

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION,
AND ACCESSIBILITY IN U.S. DIPLOMACY
AND DEVELOPMENT

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION,
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AND DEVELOPMENT**

TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2022

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Booker, Risch, Rubio, and Cruz.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY**

The CHAIRMAN. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Let me first thank Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer of the Department of State, as well as Chief Diversity Officer at USAID Neneh Diallo for appearing before our committee today.

I believe this is the first time the committee has held a hearing on this topic with senior department leadership dedicated to this issue.

Our premier American foreign policy institutions must set the bar for others to follow, and harnessing the incredible diversity of the American people on different points of view, backgrounds, and languages is crucial to not only our nation's security, but also our global, economic, and other interests.

I have been working on efforts to promote diversity at the State Department and USAID now for more than two decades, and while I am disappointed to say progress has been slow, I am pleased to see both of you here today.

Only last year, the head of the American Foreign Service Association said, "The State Department was more diverse in 1986, literally, than it is now." In the last 20 years, there has been a 2 percent decrease in the proportion of Black employees at the State Department with the majority still in the civil service and Latino numbers have barely budged. USAID is no better with 6 percent of its workforce Latino while the Latino population of the United States overall is almost 19 percent.

This year, we are commemorating the Pickering program's 30th, Rangel program's 20th, and Payne program's 10th anniversary, all

programs created to increase diversity at our agencies, but as we commemorate we need to know if these programs are actually accomplishing their goals. I can count on my fingers the number of ambassadors and mission directors who are people of color.

We have got a lot of work to do. Not fully utilizing the strategic advantage of America's diverse talent pool to engage our allies and counter our competitors and adversaries on the global stage is a vital error.

Let me just give one example. I know some of our colleagues will probably be unhappy about today's hearing, but the reality is that when I was in China, our chief in China in charge of democracy and human rights programs was an African American who was an active participant in the civil rights struggle.

His personal history, his personal eyewitness to the accounts of trying to change the course of events in our country, were a powerful voice to those in China seeking to create an opportunity for themselves in terms of greater openings for democracy and human rights.

I can recount easily over the course of 30 years of doing foreign policy dozens of moments in different parts of the world where the few people that we have had who come from diverse backgrounds had been able to make a powerful case and liaison with the peoples of those countries where we are being represented.

That cannot be purchased. That cannot be bought. While it is an error in terms of where we have been at, I am pleased to say this Administration is trying to fix. It is also one that nations like Russia and China continue to exploit by using their propaganda tools to highlight the gap between our promises and rhetoric when it comes to racial justice and our actions.

They paint us as hypocrites who talk a big game on equality and human rights, the very foundation of democracy, but say we do not deliver. Our diplomats are on the front lines of countering their narratives.

We must modernize our diplomacy and development efforts to meet the demands of the 21st century. That means recruiting from all across America, from the cities and coasts of New Jersey to the border towns of Texas and Idaho. It means cultivating and retaining a diverse workforce that can take advantage of our nation's technology advances and keep up with other industries.

It means ensuring workstations and foreign mission buildings are accessible for those with disabilities and it means committing to increasing morale so that people are not leaving mid-career after years of investment in extensive language and diplomatic skills.

Let me be clear. As chief diversity officers, you not only have the full weight of the White House and your leadership supporting you, I want you to know that many of us support you as well. I certainly do.

That is why I am launching a series of initiatives to advance the diversity, legislation, resources, and recruitment pipelines. We need to keep our nation competitive in global affairs for years to come.

This is also an economic imperative. I often tell when I speak to the corporate leadership in our country about diversity, not for diversity's sake, but for the bottom line. Study after study shows that more diverse corporate boards and senior executive management

means more profitability, and these are studies done by private entities.

Also, as I tell groups as a simple example of the past, Chevrolet found out what diversity means when they tried to sell the Chevy Nova in Latin America. For those of you who do not know Spanish, when you pronounce Nova in Spanish it means it will not move. It will not go.

That is just a simple example. I do not care what type of marketing program you have. A car that says it is not going to move, it is not going to go, is not going to sell.

That is just one of many simple examples where in terms of the economics of how to do business and get greater market share for our country is incredibly important.

Today, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on how they are advancing these goals at their agency. I also want to know what is needed to do your jobs effectively, and if you are not getting what you need, I want to know why. The clock is ticking. It has been a year and a half since these efforts began and I want to see progress.

Finally, to those who might be reticent to support these efforts, I want to point out that one of our other great institutions, the United States military, has long been a place where people of all backgrounds fight alongside each other and where they can rise and an opportunity is given including to the highest levels of our military.

As a result, our military is the greatest fighting force in the world. Our diplomatic corps and our development program should be strengthened in the same way. We must, as diplomat and Nobel Laureate Ralph Bunche once said, "Adhere staunchly to the basic principle that anything less than full equality is not enough."

With that, let me turn to the ranking member for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. RISCH,
U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO**

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and kudos to you for pursuing this issue. I know you have been on the forefront of this and certainly deserve credit for the progress that has been made and I know you will keep up those efforts.

I, too, am interested in diversity, although I come at it from a little different viewpoint than you do, but diversity of all sorts is important in our agencies.

Our foreign affairs agencies in the Department of State in particular have wrestled with issues of diversity in the civilian national security workforce for generations.

For years, we have heard the Department say that its workforce was going to "look like America."

However, its workforce still does not look like America. Employees from urban and especially coastal areas are still heavily over represented while noncoastal, suburban, and especially rural areas and interior areas of America are barely represented.

This is at least partially and substantially the result of the fact that the Department only offers Foreign Service oral exams in

Washington, DC, dozens of times a year and twice a year in San Francisco, both coastal cities and two of America's most expensive.

Let us take my state, Idaho, for example. An Idahoan would have to buy an airline ticket to either of these cities, taking multiple legs each way to DC, then pay for multiple nights at a hotel.

A trip like this would cost more than \$1,000. For a professional already in the workforce, they would also need to take vacation days and also find someone to look after their children if they were single with children while they travel across the country, all for the privilege of applying for a job at the State Department.

This burden comes only after they have already decided they want to try and join the Foreign Service. What about recruitment to join its special ranks? The Department uses diplomats in residence scattered across the country to help highlight how great a career in diplomacy can be.

Yet, only a handful of these people exist. There is only one diplomat in residence for all of Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, and Montana, and that person is based in Denver.

So if a University of Idaho student wanted to meet with the local diplomat in residence, he or she would have to drive 17 hours to Denver. In fact, it would actually be faster to drive to the Pacific Northwest diplomat who is based in Berkeley, California. That drive is only 14 hours.

The truth is State Department's continued promise to develop a workforce that looks like America is not centered and representing all of America based on things like geographic diversity.

It seems devoted to representing the ideas and opinions of coastal views and philosophy, which does not highlight diversity of all of America with its broad and stunning greatness.

Similarly, at USAID there are so many hiring mechanisms that the agency cannot even provide credible data on the success or failure of its own efforts to enhance diversity.

Our foreign affairs agencies must be serious about all forms—all forms—of diversity, to include participation from our veterans. They have sacrificed a lot to protect our nation and freedom, and their perspective and experience brings diversity of thought to solving tough diplomatic challenges.

We need more and better from the Department and USAID on these issues and I look forward to hearing how the Department intends to do a much better job of developing a workforce that represents all of America and especially its interior.

Again, kudos to the chairman for his efforts in this regard.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

It is an honor to introduce our two witnesses today, our privilege to welcome Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley, the State Department's first Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer charged with "advancing national security by building a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible department to handle the foreign policy challenges of the 21st century."

A consummate diplomat, Ambassador Abercrombie-Winstanley has served her country for over three decades as the longest serving U.S. Ambassador to Malta, the first woman to lead a diplomatic

mission in Saudi Arabia, and as chair of the Middle East Area Studies at the Foreign Service Institute.

In addition to serving at the National Security Council, she also served as a fellow on this very committee under then Ranking Member Biden.

We are also joined by Chief Diversity Officer Neneh Diallo, whose remit is to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility among USAID's people, partners, and programs at home and abroad as part of USAID's international development and humanitarian efforts around the globe.

Her public service career has included work as the Director of Diversity and Inclusion at the Millennium Challenge Corporation. She has also led diversity efforts in the private sector as a senior vice president for marketing and communications in global media.

Welcome to you both. Your full statements will be included in the record without objection, and I would ask you both to try to summarize your statements in about 5 minutes or so so that then we can have a conversation.

Ambassador Winstanley.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE GINA K. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY, CHIEF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OFFICER, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, I am delighted to speak with you today about the State Department's efforts to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility—DEIA.

I am pleased to be joined by my counterpart from USAID, Neneh Diallo.

Secretary Blinken appointed me as the Department's first stand-alone Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer 15 months ago. Since that time, the Department has made significant strides to advance DEIA within our organization and build the foundation for sustained success.

We have done this by increasing transparency and accountability for processes and personnel. Our goal is to improve our entire organization. Any business wants a highly productive workforce that operates maximally.

It is not enough to recruit a representative workforce. We have to keep them. We must leverage the strength of our diversity to ensure we have the strongest foreign policy to meet 21st century challenges.

We are focused on examining our organization holistically, to identify where inequities exist, not just in whom we hire, but among who stays and who advances.

The Department is committed to using evidence-based approaches to identify barriers to equitable merit-based hiring and career outcomes. By analyzing disaggregated data we can identify where potential inequities exist and recommend specific actions to address them.

This is why my first priority was to create a DEIA data working group. Since its formation, we have compiled a demographic baseline of the entire Department of State by rank, job category, and

bureau. With this established baseline we can evaluate the effectiveness of our initiatives and track our progress.

In this way, we will remain unified in opportunity, unified in earned recognition and support. Data analysis is key to guiding, measuring, and sustaining an effective DEIA program, which is why I respectfully ask for your support to continue providing my office with the funding and staffing resources needed for this important work.

Another change I am proud to tell you about is that advancing DEIA is now tied to the Foreign Service promotions and civil service performance evaluations. Everyone must play a part to advance DEIA as an organizational culture.

Why? Because it will improve the quality of our foreign policy, model the values that we promote abroad, and ensure the best rise to the top because of merit.

To hold employees accountable for this, the Department has created a dedicated DEIA core precept for the Foreign Service and a DEIA work element for the civil service.

While the dedicated core precept provides a way to recognize and reward positive contributions to the DEIA mission, we must also improve accountability and uproot toxic workplace behavior.

As the Department has made significant strides to educate employees on how to address toxic behavior, reports of harassment have increased. Staffing to investigate and respond has not.

The Department's fiscal year 2023 budget includes a request for new positions and funding to create an anti-bullying program and to properly staff our anti-harassment program.

We can correct toxic behaviors and eliminate the resulting distractions in the workplace that impede our best work in service to the American people.

The Department's 5-year DEIA strategic plan has been released to the workforce. It is the most forward leaning, ambitious, robust DEIA strategic plan the Department has ever created.

My office will oversee the plan's implementation and has already formed an implementation team. It is made up of representatives from bureaus and offices with responsibility for action items in the plan. We are already taking steps to reconfirm our commitment to make a truly merit-based organization.

Lastly, I applaud the Department's recent changes to the Foreign Service generalist exam process. The Foreign Service Officer Test served as a distorted barrier to entry for the Foreign Service and has never been a predictor of future job performance.

Let us be clear, there are many highly successful Foreign Service Officers and career ambassadors serving today whose entry requirements did not include taking or passing the FSOT.

Starting last month, the Department now takes a more holistic approach by evaluating a candidate's FSOT performance along with their skills and experience when deciding who will advance to the Foreign Service oral assessment.

For candidates who miss the FSOT cut off by a few points, but have valuable relevant skills and experience, this change allows their other strengths to be considered. This levels the playing field and allows the Department to examine more candidates from a wider variety of backgrounds.

I am grateful to this committee for its attention to this decades-long problem within the Department of State. With your support we will continue to work until we have a workforce that does truly reflect and leverage the diverse talents of the nation we represent.

Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to speak today and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Abercrombie-Winstanley follows:]

Prepared Statement of Ambassador Gina K. Abercrombie-Winstanley

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, Members of the Committee, I am delighted to speak with you today about the State Department's progress—and challenges—on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA). I am thrilled to be joined by my counterpart, Neneh Diallo, from USAID.

Secretary Blinken appointed me as the Department's first stand-alone Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer 15 months ago. Since that time, the Department has made significant strides to advance DEIA within our organization and build the foundation for future success. This foundation will ensure the Department's DEIA initiatives get implemented in a sustainable way. Our steadfast goal is to support equity and inclusivity across our entire workforce and ensure our workforce knows and understands what we are doing and why.

It is not enough to recruit and support a workforce that draws from the diversity of our nation. We must also leverage the strength of our diverse talents to make certain we have the strongest foreign policy to meet 21st century challenges. This is how we best serve the American people. Therefore, we must examine our organization holistically to identify where inequities exist not only in terms of whom we hire, but also in terms of who stays and who advances.

Our approach is two-pronged: first, focus on *structural changes* to policy, practice, and procedures so that opportunities are no longer based on “who you know” but what you bring to the table. We do this work by identifying and removing barriers to a truly merit-based system for every employee. Second, we are focused on *changing the culture* so that employees feel truly included, seen, and encouraged to speak up when they have ideas to offer or want to flag concerns.

The Department is committed to using an evidence-based approach to identify barriers to equitable, merit-based hiring and career outcomes. By examining red flags in our data, we can identify where potential inequities exist and recommend specific actions to improve how we do business. This is why my first priority as Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer was to create a DEIA Data Working Group. This team of analysts and subject matter experts from multiple offices coordinate the Department's vital barrier analysis work.

Since standing up this unprecedented group a year ago, we've compiled a demographic baseline of the Department of State, by rank, job category, and bureau. As a result, we now have a more accurate picture of who and where we are as an organization. And we can now better identify where we have work to do to keep us unified in terms of opportunity, earned recognition and support. With this established baseline we can also evaluate the effectiveness of our initiatives and track our progress. Data analysis is key to guiding, measuring, and sustaining an effective DEIA program, and I want to thank Congress for providing the resources needed for this important work.

Another change I am excited to tell you about is our work to ensure that advancing DEIA is now tied to Foreign Service promotions and Civil Service performance evaluations. Secretary Blinken has made clear his expectation that DEIA work is not just on me, my office, or for employees working in human resources. It must not be limited to employees from historically underrepresented groups or the most junior among our ranks. Everyone must play a part in advancing DEIA as an organizational culture. Why? Because it will make the Department of State stronger, improve the quality of our foreign policy, model the values we promote abroad, and ensure the best rise to the top because of their merit.

To hold employees accountable for this, the Department has created a dedicated DEIA core precept for the Foreign Service and DEIA work elements for the Civil Service. This was necessary, because while the Department has always valued and included DEIA principles as an element of earlier core precepts and work elements, if employees demonstrated achievements in other areas within the precept, their lack of attention to DEIA could be overlooked. By tying promotions more strongly

to advancing DEIA, we have now increased the incentive for every Department employee to forward this vital work.

While the dedicated core precept provides a way to recognize positive contributions to the DEIA mission, we must also do more to improve accountability and transparency, and root out toxic workplace behavior such as discrimination, including harassment and bullying. As the Department has made significant strides to educate employees on how to address toxic behavior, and reports of harassment have increased, staffing to investigate and respond has not. The Department's FY23 budget includes a request for new positions and funding to create an Anti-Bullying Program and to properly staff our Anti-Harassment Program so that we can correct toxic behaviors and address situations before they reach the level of a formal complaint. It is imperative that our workplaces eliminate toxic behavior so that everyone has the same opportunity to do their best work in service to the American people.

I am pleased to report the Department completed development of its 5-year DEIA Strategic Plan. It is the most forward-leaning, ambitious, and robust DEIA Strategic Plan the Department has ever created. It includes input from dozens of offices and hundreds of employees from every segment of the workforce. This includes local DEIA Councils, Employee Organizations, Locally Employed Staff, Eligible Family Member staff, contract staff, the Civil Service, and Foreign Service Specialists and Generalists. My office will oversee the Plan's implementation and has formed an Implementation Team, made up of representatives from bureaus and offices with responsibility for action items in the Plan. The Team's first meeting was in June, and it will meet quarterly to ensure goals and objectives are being met within the outlined timeframes and ensure the Plan is properly resourced. In addition, the State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan includes a strategic objective on promoting DEIA as a component of revitalizing our workforce.

Lastly, I would also like to mention the Department's recent changes to the Foreign Service generalist exam process. The Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) served as a distorted barrier of entry into the Foreign Service because it favored candidates who had the resources to hone their standardized testing skills on niche topics. Further, the FSOT has never been a predictor of future job performance. There are many successful Foreign Service Officers and career ambassadors serving today whose entry requirements did not include taking the FSOT. In essence, our analysis showed that the FSOT served as an initial stage to reduce the volume of candidates to a more manageable number to determine who to advance to the Foreign Service Oral Assessment (FSOA). The Oral Assessment has always been the true method of evaluating a candidate's skills and abilities to succeed in the Foreign Service.

I am pleased the Department made changes to the Foreign Service generalist selection process. Starting last month, the Department now takes a more holistic approach by factoring a candidate's FSOT test performance along with their skills and experience when deciding who will advance to the FSOA. For those candidates with valuable and relevant skills and experience but less practice at taking standardized tests, this change allows the Department to look at all of a candidate's strengths. No amount of skill or experience will cancel out a low FSOT score. Likewise, candidates with high FSOT scores, but inadequate experience or skills, are also unlikely to advance to the FSOA. This change takes a comprehensive view of all candidates, levels the playing field and allows the Department to examine more candidates from a wider variety of backgrounds, using better and more predictive assessment information and criteria.

While the changes we have implemented in this short amount of time exceeded my expectations, we have much more work to do. The findings in the recently released GAO report "Additional Actions Needed to Improve Workplace Diversity and Inclusion" are consistent with the initiatives my staff and I lead, as we rally more Department employees to join us in this work.

I am grateful to this Committee for its attention to this decades-long issue at the State Department. We will continue the work until we have a workforce that truly reflects and leverages the diverse talents of the nation we represent. Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to speak today. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Ms. Diallo.

**STATEMENT OF NENEH DIALLO, CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER,
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WASH-
INGTON, DC**

Ms. DIALLO. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak about the progress USAID has made to date and the remaining opportunities to do more on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility—or DEIA—within our agency.

Thank you for your leadership in this space. I also want to acknowledge Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley and her work at the Department of State. Our agencies are working together to ensure we maximize and accelerate efforts toward our shared interests.

With the leadership and support of President Joe Biden, Administrator Samantha Power, and a strong bipartisan coalition in Congress, USAID is uniting its DEIA efforts, an ambitious undertaking I have been privileged to lead since being sworn in this past March.

As the agency's first chief DEIA officer, I oversee our DEIA efforts not only in our workforce and workplace, but also in how we deliver assistance, design programs, and partner. My office does not undertake this work alone, but together with DEIA advisors who are hired within bureaus and independent offices as well as the diversity councils across the agency.

I would also like to take this time to thank the committee and your colleagues for providing this office with a dedicated budget to realize our DEIA objectives.

My office oversees USAID's DEIA strategic plan. This seeks to reduce potential barriers to accessing benefits and services, procurement and contracting opportunities, and agency actions and programs.

We work collectively to recruit, retain, and promote the agency's talent. This work is not without its challenges when it comes to underrepresented populations. My submitted testimony goes into the details of how we are addressing these challenges, but let me highlight three ways we are making progress on our agenda.

First, recruitment. We have expanded our Affirmative Employment Division within the Office of Civil Rights to include the establishment of a robust Special Emphasis Program to identify and remove any potential barriers to equal employment opportunity in agency policies, programs, processes, and practices for all persons, including members of groups that are traditionally underrepresented or have been historically subjected to discrimination in the workforce.

We are working to ensure USAID is an employer of choice for all individuals with disabilities. Thus, we are prioritizing the use of Schedule A hiring authority for individuals with disabilities and disabled veterans on competitive hiring authorities.

We are also working to diversify our candidate pool through new and renewed partnerships with historically Black colleges and universities, tribal and indigenous colleges and universities, and institutions serving Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American/Pacific Islander communities.

These partnerships help diversify our talent pipelines and provide opportunities to collaborate with USAID as thought leaders in

global development and expand our partner base to ensure minority-serving institutions play a meaningful role in our humanitarian and development work.

