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**BEFORE THE**

**SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS AND RELATED  
PROGRAMS**

**REVIEW OF U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE FOR CHILDREN IN  
ADVERSITY**

**MAY 21, 2013**

Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Graham, Sen. Landrieu and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and to highlight the lifesaving work we do each day, including our essential work to support orphans and vulnerable children.

### **PEPFAR Introduction**

Let me begin by stating that on behalf of the entire PEPFAR family, we are profoundly grateful to Congress for its sustained investment in and support of our program. At the end of this month, PEPFAR will celebrate ten years of success. None of this would have been possible without the vision and leadership of President Bush, President Obama, and the bipartisan support of Congress. A decade ago AIDS was wiping out an entire generation in Africa, stalling economic development, and leaving countries in poverty. Today, PEPFAR's efforts and those of its many partners have brought the world to a new era—a time when new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths are on a steep decline and creating an AIDS-free generation is both U.S. policy and a goal within our reach.

Through the resources appropriated to PEPFAR, as of September 30, 2012, PEPFAR was directly supporting more than 5.1 million people on antiretroviral treatment — a three-fold increase in only four years. Moreover, in 2012 alone, PEPFAR provided antiretroviral drugs to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV to more than 750,000 pregnant women living with HIV, which allowed approximately 230,000 infants to be born without HIV; enabled more than 46.5 million people to receive testing and counselling, and directly supported nearly 15 million people with care and support, including nearly 5 million orphans and vulnerable children (OVC).

PEPFAR's efforts already play a critical role in contributing to many of the coordinated objectives of the recently released U.S. Government Action Plan for Children in Adversity, a government-wide plan for vulnerable children.

## **Children and HIV/AIDS**

While significant progress has been made through PEPFAR, our work is far from done. A central mission from the start of PEPFAR has been addressing the diverse, complex and critical needs of orphans and vulnerable children affected by the AIDS epidemic, and so we appreciate the opportunity to discuss the progress made and the challenges that remain in caring for this very special population. It is important to note that PEPFAR has a disease-specific mandate, serving many populations including orphans and vulnerable children. PEPFAR's role concerning OVCs is to mitigate the effect of the HIV epidemic on this population.

The impact of HIV and AIDS on children is devastating. To date, an estimated 16 million children have lost one or both parents due to AIDS, 90 percent of whom live in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, an estimated 3.4 million children under the age of 15 are living with HIV, and millions more children are made vulnerable due to chronically ill parents or the social and economic effects of living in communities with high HIV prevalence. These numbers clearly demonstrate how vulnerable children are to the social, emotional, economic, and environmental effects that HIV and AIDS has on families, communities, and countries.

Experience shows us that children can quickly move from being *affected by* HIV to becoming *infected with* HIV, particularly if they lack the necessary services and support to address their complex needs. In addition, even when children are not living with HIV, social and economic conditions can impede their ability to lead healthy, productive lives,

## **PEPFAR's Impact on Children in Adversity**

PEPFAR's programs are first and foremost guided by evidence-based interventions that work. As the Institute of Medicine recently reported as part of its Congressionally-mandated evaluation of PEPFAR, "*With its explicit focus on orphans and vulnerable children, PEPFAR has elevated attention to and investment in meeting the needs of this population through programs and services that are informed by evidence.*" Building on nearly a decade of lessons learned, and rigorous evaluation of our programs, PEPFAR

released new Guidance for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in 2012, which outlines sound interventions for children in adversity and specifically for children affected by HIV/AIDS. This guidance not only benefits our USG efforts but is a significant resource for vulnerable children's programming across the globe. Additionally, on World AIDS Day last year, PEPFAR released a blueprint that outlines a global path towards creating an AIDS-free generation, including key interventions necessary to aid children in adversity.

### **PEPFAR's Orphans and Vulnerable Children Programs**

PEPFAR's comprehensive, integrated, results driven approach has had a transformative effect on vulnerable children. While it is well known that PEPFAR dedicates 10% of its country funding directly to Orphans and Vulnerable Children programs, the truth is that our cross-cutting investments across our portfolio benefit children and families. PEPFAR's interventions for vulnerable children gain from their integration across the broader PEPFAR platform and specifically support achieving an AIDS-free generation as well as general child well-being. In turn, the integrated goals of other portions of the HIV/AIDS response gain from the interventions to support child vulnerability.

