

**REVIEW OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2024  
UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT BUDGET**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2023

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:00 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Kaine, Booker, Van Hollen, Duckworth, Risch, Paul, Cruz, and Hagerty.

**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.

Administrator Power, thank you for joining us.

As we meet today, horrific violence continues to unfold in Khartoum. Hundreds are dead. Thousands have been wounded. The staff of humanitarian aid organizations had been assaulted and killed, a reminder of the dangers our diplomats, humanitarian, and development workers at USAID face as they carry out their mission every day.

I am sure I speak for all of us when I say how relieved I was to hear about the successful evacuation of our officials from Sudan, but I agree with Administration officials we cannot and must not abandon the Sudanese people nor will insecurity deter us from our work in other parts of the continent and other places in the world.

Russia's war in Ukraine is driving up food, fertilizer, and energy costs all over the globe. Forty-eight million people in West Africa are experiencing food insecurity.

Climate change is fueling record floods around the world from Pakistan to Nigeria and extreme droughts in Brazil and Central Asia.

Additionally, the threat of state-sponsored death squads, criminal gangs, and sexual violence is driving millions and millions of people to flee their homes, creating a growing migration crisis across continents and hemispheres.

Administrator Power, do you think we are prepared? Because while your budget request is an improvement compared to past years, given the challenges and risks we face right now and the

shocks and stresses we will face in the future, I am concerned that this budget is not ambitious enough.

Successful U.S. foreign policy requires a balance between the three “Ds” of defense, diplomacy, and development. Development is effectively the ounce of prevention for the pound of cure we see in places like Sudan right now.

It cannot be an afterthought for the United States and it certainly is not an afterthought in Beijing. China is outspending us and outflanking us when it comes to international development and development diplomacy.

I would argue American international development is driven by a desire to support people seeking to improve their own lives, to help build strong societal and governance structures that facilitate sustainable economic growth.

That stands in stark contrast to China’s development approach, which amounts to foreign infrastructure investments, which I think is fair to say does not come from the goodness of Xi Jinping’s heart. Rather, it is a tool Beijing uses effectively to influence and shape the direction of nations around the globe.

Their efforts ignore workers’ rights, destroy the environment, saddle local communities seeking critical infrastructure projects with faulty bridges and roads.

We need to up our game to be responsive to the types of infrastructure projects so many nations need. We can build the world’s best hospitals, the smoothest roads, the most efficient power grids, but when the United States invests in local infrastructure, we also have to make sure that the host communities know what we are doing, that they know the United States model of development and investment brings needed, trusted, and sustainable partnerships for growth.

I also think that when democratic nations try to do the right thing, USAID needs to be able to move quickly. We must be agile and ready to support those democracies facing economic hardship.

I would like to hear your thoughts on whether USAID has what it needs to show that democracies can deliver for their people because oftentimes USAID moves slower than molasses.

Case in point—the humanitarian crisis for Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh is only getting worse. Where are we? Why are we not airlifting humanitarian supplies to those Armenians facing Baku’s blockade?

We need to respond to events quickly and we also need to address root causes. I think you would agree with me that international development must be about more than sending tents to people impacted by an earthquake or hurricane.

It has to be about making strategic investments that address the needs of people on the ground, about strengthening the systems and institutions countries need to be resilient in the future, about creating good-paying local jobs and about supporting the peace and prosperity people need to raise a family rather than be forced to flee their homeland.

Administrator Power, I look forward to hearing your testimony, updating us on your progress since the last year.

With that, let me turn to the ranking member.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A year ago we had this same hearing, as we do every year—the budget hearing—and Ms. Power, I want to quote you as we start this hearing.

You said last year, “The work we do abroad matters to Americans here at home. It makes us safer, it makes us more prosperous, and it engenders goodwill that strengthens alliances and global cooperation.”

Well said. Americans support that proposition, but it must be done well and it must be done right, and in that regard there are problems with this budget and I want to talk about them briefly. We will drill down as the hearing goes on.