Second, we continue to invest in the career advancement and professional development of our current workforce. For staff from underrepresented groups, we are expanding our support for the International Career Advancement Program and the Donald M. Payne International Development Fellowship Program.

These programs provide highly qualified candidates with leadership development and valuable firsthand experience both in Congress and in the agency.

Since arriving at USAID we have doubled our support in both programs and will look to continue building off that success.

As a learning organization, we are committed to capacity building for a global workforce. That is why we have expanded access to DEIA-related training through our Respectful, Inclusive, and Safe Environments' learning and engagement platform.

USAID's RISE training has reached more than 6,000 individual staff members globally since June of 2020. USAID has developed our first ever DEIA survey, which, when completed, will establish a baseline for DEIA-related metrics and enable longitudinal evaluation across USAID's entire workforce.

I am also working to ensure that DEIA competencies and objectives are included into annual civil service performance evaluations and Foreign Service precepts across all work levels, including senior leaders.

This is a clear step forward in ensuring leadership accountability for creating an inclusive work environment.

Third, USAID is committed to expanding the universe of implementing partners. Last November, we launched the Work With USAID platform, a free online resource hub to support new and existing partners with the knowledge, tools, and networks to navigate how to work with us.

We are streamlining acquisition and assistance practices to enhance equity and inclusion for both our domestic and international partners.

We are updating and enhancing our policies to ensure that our programming is inclusive, equitable, and reaches marginalized and underserved populations, including persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people, indigenous peoples, and nondominant racial, ethnic, and religious groups.

Our inclusive development approach ensures we do no harm to those who are vulnerable and marginalized and that we intentionally and proactively include them.

We believe all these efforts at USAID will help us bring diverse perspectives and talents into our workforce and across our humanitarian assistance and development programming, and provide opportunity and equitable access in a deliberate way.

In closing, echoing testimony from Ambassador Abercrombie-Winstanley, I am grateful to the members of this committee for your support of our ongoing efforts to strengthen and improve development outcomes for the communities where we work through a comprehensive and unified DEIA strategy. With your support, we

will continue to ensure that USAID reflects the values we strive to live up to as Americans.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be here and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Diallo follows:]

Prepared Statement of Ms. Neneh Diallo

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today about the progress USAID has made to date—and the remaining opportunities to do more—on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) within our Agency.

In the span of USAID's 60 years of global development work, the Agency has relied on the dynamism and fresh perspectives of a uniquely talented workforce, always aiming to improve policies and outcomes to better reflect our values and bring to bear the best of what America has to offer. With the leadership and support of President Biden, Administrator Power, and a strong bipartisan coalition in Congress, USAID is finally able to unite its disparate diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts, an ambitious undertaking I have been privileged to lead since being sworn in in March of this year. As the Agency's first ever Chief Diversity Officer, I lead an office of outstanding and committed individuals who are working tirelessly to ensure USAID is diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible throughout its practices, programs, policies, and partnerships. I oversee our DEIA efforts across the Agency, not only in our workforce and workplace, but also in how we deliver assistance, design programs, and form partnerships. I want to acknowledge Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley and her work at the Department of State and let the Committee know that the Department and USAID are working together to ensure we maximize and accelerate efforts where we have mutual interests.

Administrator Samantha Power has prioritized a comprehensive approach to DEIA from her first day in office when she signed USAID's 2021 DEIA Strategic Plan. Since then, she has continued to demonstrate that DEIA is a priority by establishing the DEIA Office within the Office of the Administrator, creating the Agency's first Chief Diversity Officer position, and ensuring the Agency has dedicated staff to support this important work. I would like to thank the Committee and your colleagues in Congress for providing the office with a dedicated budget to support the programs and activities that will help increase diversity in our workforce, expand opportunity to the organizations with which we partner, and ensure equity is incorporated across our employment lifecycle, our partner base and in the communities we serve.

This new office is now staffed by a team of 18 dedicated DEIA experts that reflect the diversity we expect to see across the Agency: a mix of civil service, foreign service, and institutional support contractors with a variety of talents and abilities. USAID has also hired 13 full-time DEIA Advisors, roles created in specific Bureaus and Independent Offices to work in collaboration with my team to advance USAID's unified DEIA strategy.

As mentioned, I oversee USAID's 2021 DEIA Strategic Plan, an updated version of USAID's DEI strategy, which contains 10 goals to enhance diversity, and promote an equitable and safe workplace. My office also supports the implementation of USAID's Equity Action Plan, which seeks to reduce potential barriers to accessing benefits and services, procurement and contracting opportunities, and Agency actions and programs. To achieve continuity across our efforts, we routinely engage with USAID Bureaus and Independent Offices, including the Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning (PPL), the Bureau for Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM), the Bureau for Democracy, Development, and Innovation (DDI), and the Bureau for Management, as well as the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and the Office of the General Counsel, regional and functional bureaus and our overseas Missions.

On the diversity front, the Agency strives to remove any potential barriers to equal employment opportunity in a bid to build a workforce that reflects the diversity of our nation. We work collectively to recruit, retain and promote the Agency's talent, yet we still have more progress to make with communities of color, veterans, persons with disabilities, persons of different religions, persons of different sexes and gender identities, and persons in rural areas. To address these challenges, we have expanded our Affirmative Employment Division within the Office of Civil Rights to include the establishment of a robust Special Emphasis Program—to identify and remove any potential barriers to equal employment opportunity in Agency policies, programs, processes, and practices for groups that are traditionally under-

represented or have been historically subjected to discrimination in the workforce. We are adding posts with work-study opportunities and increasing paid internships; those managed by USAID and with third parties such as the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and the Urban League.

As we prioritize the diversification of our talent pool, we are actively working to ensure USAID is an employer of choice for individuals with disabilities, including disabled veterans. As such, we are prioritizing the use of the Schedule A hiring authority for individuals with disabilities and Disabled Veteran non-competitive hiring authorities. These non-competitive authorities are invaluable in ensuring we achieve our goals of reaching 12 percent of our employees be Persons with Disabilities and 2 percent be Persons with Targeted Disabilities or Serious Health Conditions within the next 2 years.

We are also actively working to diversify our candidate pool through new and renewed partnerships and engagements with Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal and Indigenous Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and institutions serving the Hispanic, Asian American (AA), and Native American Pacific Islander communities. Last year, we held the first conferences for HBCUs and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) with a total of over 3,000 registered students, faculty, and partners. This fall we will host our second annual HSI and HBCU Conferences and will be expanding conference outreach to AA and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (NAPISI) and planning the Agency's first TCU symposium in the spring. Our partnerships with MSIs are intended to do more than diversify our talent pipelines, however; we hope that these institutions can also collaborate with USAID as thought leaders in global development, and also ultimately join our cadre of implementing partners and sub-partners. On top of the Memoranda of Understanding we have signed with Delaware State University, Tuskegee University, Florida International University, and Alcorn State University, we are teeing up new partnerships to be announced this fall and exploring new partnerships with HSIs and TCUs.

We also plan to leverage our Development Diplomats in Residency (DDIRs) Program, through which talented Foreign Service Officers are embedded within higher education institutions in the U.S. to strengthen our partnerships, enhance regional outreach and recruitment activities, and allow for development concepts to be incorporated into the educational curriculum of institutions.

The elevation and unification of these efforts in USAID's Front Office is about more than just changing what this Agency looks like. It's about changing how it feels to work here, to partner with us, and how we deliver results, elevating a far more inclusive array of voices, making sure they have seats at the table, and grappling with the legacies of racism and sexism that plague all our country's institutions. It's about overcoming a history of gatekeeping that prevents underrepresented groups both in the United States and abroad from having a meaningful say in our humanitarian and development work.

To minimize biases during the hiring process as more diverse candidates apply for employment, USAID is piloting masked hiring, a process that promotes the mitigation of bias by masking information such as demographics and focuses on objective criteria for positions. This process is currently being piloted within the civil service and within some of our non-direct hire mechanisms.

We continue to invest in the career advancement and professional development of our current workforce, including staff based in Washington and around the world. For staff from underrepresented groups, we are expanding our support for the International Career Advancement Program (ICAP), which provides leadership development to mid-level professionals from underrepresented backgrounds. Over the past year USAID has doubled the number of ICAP participants, and we aim to further expand participation in the program 50 percent next year. We have also increased our support for the Donald M. Payne International Development Fellowship Program, which recruits highly competitive candidates from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds to join USAID's Foreign Service and intend to expand the Payne Fellowship Program from 15 to 30 Fellows in the coming year. I appreciate that many Members of Congress have hosted Payne Fellows for summer placements. I hope you will continue to support our Payne Fellows who gain invaluable first-hand experience on the legislative process.

In my role as CDO, I engage with staff across the Agency and serve as a standing member of USAID's Senior Leadership Group Panel, which selects key Foreign Service leadership assignments. And we will be including DEIA competencies and objectives into annual civil service performance evaluations, and foreign service precepts across all workforce levels, including senior leaders, a clear step forward in ensuring leadership accountability for creating an inclusive and diverse work environment.

As a learning organization, we are committed to capacity-building for our global workforce. USAID has expanded access to a wide range of DEIA-related training through our Respectful, Inclusive, and Safe Environments (RISE) learning and engagement platform. USAID's RISE training has reached more than 6,100 individual staff since June 2020 and is a gold standard for the Federal Government. Over a third of our workforce, including over half of USAID leadership, has participated in at least one of the 660 RISE trainings or events held since June 2020.

USAID has also developed our first-ever DEIA climate survey, which, when complete, will establish a baseline for DEIA related metrics and enable longitudinal evaluation across the workforce. The survey will expand our insights into the diversity of USAID's workforce through the collection of expanded demographic and sexual orientation and gender identity data and will help us better understand staff perceptions on USAID DEIA efforts.

USAID's DEIA efforts go beyond building a diverse workforce and an equitable and inclusive workplace, we are also committed to expanding the universe of USAID implementing partners by reducing potential barriers for underrepresented groups and organizations from the U.S. or overseas. In November, we launched the *WorkwithUSAID.org* platform, a free online resource hub built to support new and existing partners with the knowledge, tools and networks to navigate how to work with us. Since its launch, we have hosted 37 external events to promote the platform, reaching over 10,000 people with 2,373 approved partner profiles uploaded to date, of which 390 are U.S. companies.

As we grow and expand our partnership base, our localization initiative is critical to diversifying the Agency's implementing partners. Localization encompasses a range of processes and actions that USAID is undertaking to ensure our work puts local actors in the lead, strengthens local systems, and is responsive to local communities. USAID's localization efforts include streamlining the Agency's internal processes to facilitate partnerships with vetted local organizations and expand our stable of non-traditional partners. One important way USAID approaches localization is through our New Partnerships Initiative (NPI). For NPI, Missions and Operating Units must specifically outline plans for enhancing equity and inclusion through their acquisition and assistance practices and program implementation in the countries in which USAID operates.

As we provide development and humanitarian assistance, we are also tapping into the expertise of U.S. small and disadvantaged businesses through the work of USAID's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU). To expand our work with these small and disadvantaged businesses we have included the businesses in the Agency's draft 2022 Acquisition and Assistance Strategy, provided training to Agency staff on how to work with small and disadvantaged businesses, and are doing targeted outreach to the small business community throughout the U.S.

Finally, we are updating and enhancing our policies to ensure that our programming is inclusive, equitable, and reaches marginalized and underserved populations. Our inclusive development approach is rooted in a both a "below the line" principle, ensuring we *do no harm* to those who are vulnerable and marginalized, and an "above the line" principle that intentionally and proactively includes these groups, including persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people, Indigenous Peoples, and non-dominant racial, ethnic, and religious groups. USAID is also enhancing implementation of its nondiscrimination for beneficiaries' policy, including by making "Inclusive Development" training mandatory for all staff and developing an accountability mechanism that can help stakeholders provide feedback to the Agency on its programs.

We believe all our efforts at USAID will help us bring diverse perspectives and talents into the national security workforce and provide opportunity and equitable access in an intentional and deliberate way. In closing, echoing testimony from my colleague Ambassador Abercrombie-Winstanley, I am grateful to the Members of this Committee for your attention to and support of our efforts to strengthen our work and improve development outcomes for the communities where we work through a comprehensive and unified DEIA strategy. With your support, we will continue to ensure that USAID is reflective of the values we strive to live up to as Americans. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you both.

We will start a round of 5-minute questions.

Ambassador Winstanley, let us start off with the answer to this question. Why diversity?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Diversity is at the foundational level of our nation. We come from everywhere and we should be represented by everyone who is part of this great nation.

We have talked about human rights, the opportunity in the United States, and we have to show it. Great ideas come from every background of Americans and we know the Department of State benefits from having us all there. So, in short, we have to represent our nation with representatives from every part of our nation.

The CHAIRMAN. So we do this not for the sake of diversity itself, not because it is the nice or right thing to do, because it is the empowering thing to do on behalf of our nation.

It is clear to me that we look for an array of skills. We, certainly, at USAID do not send a rocket scientist to help countries in terms of agriculture. We look for different experiences.

At the end of the day, those different experiences are also manifested in the diversity of our people and their experiences as well.

We were able to obtain—can we get those charts?

We were able to obtain demographic trends data from GAO, OPM, and the Department that I would like to share that is quite concerning.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—Chart being presented.]

The CHAIRMAN. The red bars on this graph that we are about to put up represent white employees at the Department. It shows that in the 1980s the State Department was much more successful in its diversity efforts than in recent times. From 1981 to 2002, you can see the percent of nonwhite employees—the blue and other colored bars—more than doubled from 13 to 28 percent, but over the last 20 years, racial diversity at State barely budged at all, even as the Latino population has substantially grown across the country. From 2002 to 2021, the percent of nonwhite employees only rose from 28 to 34 percent and African Americans actually decreased from 17 to 15 percent.

When we look—may we have the other chart?

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—Chart being presented.]

The CHAIRMAN. When we look at the red sections on this second figure we see that the senior ranks of the State Department remain largely white in both the Foreign Service and civil service with the Senior Foreign Service and Senior Executive Services almost 85 percent white.

It comes as little surprise then that only, roughly, 12 percent of U.S. ambassadors come from underrepresented communities and only 40 percent of ambassadors are women.

While this committee plays a critical role in confirming ambassadors, we also need more diverse candidates to consider.

As I noted in my opening statement, the State Department sets the stage for what happens in our other agencies. So if we get this right at State, we get it right at USAID, at DFC, Ex-Im, Peace Corps, MCC, and the entire foreign affairs infrastructure.

The first graph demonstrates change is possible and we all know change comes most quickly when it comes from the top. We are living in historic times. For close to two decades I have called for di-

iversity initiatives to address under-representation in our foreign affairs infrastructure.

Last year, Ambassador, you were appointed as the State Department's first standalone Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer in April of 2021 by Secretary Blinken, and Chief Diversity Officer Diallo, you were appointed by the administrator earlier this year in March.

We also passed the 1-year anniversary of the President's June 2021 Executive Order 14035—Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce—and the February 2021 President's National Security Memorandum prioritizing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility as a national security imperative.

So I applaud these efforts, but I am concerned that the White House has yet to allow you to release the diversity and inclusion strategic plans you are required to draft by Executive Order 14035 a year ago and what signal that sends.

I have a couple of questions. When do you anticipate the plan being released to State Department and USAID personnel, the public, and Congress?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you, Senator, for the question, Mr. Chairman.

We released the report to the workforce, yesterday. We got permission yesterday afternoon or the night before and we released it immediately. It is on our SharePoint site and released to our employee organization so that people can see it.

We will have what I believe is going to be a more user-friendly version up in a couple of weeks as well so that people can interact with it, but we have released it.

The CHAIRMAN. When will Congress get that?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I would say at least a couple of weeks that we get a version that you will actually be able to understand.

The CHAIRMAN. I look forward to knowing when that is going to happen and to receiving it.

How is the White House supporting you and your efforts to change these worrying demographic trends, especially in the senior ranks?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you.

It has been a strong cheerleader for our efforts. The demand signal, as you noted, comes from the top from the President, from the Secretary, and I have the opportunity to continue that demand signal within our organization.

We are very serious about this now. The statistics that you put up there are deeply troubling for all of us, but we recognize that and we have put resources and personnel and leadership from the top to this problem.

So we have put in place accountability factors with the core precept. That is a way that we are communicating to the entire organization that this counts, that we are taking it seriously, and we are holding people accountable. If you want to be promoted you will help the organization be better, more diverse, more inclusive, taking steps with regard to accessibility.

We are in the midst of conversations, reviewing options on how to increase transparency and accessibility with regard to senior positions from the Deputy Assistant Secretary on up.

We have changes that I am sure are going to be very impactful for the entire organization in the next several months. We have changed how we are doing our Foreign Service oral exam with regard to using the technology that we have all come to know and, perhaps, not love, with remote interviews and that is going to help us expand our reach throughout the nation.

So we have taken several steps, but most importantly, ensuring that the entire organization understands it counts. We are holding people accountable. If you want to be promoted, we are holding people accountable for their behavior if they are not supportive and making us the best organization that we can be.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I have many other questions, but in deference to my colleagues, let me turn to the ranking member.

Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

I heard your statements and I think everything that has been said, certainly, is laudable.

What I would like to hear a little more is about the details of recruiting. Could both of you touch on that a bit? How do you go out and recruit specifically for the agencies and then, specifically, how do you focus on diversity recruitment, in detail?

Either way. Jump ball.

Ms. DIALLO. Thank you, Senator, for your question.

Through the Global Development Partnership Initiative, USAID will build a responsive and resourceful and resilient workforce by increasing the size and diversity of our permanent career workforce and providing flexibility to hire noncareer direct staff.

Senator RISCH. How did you do that specifically? Did you run ads in magazines? Did you go on TV? Did you do it on—how did you do that, mechanically?

Ms. DIALLO. It is a current program that we are running right now and so what we are doing is through those methods, sir, and through nontraditional means as well, including outreach to minority-serving institutions.

USAID held its first HBCU conference last year and the first Hispanic-serving institution conference as well where we had about 3,000 attending.

Senator RISCH. Where were those held?

Ms. DIALLO. It was virtual, sir.

Senator RISCH. I see.

Ms. DIALLO. So in addition to that outreach, it increases the awareness of USAID and our jobs. We have also developed a new recruitment video that promotes the careers in Foreign and Civil service and it features USAID employees who represent the agency's diversity.

Senator RISCH. What about personal interviews when you are hiring someone? What does a person have to do if they, say, live in Idaho and they want to go to work at the State Department?

Ms. DIALLO. I would have to get the details exactly from our HR colleagues, sir, but my understanding is that we hold virtual interviews with people all across the world.

Senator RISCH. So a person does not have to appear personally?

Ms. DIALLO. Currently, no.

Senator RISCH. Go ahead.

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you for the question.

We also do remote interviews at this point that I mentioned earlier, and so we have been able to increase our reach across the nation, the middle parts as well. I am from Ohio so I think this is very important.

We have expanded our diplomats in residence so we are going to be sending them to more college campuses. We hold recruitment events across the country and overseas as well because there are Americans studying abroad.

We use our hometown diplomat program that I have participated in many times over my 30-plus career when I have gone home to the Midwest, to Ohio, and to neighboring states, reaching out to colleges and universities and community colleges in states that are not on either coast.

We have informal diplomats in residence. I started one myself when I left the State Department in 2017. I reached out to colleges in Ohio to offer my services to support students who did not have access to those Washington, DC, universities to talk to them about the Foreign Service exam, to help them prepare for it, to look at internships in the Washington, DC area if they were going to be studying here or virtual ones that would help give them a leg up.

I have had conversations with other retirees who are doing that in different parts of the country as well.

Finally, we have started a collaboration with the Association of Community Colleges because, as we all know, you do not even need a college degree to join the Department of State. You have to pass our entry procedures.

So you do not have to go to a 4-year college on either coast or in the middle of the country. Community colleges have an amazing array of Americans who would bring background experience and knowledge that we need, and so we are doing additional outreach in that area as well.

Also, community colleges have a wide array of Americans, extremely diverse, whether it is geographic, racial, ethnic, background, et cetera, that we want to reach and tap and we are taking strides to do so.

Senator RISCH. What percent of college campuses do you think that the State Department visits recruiting each year?

