

**STATEMENT OF ANTHONY PANTALEONI
CHAIR OF THE BOARD**

UNITED STATES FUND FOR UNICEF

**SUBMITTED TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS,
AND RELATED PROGRAMS**

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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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 present testimony regarding the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). I respectfully ask the Subcommittee to provide at least \$140 million as the U.S. Government's voluntary contribution to UNICEF for Fiscal Year 2011.

I am Chair of the Board of the U.S. Fund for UNICEF, a U.S. NGO that supports UNICEF's work. But UNICEF has always been a part of my life. My mother Helenka Pantaleoni founded the original U.S. Committee for UNICEF back in 1947, and led the organization as president for 25 years. Now my daughter, Téa Leoni, serves on the board with me as well.

Let me thank the Subcommittee for supporting \$132.25 million as the U.S. Government's contribution to UNICEF for Fiscal Year 2010. I commend the bipartisan leadership of this Subcommittee for championing programs that help children around the world.

In strong partnership with the U.S. Government, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and protecting children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. As you know, UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments, and receives no funding through assessed contributions to the United Nations.

Thanks to strong support from the U.S. Congress for UNICEF and for child survival, the number of kids dying before age 5 from preventable causes has dropped by more than half since 1960, from 20 million deaths to 8.8 million in 2009. Almost one-third of the 50 least developed countries have reduced child mortality rates by 40 per cent or more since 1990 – proof that

progress for children is possible even in poor countries, if political will, sound strategies, and adequate funding are in place.

UNICEF's efforts around the world support American compassion and American interests by helping children and families:

- For more than 50 years, UNICEF has been a world leader in immunization. In 2008, UNICEF distributed more than 2.6 billion doses of vaccines worth \$633 million, reaching 56 percent of the world's children. In addition, UNICEF provided more than 480 million auto-disable syringes, the safest way to administer vaccines.
- UNICEF partners with governments to save children's lives by scaling up access to high-impact health interventions. For example, in Mozambique, UNICEF helped implement Child Health Weeks to deliver a package of basic child health services to remote communities. These campaigns helped Mozambique cut child mortality rates by 10 percent over the past five years.
- Malnutrition accounts for up to a third of all child deaths, but we know that ready-to-use therapeutic foods like Plumpy'nut® are "miracle" foods that can quickly bring a child back from the verge of starvation. Last year UNICEF provided 11,000 tons of such foods, saving thousands of lives.
- UNICEF remains one of the world's largest buyers of long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets that help protect children and infants in malaria-endemic countries, supplying 19 million bed nets in 48 countries in 2008.
- A global effort led by UNICEF and Kiwanis International, with support from the U.S. Agency for International Development, has increased household use of iodized salt from 20

percent to 70 percent, protecting 84 million newborns from brain damage caused by iodine deficiency disorders, and helping 34 countries achieve universal salt iodization.

- Spearheaded by UNICEF, Rotary International, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and others, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative helped reduce polio cases by more than 99 percent over the past two decades, from more than 350,000 cases in 1988 to an estimated 1,500 in 2009.
- UNICEF is a world leader in promoting basic education, particularly for girls, even during conflict and after disasters. In 2008, UNICEF provided educational materials to 43 countries, and supported the construction or rebuilding of child-friendly schools in 30 countries.

But our job is far from complete – nearly nine million young children still die every year, more than 24,000 each day, from preventable causes. UNICEF is an organization that is critical for scaling up country-led health programs to make dramatic progress in cutting child, newborn, and maternal mortality rates. It is a practical reality that countries are reluctant to become involved in these programs without the involvement of UNICEF and its expertise.

UNICEF's global reach, long-term presence in poor countries, and pre-positioned stocks around the world allow the agency to play a critical role as a U.S. partner in humanitarian crises. Nowhere is this more evident than in Haiti. Like most Americans, I was shocked at the level of devastation and loss of life caused by the recent earthquake. I am proud to say that with strong U.S. support, including more than \$55 million in contributions from the American public, UNICEF is a leader for the humanitarian response in Haiti, providing water and sanitation, child protection, and nutrition. UNICEF is helping to ensure that children in Haiti have what they need to be healthy, to be protected, to learn, grow, and play.

Building on its 60 years of experience, UNICEF is committed to address the health, education, and protection issues that prevent children from living life to the fullest. UNICEF recognizes that helping children is a team effort, and UNICEF's innovative alliances with organizations like Kiwanis International (on salt iodization) and Rotary International (on polio) are ongoing success stories. In this regard, the U.S. Fund for UNICEF supports the funding requests for Iodine Deficiency Disorder (\$2 million), and Polio Eradication (\$32 million). In addition, because of the importance of U.S. child survival and health programs, our organization also supports the requests for increasing funds for the Child Survival and Maternal Health subaccount advocated by the U.S. Coalition for Child Survival and others.

As an organization completely funded by voluntary contributions, UNICEF must ensure that its operations are efficient and focused on results. UNICEF's results-oriented budget mechanism includes key performance targets and indicators to measure results for specific programs. In 2008, 93 percent of UNICEF's income went directly for programs to help children, limiting administrative costs to seven percent.

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 believe that UNICEF is an indispensable partner of the United States on initiatives to save lives and protect vulnerable children around the world.

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. We respectfully ask the Subcommittee to provide \$140 million for UNICEF's regular resources for Fiscal Year 2011.