March 11, 2020

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hal Rogers  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lowey and Ranking Member Granger:

We are writing to respectfully request that you maintain and increase funding for programs in the Gender Equality section in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations (SFOPS) bill and to include related Committee report language to further assist in these efforts. We are pleased that under your leadership, the SFOPS bill has included critical support for programs that promote the participation of women in efforts to prevent and resolve conflict, protect against and respond to sexual and gender-based violence, reduce the incidence of child marriage, and advance women’s political participation and economic empowerment. Advancing the political, economic, and social status of women and girls is an essential component of U.S. Government efforts to promote global stability and strengthen our national security.

As you begin to draft the FY 2021 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill, we ask that you consider funding for the following programs important to promoting gender equality. Further, the robust gender language set forth for the first time in the FY 2013 SFOPS appropriation bill and reinforced in the FY 2014-FY 2020 SFOPS appropriations bills should be similarly included in the FY 2021 SFOPS bill with additional updated language on the following: the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security to ensure congressional oversight, accountability, and transparency; increased funding for efforts to combat gender-based violence; and dedicated funding to address the needs of adolescent girls.

**Gender Equity:** We ask that you support a total funding level of $1,900,000,000 in FY 2021 to promote gender equality in United States Government diplomatic and development efforts.

**Women's Leadership:** Maintain at least $50,000,000 in support, to increase leadership opportunities for women in countries where women and girls suffer discrimination due to law, policy, or practice, by strengthening protections for women's political status, expanding women's participation in political parties and elections, and increasing women's opportunities for leadership positions in the public and private sectors at the local, provincial, and national levels.
**Women's Economic Empowerment:** Provide $350,000,000 for all activities that foster women’s economic empowerment, of which $200 million will support activities under the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (WGDP) initiative; $100 million will implement activities authorized by the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2018, including at least $15 million in new funding to implement the gender analysis requirement of the Act; and $50 million to support renewal of the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi).

**Adolescent Girls:** Provide no less than $250,000,000 to implement the whole-of-government U.S. Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls, including addressing child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting.

- **Child, Early, and Forced Marriage:** Allocate no less than $25,000,000 of the $250 million for adolescent girls to the implementation of a coordinated and comprehensive effort to end child marriage and meet the needs of married girls in alignment with the United States Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls.

**Gender-Based Violence:** We request to maintain the FY 2020 bill language and no less than $200,000,000 for implementation of activities to address gender-based violence pursuant to a multiyear strategy to prevent and respond to GBV globally. Given the prevalence of gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies, we request a portion of this appropriation be focused particularly to support programs to address GBV in humanitarian contexts through the Safe from the Start program at the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

- **Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Emergencies:** Ensure that no less than $60,000,000 in funds are utilized to support the Safe from the Start program, drawing from gender mainstreaming, region-specific, humanitarian, and other funds to combat gender-based violence in the humanitarian contexts in which they arise through the Department of State and USAID.

- **Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting:** Allocate no less than $5,000,000 (aligned with FY 2020 enacted) for the purpose of supporting the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Program on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) to increase the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting and address the needs of those who have already undergone female genital mutilation/cutting. Additionally, we request language requiring details on how this funding will be spent.

**Women, Peace, and Security:** Provide no less than $95,000,000 to implement the Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017 and the U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security (June 2019) to expand and improve coordination of U.S. Government efforts to empower women as equal partners in conflict prevention, peace building, transitional processes, and relief and reconstruction efforts in countries affected by conflict, crisis, or political transition; and to ensure the equitable provision of relief and recovery assistance to women and girls.
Women and Girls at Risk of Violent Extremism: Provide no less than $19,000,000 to support women and girls who are at risk from extremism and conflict, and activities that empower women and girls.

Office of Global Women’s Issues: Provide no less than $20,000,000 for the Office of Global Women’s Issues at the State Department in order to ensure consideration of gender equality, including the rights of women and girls, is integrated throughout our foreign assistance efforts.

We look forward to working with you on these efforts as the appropriations process moves forward.

Sincerely,

JAN SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress
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Member of Congress

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