For example, the budget correctly identifies China’s predatory and coercive activities as a major threat to the U.S., our allies, and our interests. Again, well said. It even includes a number of so-called outcompete China initiatives that I might be willing to support, but the decision to request this as mandatory funding without legally required offsets demonstrates a lack of seriousness, I believe, and an inability to make tough budget decisions.

Also, by example, the Administration’s climate and energy policies are self-defeating and misaligned with outcompeting China proposition. By rejecting low-carbon energy options like natural gas and clinging to only green-only approach, the Administration will not outcompete China and it will not reduce carbon.

Why do I say that? Instead, it will push developing countries toward even more Chinese investment in high-carbon cheaper energy while simultaneously creating markets for solar panels built, as we know, on the backs of Uighur slave labor in China.

This is not an appropriate use of U.S. taxpayer dollars. As administrator, you lead a world-class team of humanitarians working to address the highest levels of conflict and displacement in recorded history.

Unfortunately, existing humanitarian crises are not going away and in places like Sudan are only getting more dangerous, as we all know.

Remarkably, with this budget, the Administration wants to reduce humanitarian assistance while increasing contributions to a nontransparent green climate fund to \$1.6 billion. This makes no sense.

Regarding Ukraine, the Administration has spoken at length about its unwavering commitment to the Ukrainian people. Yet, this budget requests—the budget request you have in front of us pretends that the war is not happening and requests no funds. We need an explanation of this.

Turning to the West Bank and Gaza, the Administration restarted Palestinian assistance 2 years ago, yet we have seen even higher levels of violence. Palestinians are identifying with terror groups to promote their interests more and the Palestinian Authority’s abhorrent pay-for-slay policy continues unabated.

Why is the Administration asking for an additional \$250 million? Whose interests will be advanced by this money? Certainly not America’s interest and certainly not our ally, Israel.

I am also compelled to point out the irony of requesting funds to empower women globally—it is certainly a laudable goal—but at the same time requesting flexibility to provide assistance to the Taliban—to the Taliban. Did we learn nothing during the 20 years we spent in Afghanistan? The Taliban certainly do not have the same values that we do.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not raise once again the need to make sure that the U.S. follows the “do no harm principle” in response to complex emergencies such as South Sudan and Ethiopia.

We all know these are tough, but we still await the conduct of assistance reviews and investigations into humanitarian aid diversions. We need strong oversight on assistance and these issues need our view.

There are a lot of areas in which we can and should work together. For example, I am eager to help ensure USAID has a workforce that is fit for purpose and fully capable of meeting today’s complex development challenges. This applies not only to the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance, where needs are particularly acute, but also at overseas missions, particularly in Africa.

On balance, this budget appears to me to be written to pursue domestic progressive goals rather than meet crucial needs overseas. This imbalance makes it really difficult to support.

It is clear we have got a very steep hill to climb when it comes to aligning priorities and resources. I hope we can get to a resolution on these and come together. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

With that, let us turn to our witness with us. To testify on the Administration’s proposed fiscal year 2024 budget for USAID is the agency’s administrator, Samantha Power.

Obviously, just in the opening statements you heard a plethora of challenges both for the agency and the world and the challenges the agency faces and grows in complexity each and every year.

You and the dedicated workforce at USAID have extremely difficult jobs to do. We are grateful for your efforts.

With that, we will turn to you for your testimony. Your full statement will be included in the record, without objection. We would ask you to summarize it in about 5 minutes or so, so that we can have members engage in a conversation.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE SAMANTHA POWER, ADMINISTRATOR, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WASHINGTON, DC**

Ms. POWER. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ranking Member Risch. Thanks to all of you who have joined here today and those who will join us subsequently.

As you each noted in your opening statements, the outbreak of discriminate violence in Sudan has upended hope for the democratic transition that millions of Sudanese risked their lives for.

It has already claimed hundreds of lives and injured thousands more, but the challenges Sudan faces, it is fair to say, I think are emblematic of a wider story that each of you have alluded to that is unfolding in many parts of the world.



