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President's Budget Request Disappoints on Family Planning and Reproductive Health

The president's budget request for fiscal year 2016 released yesterday is a mixed bag for international family planning and reproductive health program funding. While the request for the main bilateral account that supports FP/RH activities is identical to last year's number—and the proposed contribution to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is only marginally lower—the total request is just slightly higher than what Congress appropriated in December. This is a disappointing proposal.

The total bilateral and multilateral request for international FP/RH for FY 2016 is \$612.6 million, including \$538 million in the Global Health Programs account, \$39.6 million in Economic Support Funds, and \$35 million for a U.S. contribution to UNFPA from the International Organizations and Programs (IO&P) account.

The president's FY 2016 request is \$31.7 million less than what he proposed last year—almost entirely the result of a dramatic, but explainable, drop in the amount of Economic Support Funds (ESF) allocated for FP/RH activities in a small number of strategically and politically important countries. The large reduction is apparently being justified by the existence of a large amount of unexpended funds in the “pipeline” for FP/RH activities in Pakistan.

The good news is that the request for most of the developing nations where the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) operates was not reduced. Nevertheless, the request falls far short of the \$1 billion that is the U.S. fair share of total global expenditures required to address the unmet need of [225 million women](#) in the developing world who would like to prevent pregnancy but lack modern contraception. In addition, the request lowballs a key element of USAID's new initiative on ending preventable child and maternal deaths, making its ambitious goals for reducing deaths of women and children by 2020 even more difficult to realize.

The following table provides details on the president's budget request in comparison to prior year appropriations and requests:

(in millions of dollars)	FY 2015 President's Budget Request	FY 2015 Enacted	FY 2016 President's Budget Request
Global Health Programs account	538.0	523.95	538.0
Economic Support Fund (ESF)	71.0	51.0	39.6
TOTAL, bilateral FP/RH	609.0	575.0	577.6
U.S. contribution to UNFPA (IO&P)	35.3	35.0	35.0
TOTAL, bilateral & multilateral FP/RH	644.3	610.0	612.6