Probably not exact, but can you give me a general sense of that?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I would ask you to take the question back to see if our full time talent management colleagues have an idea of that, but it is only going to be an idea because people like me go out because we love to work for the Department of State. So we are going to be reaching college campuses and the Department will not even know it.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. My time is up, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me thank both of our witnesses for your service to our country. We thank you for taking on this challenge.

Diversity at the State Department is critically important, as both of you have said. America's strength is in our values and we should be judged by our actions. So diversity is a very important goal that we need to obtain. We also have so many challenges in international diplomacy. We need all the talent of all of Americans in our State Department.

Then for effectiveness of our foreign policy we need a workforce that represents this nation. So for all those reasons, it is critically important that we achieve the goals that you have expressed.

So the chairman's numbers are extremely disappointing. We have lost over a decade of progress in diversity at the State Department. That is difficult to make up. It takes time for us to achieve these objectives.

Yes, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for holding this hearing. This hearing is solely focused on this issue, but I want to tell you, we have raised these issues with senior representatives at the State Department in many hearings on oversight of the Department, generally, and I am going to tell you I have heard some of the same replies from those officials that I am hearing today.

I am concerned that we really are not going to see progress, and I point out the GAO report that was issued in 2020 that showed the deficiencies in regards to what we needed to do on diversity, and then last week they issued the report, "State Department Additional Actions Needed to Improve Workplace Diversity and Inclusion," and it points out the deficiencies in performance measures and accountability.

I have heard you mention, Madam Ambassador, that you are dealing with performance and accountability, but we have not seen the specifics.

So how can you reassure this committee that you have listened to the challenges we have had for a long time at State Department, not having adequate performance measures and not having adequate accountability to make sure we achieve our objectives? What is different under your leadership?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

It was important from the very beginning when we started this mission that it be clear this time is different. Our credibility with our workforce demanded it. Our credibility with you and the American people demanded it, and so we have taken concrete steps with regard to accountability for actually moving this forward in addition to putting the need for support for DEIA in our performance evaluations.

Again, this was a clear signal to all of our workforce from top to bottom that this work is important, that we are taking it seriously, that it is going to count with regard to your ability to be promoted in the Foreign Service, and it is for senior leaders down to the entry level. Everyone has to address this. It is part of the civil service job performance element for those who supervise. So we are sending a clear signal there.

We have released guidance on integrating DEIA into our post-integrated country strategies. So this is not Washington-focused. This is around the world.

We have strengthened our policy on vetting. We get back to that accountability. People can talk the talk, but are they doing their best to ensure that we have the best representing our nation.

One of the ways that we have done this is to ensure that I am on the committees that select senior positions—chiefs of mission, deputy chiefs of mission, deputy assistant secretaries, and principal officers.

So everyone heading up the ladder understands that this issue and their support, participation, impactful work on this issue is going to count with regard to whether they are going to be tapped for leadership positions.

So those are things that we have done with regard to accountability so that people understand that we are serious, and we continue to make the point in our actions and in our words because we know that we have a credibility gap. We know what those numbers are.

Senator CARDIN. Let me just conclude by—you started by saying that you have invested a lot of resources in getting the specific demographic information about the workforce broken down by Department, et cetera. Will you make that information available to this committee on a regular basis?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Yes.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cruz.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Abercrombie-Winstanley, the Biden administration, I believe, is staffed by radicals. The State Department has consistently alienated our friends and appeased our enemies.

You are empowered as the State Department's first standalone Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer. Your mandate is to promote a concept on the left called equity, which, I think, is nothing more than brazen discrimination.

You were appointed in April 2021, and as you extensively testified this morning, you introduced fundamental changes to the State Department hiring practices in line with the mandate of equity to affirmatively and aggressively discriminate.

A year after your appointment in April 2022, the State Department released its "equity action plan" to integrate these so-called equity principles into "all aspects of State Department foreign affairs."

That very week, just days after you published the equity action plan and 1 year after you began your tenure, a senior State Department official broadly distributed what I consider to be a very troubling email. I have a copy of that email next to me. Let me read from a part of the email.

The email says that hiring practices have developed inside the State Department so that, and I will quote, "that certain candidates could not be hired because they have a disability—they are white men. They are straight white men. They are not of the 'right religion.'" All of these are verbatim quotes from the email of a senior State Department official.

My first question to you is did you clear this guidance?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you for the question, Senator.

I have never seen that before.

Senator CRUZ. You have never seen the email before?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I have never seen it.

Senator CRUZ. You did not know it had been sent?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. This is the first time I am seeing it, sir.

Senator CRUZ. Do you know that it is happening, that the State Department perceives—and this is, I believe, as a result of your work—that they have a mandate to discriminate against—as the email says, to discriminate against people with disabilities, to discriminate against white men, to discriminate against straight white men, and to discriminate against people that are not of the “right religion.”

I am not sure what that meant, but I suspect it meant that if someone is a Christian. I do not know that because that is not what the email says.

Are you aware these practices are happening at the State Department?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Again, thank you for the question. I am definite and certain that they are not happening at the State Department, but again—

Senator CRUZ. So do you believe the senior State Department official who sent this email was lying?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Senator, I cannot comment. I do not know who that is from. I do not know if it is—I have never seen it before.

Senator CRUZ. So you are the Chief Diversity Officer and you are arguing you are certain discrimination is not happening at the State Department.

Is that right? Is that what you are testifying? It is what you just said.

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I am saying that it is against the law and we certainly are not overtly or on purpose breaking the law in the Department of State.

Certainly, there are members of our organization who do discriminate, who do harass, who do bully, which is why we are trying to put in place programs to address it and to strengthen accountability for those who do break the law.

Senator CRUZ. So you did not clear this guidance, and after it was sent you are testifying now that you remained unaware of it. So no one showed it to you.

You were in the State Department for a year. You were empowered in your position in an unprecedented way. In your testimony, you talked about creating a DEIA data working group about hiring practices and a dedicated DEIA core precept, and your testimony is you did not know that this discrimination was happening. My staff can transmit to you the exact header and the details of this email.

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Okay.

Senator CRUZ. I have to say, Ambassador, I find it a little bit amazing that this discrimination is being reported to be ongoing in the Administration and you are professing to be unaware of it.

I am reminded from a line from the movie “Office Space”—what would you say you do around here? What is your job if not to stop discrimination? Unfortunately, I believe what your job in practice is, is encouraging this discrimination.

This is a manifestation. You just said a minute ago in testimony your hiring and promotion in the State Department will depend on complying with the edicts from your office.

Is it good for the State Department and good for the United States Government to be actively discriminating based on disability, based on race, based on being a straight white man, or based on not being the right religion? Is that good or bad?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Senator, as I am looking at the email it does appear to me—and my eyesight is not great—that people have reported comments. That is certain candidates.

Senator CRUZ. So what it says is, unfortunately, over the past several months, a number of people have reported comments that certain candidates could not be hired because.

So these are employees at the State Department saying we cannot hire someone because, and here is what the email lists. They have a disability. They are white men. They are straight white men or they are not of the right religion.

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Indeed. So I would say comments does not at all say it is, indeed, happening.

Senator CRUZ. Comments from hiring people saying we cannot hire them because of it.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the senator has well expired.

I would ask the senator to submit copies for the rest of the committee so we could see it, and if there is an attribution, which I do not understand if there is or is not one—if there is an attribution then that person should come forward and it should be fully investigated what he has to say. Otherwise, we have an anonymous entity.

The next person is Senator Booker.

Senator BOOKER. I want to thank the chairman, who has been championing this issue not just in the State Department, but throughout our society for a long time.

I also think that I state the obvious when I say that all through the private sector, through companies that are run by people all across the political spectrum, they see diversity as a strength.

We know this from Harvard Business School studies to big consulting firms like McKinsey. Companies do better when they have diverse teams at the table.

My mom, having been an HR officer for IBM focusing on these issues way back in the seventies and the eighties, understands that their competitive edge was improved by making their workforce more reflect the population of the United States.

As someone who has traveled around the world now in the privileged office that I hold, I have to say it is always disappointing when I sit in a State Department team in a foreign country and

see very little diversity, not because I just like to see diverse folks, but because I know diverse teams are better teams.

That is why I am extraordinarily grateful for the mission that you both hold and the work that you both do. Again, having grown up at a kitchen table listening to a mother that was trying to help serve the bottom line of IBM by making more diverse teams, I know how difficult it is on everything from pipeline issues to even retention issues because often when you promote diverse candidates, because there is such a paucity of them, they have a lot of demands for other opportunities.

So I just want to say thank you, first and foremost. I know your dedication to your mission. I know the hill that you have to climb.

I know, as the chairman put forth, we have a lot of really urgent work to do. Again, this is not just a radical agenda of some left-wing politician. This is an agenda that I see from the tech industry, from manufacturing across the board in the United States of America. We know when we draw from the full talent of this country we are so much better.

Tim Scott and I—again, in a bipartisan way—both understood that one of the biggest barriers to often getting folks in is just the experiences they start having as young as college students and for paid internship programs.

We put forth a bipartisan bill for paid internships. I was very happy to see, even though the bill has yet to pass, that there was \$10 million put in the last budget in the State Department.

I would just love to hear how that is going and if there are some things that you might be able to tell me that we should be thinking about as we look forward to trying to create that pipeline of people seeing this as an experience and a possible profession.

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

I must take the question back for details to my colleagues in GTM, but I know that people are hard at work getting ready the program to start our paid internship program.

One of the most important things is to have the money to continue it. We do not want to have it for one round of young people who need the money, who deserve the money. It is going to allow us to reach a wider array of Americans and bring them in to our organization and we do not want it for just a limited time. We need a steady, full pipeline. So that would be my request on that, but as additional information, I know, we are planning for the fall and people are hard at work.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The requested information referred to above follows:]

We thank the Senate for the continued support for the Paid Internship program. We are excited to welcome the first cohort of paid interns this Fall after launching the program in the Spring of 2022. We received over 2,000 applications in less than a week after the application period was open for the initial pilot of 200 interns. The Department released the Spring 2023 vacancy announcement for the Paid Internship program at the beginning of July and we expect to welcome 300 interns for that cycle. Our goal is to provide students opportunities to gain experience and insight into the business of diplomacy to advance U.S. interests worldwide. Providing interns meaningful assignments and mentoring are essential for a successful internship. Offering paid internships broadens the pool of participants to include those that may not be able to afford to travel and support themselves in Washington, DC or abroad for an unpaid internship, thereby reaching previously underserved popu-

lations of students. All internship and fellowship programs are, first and foremost, a recruiting tool and are not meant to fill staffing gaps. We work with each of our bureaus to reflect recruitment and policy priorities for the Department.

Senator BOOKER. Yes. No, it is extraordinary. I know when the CBC started offering—the Congressional Black Caucus—started offering paid internship programs here in the Capitol it made such a big difference because so many students do not apply for internships because they are not paid. So I appreciate you affirming that.

Can I also ask you, one of the things that GAO's 1989 and 2020 reports indicated is the State Department has not really been successful in identifying some of the barriers towards hiring when it comes to hiring and advancing women and minorities in the Department?

The recent 2022 report acknowledged significant improvement, but that there is still a lot of work to be done. The recommendation from the Government Accountability Office is that the Department create a plan to improve its barrier analysis process.

That is the challenge and, in your view, what has hindered the State Department with regard to identifying the barriers to hiring a diverse workforce in the first place?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you, Senator.

Being diplomatic, I will say more resources and focus on actually doing it was necessary. It is one of the main tools that my office used.

So we have four barrier analyses underway as we speak, and so we are going to take a hard look because that is how we find out what we need to do. We have got to have that. So my office focuses very much on barrier analysis.

Senator BOOKER. Well, listen, I will submit some other questions for the record. I just want to say you all are great patriots.

If this country is going to compete on the playing field that is an international global playing field right now, we cannot leave our best talent—some of our best talent on the sidelines or on the bench.

So what you all are doing is making our country stronger and better in a more increasingly complex and challenging global world and I am deeply, deeply grateful for your work.

I celebrate you both, and my office is here to help in any way we can.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Before I call on Senator Rubio, I was just struck. Our colleague made the declaration that equity is discrimination.

So I thought that maybe I had in my schooling lost the concept of what equity was so I looked up—according to Oxford Dictionary, equity is defined as the quality of being fair and impartial, the freedom from bias or favoritism. So if equity is discrimination, then I assume justice, under that view, is inequality.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Ambassador Abercrombie-Winstanley, the President's executive order—I think it is 13985—it provides a list of underserved communities and it mandates that executive agencies seek to promote equitable, fair, and impartial outcomes for those communities.

I, too, believe not only is diversity our strength as a country, but if, in fact, our workforce does not reflect our population then it merits an inquiry into what are the impediments—are there any artificial impediments that are leading to that outcome.

In the list of the underserved communities are groups that have historically faced discrimination in this country on the basis of their race, their religion, their gender, but it also includes a list of other groups: first-generation college students, which I happen to be; people with limited English speaking ability; immigrants; the elderly; former convicts; people from rural areas; military spouses; single parents. All good groups.

I am just curious. If we include all the people that have been discriminated against historically plus all these other groups, who is not an underserved community?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you for your question, Senator.

I can tell you that my office looks at this two ways: a) that our responsibility is focused on those groups who have been historically underrepresented in the Department of State who are protected classes, and so that is a more narrow list of people than the first group that you mentioned.

The reality is as we work to remove barriers to those groups we are, in fact, leveling the playing field for every group. We are focused on making merit-based decisions, so removing those artificial barriers.

When we do things like ensure that people can interview for the Department of State via a virtual technique, while it might, indeed, help groups that are in the center of the country or from families that cannot afford a \$1,000 plane ticket to fly to San Francisco or Washington, DC, it is also going to touch on other groups of people who also have that problem.

In that way, we are able to hit that wide variety of—

Senator RUBIO. No, and I understand, but when you add to the—and I know you did not write the executive order, but what I am saying is that when underserved communities expands to include all these other groups, which are all—there is nothing—I understand the struggles or the challenges of each of these groups individually—it just seems like we have really narrowed the pool of people who we do not consider underserved to a very narrow category of people, which obviously begs the question what information—do we keep a list of, for example, the religious affiliations of all the employees? Do we keep a list of everybody's ethnicity?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. We collect limited information on demographic information and we have a number of employee organizations that group around many of these other characteristics that you have mentioned.

Whether it be singles at State, working parents at State, veterans, none of those are protected classes per se, but they do have issues that employees talk about, work with our HR or global talent management to ensure that they have a level playing field and the ability to serve to the best of their ability when they are in the Department.

Senator RUBIO. I guess my point is I do not know how we can possibly make these efforts to help these groups—a broad array of

individual groups that have been defined as underserved without collecting information about all these topics.

Are they the first to go to college in their family? What is their religion? What is their race? How well do they speak English? Are they immigrants?

I mean, that is the point I am trying to make. We are collecting a lot of information.

My time is short. I did want to ask you, I am curious how U.S. interests were advanced by promoting a film festival in Portugal that highlighted “Minyan” which is a film about a 17-year-old boy who has sexual relations with an adult bartender, and “Saint-Narcisse,” which is a film about incestuous twins.

How would promoting—which was part of some sort of drag queen film festival in Portugal—how does that advance our national interest and how much taxpayer money was spent putting on this film festival?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you for the question, Senator.

I will take it back to get an answer for you. I do not know.

Senator RUBIO. You are not familiar with this—

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I am not familiar.

Senator RUBIO. So you do not know how much we spend or how many State Department employees work—you are just not familiar with the topic?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I am not familiar with those films or that festival, Senator.

Senator RUBIO. Okay. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you handle festivals as part of your portfolio?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I do not.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

Senator—

Senator RUBIO. Well, does she handle—no, no, Mr. Chairman. That is not the point. The point is it is part of the diversity—

The CHAIRMAN. The point is I just want to clarify for the record that she does not handle festivals. It is a legitimate question and I look forward for her to get back with the answer.

Senator RUBIO. She handles diversity and equity issues, which this was part of the diversity and equity initiative.

The CHAIRMAN. But that initiative is not necessarily one that is diversity and equity. It may have been part of a State Department program—

Senator RUBIO. Actually, it was advertised as such, Mr. Chairman. It was advertised as such.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Then I look forward to seeing the answer to that as well.

[EDITOR’S NOTE.—The requested information referred to above follows:]

The United States strongly supports protecting and promoting the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons. We support freedom of expression and do not censor our grantee’s content or products.

In September 2021, through its competitive small grants program, U.S. Embassy Lisbon issued a \$10,000 grant to the Queer Lisboa group in charge of running one of the most popular LGBTQI+ film festivals in Europe since 1997. The grant supported the screening of the iconic 1991 LGBTQI+ film “My Own Private Idaho”

amongst other films by Gus Van Sant and influential American LGBTQI+ filmmakers, bringing an American perspective and talent to the festival.

This award made up one part of our overall Public Diplomacy engagement between the United States and Portugal, supporting our shared values on human rights and social inclusion of LGBTQI+ persons, while advancing our overall diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility efforts.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch, and thank you to our two witnesses today.

I am so pleased that you are here. I think this shows intentionality and leadership by this Administration.

I do not often make a practice of responding to comments by my colleague, the junior senator from Texas. It is not often productive, necessary, or even relevant to the conduct of hearings before this committee.

Today, I feel I have to. He launched into a diatribe against the Administration, announcing that, in his view, the Biden administration is run by radicals and he cited as evidence for that directly your job roles, the fact that there is now a Chief Diversity Officer at the State Department and USAID.

I have a little experience with this field from my time in the private sector. I actually spent 8 years at a global manufacturing company and a global manufacturing company that is a profit making enterprise, not a social service organization.

Over several years, in consultation with McKinsey, its leadership concluded that the demonstrable lack of diversity in our company in who was being recruited and trained and hired and promoted and who made the key leadership decisions was having a demonstrably negative impact on outcomes.

This was not some woke agenda. This is something that the vast majority of America's highest performing most profitable companies have also concluded.

I just took a quick look here in the last few minutes online and I will tell you that the following corporations have chief diversity officers: 3M, Dell, Hilton, Nationwide, Wal-Mart.

The list can and should go on because a chief diversity officer is someone who is at the table in a C Suite in a company making recommendations, suggesting strategies for how to make sure that the most talented possible people end up working for that company.

It requires intentionality, it requires strategic investment, if we are going to have the best possible Americans serving us overseas as diplomats and development professionals.

Now, in the dozen years I have been blessed to have the chance to serve here in the Senate, I have also had the incredible opportunity to meet Foreign Service Officers and USAID development professionals overseas.

These are very tough jobs. They are very demanding, and it requires our very best.

So I simply wanted to ask both of you: How important is sustained effort at making progress in ensuring that the two agencies you help serve and lead are, in fact, recruiting and retaining and promoting our very best, which requires diversity in terms of the recruitment pool and inclusion in terms of how the cultures of the entities work and equity in terms of the opportunities in your workplaces.

How important is it that we sustain our investment in paid interns, something that we in the Senate have seen in our own offices makes a critical difference in who we are able to recruit and retain in our offices?

How important is it that we sustain the Rangel and Pickering and Payne Fellowships? How important is it that we have a chief diversity officer for State and USAID, not just in this Administration, but in the next and the next and the next?

If I could ask one question of the two of you today, it would be how important is sustained effort around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Madam Ambassador.

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you so much for the question.

It is key, and the statistics that the chairman put up earlier about how minimal our progress has been over past years makes the case for me. That is why putting resources, personnel dedicated, experienced, knowledgeable to the issue and having the support from you with regard to continuing the paid internships is absolutely crucial.

We are going to change those statistics, but it is going to come from sustained effort from the leaders, from the workforce itself, and I am certain that we can continue because we have done a climate survey. We know that the vast majority of our employees understand what we are doing and support it. We have got that knowledge already.

We are going to change our organization, but sustaining it is absolutely key.

Senator COONS. Ms. Diallo.

Ms. DIALLO. Thank you very much, Senator, for that question.

At USAID, I believe that we have actually put in place a lot of initiatives and programs that will ensure that our DEIA efforts are sustained.

For years DEIA has been critical to the workforce there and I do believe that beyond my tenure it will continue. We have a Respectful, Inclusive, and Safe Environments training, trained over 6,000 staff members across the agency and in our missions, and offered over 650 RISE training events and seminars.

