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**BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON MULTILATERAL INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS, AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC, ENERGY, AND
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**“GLOBAL PHILANTHROPY AND REMITTANCES AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT”
MAY 3, 2017**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of nearly one million American supporters of UNICEF USA, thank you for the opportunity to highlight the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the significance of diaspora philanthropy in global development.

The role of diasporas in philanthropy and global development cannot be overstated. While the notion of diasporas is not new, their role in addressing global development is a timely and growing phenomenon that is helping to address significant poverty challenges, particularly in the Global South.

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. 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 USA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that supports UNICEF’s work through fundraising, advocacy and education in the United States. Together, we are working toward the day when no children die from preventable causes and every child has a safe and healthy childhood. UNICEF’s funding comes from voluntary contributions from governments, businesses, foundations, and individuals. UNICEF USA receives incredible backing from the American people for our 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, and diasporas donating to support UNICEF’s work in their ancestral homelands.

The U.S. Government’s longstanding and generous support for UNICEF also allows us to leverage private sector funding from corporations, foundations, and other donor governments and to work with U.S. Government programs to make a real difference in saving children’s lives. Today, 29 percent of UNICEF’s total funding comes from non-governmental sources, including individuals, businesses, organizations and diaspora communities.

This unique public-private philanthropic approach to our funding is critical to UNICEF’s success in helping to save children’s lives. For that reason, UNICEF makes sure its operations are efficient and focused on results where they matter – for vulnerable children around the world. 90 per cent of UNICEF USA’s funds directly support UNICEF’s program activities.

Thanks to this strong support for UNICEF and 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.

Diaspora Philanthropy in the United States

The United States is home to at least 62 million members of the global diaspora, making it the largest diaspora population in the world.¹ This demographic includes Americans of all backgrounds, from first-generation immigrants to the descendants of migrants who arrived over the past two hundred years.

Given UNICEF's presence around the world and its wide range of programming, UNICEF USA has been fortunate to receive the support of diasporas for decades. We understand and value the critical role of diasporas in philanthropy, including disaster response, remittances, fundraising campaigns, community engagement, and development campaigns.

We believe diaspora philanthropy and giving exists for these communities on an ongoing basis, in daily life, disaster response and long-term development. Whether it is with diaspora organizations fundraising for an emergency or a development goal, diaspora communities in the United States have proven to be consistent responders, donors and supporters for children and communities around the world.

The diaspora experience is not new nor is it limited to a specific group of people.² The term "diaspora" refers to people who are emigrants and their descendants, who live outside the country of their birth or ancestry, either on a temporary or permanent basis, but maintain affective and material ties to their countries of origin.³

While it has existed for centuries, the role of United States based diasporas in global development is growing and having a direct impact on global development goals. Governments, organizations and even local municipalities recognize this and are partnering with diasporas for development. For instance, the U.S. Government has developed various policies and initiatives aimed at partnering with diasporas, including the International diaspora Engagement Alliance, the African Diaspora Marketplace competition, the Global Diaspora Forum, and the other public-private partnerships aimed at diaspora investment, entrepreneurship, humanitarian response and capacity building.

Diaspora Philanthropy and Global Development

For diasporas, global development is a personal reality. It directly affects their lives, both here and abroad. As a result, diasporas closely follow the needs of communities they left behind. This is especially true for diasporas from the Global South, where systemic poverty persists and access to opportunity, capital or growth may be limited.

Whether it's natural or man-made disasters, or systemic development challenges, diasporas are often among the first responders. They provide financial, humanitarian, and social support to affected

¹ USAID (2016), USAID and Diaspora: Partners in Development. Washington, D.C.: USAID. Accessed April 28, 2017. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/15396/usaid_diaspora16_web_spreadv3.pdf.

² Note from the author: The diaspora is a centuries-old, universal human experience, with the earliest recorded historical movements of Jewish, Arab, Asian and African populations, including the transatlantic slave trade where Africans were forcibly uprooted and migrated to the West. More recently, the 19th and early 20th century migration patterns to the United States included German, Polish, Italian, and Irish migrants, followed by successive post-colonization migration waves from Asia and Africa during the mid-20th century.