Broadly speaking PEPFAR has enabled access to healthcare where previously little or none existed and strengthened the capacity of partner country health systems to address a range of issues. Through PEPFAR, we have ensured that more parents with HIV/AIDS are staying alive, thus averting 1.6 million children from becoming orphans in 2012 alone, expanding access to pediatric treatment, and ensuring that fewer children are being infected with HIV/AIDS through successful prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT).

In addition to these meaningful contributions to the well-being of children, PEPFAR's 10% OVC set-aside strategically and comprehensively addresses the diverse support services that complement the entire PEPFAR portfolio, including family-strengthening education initiatives that keep children in school, and building the capacity of social service systems for children. These programs protect children from HIV/AIDS and other

risks to their development and well-being, and work directly with families, communities, national social service systems, and governments to strengthen national capacity for OVC service delivery, as well as HIV treatment and prevention services.

### **Family Strengthening**

Family strengthening is a major priority of the PEPFAR program, and we have integrated large-scale programming that supports and keeps children in families whenever possible. Over the past decade, PEPFAR has worked hand-in-hand with partner countries to provide the physical, emotional, and social support that strengthens families and communities, and mitigates negative outcomes for children. PEPFAR is able to support family unity both through its work on keeping families and caregivers healthy and alive to care for their children, and also through extensive and evidence-based household economic strengthening interventions such as village savings and loans associations which have positive effects on the well-being of families and the children in their care. These programs prevent the separation of children from families due to the heavy economic burden placed by HIV.

Globally, PEPFAR OVC programs have supported 9,000 Village Savings and Loans Associations in 15 countries. As a result of these efforts, approximately 720,000 children affected by AIDS are living in families with improved economic stability. And these groups are not only self-sustaining after a few years, they are also self-generating, and do not require ongoing support from PEPFAR or any government to continue and even to expand their membership.

PEPFAR programs also strengthen families to keep children within them, through parenting skills training, educational support and early childhood interventions that promote strong attachment and stimulation for the youngest children. Throughout the world PEPFAR-supported programs have created pre-school classrooms and home- and community-based programs for thousands of children.

## **Systems Strengthening**

PEPFAR programs also recognize that some children are already living outside of care and that all families made vulnerable by AIDS need support. Important progress toward better meeting the needs of vulnerable children are underway in many countries, including social protection through child grants, deinstitutionalization, and foster care. Within this, PEPFAR strengthens system and community responses to combat gender-based violence (GBV) against children, including efforts to improve legislation and enforcement for child protection. Addressing these needs requires strong child welfare systems that facilitate access to services across sectors.

Therefore, in recent years, PEPFAR has focused its efforts not only on community-based responses for children but also on child welfare systems strengthening. In fact, PEPFAR has been a leader in spearheading such efforts globally. The needs of OVC and their families are complex, including health services, economic security, legal rights, education, child protection, and emotional support. When systems are strong and working then all of the services required for children in and outside of family care are typically in place.

To strengthen social welfare systems, PEPFAR has prioritized strategies in 16 countries to improve the leadership and governance of social service ministries, civil society organizations, and communities that support children. This strengthening includes facilitating strategic planning and child protection responses, as well as supporting and training government and community leaders, and assisting in the development of policies, including OVC quality standards and local adoption procedures and resources.

With PEPFAR support, 17 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have formulated national plans of action for vulnerable children. Through its implementing partners, PEPFAR also works with ministries and NGOs to increase the number of social workers and expand their capacity in partner countries. In Uganda, for example, PEPFAR support has led to the training and accreditation of 1,100 Community Development Officers and probation officers in child protection, who, in turn, provide services to 66,000 children.

And in South Africa, with PEPFAR support, the Department of Social Welfare will hire 10,000 new child and youth care workers by 2017. These workers play a vital role in strengthening families to protect children from exploitation and abuse, ensuring children remain in school, and referring children for pediatric testing—36,000 of them in 2012 alone.

### **Closing**

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you to share the significant work that PEPFAR is doing across the globe to bring children out of adversity, and to create an AIDS-free generation. Congress' ten years of robust and bipartisan investment in PEPFAR's work has profoundly improved the lives of so many children and their families. This has only been possible because of PEPFAR's integrated approach and the multifaceted nature of the interventions it supports, which strengthen access to medical care and support services at the family, community and country level. While significant challenges remain, there is no doubt that millions of men, women and children have a brighter, healthier, more productive future thanks to PEPFAR. This is truly a smart investment in our future.

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