We are happy to say that our 2022 FS—Foreign Service Officer cohort was the most diverse to date with a breakdown of 52 percent making up racial and ethnic minorities. This includes a higher percentage of Black, or African Americans, at 18 percent, Hispanics at 18 percent, and Asians at 14 percent.

Senator COONS. Thank you. Thank you both.

I just, in quick closing, want to commend Administrator Power for coming to Delaware and signing an MOU with our HBCU Delaware State for research and also to open that opportunity channel and, frankly, Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield and I, and Secretary Blinken and I, have spoken about this repeatedly. It is important we sustain this effort.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for today's hearing.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the witnesses for the important work that you do.

I hate it when people act as if there was no history before we walked into a room and pretend that the reality of discrimination against groups of people did not actually happen.

Many groups of people—Irish—faced discrimination, but others have faced much more serious discrimination that still needs to be repaired and remedied. The discrimination was not accidental. It was intentional, and the discrimination was perpetrated by the State Department and by Congress.

The actions that you are undertaking are not just about fairness, but they are also about something very fundamental, which is atonement for past problems that have dramatically reduced the diversity of the federal workforce.

The federal workforce was integrated in the years after the Civil War, but when Woodrow Wilson became president in 1913, he issued orders to his cabinet secretaries requiring that the federal civil workforce be resegregated in ways that were directly contrary to African-American employees, and that turned the federal workforce from a model at the time into one that was one of the most harshly segregated at the time.

That executive order hurt African Americans, and African American under-representation in federal employment persisted for decades as a result of an action of the President of the United States.

What about the United States Senate? Joe McCarthy led a set of hearings in the 1950s attacking LGBTQ employees from this chamber, the greatest deliberative body in the world.

Hearings were held, one of which was titled “The Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government.” Those hearings led to the issuance of a widely read report that falsely asserted that gay people posed a security risk. The report of the Senate found that gay people were unsuitable employees because, “One homosexual can pollute an entire government office.”

In response to the Senate hearings and Senator McCarthy’s allegations, the Department of State increased persecution of LGBTQ people and more than a thousand Department of State employees were dismissed because of their sexual orientation.

Now, I think it is important that we think about people who are not represented for any reason. If they are from rural America, if they are from a minority religion, it is all incredibly important, but when this body and this government has intentionally perpetrated policies that were hostile to African Americans or hostile to LGBTQ or hostile to anyone else, how dare—how dare—someone come and question your efforts to create an equitable and fair workplace where people who have been historically kicked around by the Federal Government can see progress moving forward that will make them have confidence that they will be reviewed fairly and on their merit, should they want to work for us?

That is why the work that you are doing is so very important, to my way of thinking.

Now, the GAO reports that have been done about the State Department, I want to just focus on one piece of it. Surveys of State Department employees tend to be more favorable about the State Department’s recruiting efforts than about the State Department’s retention efforts, and as you move further up in the hierarchy at the State Department, the challenges of representation of commu-

nities that have been discriminated against in the past tends to dwindle.

Tell us about what you are doing on the retention side to make sure that high-quality diverse individuals who get over that tough hurdle and come into the State Department stay and make a career out of it.

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Senator, thank you for the question.

This is a very important aspect of it. You are right, we do better with recruiting than retaining. So we have stood up a retention unit. My office works very closely with them. They have begun exit interviews and we are getting qualitative interviews. So if someone says they are intending to leave, we are also delving in to the why.

They are also going to be doing stay interviews, and I was just speaking this last evening about habitually doing it at year 19 because year 20 is when you are vested and can leave if you are age 50.

So we are looking to ensure we understand what keeps people going and what is making them think about leaving so that we can correct it before they go.

So a lot of attention is going to retention.

Senator KAINE. Ms. Diallo, do you have any anything additional to add to that?

Ms. DIALLO. Thank you, Senator.

Just to say that USAID has a very robust coaching program where we are providing executive coaching to our career staff and our retention data in 2022 actually shows that we are at a low at 4.2 percent, which is down from 7.7 in 2021. I believe that the efforts that we are doing to provide professional development and training is actually proving and serving that benefit.

Senator KAINE. Thank you. Thank you.

Chair Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN [presiding]. Thank you, Senator Kaine. I am filling in for Senator Menendez. It just happens that I get to question next.

Probably even more concerning, Senator Kaine, than the restrictions that you cited that the Federal Government has done over our history is the fact that there are some who want to return to those restrictive policies and they want to return to them not just in terms of the Federal Government, but across our society, and that is particularly concerning.

Thank you both very much for being here and for what you continue to do on an ongoing basis.

Last December, more than 200 Foreign Service Officers sent a letter to the Department expressing concern about access to reproductive services for women serving the country abroad as an FSO or their family members.

Can you talk about the impact of that access to comprehensive reproductive services is having on women who—and their families who are interested in working for the State Department or USAID?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you for the question, Senator.

I know that this is an issue. I know about the letter that was written and that our leadership has sent out reassuring messages

to the workforce about the importance, and that our medical bureau is looking to provide details about what is available and how support will be provided, and I will ask to take the question back so that I can get you a fully informed response to what steps are being taken.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, because my second question was going to be is this something that your office is working to address. So I would be very interested in hearing that, and one of the things that I understand is that nearly 80 percent of medical officers at the Bureau of Medical Services are men—predominantly white men.

So that lack of diversity, obviously, has an impact on those people that are being served by that agency.

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I would not disagree.

Senator SHAHEEN. You do not need to respond to that. That is a declarative statement.

In that same letter from last December, the FSOs also expressed concern about the inconsistent availability of rape kits, and the IG has previously noted that sexual harassment is likely underreported in the Department, that a key reason is the lack of confidence in the Department's ability to resolve complaints and that this inconsistent access to rape kits and lack of training by staff fundamentally undermines the ability of those who are assaulted to seek justice and accountability for any crimes committed against them.

Can you talk about how you are responding to that kind of concern?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you for the question, Senator.

It is extremely important. We are working, of course, with the Office of Civil Rights where our anti-harassment program currently sits.

In my formal remarks, and I will repeat now, we need more funding because we need investigators to move the investigations open because we have informed our employees about the importance of reporting, of the importance of eliminating the behavior, but reports of harassment have gone up so there is increased credibility that we are serious about this. We need the money to increase the investigators so that we can get to the bottom and end the behavior. So yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I am glad to hear that that is a focus of what you are looking at.

One of the initiatives that I know is not directly under either of your portfolios, but that I think is important and helps address the gender aspect of what we are trying to do when we talk about inclusion is the Women, Peace, and Security Act, which was signed in 2017, and it asks us to prioritize policymaking through a gender lens, particularly when it comes to national security.

Can either of you speak to whether your offices are looking at the WPS initiative and how that is being integrated in the State Department and USAID?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you for the question, Senator.

I can say that my office does not specifically look at it. It is in the Office of Global Women's Issues, a wonderful office, and we have our new Special Representative for Racial Equity, who is taking over the agency equity plan.

So that is where those issues lie, but of course we are cooperative and supportive because it is inside our organization as well as outside our organization.

So I will leave it there.

Neneh.

Senator SHAHEEN. Ms. Diallo.

Ms. DIALLO. Thank you, Senator.

We actually also, like the Ambassador, do not manage the gender program. However, we do have a senior gender coordinator and advisor who also reports to the administrator, and I will be happy to take your question back and—the question for the record.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Thank you both.

Senator Markey.

Senator MARKEY. I yield to Senator Murphy.

Senator SHAHEEN. Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Senator Markey.

Senator Markey is next. I have yet to vote. So I was just going to sneak in one quick question, not take my full time.

I appreciate it, Senator Markey.

Ambassador Winstanley, I appreciate our work together. You and I, along with Representative Castro, chaired a task force put together by the Truman Center to make recommendations about innovation at the State Department and fostering diversity and inclusion, and enjoyed doing that work together.

One of the recommendations that we made as part of that report was to revitalize the Office of Subnational Diplomacy at the Department of State. This is a capacity that the State Department had long ago. I think Secretary Blinken is committed to bringing it back, and we have bipartisan legislation here that would make it a permanent capacity at the State Department.

What it, basically, does is allows an ability to organize state public servants, local elected officials, to represent the United States abroad.

Now, that is just good diplomacy because China is doing that at scale. We are not, but it also is a really quick way to diversify the voices that are representing the United States abroad.

The ability to create a more diverse permanent staffing pipeline can take some time, but you can very quickly make sure that we have a diverse set of voices representing the United States abroad if you have more state and local actors out there, even in brief bursts of diplomacy showing up around the world representing the United States.

So just my only question to you is how does the effort to rebuild state and local diplomacy fit into this question of diversity and inclusion work?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

I could not agree with you more and, certainly, having been in leadership positions around the world when we had state and local officials come to visit and sent them out where delegations are to

speak, I know the value of those voices externally as well as internally.

Not to take away anybody's thunder, so I know simply that we are moving forward with this and I will take your question back for further input from the Department, but I know we are moving forward.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The requested information referred to above follows:]

The Department recognizes the role of subnational diplomacy in advancing U.S. values and priorities on the international stage, as well as the fact that state and local officials are increasingly interacting with and collaborating with global partners. As part of the Secretary's modernization agenda, the Department is committed to engaging state and local actors on a range of national security priorities, and this includes building inclusive recruitment pipelines and advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility more broadly in our foreign policy.

Senator MURPHY. Great.

Thanks, Senator Markey, for allowing me to jump in quickly.

We have legislation that we can pass or include as part of an authorization bill to create this new office, but I think Secretary Blinken is intending to move forward, seeing it as a real benefit to our ability to be everywhere and anywhere around the world.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

Senator Markey, I am going to leave the hearing in your capable hands since I also have not voted and I need to go do that.

Senator MARKEY. Would I then conclude the hearing?

Senator SHAHEEN. Senator Menendez is coming back.

Senator MARKEY. He is? Okay. So I would then put the hearing into recess, I think, at that point. Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Senator MARKEY [presiding]. So you have talked about the importance of using an evidence-based approach to identify barriers to equitable merit-based hiring and career outcomes.

How is the Department of State collecting data on diversity, including on LGBTQ+ persons in the Department?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you for the question, Senator.

We have our employee portal where employees can voluntarily provide information—demographic information—about themselves. We are working with—we have started working with the Census Department. We are working with another government agency to put together a pilot to break down the LGBTQAI+ nomenclature to ensure that we get it right, but that will allow people to identify themselves because we have already learned from our employees that often they do not provide information because they do not see themselves in the choices available.

We are trying to expand those choices.

Senator MARKEY. Ms. Diallo, currently USAID collects diversity data sporadically on 70 percent of the workforce. How would you suggest that AID modify its data collection process to capture—to ensure that you are capturing a more full picture of your workforce?

Ms. DIALLO. Thank you, Senator. I truly appreciate that question and the timing.

We have actually designed our first annual DEIA survey, which will capture data across all hiring mechanisms and will establish a baseline of DEIA metrics.

This data will be used to evaluate the composition of our workforce and identify any potential barriers in hiring, promotion, professional development, and retention practices. We are hoping to complete this—well, the design has been completed, but we are hoping to launch it pretty soon.

Senator MARKEY. Beautiful.

Ms. Diallo, in your testimony, you talked about the number of partnerships USAID has with minority-serving institutions and how you plan to expand and deepen these partnerships.

I am encouraged by those steps. While there are specific fellowships and programs targeting diversity in USAID's Foreign Service, similar programs do not exist for the civil service.

Would you recommend any specific programs or steps that would specifically target diversity in USAID's civil service?

Ms. DIALLO. Target diversity in USAID's civil service in terms of programs?

Senator MARKEY. That is right.

Ms. DIALLO. I believe that we are very intentional with our professional development programs that we have. As you know, it is very difficult to target hiring diverse candidates in the civil service.

However, we have programs and initiatives across the agency. We have 13 DEIA advisors currently and are hiring more. They are within—across our bureaus and missions and we are—have over 50 DEIA councils who are working on initiatives and programs to actually help address that and the very, very robust employee resource groups as well.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Thank you both for all your work. The more we can have your agencies look like the United States of America overseas, I think, the better the response we are going to get from the countries that we are dealing with.

We are them and we are the product of their family members coming to our country and becoming citizens and, in return, that brings an extra level of sophistication.

I know that being Irish, as we are on the 25th anniversary of the Peace Accords in Northern Ireland, I know how much interest Irish Americans took in trying to understand and solve those problems and it was, obviously, the Irish who had to solve them, but Americans can play a big role because they have a deeper understanding of the cultural, political, religious underpinnings of the countries from which their families came.

I want to thank you both so much for all of your work, and I will just stop right here—oh, and yield back to the chairman.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Thank you, Senator Markey.

Let me go through a couple of final questions.

First of all, I just—I do not know the email that was exhibited, where it came from, who it is from, but I will say as a classification it might fall under the heading that if I am the one who had everything and now I have to create a more equitable set of circumstances, I do not like having to give up what I had, and there is some of that.

I am sure that there will be some who will resent the fact that equity means that you do not get to keep it all, that you are not going to get 90 percent of the shot just because that you are from a certain class.

Do you ever experience any of that?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you for the question, Senator.

Yes, I am well aware that I have concerned colleagues about what the change may mean for them. I have been able to, certainly, in one-on-one conversations, town halls, and in the building in Washington, in Charleston, I was a couple of weeks ago, and around the world as I travel, I make sure that people can ask questions anonymously because those who have that sort of concern, I want them to voice it.

We need to know it so that we can address it and reassure that what we are doing to increase equity is good for everyone. Though, as you say, some people will have to give up some of the marbles, as it were, there is no one in my organization that says, I want something that I did not earn. I want something that I did not get because I am the right person, that I am the best candidate for it, et cetera.

Nobody admits to that. So once you put that out there and say then we are going to make this merit based, recognizing that that old boy and girls club that is so popular in the Department of State does not include a lot of people from a lot of different backgrounds.

So increasing transparency, increasing accountability, helps everyone. It is not just underrepresented groups that get bullied in the Department.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask you, if you are Black, Hispanic, woman, LGBTQ, and unqualified, will this help you get a position?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. It will not. It will not.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask you a couple more specific questions so we understand and then we will bring this to a conclusion.

What, if any, technical assistance or other support are you receiving to execute your plans from OPM's recently created government-wide Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility led by Dr. Janice Underwood?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Yes. I have a texting relationship with OPM on these issues. She has been a great supporter. We are talking about what makes a highly effective Chief Diversity Inclusion Office, what are the resources that are needed.

We are in those discussions and I think eventually OPM will come out with a plan of what—if you are going to be serious about this work what do you need with regard to staff, with regard to resources, with regard to counsel, information that way, where it should sit, et cetera.

OPM has been very supportive and clear and exchanging information with us. It has been very helpful.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask you, are you working, if at all, with NSC's Interagency Working Group on the national security workforce on addressing biases in security clearance processes, accommodating individuals with disabilities, among other issues the working group was charged with in the President's memorandum?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Yes. I will say at the beginning of my tenure I was having conversations with the NSC. I have not had discussions on that specifically. They just told me to get to work.

The CHAIRMAN. I hope you will, and you have a very broad mandate, but very often not being able to have prolonged periods of time to get a security clearance is a hindrance to our success.

We have some committee staff that we have the challenges of getting them up a security clearance so that they can be in the appropriate setting to help their member guide them through some of the issues that may exist.

I can only imagine at State or at USAID that, in fact, if you cannot—I mean, if you cannot get a security clearance because there is something in your background that is different. Obviously, you cannot get it, but if it is because it is taking inordinate amounts of time to get it, it creates barriers to positions. I hope you will look at that.

Given the series of concerning media stories on the experience of diverse political appointees, what role does your office play in working with the White House to support those willing to serve in this capacity at our government's highest levels to advance our country's global interests?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Yes. I work with colleagues in the Secretary's office to provide support to those political appointees within the Department of State.

We are taking steps to make sure they understand how valued and supported and what the resources are within the Department, so I can speak for the State Department.

The CHAIRMAN. Sometimes diverse appointees, ultimately, face the type of pressures from colleagues that others do not because they are viewed as less than even though they are eminently qualified, and so that is a unique challenge as well.

Let me turn to budgets and resources. State's DMR McKeon noted that there was substantial funding in the Department's budget to support your efforts and implementation efforts throughout the agency at our budget hearing earlier this year. Administrator Power also indicated strong support for DEIA efforts at her hearing before the committee.

This is a question to both of you. Have you been able to onboard permanent staff with the proper expertise to complete your mandate, including data analysts and legal counsel to assist in identifying, investigating, and eliminating barriers to workforce diversity?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Thank you for the question, Senator.

We started off with nine and then moved it up to 12 full time equivalents. We, I believe, are filling our last position shortly of that 12, but we also have detailees.

I can say with great gratitude that there are a number of people in the Department who are able to do details or "Y" tours who are interested in the mission of this office.

We have very strong staff. Everybody is overworked. We are looking very much to bring on additional data scientists, and so I think in my formal remarks I did ask for continued support be-

cause the barrier analysis is our main tool. We cannot convince anybody of anything if we do not have the data.

The CHAIRMAN. So is the budget—I am asking you. This is a direct question and in hearing.

So is the budget as has been presented to the Congress as it relates to your mission going to allow you to do that? Or would you not be able to do that under the existing budget that is being proposed?

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. Understood. I certainly would say that we are going to make significant progress with the budget that we have, but recognizing that the Secretary is one who decides, and OMB and the White House, where the money goes. We make our case and we are going to do great work with the budget that we get.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate you are going to do great work with whatever you get. I am sure you will do that. The question is, is what you will get necessary to meet the mission and I am not clear that that answer is yes.

How about at USAID?

Ms. DIALLO. Thank you, Senator, and we thank you for the \$9.5 million that we have currently for fiscal year 2022 and we have made a request for \$20 million for fiscal year 2023 for an increase.

As we have just launched the DEIA strategic plan, as we are moving forward into implementation, we will be better able to assess the appropriate funding level and we will be glad to come back to you.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. We would be glad to hear from you.

Let me ask you how, in your capacity as CDIO, are you working to increase transparency, fairness, and accountability around promotions—particularly, you mentioned that you now sit in on those—and other processes, given findings just this May—May 2022—of the Inspector General report that friends and family members of State Department personnel were selected to serve on Foreign Service selection boards, in addition to long-standing reports of bias in hiring, overseas assignments, and promotion. This is May 2022.

Ambassador ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY. I am going to ask to take that question back for GTM to provide a detailed response. I will say that the Department accepted the recommendations of the Inspector General and that we are making changes as a result. The specifics, I would like to make sure I do not misspeak. I will take that question back.

The CHAIRMAN. I would like a detailed answer to that because it is May 2022. We established a year ago a chief diversity officer. In May of 2022, I do not expect to read a GAO Inspector General's report that suggests that.

I look forward to seeing how that, ultimately, shakes out and we will be looking for your written response.

Ms. Diallo, USAID's workforce comprises more than 10,000 people, approximately 70 percent of whom are not direct hires, e.g., example, Foreign Service nationals, personal services contractors, institutional support contractors, just to mention some.

Diversity data are not consistently collected on nondirect hire personnel, which, in my mind, leaves us with an incomplete understanding of USAID's workforce.

Given that persons who serve as contractors make up such a large portion of the agency and often have an advantage in their knowledge of the agency when applying for direct hire positions, is it important to understand the demographic makeup of the non-direct hire population?

Ms. DIALLO. Thank you, Senator.

You are absolutely correct. It is definitely important to understand the demographic makeup of our nondirect hires and through this DEIA survey, which we hope to launch very soon, we hope to capture that data of our nondirect hire staff.

The CHAIRMAN. So are you beginning to collect data related to DEIA issues related to nondirect hires?

Ms. DIALLO. Yes, that is what we hope to collect in this survey.

The CHAIRMAN. Lastly, my understanding—well, two final questions.

USAID has highlighted four agency programs over the years—the Donald Payne International Development Fellowship, Development Diplomats and Residents, the Pathways Internship Program, and Partnerships with Minority Serving Institutions—aimed at increasing workforce diversity primarily within the agency's Foreign Service.

However, the Payne Fellowship is relatively small and the only program that guarantees a position at the conclusion of the program, and it also does not target the civil service where Latinos are notably underrepresented.

How might these programs be strengthened and what other initiatives are needed to expand diverse recruitment and retention efforts, especially to address under representation in USAID's senior ranks?

