

## Carolyn Miles, President and CEO

### *Save the Children*

#### **US Foreign Assistance and Childhood**

The first steps of a great journey are often the most important – and it's no different when a child is born. What they face in childhood will impact their entire lives, and it's why we believe in reaching them early.

Foreign aid has made a remarkable difference in the lives of the world's poorest children, who are especially vulnerable to a range of hardships, from HIV/AIDS and malnutrition to child labor and trafficking. It's a heartbreaking problem that I have encountered over and over in my travels – and one that we are determined to help children and families overcome.

That's why Save the Children is proud to support the U.S. Government's Action Plan on Children in Adversity (APCA), a coordinated, whole-of-government plan to help kids around the globe who are facing these challenges—something that aligns seamlessly with Save the Children's existing efforts in the critical areas of early childhood care and nutrition, strengthening families and protection from violence and exploitation. We are excited to be a part of this collaboration between U.S. Government agencies and other NGOs, which will direct important resources to meet the critical needs of children and their families.

The Action Plan on Children in Adversity focuses on three main objectives that can be game-changers in the lives of children:

#### *1. Build strong beginnings*

By supporting children and families in those first months and years, the U.S. Government is helping kids not just survive, but thrive. This has been a hallmark of Save the Children's work for decades—making sure that children, no matter where they are born, have the best chance possible for a healthy and happy life.

Our Essential Package program, which we're implementing in Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi, trains the caregivers of children under the age of 8, linking them with basic services and providing important messages on child development. This helps families care for their children and provide the tools they need to grow, in the best environment possible: the home.

Whether it's our newborn health programs in Africa, our breastfeeding trainings in Asia, or our livelihoods work with displaced families living in conflict, we know that a strong start leads to a stronger future. APCA recognizes the importance of a helping kids get off on the right foot by focusing on comprehensive programs that help them develop.

#### *2. Put family care first*

Those of us working for children understand that caring, empowered families are the best champions for children—which is why APCA puts families first. We believe in enabling families to provide the care these children need – keeping them out of institutions and in home environments, where they can receive the care and attention every child deserves. In Georgia, Save the Children works to reintegrate

and destigmatize street children. In Azerbaijan, we are part of programs that establish child and family support centers to provide psychosocial support and counseling. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, with help from USAID, Save the Children is addressing the needs of separated families and linking the most vulnerable to basic services.

### *3. Protect children*

Lastly, APCA aims to protect children from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect. In Myanmar, Save the Children is working with more than 30 civil society organizations to protect children from abuse and exploitation, an effort which has touched more than 8,000 children. In Indonesia, Save the Children and its partners have removed thousands of children from exploitative labor. In Afghanistan, we are training community leaders, caregivers, and children themselves on safety and child protection. This week, we launched our report on the very real impact urbanization in Africa is having on the continent's children ([link](#)). The challenges facing children in the twentieth century are complex and widespread—and they require a comprehensive, coordinated approach to making a safe world for kids.

It is efforts like these—and so many others across Save the Children's offices in nearly 120 countries and with partners around the world—that make participation in the APCA so important: when we work together, we can do even more to meet the vast need.

Save the Children looks forward to the opportunity to be a key player in the implementation of the APCA so that, together, we can offer children all over the world hope for a better future.



*Carolyn S. Miles is President and Chief Executive Officer of Save the Children, the leading independent organization creating lasting change in the lives of more than 70 million children in need in the United States and 120 countries around the world.*

*Carolyn became the first woman to head Save the Children in September 2011, after joining the organization in 1998 and serving as its Chief Operating Officer for the past seven years. She has traveled to Save the Children's field operations in nearly 50 countries, and during her tenure as COO, Save the Children doubled the number of children it reaches with food, educational and other programs, and helped grow the organization's budget — 90 percent of which goes directly to programs serving children— from \$140 million to more than \$550 million.*