs.



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