Ms. DIALLO. Thank you for that question.

Since I began in March, we have doubled the candidates and participation of our—or at least the goal is to increase the participation of the Donald M. Payne Fellowship Program. So I believe we currently have 15 and we are hoping to double that to 30 in the next coming fiscal year.

As I mentioned earlier, we are working considerably with minority-serving institutions. Since I began, we have actually moved the coordination of all minority-serving institutions under my office where I will be overseeing with my team the coordination efforts on establishing MOUs, partnerships with these minority-serving institutions, as well as holding four conferences this year, where we will—are expanding it beyond the HBCU and HSI, but also to include tribal colleges and universities as well as Hispanic-serving institutions.

The CHAIRMAN. One final question to you.

USAID reportedly is in a legal battle with a group of women that alleges they were hired at salaries lower than those of their male peers. According to reports, and I will quote, "The specific goal of their suit is to have their salaries adjusted retroactively with back pay from 3 years before they made the complaint, which is the

legal limit. If they win, the women could receive the back pay as well as related adjustment to their retirement packages.”

Now, has USAID—I am not going to ask you about that specific case, but has USAID studied pay equity related to both sex and to race and ethnicity? If so, what conclusions have you drawn?

Ms. DIALLO. Thank you, Senator.

USAID takes very seriously the issue of pay equity, and I was made aware of the issue you are discussing and I believe that they—our HR colleagues have undertaken a robust pay equity analysis, and I believe I will be presented with that—the initial findings this week and will be happy to come back and report back to this committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, I would like to know, but I assume that while HR may be, let us say, taking the lead on that that it is a legitimate question of equity, at the end of the day, and that it should be reviewed to determine whether there are institutional biases.

I am not saying that they are. I am just saying that it is something worthy of being looked at to determine whether there are institutional biases in which women are being paid less than other counterparts in the same field.

Okay. With the thanks of the committee for your work and your testimony, I will have a few other questions that I will follow up for the record. I want to get your ideas about DFC and other entities that do not have something in this regard.

We thank you for coming before the committee to give this testimony, tremendous insights, and an opportunity for us to build upon the work that we collectively want to see happen.

Without objection, I would like to introduce a statement for the record from the Government Accountability Office.

So ordered.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The information referred to above can be found in the “Additional Material Submitted for the Record” section at the end of this hearing.]

The record for the hearing will remain open until close of business on Wednesday, July 27. Please ensure that questions for the record are submitted no later than that date.

With that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:47 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF HON. GINA K. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. What, if any, technical assistance or other support are you receiving to execute your plans from OPM's recently created government-wide Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (ODEIA) led by Dr. Janice Underwood?

Answer. The Department complied with all technical specifications from OPM on drafting its DEIA Strategic Plan and submitted the plan on OPM's due date of March 23, 2023. OPM has not provided agency-specific technical assistance on the execution of the Department's DEIA Strategic Plan, given that it was under review until July 25.

Question. In addition to the State Department and USAID, several of our smaller international affairs agencies are implementing DEIA practices and addressing in-

equities. For instance, close to 40 percent of the Peace Corps and Millennium Challenge Corporation workforces are made up of diverse racial and ethnic groups, and they have also introduced diversity plans. How, if at all, are Chief Diversity Officers from other agencies exchanging best practices to strengthen efforts?

Answer. The Department's Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer (CDIO) leads bi-monthly meetings with counterpart CDIOs from the other foreign affairs agencies covered by the Foreign Affairs Act of 1980—USAID, Agriculture, and Commerce—to discuss efforts and exchange best practices. The CDIO's staff maintain relationships and contact with counterparts from other agencies to discuss policies, practices, and procedures that affect employees from other agencies serving overseas, such as the Department of Defense.

Question. How, if at all, are you working with the NSC's Interagency Working Group on the National Security Workforce on addressing biases in security clearance processes, accommodating individuals with disabilities, and employee retention, among other issues the working group was charged with in the President's memorandum?

Answer. The Department of State is an active participant in the National Security Memorandum on Revitalizing America's Foreign Policy and National Security Workforce, Institutions, and Partnerships (NSM-3) Working Group. The Department has required those involved in the security clearance process to take training to reduce potential bias and improve equity in assessments/evaluations. Foreign Service Recruitment has improved accessibility through implementation of virtual Oral Assessments for Foreign Service Specialists and launched a Volunteer Recruiter Corps comprised of nearly 500 employees, with representation from a number of employee organizations which participated in almost 150 recruitment events. Our Access Center provides state-of-the-art resources, support, and accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities. In addition, the Department launched a Retention Unit that has already begun conducting in-depth exit interviews in addition to existing exit surveys, will conduct surveys of why employees choose to stay in the Department, and will develop the Department's first ever Retention Strategy. The Department also developed, published, and has begun implementing our comprehensive Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Strategic Plan.

Question. Given the series of concerning media stories on the experiences of diverse political appointees, what role does your office play in working with the White House to support those willing to serve in appointments at our government's highest levels to advance our countries' global interests?

Answer. The Secretary's Office of Diversity and Inclusion works to ensure every office in the Department of State contributes to a welcoming, inclusive environment. Political appointees add to the diversity and richness of our policy conversations, and it is important everyone feels empowered to contribute their perspective and voice to the policy decisions made within the Department.

Question. What FY23 and FY24 budget needs do you have to execute any programming that would assist in implementing the DEIA Strategic Plan?

Answer. We have an acute shortage of personnel to investigate and process allegations of discrimination and harassment, leading to unavoidable delays in the timeframe from a complaint's filing to resolution. We understand State's ratio of investigators to workforce size is among the lowest for a federal agency. For FY23, we requested seven additional full-time equivalencies (FTEs) to allow more timely processing of complaints. Based on casework needs, these FTEs would be apportioned between the Office of Civil Rights, the Office of the Legal Advisor, and the Bureau of Global Talent Management. Additional personnel resources in FY24 would further expedite investigations and ensure greater accountability.

With the new emphasis on data and evidence-based decision-making, we are also seeking resources for data analyses, the development of outcome measures, and monitoring and program evaluation. Our goal is to improve how we monitor implementation of our 5-year Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Strategic Plan and launch barrier analyses based on anomalies in data patterns revealed by the Department's first-ever Demographic Baseline Report that suggest possible problems in equal opportunity across our different demographic groups. Resources in this area would also allow us to address the finding in the Government Accountability Office's July 2022 Report on *Additional Actions Needed to Improve Workplace Diversity and Inclusion*, which noted that "State does not have performance measures and has not taken sufficient actions to enhance accountability for its workplace DEIA goals."

Question. Media and others have raised concerns about transparency in promotions and other processes as barriers to retention.

Are the employees responsible for violating ethics standards by selecting friends and family members to serve on Foreign Service Selection Boards (FSSBs) as reported in the May 2022 Inspector General report still employed at the Agency? If so, how, were they reprimanded?

Answer. The OIG found that seven of the approximately 150 public members who served during the 7-year period reviewed were personally known to Department employees who worked in the office that manages Foreign Service Selection Board processes, which is inconsistent with the Department ethics standards. The Department is reviewing information regarding the OIG findings and has already begun to take actions to ensure accountability.

Question. What is the Department's plan to implement the recommendations of the OIG report on the recruitment and selection process for public members of the Foreign Service Selection Boards?

Answer. To ensure that public members selected have the skills and experience most appropriate for service on the Foreign Service Selection Boards (FSSB), the Department updated the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) criteria and implemented new procedures in the selection of public members for the 2022 FSSBs, including panel interviews of candidates, a scoring rubric for each criterion, and multi-layered oversight and approval of the process.

To ensure the work of the FSSBs is conducted in a manner that is fair, transparent, and objective, the Department issued a new written policy regarding public member referrals and recusals applicable to all Department personnel and FSSB members beginning with the 2022 FSSBs.

To enhance the efficacy of public member recruitment and the efficient use of resources, the Department updated its recruitment processes, effective with the current 2022 FSSBs, sending recruitment letters to over 90 organizations. The Department is also reviewing alternatives to the current procurement vehicle and payment structure for contracting public members to serve on the FSSBs.

Question. What did the Department learn from its various Foreign Service bidding and assignments pilot programs last year and what efforts are now underway to centralize these programs to make sure application and notification timelines, job qualifications and selection standards, and communications to Foreign Service employees are coordinated, clear, and consistent?

Answer. Various offices and bureaus have enacted pilot programs to address DEIA issues and to create more transparency and equity in the bidding process. To assess bidders' experiences with the new initiatives, the Bureau of Global Talent Management (GTM) conducted a survey in 2021 following the 2022 bid season. The survey received 1,200 responses, from which were generated initial recommendations and best practices for all bureaus to implement for future bidding seasons. GTM provided these recommendations to bureaus to encourage more consistency in bidding practices across the Department. The recommendations included steps such as bureaus sharing interview criteria and timelines, using standardized interview questions and platforms for references, conducting panel interviews with scoring rubrics, and notifying candidates who made the "short list" for hiring. These recommendations enhance transparency, encourage better communication, and limit confusion over differing bidding requirements across bureaus. Following the coming 2023 bid season, GTM will conduct another assessment of the impact of DEIA programs for bidders and continue to refine its recommendations to State Department bureaus and hiring offices.

Question. What are the specific activities of the recently created retention unit? How is it addressing retention issues for women and members of racial and ethnic groups at mid-career and senior levels?

Answer. The Retention Unit (GTM/RU) in the Bureau of Global Talent Management is taking a holistic look at retention issues across our workforce at various points in careers. The RU is analyzing data from a variety of sources, including exit surveys, exit interviews, and focused discussions with the wide range of the workforce, including women and underrepresented employees. The Secretary's Office of Diversity and Inclusion is a key partner that supports this effort through a contract project that specifically explores retention issues among historically underrepresented groups of employees. The RU's extensive data collection and analysis effort, which includes both quantitative and qualitative data, will help pinpoint retention challenges and inform the Department's first comprehensive retention strategy.

Question. In recent years, Rangel, Pickering, and other programs established to address racial and ethnic underrepresentation at the agency have been expanded to include other groups. What is being done to review traditional recruitment and hiring practices to better understand what barriers exist and are preventing different segments of the American population from entry through the traditional processes before widening the pool of participants for programs established to address racial and ethnic disparities?

Answer. The Department continuously reviews and seeks to improve hiring procedures and methodologies, as required in the Foreign Service Act. On April 26, we announced a change that began with the June 2022 Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT), which combines candidate results from the FSOT and Qualifications Evaluation Panel (QEP), providing a more holistic view of each candidate. We instituted these changes to meet the Secretary's goals to modernize American diplomacy, win the competition for talent, and ensure that all applicants can present a full picture of their qualifications. The announced changes are enthusiastically endorsed by me and are part of a broader package of reforms to accelerate and improve the hiring process. In addition to the Pickering and Rangel programs, the Department has other established Fellowships that focus on certain skill categories and enhance diversity, such as the Foreign Affairs IT Fellowship (FAIT) and the newly announced William D. Clarke Diplomatic Security Fellowship. Additionally, the Department is in the process of transitioning all student internships to paid, as part of the Department of State's continued efforts to diversify the ranks of its employees by encouraging applications from populations traditionally underrepresented in the Department and that reflect the diversity of the United States. This paid internship program will help remove barriers for traditionally underrepresented students who may not have the financial means to accept an unpaid internship.

Question. At the hearing, discussions on improving recruitment and retention indicated that additional personnel in the Offices of Civil Rights and Global Talent Management could assist in addressing a number of issues, including addressing a backlog of complaints and investigations. What are the personnel needs of OCR and GTM? How would additional personnel assist in addressing DEIA issues including recruitment and retention?

Answer. Within State Department, we have an acute shortage of personnel to investigate and process allegations of discrimination and harassment, which leads to unavoidable delays in the time from a complaint's filing to resolution. We understand State's ratio of investigators and processing staff to workforce size is among the lowest for a federal agency. For FY23, we requested seven additional full-time equivalencies (FTEs) to allow more timely processing of cases. Based on casework needs, these FTEs would be apportioned between the Office of Civil Rights, the Office of the Legal Advisor, and the Bureau of Global Talent Management. Additional personnel resources in FY24 would further expedite investigations and ensure greater accountability, which is an important retention issue.

The Department established a Retention Unit in January 2022, within the Bureau of Global Talent Management, to pinpoint retention challenges and develop the Department's first retention strategy. Working in partnership with the Secretary's Office of Diversity and Inclusion (S/ODI), the Retention Unit is examining a broad range of issues that potentially affect retention, including DEIA challenges and accountability. The Department's DEIA Data Working Group, led by S/ODI with participation from the Retention Unit and GTM's recruitment team, is collecting and analyzing data pertaining to the life cycle of our employees, including in the areas of recruitment, selection and hiring, professional development, awards recognition, retention, and promotion. For FY24, we requested four FTEs to permanently staff the new Retention Unit.

Question. What is the status of assignment restrictions reform? Will there be changes to the assignment restrictions appeals process?

Answer. Pursuant to the passage of the Section 5311(c) of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of Fiscal Year 2022 in December 2021, the Department drafted revisions to the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) to implement the new assignment restriction review and appeals process. The new review and appeals process will mimic the process for those seeking an appeal of a security clearance denial or revocation. Following approval of the FAM revisions, the Department will engage employee unions to comment on the implementation of the updated policy. Once that process is complete, the assignment restriction appeals process will fully reflect the mandates of the NDAA. Additionally, the Department has returned to the original, narrower scope of assignment restrictions by decoupling them from a different matter, assignment preclusions. Assignment preclusions, which are governed by

3 FAM 2424.5 (Dual Nationality), fall under the purview of the Bureau of Global Talent Management and reflect the Department's rule that members of the Foreign Service may not be assigned to posts in states of which they are nationals, as host governments will generally not accord privileges and immunities to their own nationals.

Question. The Department appointed its first Special Representative for Racial Equity and Justice, Desirée Cormier Smith, in June 2022. What role, if any, will Special Representative Smith have in regard to State's DEIA internal workforce issues? How, if at all, will your office coordinate with her?

Answer. As Secretary Blinken has said, a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible Department leads to a stronger, smarter, and more creative foreign policy with a workforce better equipped to pursue U.S. national security interests and 21st century foreign policy challenges in a world that grows ever more complex. My office is charged with building a State Department that has a diverse and inclusive workforce that is equitable and accessible for all our employees and the American public we serve. Special Representative for Racial Equity and Justice (SRREJ) Cormier Smith's mandate is to ensure the Department's foreign affairs work advances the human rights of members of marginalized racial and ethnic communities, including indigenous communities, and combats systemic racism, discrimination, and xenophobia around the world. Our work will complement SRREJ Cormier Smith's by focusing on how State's workforce abroad, in its full diversity, can further the SRREJ's work to advance racial equity and justice in our outward-facing foreign policy, including the SRREJ's lead in implementing the Department's Agency Equity Plan.

Question. What steps are you taking to institutionalize DEIA within the Agency's own operations to ensure it has strong support, leadership, and accountability at State under future Administrators?

Answer. We are strengthening DEIA in State's internal workforce, which includes our internal workforce at our missions abroad. We are focusing on what we can put into motion that will lead to systemic change. Concurrently, we are working to change the culture of our institution so that every single employee feels invested in advancing DEIA work. One way to ensure that DEIA is a core part of our everyday work is to make it a metric for promotion and career advancement. My office has collaborated with GTM to launch a standalone EER precept that requires employees to demonstrate how they are advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. This precept will be in effect for the 2022–2023, 2023–2024, and 2024–2025 rating cycles.

RESPONSES OF MS. NENEH DIALLO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Has USAID collected recent disaggregated demographic data? If so, how do trends for women and racial and ethnic groups compare to the 2020 GAO findings of disparities in senior levels in the civil and foreign service?

Answer. Yes, USAID has collected disaggregated demographic data as recent as 2021. The latest data show that USAID has made some progress since the 2020 GAO report which found that promotion outcomes at USAID were generally lower for racial and ethnic minorities than for Whites in early to mid-career. When controlling for factors such as occupation, GAO found statistically significant odds of promotion in the Civil Service (CS) were 31 percent to 41 percent lower for racial or ethnic minorities than for Whites in early and mid career. In the Foreign Service (FS), average promotion rates were lower for racial or ethnic minorities in early to mid-career, but differences were generally not statistically significant when GAO controlled for various factors.

The percentage of women in senior level CS at USAID increased from 53.3 percent in 2015 to 58.9 percent as of the end of fiscal year 2021. Similarly, the percentage of women in mid-level CS increased from 63.9 percent to 64.5 percent as of the end of fiscal year 2021.

Asians, Hispanics/Latinos, and other racial and ethnic minorities¹ all increased as a share of mid-level CS staff from 2015 to end of fiscal year 2021, with Asians increasing from 6.4 percent to 9 percent, Hispanics/Latinos increasing from 6.1 percent to 7.5 percent, and other racial and ethnic minorities increasing from 2.6 percent to 3.5 percent. Blacks/African Americans, in contrast, declined as a proportion of mid-level CS staff from 43.2 percent in 2015 to 40.9 percent in 2021.

Trends for racial and ethnic minorities were similar in the senior level CS. Asians increased from 7.6 percent to 8.6 percent, Hispanics/Latinos increased from 4.9 percent to 6.4 percent, and other racial and ethnic minorities increased from 1.4 percent to 2.5 percent. African Americans/Blacks remained largely consistent at just over 22 percent (22.4 percent in 2015 and 22.2 percent in 2021).

In the Senior Foreign Service (SFS), the overall percentage of females increased from 47 percent to 52 percent from 2017 to April 2022. In the three SFS grades, females make up 65 percent in the Career Minister (most senior), 33 percent at the Minister Counselor grade, and 56 percent at the Counselor (least senior) grade. In grade FS-01, the percentage of females has decreased slightly from 45.7 percent to 45.3 percent.

In the SFS Minister Counselor grade, the 2017 to 2021 5-year average shows the promotion rate was 26 percent for males and 24 percent for females. In the SFS Counselor grade, while the promotion rate for females steadily increased from 5 percent to 19 percent, the promotion rate for males increased at an even higher rate of 7 percent to 30 percent; the 5-year average promotion rate for males was 20 percent and for females 11 percent. In grade FS-01, the promotion rates for females were significantly higher than males in all years except 2019. The 5-year average promotion rate was 20 percent for females and 10 percent for males.

The percentage of racial and ethnic minorities in the total FS and SFS count increased from 26 percent to 32 percent from 2017 to April 2022. The diversity of the FS and SFS staff has increased over time as is evident in the differences in diversity between cohorts hired recently as compared to those hired 20 or more years ago. The current 17 Career Ministers began their USAID careers between 1983 and 2001. The most recent cohorts hired have been the most diverse and over time are being promoted up through the ranks. The 2022 FS hires were 52 percent racial and ethnic minorities, which includes a higher percentage of Black or African Americans (18 percent), Hispanic or Latinos (14 percent), Asians (14 percent), and Two or More (5 percent) than previous cohorts.

Table 1: Percentage of Racial or Ethnic Minorities by Grade

Grade	Number of Employees	Percentage Racial or Ethnic Minorities	Percentage Workforce
SFS-01-Career Minister	17	12%	1%
SFS-02-Minister Counselor	42	17%	2%
SFS-03-Counselor	110	21%	6%
FS-01	345	23%	19%
FS-02	434	32%	24%
FS-03	522	35%	29%
FS-04	253	45%	14%
FS-05	67	45%	4%
	1790		

Data as of April 2022

In the SFS, the percentage of racial and ethnic minorities increased from 14 percent to 19 percent from 2017 to 2022. For 2022, in the three SFS grades, racial and ethnic minorities make up 12 percent in the Career Minister (most senior), 17 percent at the Minister Counselor grade, and 21 percent at the Counselor grade. In grade FS-01, the percentage of racial and ethnic minorities increased from 21 percent to 23 percent. In the total FS and SFS, the 5-year (2017–2021) average pro-

motion rate for racial and ethnic minorities and Whites is the same at 20 percent. The overall promotion rates for racial and ethnic minorities were slightly higher than Whites in 2017 and 2018 (+3 percent) and slightly lower than Whites in 2020 and 2021 (–1 percent). In 2021, the overall promotion rate was 22 percent for racial and ethnic minorities and 23 percent for Whites.

