



## **Dr. Carolyn Woo, President**

### *Catholic Relief Services*

When we invest in children, we invest in the future. Today's children are tomorrow's teachers, doctors, business leaders, farmers, laborers and parents, all eager for a bright future. But for millions in developing countries, that future is unclear, their optimistic eagerness tempered by poverty, disease, danger and neglect. These challenges must be addressed so that all children can grow into healthy, strong adults ready to lead their communities and nations.

The US Government's new Action Plan on Children in Adversity is a significant step towards ensuring a comprehensive and coordinated U.S.-supported response to the needs of vulnerable children around the world. Its emphasis on collaboration and evidence-based policies and programs will help to ensure that addressing the needs of children becomes a core component of U.S. foreign policy. The plan will also align U.S. funding agencies and implementing partners in responding with more efficiency and effectiveness.

[Catholic Relief Services](#) has been actively engaged in supporting vulnerable children since its founding nearly 70 years ago. Today our health programs alone serve an estimated 5.7 million children, with millions more supported by education, agriculture, economic strengthening, shelter, and protection projects. [Our approach](#) includes many of the initiatives prioritized in the Plan: support to families, early childhood development, and efforts to promote systemic and nationwide changes to ensure that gains to child wellbeing are sustainable and long-lasting.

We applaud the tremendous efforts the development community has made to ensure that U.S.-supported programs addressing the needs of children are coordinated, efficient, and highly effective. Healthy families are the key to a stable society, and they deserve our best efforts. Together we can make a difference for millions of children facing adversity around the world.

*Dr. Carolyn Woo is President of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. The agency provides assistance to people in need in nearly 100 countries, without regard to race, religion or nationality.*