³ International Organization for Migration (2013). Diasporas and Development: Bridging Societies and States, Diaspora Ministerial Conference, International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG), Geneva, Switzerland, June 18-19 2013. Geneva, Switzerland: International Organization for Migration.

communities. As humanitarian crises have become more frequent, reoccurring and predictable, diasporas have also become more responsive and prepared to provide humanitarian and philanthropic support during those sudden times of need. These efforts include fundraising campaigns, delivery of medical materials and supplies, emergency food assistance, humanitarian volunteering, and development campaign initiatives.

UNICEF USA believes in partnerships and works with diasporas for disaster response and long-term development. For example, after the 2010 Haiti earthquake, Haitian-Americans mobilized to raise funds for UNICEF's post-earthquake recovery programming. UNICEF USA worked with communities and organizations with sizable Haitian-American membership, such as The Links, the Mass Emergency Relief for Haiti and the SEIU 1199. Together, these diaspora efforts with UNICEF USA resulted in over \$1 million being raised by diasporas for UNICEF Haiti's post-earthquake recovery programming. This is in addition to the total amount that was raised by all of our supporters.

When Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines in 2013, UNICEF USA worked with the Filipino diaspora to raise funds and mobilize emergency resources. Within a matter of days, diaspora organizations, such as the Filipino Community in America and the Philippine Nurses Association of America helped to raise over \$300,000 in funding for our emergency response, as part of the larger \$21 million that was raised from individuals, communities and other donors.

Another diaspora partnership UNICEF USA continues to cultivate is with the Somali-American community. The United States is home to one of the largest Somali diaspora populations in the world. These communities remain deeply connected and invested in supporting humanitarian and development efforts inside Somalia. Of the \$1.3 billion dollars in diaspora remittances sent to Somalia every year, approximately \$254 million comes from the Somali-American community.⁴

Just as we are seeing now, Somalia's devastating 2011 famine prompted diasporas around the world to respond to the crisis. When famine struck, it was the remittances from Somali-Americans that served as a major lifeline. UNICEF worked directly with Somali diaspora communities in the United States, raising awareness and support, to respond to the devastating famine.

In development, diasporas provide post-conflict reconstruction support, through diaspora investments, entrepreneurship, knowledge transfer and capacity building. More recently, UNICEF Jamaica supported a special three-month effort by our corporate partner, Western Union, to raise funds in the diaspora for an initiative to boost school attendance in rural Western Jamaica. Together, these efforts all help to solidify diasporas as critical partners in global development and philanthropy.

Diaspora Remittances

Within the humanitarian and development framework, remittances are one of the most recognizable forms of diaspora philanthropy but they are also the tip of the diaspora philanthropic iceberg. The diasporas' ability to leverage capital, networks, and resources exist far beyond remittances and governments, organizations and businesses should consider develop more frameworks for diaspora partnerships in philanthropy.

⁴ Keeping the Lifeline Open: Remittances and Markets in Somalia. Washington, D.C.: Oxfam International, 2013. Accessed April 28, 2017. <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/static/media/files/somalia-remittance-report-web.pdf>

For purposes of this topic, personal remittances are defined as transfers in cash or in kind made or received by resident households to or from nonresident households.⁵ They are most often sent to cover the costs for basic necessities, such as rent, clothing, and food, or for investments in human capital, such as education and small businesses.

In its recent Global Philanthropy Report, the Hudson Institute found diasporas in the United States sent over \$108 billion in remittances to 175 countries around the world.⁶ Given the sheer size and frequency of global remittances, recipient countries, such as Mexico, India and the Philippines, have adopted national policies designed to incentivize diaspora giving. Despite the growing efforts to maximize the impact of remittances, significant barriers still exist, including the lack of affordable, formal sending channels, limited reach and exorbitantly high transmission costs. While UNICEF does not offer programming directly related to diaspora remittances, the organization has launched partnership opportunities, campaigns and appeals aimed at diaspora giving for humanitarian and development needs of children around the world.

UNICEF USA is proud to work with diasporas and we will continue to deepen our partnerships on behalf of children around the world. We believe all diaspora communities are critical stakeholders for global development, through philanthropy, investments, capacity building and exchange, and look forward to working with them and others as we continue to stand up for children everywhere.

⁵ Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016, Third Edition. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2016. Accessed April 28, 2017. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/23743>.

⁶ The Index of Global Philanthropy and Remittances 2016. Washington, D.C.: Hudson Institute, 2016. Accessed April 28, 2017. <https://www.hudson.org/research/13314-index-of-global-philanthropy-and-remittances-2016>.