In 2021, racial and ethnic minorities made up 30 percent of the total FS and SFS workforce and received 30 percent or 62 of the 205 promotions, while Whites made up 70 percent of the workforce and received 70 percent or 143 of the promotions. For the SFS in 2021, the promotion rate was 40 percent for racial and ethnic minorities and 19 percent for Whites. In the SFS Minister Counselor grade, the annual changes in the small numbers of racial and ethnic minorities and Whites created big swings in promotion rates from 0 percent to 50 percent. The 2017 to 2021 5-year average shows the promotion rate was 20 percent for racial and ethnic minorities and 27 percent for Whites. In the SFS Counselor grade, the promotion rate for racial and ethnic minorities varied from 0 percent in 2019 to 40 percent in 2021. In this same 5-year period, the average promotion rate for both racial and ethnic minorities and Whites was 17 percent. In grade FS–01, the promotion rates for racial and ethnic minorities varied from 3 percent to 19 percent and were higher than Whites in all years except 2019. The 5-year average promotion rate was 13 percent for racial and ethnic minorities and 15 percent for Whites.

USAID reports annually on the demographic makeup of its permanent and temporary U.S. Direct Hire (USDH) employees as required by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Management Directive (MD)-715. The USDH workforce is analyzed by race, ethnicity, sex, and disability status, for participation rates (and inclusion rates for disability status), across the employment life-cycle including grade/rank, salary, mission critical occupation, awards (time and money), separations (e.g., resignations, removals), etc.

USAID's annual MD–715 Report and Workforce Tables are available here: <https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/organization/independent-offices/office-civil-rights/md-715-reports>

Question. Reports suggest a lack of robust competition and transparency around hiring of non-career PSC and FSL appointments has exacerbated DEIA concerns, including lack of inclusion opportunities due to limited solicitations and inside tracks for positions. What actions are being taken to ensure that the hiring processes for all of USAID's many mechanisms are fair, competitive, transparent, and inclusive? Are you collecting data on DEIA issues related to non-direct hires (e.g., Foreign Service Nationals, Personal Services Contractors, and Institutional Support Contractors), including any demographic data? If so, what are the demographic trends?

Answer. USAID is taking steps to increase the competitiveness, fairness and transparency of hiring processes for non-career U.S. Personal Services Contracts (PSCs) and Foreign Service Limited (FSL) appointments to help achieve our goal of having a workforce that reflects the rich diversity of the United States population.

USAID partnered with the Department of State on the Joint DEIA Agency Priority Goal for Hiring Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Targeted Disabilities to guide the hiring of FSLs. In pursuit of this goal, USAID will expand inclusive and equitable recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that contribute to increased diversity in the USAID workforce across demographic groups. USAID will increase recruitment, hiring, and retention in an effort, by September 30, 2023, to bring the number of employees with disabilities to at least 12 percent of our workforce, with 2 percent of our workforce being persons with targeted disabilities.

Updates to procedures for FSL hiring have been proposed and are under discussion with the American Foreign Service Association. These include requiring job opportunity announcements to be advertised externally as well as within USAID, requiring hiring offices to use standard position descriptions developed by USAID's Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM) for Foreign Service occupational series, requiring minimum qualifications for positions to be advertised and verified by an HCTM Human Resource Specialist, and for the hiring office to document the selection procedures in a memorandum submitted to HCTM when requesting an appointment letter.

USAID has added a statement to solicitations for all types of personal services contracts (cooperating country national (CCN), third-country national (TCN) and United States National) encouraging all individuals, including those from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, to respond to the solicitation and stating that all individuals will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria in the solicitation.

In addition, later this year, USAID will launch the Agency's first-ever annual DEIA Survey, which will help to establish a baseline for measuring longitudinal

progress on the Agency's DEIA goals, while also contributing to government-wide data collection to both inform DEIA efforts across the federal workforce. The survey will provide the agency a more robust picture of the workforce through the collection of expanded demographic data, in particular sexual orientation and gender identity data, which is currently not collected. This survey will complement data USAID collects on workforce composition both domestically and abroad with the goal of including all hiring mechanisms. The survey will provide data to enable USAID to take an evidence-based approach to reducing any potential barriers in hiring, promotion, professional development, and retention practices. Responses from staff will be voluntary and data collected will be published on an Agency-wide DEIA dashboard with scorecards for Missions, Bureaus and Independent Offices. Over time, the annual survey will help monitor and report on DEIA program effectiveness, enable continuous program improvement, and inform DEIA policy decisions.

HCTM's Office of Workforce Planning, Policy, and Systems Management (HCTM/PPSM) is working to increase transparency and improve general knowledge around workforce data. The office recently created and released to the Agency a data visualization tool to highlight the makeup of USAID's workforce in FY 2021. This is the first in a series of data visualization tools HCTM/PPSM is releasing to provide the latest workforce trends to staff. Future visualizations include highlights of a soon-to-be-released Foreign Service Promotion report and a Pay Equity analysis.

While USAID voluntarily collects demographic data (race, ethnicity, sex, disability status) from U.S. Personal Services Contractors as well as from U.S. Direct Hires (USDHs), the data is analyzed on an ad-hoc basis. Although the Agency is mandated by the Equal Employee Opportunity Commission to annually produce a report analyzing the Agency's demographic makeup across the employment life-cycle, the data analysis requirements are for USDH only. As the Office of Civil Rights Special Emphasis Programs becomes operational, the Agency will be able to expand workforce demographic data analysis.

Question. In recent years, Payne and other programs established to address racial and ethnic underrepresentation at the agency has been expanded to include other groups. What is being done to review traditional recruitment and hiring practices to better understand what barriers exist and are preventing different segments of the American population from entry through the traditional processes before widening the pool of participants for programs established to address racial and ethnic disparities?

Answer. USAID's DEIA Strategic Plan was developed based on the results of an internal equity assessment. The Plan outlines a framework for envisioning, creating, and sustaining a diverse workforce and an inclusive workplace. The Plan includes priorities such as, implementation of a DEIA Agency-wide survey; creation of a monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan for DEIA data collection; and completion of a pay equity analysis meant to remove or reduce any potential barriers to entry for employment at USAID.

To expand recruitment efforts and reduce any potential barriers to employment, USAID's Development Diplomats in Residence (DDIR) work closely with the recruitment and selection process and actively participate in webinars to advertise Agency internships and fellowships. DDIRs also serve as mentors to Donald M. Payne Fellows.

The DDIRs conduct outreach to a diverse number of colleges and universities for career fairs and faculty consultations country-wide. The DDIR Program also establishes partnerships with career development centers in universities and colleges, primarily Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs).

In addition, in August 2022 USAID began issuing guidance to operating units to make the contractor selection process more DEIA-sensitive, better aligning the process to hiring guidance for U.S. Direct Hires.

Question. Has USAID studied pay equity related both to sex and to race and ethnicity? If so, what were the findings and how are they shaping agency hiring and promotion practices?

Answer. Yes, we have studied pay equity. From 2015 to 2021, our data found an overall decrease in pay disparities across different races and gender. (The results shared below do not include the Office of the Inspector General.)

In the Civil Service, the Black/African American, Hispanic, and Other race workforce combinations had relatively lower average salaries from FY 2015 to FY 2021, but had higher base pay average growth rates at 3.6 percent, 3.7 percent, and 3.6 percent respectively compared to overall civil service at 2.9 percent. This caused less variation in the average base pay between race groups by FY 2021, but significant

pay inequity still existed in FY 2021 for the Black/African American, Hispanic, and Other race workforce. For the Foreign Service, from 2015 to 2021, the base pay average growth rates were 2.1 percent, 3.2 percent, and 2.1 percent, respectively for these workforce combinations.

Civil Service gender base pay inequity, favoring men, also decreased over this period with a relatively stable downward trend reducing the pay gap. However, the Civil Service gender base pay gap is still wide enough to indicate further steps must be taken to ensure pay equity, especially for minority women. Foreign Service gender base pay inequity, favoring men, has remained consistent with some year-to-year pay gap volatility from FY 2015 to FY 2021.

These findings have been reported to the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Office (A/DEIA). Eliminating pay inequity is vital to creating and maintaining a diverse workforce across race and gender is a priority of A/DEIA. DEIA goals are the following:

- Enhancing diversity throughout the Agency, Agency leadership will proactively address internal systems that potentially inhibit inclusive diversity efforts and access throughout the USAID employee life cycle; will develop, implement, and enhance a range of policies, programs, practices, and systems to improve and increase diversity; and will develop and implement broad outreach strategies to attract talent from diverse sources.
- Enhancing inclusion and equity for everyone in the workplace, Agency leaders will champion and enable staff participation in initiatives that work toward the betterment of the Agency's efforts in DEI and actively engage with these groups to operationalize their recommendations and efforts. Agency leadership will establish and enhance training and capacity-building opportunities for all staff, including managers and supervisors, on diversity fundamentals, bias, and principles of inclusion—all of which contribute to a respectful, safe, and inclusive work environment that enhances retention.
- Achieve strengthened accountability for promoting and sustaining a diverse workforce and an inclusive Agency culture. To achieve this goal, the Agency will consistently apply DEI principles across program and management operations; all leaders at the Agency will be required to show evidence of their support for DEI at USAID; performance management efforts at the Agency will promote accountability to create and sustain a diverse and inclusive workplace at all staff levels; and, finally, Agency efforts to promote DEI will be informed by workforce data and principles of transparency.

Question. In addition to the State Department and USAID, several of our smaller international affairs agencies are implementing DEIA practices and addressing inequities. For instance, close to 40 percent of the Peace Corps and Millennium Challenge Corporation workforces are made up of diverse racial and ethnic groups, and they have also introduced diversity plans. How, if at all, do you work with Chief Diversity Officers from other agencies to exchange best practices and strengthen efforts?

Answer. USAID, Department of State, Department of Commerce and USDA meet on a quarterly basis to collaborate and coordinate on issues affecting our workforce, share best practices and find ways to collaborate on major events and DEIA-related topics across the Federal Government. Additionally, USAID and Department of State also meet on an ad hoc basis to discuss matters such as the incorporation of DEIA into the employee performance cycle and foreign assistance programming.

Question. In 2020, GAO made several recommendations on improving USAID's capacity to perform key EEO functions. These included timely processing of EEO complaints and investigations, regular analysis of workforce demographics for trends, and regular submission of required MD-715 reports. (GAO-20-477). What is USAID's current capacity to perform these key EEO functions? After USAID's reorganization and establishment of your position, how does your office interface with the Office of Civil Rights in carrying out these and other EEO responsibilities?

Answer. In FY 2020, OCR established internal timeliness standards and procedures to process Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaints, including using a database to generate reports and conduct analyses. During the last two fiscal years and in FY 2022, 100 percent of complaints have been processed and investigated within mandated timelines. The EEO Complaints Team within OCR's Complaints and Resolution Division has three staff members. The Team manages a cadre of 24 EEO Collateral Counselors responsible for conducting EEO counseling at the pre-complaint stage. The Team also counts on the services of a contractor with the capacity to conduct EEO counseling, mediation, and EEO investigations.

OCR's operating budget increased from less than \$600,000 in FY 2017 to almost \$3.2 million in FY 2020, which allowed for increased staffing. In FY 2021, the Agency established an Affirmative Employment Division and hired staff to provide oversight and guidance on the Agency's EEO Affirmative Employment responsibilities. Increased staff enabled OCR to conduct analyses of its workforce data and undertake efforts to identify triggers; analyze potential barriers to EEO in Agency policies, practices, and processes; develop action plans to reduce any potential barriers; and monitor the Agency's performance to achieve greater EEO results. As a result, USAID was able to meet its obligation for timely submission of its fiscal year 2020 and 2021 MD-715 Reports.

OCR and the Office of the Chief DEIA Officer work closely together using the data analysis conducted for the MD-715 reports to advance DEIA at USAID. The acting Director of OCR and the Chief Diversity Officer hold weekly meetings to discuss and address DEIA-related matters and develop proactive strategies that engage Agency leadership at all levels, including overseas mission leadership.

Question. What, if any, technical assistance or other support are you receiving to execute your plans from OPM's recently created government-wide Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (ODEIA) led by Dr. Janice Underwood?

In addition to the State Department and USAID, several of our smaller international affairs agencies are implementing DEIA practices and addressing inequities. For instance, close to 40 percent of the Peace Corps and Millennium Challenge Corporation workforces are made up of diverse racial and ethnic groups, and they have also introduced diversity plans. How, if at all, are Chief Diversity Officers from other agencies exchanging best practices to strengthen efforts?

Answer. In March 2022, USAID's Office of the Chief DEIA Officer submitted the Agency's 2022 DEIA Strategic Plan and met with representatives of OPM to discuss implementation of the plan. Following the release of DEIA Strategic Plan in July, the Chief DEIA Officer will meet monthly with Dr. Janice Underwood, the Director of DEIA at OPM.

In addition, USAID, Department of State, Department of Commerce and USDA meet on a quarterly basis to collaborate and coordinate on issues affecting our workforce, share best practices, and explore ways to collaborate on major events and DEIA-related topics across the Federal Government.

Note

¹ Other REMs include Native Americans and Native Alaskans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, and those identifying as two or more racial/ethnic categories.

RESPONSES OF HON. GINA K. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Please describe the purposes of conducting remote interviews. Are remote interviews intended to increase geographic diversity at the State Department in the long-term or are they a temporary practice as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answer. Our overarching goal is to make the test accessible to as many qualified candidates as possible from across the United States, and we recognize that the requirement to test in-person, whether in Washington, DC or even many other locations across the United States, may be cost prohibitive to some. Therefore, the Department is moving to transition Foreign Service Officer assessments to fully virtual platforms by July 2023, and in February 2022, the Director General approved a permanent shift to virtual oral assessments (remote interviews) for all non-law enforcement Foreign Service Specialists (FSS). Virtual oral assessments are now possible for FSS candidates from most locations in the world.

Question. Does the State Department plan to hold remote interviews after the President declares the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency?

Answer. Yes. After successfully assessing specialist candidates using virtual platforms during the pandemic, the Department permanently transitioned all non-Diplomatic Security Service specialist assessments to virtual effective February 2022. We are now working to do the same for Foreign Service Officer candidates. In addition to making the hiring process more accessible, we anticipate this will shorten the assessment timeline from approximately 9 months to 4, as well as shorten the assessment day to 4 hours. We will be able to offer assessments both in the mornings and afternoons to accommodate for time zones beyond the East Coast, and we will mini-

mize any advantage a local candidate might have compared to candidates from outside Washington, DC.

Question. How many Diplomats-in-Residence did the State Department add in its recent expansion?

Answer. The Department has added one Diplomat in Residence (DIR) position, which will be encumbered beginning Summer 2023. We have restructured and expanded our Recruitment Division to enable greater efficiencies and improve our strategic outreach nationwide. In our phased approach, we have shifted portfolios to provide additional support, including the Plains States and Midwest, community colleges, TRIO students, and Minority Serving Institutions. In Summer 2023, we will add greater focus on the Pacific Northwest and Allegheny regions with Diplomats in Residence placed in Seattle and Pittsburgh, respectively. We have also added a Recruiter Coordinator position for additional oversight and support of our frontline recruiters.

Question. Where are the new Diplomats-in-Residence located across the country?

Answer. The additional Diplomat in Residence (DIR) position and geographic restructuring of the DIR program allows the Department to better serve communities nationwide. In a phased approach over the next 12 months, DIRs in large urban centers with high volume demand will have smaller territories, allowing them to better reach underserved urban populations and rural communities in their territories. The placement of Diplomats in Residence in Seattle and Pittsburgh in Summer 2023 will enable improved support of communities in the Pacific Northwest (Alaska, Oregon, and Washington) and the Allegheny region (Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia), territories that are currently covered out of San Francisco, Detroit, New York City, and Washington, DC. Coupled with additional administrative support and outreach support from Retired Employee Annuitants (REA) who previously served as DIRs, this gives our current DIRs the ability to better focus on their regions and connect to various population centers.

Question. Does the State Department believe this number is sufficient to recruit a geographically diverse class of Foreign Service Officers? Should this number be increased, especially throughout America's interior?

Answer. The Department continues to recruit from geographically diverse communities throughout the country. This is evident from the last Foreign Service class that onboarded in July, which was made up of individuals that came from 39 out of 50 States and the District of Columbia. Even so, our reach can only go so far with 17 Diplomats in Residence, and increased support would be welcomed in order to reach additional candidates throughout the country, particularly those from traditionally underrepresented groups and geographic locations in the Department.

Question. How is the State Department working to expand geographic recruitment beyond the Diplomat-in-Residence program?

Answer. The pandemic has allowed the Department to change the ways we reach diverse audiences. In the recruitment industry, it is widely accepted that hybrid recruitment efforts, including virtual and in-person engagement, will continue because many candidates appreciate the flexibility and organizations are able to reach a broader pool at lower costs. Already, we have implemented dedicated virtual career fairs that offer the advantage of reaching a national audience that reflects our strategic priorities while avoiding competition at third-party organized career fairs with employers with greater brand recognition. We have made a specific budget request for DoS dedicated virtual career fairs for FY23 and FY24, which will allow the Department to expand geographic recruitment even further and reach a much broader and diverse audience.

Question. What percentage of Universities did the State Department visit for recruitment purposes in 2021? Does the State Department plan to increase this number in 2022 and the coming years?

Answer. In 2021, the Department was able to visit 448, or 11 percent, of the nearly 4000 colleges and universities located in the United States with our small team of 16 Diplomats in Residence and five Washington, DC based recruiters. A review of the school affiliations of the 4,600+ Foreign Service Officers hired from the beginning of FY 2010 to date indicates that they have graduated from over 745 schools located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. We expect to continue to expand this outreach as we implement additional methodologies such as nationwide virtual events and career fairs.

Question. How will better geographic recruitment promote greater diversity of views and experience within the Foreign Service?

Answer. Recruitment capitalizes on its network of contacts throughout the country to share information and ensure target populations know of our student program and career opportunities and are prepared to apply. This level of recruitment has allowed for greater representation within Foreign Service classes. For example, in the last Foreign Service class that entered service in July 2022, the Department welcomed 186 new Foreign Service personnel representing 39 out of the 50 United States and District of Columbia. This provides greater perspectives from across the country.

Question. Does the Department value the skills that our veterans have developed through years of service to our country?

Answer. The Department values the skills of not only veterans, but also active military (National Guard and Reservists). In fact, veterans make up 18.7 percent of the Department's workforce as compared to an estimated 7 percent of the U.S. adult population. We believe these numbers show just how much the Department values the skills our veterans have to offer. The Department recently established a Veteran Support Program (VSP) to guide and support the Department's more than 5,000 military veterans and current Reservists/National Guard. The VSP will assist these employees in navigating the benefits afforded to them by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs because of their status as a Federal Government employee and their service and sacrifice to our nation. The creation of the Department's VSP, only the second of its kind in the Federal Government, is a reflection of the Department's commitment to veterans and our dedication to retaining them as valued employees.

Question. Is the State Department working to increase veterans' preference in the Foreign Service?

Answer. The Department strives to recruit, retain, and sustain a diverse, talented, and inclusive workforce that reflects our nation, including those who have served in our military. In fact, 18.7 percent of the Department's workforce are veterans (17.1 percent of the Foreign Service and 20.6 percent of the Civil Service) compared to an estimated 7 percent of the U.S. adult population. We believe these numbers show how strong the Department's commitment to veterans is. The Department dedicates one of its national recruiters to veteran recruitment in the Foreign Service and trains a national platform of 22 Diplomats in Residence and Washington, DC-based recruiters to increase the number of veterans hired by the Department and to provide guidance and advice to veterans, disabled veterans, and transitioning service members. Once on board, the Department of State's newly established Veteran Support Program (VSP) provides support for military veterans and current Reservists/National Guard at the Department and assists them in accessing the benefits afforded them by the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

RESPONSES OF MS. NENEH DIALLO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. USAID is badly in need of reform when it comes to hiring. With over 20 different hiring mechanisms, the agency doesn't even know how diverse it really is (or isn't).

How are you working with Human Capital Talent Management to streamline USAID's opaque and arcane hiring mechanisms to ensure that the agency has the right skills available to it in the right place at the right time?

