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NEWS RELEASE

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Key Programs for Children Remain Underfunded in 2007 Budget While 30,000 Children Die Each Day

ARLINGTON , VA - In the FY 07 joint continuing resolution filed by the U.S. Congress on January 30, 2007, key programs in child health and survival will see decreased or stagnant levels of funding as compared with 2006 appropriations. FY 07 appropriations to bilateral child and maternal health programs will equal 2006 levels of \$356.4 million. This continues a trend of stagnant funding for global child health and survival since 1997. These programs are critical for saving the nearly 11 million children under-five who continue to die each year (about 30,000 each day) – about three-quarters from preventable causes.

While diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria have received welcome Presidential attention and Congressional funding, the major killers of young children have not. Pneumonia, which is treatable with a course of inexpensive antibiotics, kills over 2 million children each year – more than AIDS, malaria and measles combined. Diarrhea claims another 2 million children who might have been saved with a simple oral rehydration solution. Inexpensive supplements of Vitamin A and zinc can reduce micronutrient deficiency, an important underlying cause of child mortality.

Research shows that mothers are key to ensuring child health and survival, yet programs for them are also in jeopardy. Many women and children do not survive beyond the initial hours and days after childbirth. Four million newborns die within their first 28 days from preventable or manageable causes like tetanus, birth asphyxia, infections, and low birthweight. Simple, low-cost interventions, such as immunizations, breastfeeding, treatment of infections, and warming and drying the newborn can save most of these lives. In addition to the 530,000 women who die in childbirth, millions more suffer complications in pregnancy or delivery that lead to debilitating injuries such as obstetric fistula. Prenatal care, skilled midwifery care during and after delivery, and access to quality emergency obstetrical care can save these lives and prevent many injuries that would otherwise occur.

David Oot, Director of Health at Save the Children and Chair of the US Coalition for Child Survival, says "the tragedy is that we know that these programs work - and can save lives. But without additional resources, many of these mothers, newborns, and children will continue to die needlessly. We know that Americans don't want to see that happen, and for that reason we are asking Congress to dramatically increase funding for these programs."

According to Tom Davis, Chair of the CORE Board of Directors, "Many successful interventions to save children's lives cost less than one dollar a person. Making this type of investment could prevent as many as 6 million children from dying. The U.S. has been a leader in developing preventive and curative child health interventions, and Americans usually rate alleviating hunger/disease and child survival as their top reasons for giving foreign aid. This is not the time to reduce child health funding, but rather to increase it to avert needless deaths."

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The US Coalition for Child Survival is a broad collaboration of organizations and individuals united to strengthen United States and global commitment to improve the health and survival of children in developing countries. The Coalition represents corporations, universities, private voluntary organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based organizations, and foundations. For more information, see www.child-survival.org.

Save the Children is the leading independent organization creating real and lasting change for children in need in the United States and around the world. It is a member of the International Save the Children Alliance, comprising 27 national Save the Children organizations working in more than 100 countries to ensure the well-being of children. Find out more at www.savethechildren.org.

The CORE Group, a membership association of international NGOs, promotes and improves the health and well-being of children and women in developing countries through collaborative NGO action and learning. Visit www.coregroup.org to learn more about CORE's work to save children and women worldwide.