Answer. One of the key elements to transforming USAID's workforce is aligning the work needs with the right staffing resources. The Global Development Partnership Initiative (GDPI) is one of the key ways USAID is transforming its workforce. The ultimate objective is for USAID to grow the permanent FS to 2,500 and the CS to 2,250 by FY 2025. GDPI also includes an increase of 206 CCN/FSN positions by FY 2025.

The initiative seeks to change USAID's workforce composition and shift away from an overreliance on the use of term-limited, non-career, and often non-U.S. Direct Hire (NDH) mechanisms to more permanent staffing mechanisms that are not limited in duration.

The GDPI initiative will strengthen USAID's organizational performance capacity by providing opportunities that expand talent acquisition offerings to broader segments of our diverse nation, recognizing the importance of the composition of the workforce in alignment with the requested staff resourcing. This 3-year initiative

will begin in earnest in FY 2023, but was jump-started thanks to bipartisan support in Congress with the FY 2022 Operating Expenses (OE) appropriation.

Through GDPI, USAID is prioritizing the core capacities and functions required for our organization to operate, which includes ensuring we have the human resources to support the employee's entire lifecycle, contracting staff to ensure the effective delivery of our projects, and other core functional needs for any organization to operate effectively. USAID's increased permanent staffing will also focus on gender and inclusive development, climate change, democracy and anti-corruption efforts, a more permanent humanitarian assistance workforce, and global health security.

As USAID expands its permanent workforce, the Agency is also pursuing equitable benefits for contract staff. USAID is a global agency with staff from several dozen hiring authorities, and needs to invest in a permanent workforce to create more opportunities for positive and sustainable development outcomes, and to meet our DEIA goals. Through GDPI, USAID will use data and modeling to help identify work needs and where to optimally place the most limited resource: CS and FS employees.

Question. How are you working to establish a baseline against which diversity can even be measured?

Answer. The Government-wide DEIA Strategic Plan released in November 2021, specifically outlines a priority to "improve the collection of voluntarily self-reported demographic data about the federal workforce by taking an evidence-based approach to reduce potential barriers in hiring, promotion, professional development, and retention practices."

USAID's workforce comprises various hiring categories, including U.S. Direct Hires (USDHs), Personal Services Contractors (PSCs), and Institutional Support Contractors (ISCs). Of our entire workforce of approximately 11,000 individuals, more than 5,500 are PSCs with almost 1,500 ISCs, comprising around 64 percent of our entire workforce.

This Fall, USAID will launch the Agency's first-ever annual DEIA Survey, which will help to establish a baseline for measuring longitudinal progress on the Agency's DEIA goals, while also contributing to government-wide data collection to both inform DEIA efforts across the federal workforce. The survey will provide the agency a more robust picture of the workforce through the collection of expanded demographic data, in particular sexual orientation and gender identity data, which is currently not collected. This survey will complement data USAID collects on workforce composition both domestically and abroad with the goal of including all hiring mechanisms. The survey will provide data to enable USAID to take an evidence-based approach to reducing any potential barriers in hiring, promotion, professional development, and retention practices. Responses from staff will be voluntary and data collected will be published on an Agency-wide DEIA dashboard with and scorecards for Missions, Bureaus and Independent Offices. Over time, the annual survey will help monitor and report on DEIA program effectiveness, enable continuous program improvement, and inform DEIA policy decisions.

Implementation of the DEIA Survey, consistent with the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, will be conducted in accordance with guidance from the White House Domestic Policy Council (DPC), U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Question. How does USAID's "localization" strategy fit into the agency's diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility goals?

Answer. Localization is the process and actions that USAID will undertake to ensure our work puts a diverse group of local actors in the lead, strengthens local systems, and is responsive to local communities. Our motto of "Nothing about them, without them" leads the way in our localization agenda and is an embodiment of our commitment to inclusive development and broader DEIA principles.

As with all of USAID's initiatives, USAID approaches localization with a DEIA lens. It is important that USAID equitably engages a diverse group of local actors to ensure that our partner base and the stakeholders we engage are representative of the populations the Agency serves and supports, and that our localization efforts do not reinforce legacies of marginalization or exploitation in a particular country, region, or community.

USAID's Equity Action Plan, which resulted from an external equity assessment that identified gaps in advancing equity with underserved communities, including racial and ethnic equity, details five priorities to increase equity in USAID programming and partnerships. One priority area focuses on lowering internal and external

barriers for USAID awards and a second focuses on incorporating racial and ethnic equity and diversity into policy, planning, and learning. The Agency's localization initiative supports both priorities of the EAP.

Question. USAID is a lead agency in advancing the Global Fragility Act and, especially when considering the work of the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance and the Bureau for Global Health, a major logistics operator in fragile contexts.

Would you agree that American service members have unique skill sets that closely align with many of USAID's core functions?

Answer. Yes, U.S. military service members have skill sets that align to USAID core functions. USAID recruitment efforts are effectively sourcing veteran candidates eligible for employment consideration, including by. The Agency is committed to and acknowledges opportunity exists for improved selection and hiring of veterans for career opportunities.

Question. Would you also agree that USAID needs to do a better job recruiting veterans with these specialized skill sets in order to enhance diversity and strengthen program execution?

Answer. USAID continues to engage the Department of Labor's Workforce Recruitment Program as a resource for providing candidates with disabilities for employment consideration and has also prioritized the use of Schedule A and Disabled Veteran non-competitive hiring mechanisms.

Recent outreach efforts have focused heavily on our Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) community as this is the area where we have faced the most challenges. We have partnered with the American Legion, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of State, among others, to enhance our SDVOSB engagement.

On August 29, 2022, USAID's OSDBU staff attended the 103rd American Legion National Convention in Milwaukee, WI where OSDBU participated on a Veteran Small Business Federal Contracting panel to discuss ongoing efforts to increase contracting opportunities for SDVOSBs. This event gathered small business owners, government leaders, and members of the banking industry to explore solutions to the most pressing matters for veteran small business development.

Additionally, on September 6-9, 2022, USAID's OSDBU participated in the 34th National Defense Industrial Association's (NDIA) Annual Navy Gold Coast Small Business Procurement conference. NDIA's Department of the Navy Gold Coast Event is a premier Navy procurement conference. Gold Coast provides a forum to educate, guide, and assist businesses, large and small, in support of the warfighter mission within the Department of the Navy and throughout the DoD. The event provided relevant topics delivered by government and industry experts.

RESPONSES OF HON. GINA K. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. In your view, do the OIG's findings indicate potential barriers that may make it more difficult for members of underrepresented groups to be recommended for promotion in the Foreign Service?

Answer. The OIG found that seven of the approximately 150 public members who served during the 7-year period reviewed were personally known to members of GTM's Office of Performance Evaluation (GTM/PE) staff. However, the OIG did not find that the results of the Foreign Service Selection Boards on which those public members served, or the results of any other Boards for the years reviewed, were negatively affected or otherwise invalid, nor did the report recommend any further review or actions regarding past boards. In addition, earlier this year, the Department conducted a review of the composition of our Selection Board panels over the last 5 years. The demographic analysis of the over 500 career Foreign Service members who served on the Board panels during this period showed that they were highly diverse, with the percentage of panelists from underrepresented groups generally exceeding the percentage of reviewed employees from such groups. There is no indication that the composition of the Selection Board panels is a barrier to promotion for members of underrepresented groups.

Question. In your capacity as CDIO, please describe how, if at all, you are engaging with stakeholders throughout the State Department to ensure that the process through which FSSBs consider candidates for promotion is fair and consistent.

Answer. As of April 2022, all foreign service personnel will need to demonstrate concrete contributions to advancing DEIA to strengthen their case for promotion. As CDIO, I advocated for a foreign service precept dedicated to DEIA and am now

working with colleagues in Global Talent Management to ensure that employees and promotion boards are aware of the change and have a common understanding of how to implement the new precept. For example, in June we collaborated with GTM and the Foreign Service Institute on a webinar focused on the new precepts to field questions from the workforce.

Question. Please describe how, if at all, this change to the core precepts may affect any existing barriers to members of underrepresented groups advancing in the Foreign Service.

Answer. The new DEIA precept was drafted by the Bureau of Global Talent Management in concert with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and AFSA. It describes the kinds of efforts in which each employee can demonstrate, through specific actions, their contributions to fostering greater diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility, both internally in the Department and in their external foreign policy engagements. For example, exhibiting cultural awareness, achieving goals through inclusive teamwork, showing support for workplace flexibilities, organizing programs and events to discuss actionable ways to advance DEIA, and working to ensure the workplace is accessible are all ways in which an employee at any level can demonstrate a commitment to the principles of DEIA. Employee performance, which is the basis for promotion, will be measured in accordance with this and other precepts.

Question. What is the status of assignment restriction (AR) reform?

Answer. Pursuant to the passage of Section 5311(c) of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of Fiscal Year 2022 in December 2021, the Department drafted revisions to the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) to implement the new assignment restriction review and appeal process. Following approval of the FAM revisions, the Department will engage employee unions to comment on implementation of the revised review and appeal process. Once that process is complete, the assignment restriction appeal process will fully reflect the mandates of the NDAA. Additionally, the Department returned to the original, narrower scope of assignment restrictions by decoupling them from a separate matter, assignment preclusions. Assignment preclusions, which are governed by 3 FAM 2424.5 (Dual Nationality), fall under the purview of the Bureau of Global Talent Management and reflect the Department's rule that members of the Foreign Service may not be assigned to post in states of which they are nationals, as host governments will generally not accord privileges and immunities to their own nationals.

Question. When will the Department announce changes to the AR appeals process and how will this be communicated to all employees, including those who are waiting to join A-100 and those still going through the appeals process?

Answer. The Department has drafted an All Diplomatic and Consular Posts (ALDAC) cable to announce upcoming changes to the assignment restriction review and appeals process, which the Department will release once employee union engagement regarding the FAM changes is complete. Additionally, the Department will continue to collaborate with the Office of the Registrar to reach those awaiting A-100 and employee unions and employee organization groups in communicating these updates to their members. Those with assignment restrictions and those who are seeking an appeal through the revised process have been provided a dedicated point-of-contact.

RESPONSES OF MS. NENEH DIALLO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. Collection of DEIA Data. The Inspector General report on USAID issued in March opens with, "For nearly 30 years, USAID has worked to improve the efficiency and efficacy of its strategic workforce planning, yet despite these attempts, human capital management has remained one of the Agency's top challenges." USAID's internal workforce is comprised of a hodge-podge of hiring mechanisms, with over 1100 Personal Service Contractors (PSCs); 400+ non-career "Foreign Service Limited" appointees; thousands of institutional support contractors (ISCs) in addition to the approximate 1,800 career Foreign Service Officers and 1,600 Civil Service employees. Yet, USAID has no current published DEIA data for any mechanism. This lack of strategic workforce planning, data, and mishmash of hiring mechanisms adversely effects overall HR efforts, including understanding and addressing DEIA concerns.

What is USAID doing to build the systems, staff, and accountability to collect DEIA data, check data accuracy, publish data and incorporate and use DEIA data appropriately to advance DEIA goals? What are the timeframes?

Answer. In addition to the publicly available MD-715 reports, USAID has been steadily improving its human resources (HR) data quality and analysis, along with our workforce planning capacity. Through the development of the Talent Analytics tool, access to HR data has expanded across the Agency, focusing first on HR and workforce planning professionals in the Agency, and with continuing efforts to expand even further to share dashboards and reports with internal and external audiences. For example, USAID recently completed its most comprehensive analysis of foreign service promotions, including demographic data, and will be releasing the results of that report in the near future upon the completion of the review to ensure privacy protections. USAID has been creating and testing demographic data reporting and dashboards for the past 2 years in our effort to increase transparency, while ensuring individual privacy is protected.

Later this year, USAID will launch the Agency's first-ever annual DEIA Survey, which will help to establish a baseline for measuring longitudinal progress on the Agency's DEIA goals, while also contributing to government-wide data collection to inform DEIA efforts across the federal workforce. The survey will provide the agency a more robust picture of the workforce through the collection of expanded demographic data, in particular sexual orientation and gender identity data, which is currently not collected. This survey will complement data USAID collects on workforce composition both domestically and abroad with the goal of spanning all hiring mechanisms, and will provide data to take an evidence-based approach to reducing any potential barriers in hiring, promotion, professional development, and retention practices. Responses from staff will be voluntary and data collected will be used to publish an Agency-wide DEIA dashboard and scorecards for Missions, Bureaus and Independent Offices. Over time, the survey will help monitor and report on DEIA program effectiveness, enable continuous program improvement, and inform DEIA policy decisions.

Question. Pay equity. USAID reportedly is in a legal battle with a group of women alleging they were hired at salaries lower than those of their male peers. According to reports, "The specific goal of their suit is to have their salaries adjusted retroactively with back pay from 3 years before they made the complaint, which is the legal limit." If they win, the women could receive the back pay as well as a related adjustment to their retirement packages.

Has USAID studied pay equity related both to gender and to race and ethnicity? If so, what conclusions has the agency drawn and how are those shaping agency hiring practices?

Answer. Yes, USAID has studied pay equity. From 2015–2021, data found a decrease in pay disparities across different races and gender. (The results shared below do not include the Office of the Inspector General.)

In the Civil Service, the Black/African American, Hispanic, and Other race workforce combinations had relatively lower average salaries from FY 2015 to FY 2021, but had higher base pay average growth rates at 3.6 percent, 3.7 percent, and 3.6 percent, respectively, compared to overall civil service at 2.9 percent. In the Foreign Service, the average base pay growth rates are 2.1 percent, 3.2 percent, and 2.1 percent, respectively, which is slightly below the FS average of 2.7 percent. Pay equity gaps related to gender also decreased over this period on average.

Question. Why is USAID battling these women in court, rather than providing the back pay they apparently deserve?

Answer. USAID unfortunately cannot comment on ongoing litigation. USAID may speak more generally regarding any pay disparities among its Senior Foreign Service Officers. Among this group, USAID reviewed pay data and identified some pay disparities, which exist for both women and men. The Agency reviewed in detail the cause of these disparities and found the cause is not gender-based. Rather, the disparities are the product of an incongruence between the FS and SFS pay systems that the Agency worked to rectify upon discovery. USAID is sensitive to concern over gender-based pay disparity and has taken actions to prevent any such disparities before they arise by, for example, eliminating salary history from its Contractor Biographical Data Sheet in 2019 and launching a pilot program in 2020 in which it stopped relying upon salary history when setting pay for new Foreign Service Officers.

RESPONSES OF HON. GINA K. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Question. How do you plan to recruit a diverse labor force for years to come when the political consensus for civil service protections, particularly for policy-focused civil servants, is under threat?

Answer. The Department is committed to making recruitment decisions based on merit and ensuring that all personnel practices are carried out consistent with all laws and regulations. The Department welcomed the protections afforded to Civil Service hires through the 2021 Executive Order on Protecting the Federal Workforce (E.O. 14003), and through this Executive Order, the Department is mandated with the task of protecting, empowering, and rebuilding the career Federal workforce. The Department takes full advantage of all available hiring authorities and has taken several steps to expand outreach to ensure that it can attract a diverse labor force.

For example, the Department began hosting nationwide virtual career fairs promoting all Department careers and student programs, including career gateway programs into the Civil Service. During these fairs, we hosted presentations on Civil Service and student program application processes, highlighted different Civil Service career tracks, and featured Department employees who shared their experiences with Employee Organizations providing community, support, and advocacy for our diverse workforce. Similarly, we consistently raise awareness of and promote Civil Service careers in our nationwide outreach through events organized by our Diplomats-in-Residence and Washington, DC-based national recruiters.

The Department includes diversity distribution lists when posting Civil Service vacancy announcements, which ensures that the organizations listed in the distribution lists automatically receive notifications when Civil Service announcements are posted to USAJOBS.

The Department is also committed to attracting diverse and exceptionally qualified candidates for Senior Executive Service positions. When advertising Senior Executive Service positions externally, the Department considers applications from all U.S. citizens to ensure the widest applicant pool.

RESPONSES OF MS. NENEH DIALLO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

Question. USAID's workforce comprises more than 10,000 people, approximately 60 percent of whom are not direct-hires (e.g., Foreign Service Nationals, Personal Services Contractors, and Institutional Support Contractors). Diversity data are not consistently collected among this group of nondirect hire personnel, leaving USAID with an incomplete understanding of its workforce.

What suggestions, if any, would you make to USAID in its data collection and analysis on non-direct hires?

How might their inclusion in these exercises change USAID's decision-making with respect to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts?

Answer. Later this year, USAID will launch the Agency's first-ever annual DEIA Survey, which will help to establish a baseline for measuring longitudinal progress on the Agency's DEIA goals. It will also contribute to government-wide data collection to both inform DEIA efforts across the federal workforce. The survey will provide the agency a more robust picture of the workforce through the collection of expanded demographic data, in particular sexual orientation and gender identity data, which is currently not collected. This survey will complement data USAID collects on workforce composition both domestically and abroad with the goal of including all hiring mechanisms, and will provide data to take an evidence-based approach to reducing any potential barriers in hiring, promotion, professional development, and retention practices. Responses from staff will be voluntary and data collected will be used to publish an Agency-wide DEIA dashboard and scorecards for Missions, Bureaus and Independent Offices. Over time, the annual survey will help monitor and report on DEIA program effectiveness, enable continuous program improvement, and inform DEIA policy decisions.

While USAID voluntarily collects demographic data (race, ethnicity, sex, disability status) from U.S. Personal Services Contractors as from U.S. Direct Hires (USDHs), that data is analyzed on an ad-hoc basis. Although the Agency is mandated by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to annually produce a report analyzing the Agency's demographic makeup across the employment life-cycle, the data analysis requirements are for USDH only. As the Office of Civil Rights Special Emphasis Programs becomes operational, the Agency will be able to expand workforce demographic data analysis.

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE,
DATED JULY 26, 2022



United States Government Accountability Office

Statement for the Record to the
Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate

For Release on Delivery
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STATE AND USAID

Efforts to Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

Statement for the Record by Jason Bair, Director,
International Affairs and Trade and Latesha Love,
Director, International Affairs and Trade

GAO Highlights

Highlights of GAO-22-106150, a statement for the record to the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

Since taking office in 2021, the President has issued several executive orders and a memorandum (executive directives) that expressed policy commitments to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) in the federal workforce, domestically, and in U.S. foreign assistance. In response, State and USAID have committed to incorporating DEIA into their strategies, policies, and practices.

This statement summarizes findings from GAO's (1) 2020 reports on State's and USAID's workforce demographics and efforts to identify barriers to diversity, (2) July 2022 report on State's efforts to improve workplace diversity and inclusion, and (3) July 2022 report on State and USAID actions to advance equity abroad. This statement also includes updates on State's and USAID's efforts to address the recommendations GAO made in its 2020 reports. Detailed information on GAO's objectives, scopes, and methodologies can be found in the issued reports.

What GAO Recommends

In its July 2022 report on State's efforts to improve workplace diversity and inclusion, GAO recommended that State establish performance measures, enhance accountability for workplace DEIA goals, create a plan to improve its barrier analysis process, and improve its statistical methodology for identifying potential barriers to workforce diversity. State agreed with these recommendations.

View GAO-22-106150. For more information, contact Jason Bair at (202) 512-6881 or bairj@gao.gov, or Latesha Love at (202) 512-4409 or lovej@gao.gov.

July 26, 2022

STATE AND USAID

Efforts to Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

What GAO Found

In 2020, GAO found that the Department of State's and U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) workforces grew more diverse overall from fiscal year 2002 to fiscal year 2018. However, promotion outcomes were generally lower for historically disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups than for Whites. State also identified some indicators of potential barriers to diversity, such as underrepresentation of Hispanic employees. GAO recommended that State and USAID take additional steps to improve workforce diversity. State and USAID took some actions in response. For example, State launched four working groups to identify, investigate, and eliminate barriers to diversity.

In July 2022, GAO reported that State needs to take additional actions to improve workplace diversity and inclusion. For example, State has taken some steps to investigate and eliminate barriers, but GAO found that State's analyses vary in depth and have methodological weaknesses. State needs to create a plan to improve its barrier analysis process and improve its methodology for identifying potential barriers. Otherwise, it risks using resources on solutions that do not address the root causes of disparities and risks leaving barriers unaddressed. In addition, State's actions address or generally address five diversity and inclusion leading practices, but gaps remain in accountability and measurement. Without better ways to measure progress and enhance accountability, State may not achieve its goal of fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace.

GAO Assessment of Department of State Actions Compared to Leading Practices for Diversity and Inclusion Management

Leading Practice	GAO Rating
Employee Involvement	●
Diversity Training	●
Leadership Commitment	○
Recruitment	○
Succession Planning	○
Measurement	○
Accountability	○

Legend: ●—Address, ○—Generally address, ○—Partially address, ○—Do not address.

Source: GAO analysis of Department of State and GAO leading practices for diversity and inclusion management. | GAO-22-106150

A separate GAO report found that, in response to executive directives, State and USAID have begun and are planning several actions to advance equity and support for marginalized groups abroad. For example, State and USAID are updating strategies to more directly advance equity and are developing frameworks that will guide their global efforts at the highest levels and begin to define success in promoting equity. State and USAID are working to mitigate challenges, such as obtaining data for marginalized groups unavailable due to privacy laws, cultural sensitivities, or difficulties with self-reporting, according to agency officials. If implemented effectively, these actions could help State and USAID expand and sustain efforts to achieve the objectives of the executive directives.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Department of State's and the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) efforts to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA). Since taking office in 2021, the President has issued several executive orders and a memorandum that expressed policy commitments to advancing DEIA in the federal workforce, domestically, and in U.S. foreign assistance. In response to these directives, State and USAID have committed to incorporating DEIA into their strategies, policies, and practices.

This statement summarizes findings from our (1) January 2020 and June 2020 reports on State's and USAID's workforce demographics and efforts to identify barriers to diversity, (2) July 2022 report on State's efforts to improve workplace diversity and inclusion, and (3) July 2022 report on State and USAID actions to advance equity abroad.¹ This statement also includes updates on State's and USAID's efforts to address the recommendations we made in our 2020 reports. Detailed information on our objectives, scopes, and methodologies can be found in the issued reports. Our work was performed in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Background

Several management and executive directives instruct State and USAID to advance DEIA within their workforces and in their foreign assistance. For example,

- **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) Management Directive 715 (MD-715)** guidance tasks agencies with eliminating barriers that impede free and open competition in the workplace and prevent members of any equal employment opportunity group (applicants and employees) from realizing their full

¹See GAO, *State Department: Additional Steps Are Needed to Identify Potential Barriers to Diversity*, [GAO-20-237](#) (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 27, 2020); GAO, *USAID: Mixed Progress in Increasing Diversity, and Actions Needed to Consistently Meet EEO Requirements*, [GAO-20-477](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 23, 2020); GAO, *State Department: Additional Actions Needed to Improve Workplace Diversity and Inclusion*, [GAO-22-105182](#) (Washington, D.C.: July 21, 2022); and GAO, *Foreign Assistance: State and USAID Are Taking Actions to Advance Equity Abroad and Mitigate Challenges*, [GAO-22-105112](#) (Washington, D.C.: July 19, 2022).

potential.² EEOC's guidance outlines a four-step process for federal agencies to identify and eliminate barriers to their workforce diversity, which is commonly referred to as the barrier analysis process.

- Executive Order (E.O.) 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government* (2021), states that it is the policy of the administration that the federal government should pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.³
- The Presidential Memorandum on *Advancing the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex [LGBTQI+] Persons Around the World* (2021) requires all Federal agencies involved with foreign aid, assistance, and development programs to expand their ongoing efforts to ensure regular Federal Government engagement with governments, citizens, civil society, and the private sector to promote respect for the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons and combat discrimination.⁴

²EEOC, *Equal Employment Opportunity Management Directive 715*, MD-715 (2003); and EEOC, *Instructions to Federal Agencies for EEO MD-715, Section II, Barrier Identification and Elimination*.

³Exec. Order No. 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government*, 86 Fed. Reg. 7008 (Jan. 20, 2021). According to the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development, they often use the term "marginalized groups" in the international context in place of "underserved communities." For purposes of this statement, we will use the term "marginalized groups" to include underserved communities. Many groups of people can be included in definitions of marginalized groups and underserved communities and thus definitions can vary for each country based on their unique circumstances.

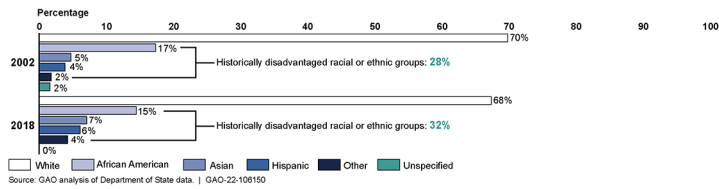
⁴Presidential Memorandum, *Advancing the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Persons Around the World* (Feb. 4, 2021).

State and USAID
Took Steps to Identify
Barriers to Workforce
Diversity to Address
GAO's
Recommendations

State's and USAID's
Demographic Data
Indicated Potential
Barriers to Workforce
Diversity

In January 2020, we found that State's workforce had grown more diverse in several ways between 2002 and 2018.⁵ Among State's full-time, permanent, career employees, the proportion of historically disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups grew from 28 percent in fiscal year 2002 to 32 percent in fiscal year 2018.⁶ However, the direction of change for specific groups varied, as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: Diversity in State Department Workforce in Fiscal Years 2002 and 2018



In addition, our analyses of State data for fiscal years 2002 through 2018 found that promotion outcomes were generally lower for historically disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups than for Whites and differed for women relative to men. We found these differences in both descriptive analyses (calculating simple averages) and adjusted analyses (controlling for certain individual and occupational factors that could influence

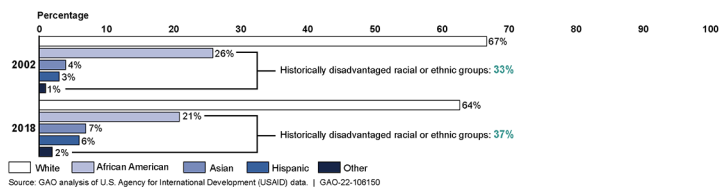
⁵GAO-20-237.

⁶Historically disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups included employees whose race was not recorded as non-Hispanic white or unspecified. We counted multiracial individuals—those who self-identified two or more races—in the "other" group and did not include those individuals in the identified racial groups.

promotion). For example, after controlling for certain factors, our adjusted analysis of State's Civil Service data found that promotion for historically disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups was 4 to 29 percent less likely than for Whites.

In June 2020, we reported that USAID's workforce had also grown more diverse in several ways between 2002 and 2018.⁷ Among USAID's full-time, permanent, career employees, the proportion of historically disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups grew from 33 percent in fiscal year 2002 to 37 percent in fiscal year 2018. However, the direction of change for specific groups varied, as shown in figure 2.

Figure 2: Diversity in U.S. Agency for International Development's Workforce in Fiscal Years 2002 and 2018



In addition, our analyses of USAID data for fiscal years 2002 through 2018 found that promotion outcomes were generally lower for historically disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups than for Whites in early to mid-career stages. For example, after controlling for factors such as occupation, we found statistically significant odds of promotion in the Civil Service were 31 to 41 percent lower for historically disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups than for Whites in early and mid-career stages.

State and USAID Have Taken Steps to Identify Potential Barriers to Workforce Diversity

Our January 2020 report found that State had identified some indicators of potential barriers to diversity, such as underrepresentation of Hispanic employees and of historically disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups in the senior ranks, and that State should consider other issues that could indicate potential barriers to diversity in its workforce. We recommended that the Secretary of State take additional steps to identify diversity issues that could indicate potential barriers to equal opportunity. The department

⁷GAO-20-477.

concluded with this recommendation, and implemented it by launching four barrier analysis working groups in August 2020 to identify, investigate, and eliminate barriers to diversity in the Civil and Foreign Services, among other efforts. As a result, State has taken some actions to investigate and eliminate potential barriers, which we evaluated in our July 2022 report.

Our June 2020 report found that USAID had previously identified underrepresentation of specific groups in its workforce, but staffing gaps, partly due to a lack of senior leadership attention, prevented the agency from consistently performing required Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) activities. We made four recommendations to USAID, including three to perform required EEO activities and one to demonstrate senior leadership attention to diversity efforts. The agency concurred with these recommendations and implemented them by increasing the allocation of staff responsible for EEO duties, such as analyzing workforce demographic data for trends and potential barriers to diversity, among other efforts.

State Needs to Take Additional Actions to Improve Workplace Diversity and Inclusion

State Has Taken Steps to Improve Diversity, but Its Analyses of Potential Barriers Vary in Depth and Have Methodological Weaknesses

In July 2022, we found that State's barrier analysis working groups formed in response to our 2020 recommendation identified four indicators of potential barriers to workforce diversity described in table 1.⁸

⁸GAO-22-105182.

Table 1: Indicators of Potential Barriers the Department of State Identified Since January 2020

Steps to identify indicators of potential barriers	Indicators of potential barriers identified
State analyzed Foreign Service Officer test pass rates by gender, race, and ethnicity.	African American Foreign Service Officer test takers had significantly lower pass rates than members of other racial or ethnic groups.
State analyzed Foreign Service Officer test takers by gender.	Fewer women took the Foreign Service Officer test.
State analyzed the distribution of Whites versus other racial or ethnic groups by grade level for Civil Service mission critical occupations.	Whites were selected for promotion more frequently than members of other racial or ethnic groups above the GS-13 level, despite comparable application and referral rates.
State analyzed GAO's 2020 report on the demographic composition of the Foreign and Civil Services by gender, race, and ethnicity.	Women and members of historically disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups were underrepresented in the senior ranks of the Foreign Service.

Source: GAO analysis of State Department documents. | GAO-22-106150

State has also taken some steps to investigate and eliminate barriers, but we found that State's analyses vary in depth, and the department has not documented a plan for improving its barrier analysis process to ensure all steps of the process are followed. In some instances, State followed the steps of the barrier analysis process, in accordance with EEOC guidance. However, in other instances, we found that State did not consistently investigate the causes of potential barriers before implementing steps to eliminate them. Specifically, State did not assess why fewer women take the Foreign Service Officer test before implementing measures designed to improve recruitment of women. Having not investigated why there was a disparity, State cannot be sure the steps it took address the underlying barrier. In addition, State does not have a plan for assessing the success of steps to eliminate barriers, so it cannot be reasonably assured that its efforts were successful.

We also found several weaknesses in State's statistical methodology for analyzing Foreign Service promotion outcomes that may have prevented the department from identifying disparities. Using this methodology, State concluded that there was not a clear and consistent disparity in promotions from Foreign Service class 4 to 3 for specialists or officers, contrary to our 2020 findings. However, we found weaknesses in this methodology. For example, State's analysis only allowed it to identify extreme disparities as indicators of potential barriers in Foreign Service promotions. State is using a similar statistical methodology to analyze demographic data on Civil Service job applicants to determine whether there is any potential bias in how State qualifies and selects job candidates. If State does not improve its methodology for identifying potential barriers, it risks leaving barriers unaddressed.

We recommended that the Secretary of State (1) create a plan to improve State's barrier analysis process that ensures all steps of the process are followed and (2) improve the agency's statistical methodology to ensure it is appropriate for identifying potential barriers to diversity. State concurred with these recommendations.

State's Actions Address or Generally Address Five Diversity and Inclusion Leading Practices, but Gaps Remain in Accountability and Measurement

In July 2022, we also reported on the extent to which State's actions address seven leading practices for diversity and inclusion management in the workplace we previously identified.⁹ We found that State's actions address or generally address five leading practices, with gaps in accountability and measurement, as shown in table 2.

Table 2: GAO's Assessment of Department of State Actions Compared to Leading Practices for Diversity and Inclusion Management

Leading practice	Definition	GAO overall rating
Employee involvement	The contribution of employees in driving diversity throughout an organization	●
Diversity training	Organizational efforts to inform and educate management and staff about diversity	●
Leadership commitment	A vision of diversity demonstrated and communicated throughout an organization by top-level management	◐
Recruitment	The process of attracting a supply of qualified, diverse applicants	◐
Succession planning	An ongoing, strategic process for identifying and developing a diverse pool of future leaders	◐
Accountability	The means to ensure that leaders are responsible for diversity by linking their performance assessment to the progress of diversity initiatives	◑
Measurement	A set of quantitative and qualitative measures that assess the effect of various aspects of an overall diversity program	◑

Legend: ●—Address: all steps addressed. ◐—Generally address: half or more of the steps addressed. ◑—Partially address: fewer than half of the steps addressed. ◒—Do not address: all steps not addressed.

Source: GAO analysis of Department of State and GAO leading practices for diversity and inclusion management. | GAO-22-106150

⁹GAO, *Diversity Management: Expert-Identified Practices and Agency Examples*, GAO-05-90 (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 14, 2005).

State's actions address or generally address employee involvement, diversity training, leadership commitment, recruitment, and succession planning. For example, State offers a range of specialized diversity and inclusion training, supports employee organizations that represent staff's DEIA interests, and maintains recruiting partnerships with diverse academic institutions and professional organizations. State also named the first standalone Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer (CDIO) in April 2021 to oversee the department's workplace DEIA efforts. The CDIO heads the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, which leads the implementation of the State's 5-year DEIA Strategic Plan that outlines the department's goals and actions to advance DEIA in the workplace. Our survey of State employee organizations revealed that the majority of respondents have favorable views of senior leadership commitment to DEIA. However, the perceptions of DEIA commitment declined substantially for bureau leadership and managers and supervisors.¹⁰

The CDIO, our survey respondents, and other State officials discussed the lack of accountability for managers and supervisors as a challenge for State's workplace DEIA efforts. To help improve accountability, State has revised its performance evaluations to include specific DEIA objectives for staff, including for managers and supervisors. The objectives went into effect for the Foreign Service beginning in April 2022 and will go into effect for the Civil Service workforce in January 2023, so it is too early to determine how State will evaluate managers and supervisors department-wide based on these objectives. In addition, while the revised objectives are an important step, they may not fully address State's significant accountability gaps. For example, the CDIO, employee organization survey respondents, and union officials we spoke to highlighted concerns that managers and supervisors do not face consequences when they fail to uphold DEIA values or violate equal employment opportunity principles. State officials acknowledged that State could do more to ensure that its actions in the new DEIA Strategic Plan will make accountability mechanisms more effective, such as analyzing the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms or changing policies to ensure effectiveness. Additional actions to enhance accountability, including for managers and supervisors, may help State achieve its vision of fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace.

¹⁰Specifically, 85 percent of respondents (17 of 20 employee organizations) stated that senior-level leadership demonstrates a great or very great commitment to diversity. In contrast, 26 percent (5 of 19) perceived the same level of commitment from managers and supervisors.

In addition, State does not have performance measures for its DEIA goals and objectives in the workplace, and thus does not have the information needed to assess progress toward these goals. Officials told us in May 2022 that State did not have performance measures that track the outcomes of or progress toward its DEIA goals in the new DEIA Strategic Plan, as they did not have the time to develop them.¹¹ Officials stated that they plan to develop performance measures through a DEIA implementation team for the new strategic plan, led by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Developing performance measures and a process to evaluate progress against those measures can help give State the information necessary to assess its DEIA programs, plans, and policies.

To address these gaps, we recommended that the Secretary of State (1) develop and implement additional actions to enhance accountability for workplace DEIA goals, including for managers and supervisors, such as analyzing the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms; and (2) establish performance measures for DEIA-related goals and objectives in the workplace and develop a process to evaluate progress. State concurred with these recommendations.

State and USAID Are Taking Actions to Advance Equity Abroad and Mitigate Challenges

State and USAID Are Taking Actions to Advance Equity Abroad

In July 2022, we found that State and USAID have taken, or plan to take, joint and individual actions in response to recent executive directives to advance equity and support for marginalized groups abroad.¹² These actions include updating strategies to more directly advance equity, developing measures to track progress, and developing equity-related frameworks to guide agency actions.

State and USAID are taking steps to more directly incorporate equity and support for marginalized groups into their strategic planning. For example, State and USAID released their updated 2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan

¹¹As of June 2022, the plan was undergoing review for final clearance from the White House Domestic Policy Council, according to officials.

¹²GAO-22-105112.

in March 2022, and the strategy includes a strategic objective to "advance equity, accessibility, and rights for all." The Joint Strategic Plan also reports that State and USAID will further equity, inclusion, accessibility, support for human rights, and resilience of marginalized peoples, including individuals from racial, ethnic, Indigenous, and religious communities, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ persons, women, and older persons. Updated joint regional strategies, also released in 2022, incorporate support for marginalized groups in a more comprehensive way than previous versions, to include a more detailed discussion of how the agencies will support these groups, recognizing their differing needs. State and USAID also issued guidance in 2021 to their embassies and missions on how to incorporate the policy of E.O. 13985 into their country strategies. This guidance highlights ways to ensure the embassies and missions incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion priorities into all country level assistance planning.

State and USAID also developed equity related Agency Priority Goals and established the Advancing Racial Equity and Supporting Marginalized Communities Key Issue. According to State, the addition of an Agency Priority Goal enables the agencies to ensure racial equity and support for underserved communities is part of all strategic planning to guide foreign policy development and execution. According to State, key issues are essential tools used to track and report on high-priority issues that cut across many, if not all, foreign assistance sectors. Agency officials told us they will use data collected from the Advancing Racial Equity and Supporting Marginalized Communities Key Issue to understand how the agencies are investing in activities supporting marginalized groups so they can allocate resources equitably and support local organizations. State and USAID have existing key issues related to the following marginalized groups: religious and ethnic minorities, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, women, LGBTQI+ persons, children in adversity, and youth.

State and USAID are also planning to develop frameworks that will guide their global efforts at the highest levels and begin to define success in promoting equity. State has called for the development of a three-part equity strategic impact framework to evaluate global progress toward reducing barriers to equity by September 2023. Similarly, USAID is developing a new policy framework for release in summer or fall 2022 that will reflect the emphasis on integrating racial equity and support for marginalized communities.

State and USAID Are
Taking Steps to Mitigate
Challenges to Advancing
Equity Abroad

State and USAID have also taken steps to identify, and in some cases, mitigate challenges to integrating equity throughout their work. For example, USAID stated that their missions often lack the local expertise and resources required to develop programs that meet the challenges faced by local marginalized groups. To help alleviate this challenge, USAID aims for all overseas missions to have Inclusive Development Advisors.¹³ In addition, having sufficient resources to implement the desired changes and metrics to track progress are areas that both agencies have identified as challenges that they are working to address. For example, both agencies identified challenges with collecting the data needed to effectively measure progress and with increasing the capacity of local organizations that are serving marginalized and underrepresented groups. Both agencies also identified some challenges that may take longer to address or are intended to be addressed in future actions. While it is too early to tell how effective their efforts to mitigate these challenges will be, the outcome will play an important role in whether State and USAID are successful in their plans to expand and sustain the implementation of a comprehensive approach to achieve the objectives of the executive directives.

State and USAID also face longstanding challenges in collecting information on marginalized groups, for reasons including intersectionality, data disaggregation, and differing definitions. For example, a person may be marginalized based on ethnicity, gender, and LGBTQI+ identity, which can lead to double counting in data systems. Further, agencies sometimes cannot disaggregate data because it is not available due to privacy laws, cultural sensitivities, or difficulties with self-reporting, according to agency officials. State and USAID are working to collect better information in several ways, such as using Agency Priority Goal data to develop a system for reporting equity issues agency-wide, and issuing guidance to staff and implementing partners.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and Members of the Committee, this concludes our statement for the record.

¹³Inclusive Development Advisors serve as subject-matter experts on USAID's inclusive development framework. They launch Inclusive Development Analyses and other relevant approaches to gathering data and understanding local contexts, guide staff in developing programming designed to integrate the needs of marginalized and underrepresented groups, and spearhead the integration of inclusive development considerations in relevant policies, among other things, according to USAID.

**GAO Contact and
Staff
Acknowledgments**

If you or your staff have any questions about this statement, please contact Jason Bair at (202) 512-6881 or bairj@gao.gov, or Latesha Love at (202) 512-4409 or lovel@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this statement. GAO staff who made key contributions to this statement include Cheryl Goodman (Assistant Director), Bridgette Savino, Michael Maslowski, Rianna Jansen, Andrew Kincare, Michelle Bird, Larissa Barrett, Neil Doherty, Alex Welsh, Moon Parks, Terry Richardson, and Clifton G. Douglas, Jr.

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