After decades of development gains that laid the foundation for an era of relative peace, stability, and prosperity, those gains are now at serious risk. During our lifetimes, the United States has helped accelerate tremendous progress in reducing extreme poverty, in fighting disease and addressing hunger, and getting kids and girls especially to school, fueling democracies' rise.

Now many of these trends have moved in reverse. The pandemic decimated health systems, leading to a resurgence in diseases from measles to tuberculosis. It also battered many nations' finances after a decade of heavy borrowing and more recently rising inflation exacerbated by Putin's war.

Sixty percent of the world's poorest countries are currently at or near debt distress—60 percent—and natural disasters, as you noted, are increasing in frequency and intensity, leading to a sharp rise in humanitarian needs.

The upshot of it all is stark. For the first time since the 1950s, human life expectancy globally is on the decline while extreme poverty is on the rise. At the same time, democracies everywhere are under attack.

Our rivals are using transnational corruption, digital repression, disinformation, and in Ukraine, of course, actual artillery and missile fire to undermine freedom, to elevate autocrats, and to curry favor.

It is a daunting list of challenges and I know some question whether the United States should be taking on these challenges through our development investments while others wonder whether the scope of the challenges at this stage is simply too great to be able to make a meaningful difference.

The fact is our national security hinges on this work. Deprivation and indignity abroad, as we well know, can fuel resource competition, political fragility, and extremism that endangers us here at home and Americans all around the world.

Disease outbreaks can cross oceans and recessions in foreign markets can threaten our own economic growth, and if we do not lead efforts to take on these challenges it is fair to say the People's Republic of China and Putin are ready to step in whether through opaque loans on unfavorable terms or with mercenaries in tow.

An international order that values democracy and human rights and that respects international borders is not a given. Indeed, authoritarian actors are challenging and aiming to reshape it as we sit here.

We have to invest in the stable and humane world that we need. USAID is truly privileged to have a leading role in tackling the most significant challenges of our time in close coordination with our interagency partners advancing diplomacy and defense, and we are grateful to the American people and to you for giving us the resources to make a major difference.

That said, we know that to drive progress on the scale that we need, on the scale this array of challenges that you have alluded to demands, we have to bring in other donor countries.

We have to bring in the private sector at scale. We have to work with multilateral institutions and harness them in pursuit of our objectives. We have to work with foundations and local organizations in our partner countries.

USAID has laid out a new reform agenda aimed at delivering progress beyond our development programs, beyond the resources that this Congress allocates to us where we are using our expertise, our convening power, our advocacy, our hustle to draw in others, to leverage more resources, to spark innovation, and to inspire broader movements for change.

The Biden-Harris administration's FY2024 request of \$32 billion for USAID's fully and partially managed accounts will allow us to make more of that transformative impact.

Alongside our partners, we will invest in countries experiencing democratic openings, helping them show, as the chairman said, that democracy delivers tangible results for citizens.

We will work with nations to attract private sector investment and drive broadly shared economic growth. We will support countries that are rebuilding their decimated health systems and we will meet growing humanitarian needs not just with emergency assistance, but with long-term investments in resilience and, crucially, we will invest in our workforce to carry out this ambitious agenda.

Since 2019, our operating expense funds have increased at half the rate that our programming has grown, giving us more to do with fewer people and resources, but this budget will help us invest in the people and systems that we need to power an agency that is nimble and that is responsive.

We know that with the United States leading the way the world can drive meaningful progress against our toughest challenges because we have decades of gains in global health, in education, and in prosperity to prove it. It is on us now to resume that progress.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Power follows:]

#### **Prepared Statement of Ms. Samantha Power**

Thank you Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and other distinguished members of the Committee.

The challenge the world faces today is clear: The decades of development gains that have laid the foundation for an era of relative peace, stability, and prosperity are at serious risk.

During our lifetimes, the United States has helped accelerate tremendous progress in reducing extreme poverty, fighting disease, addressing hunger, getting kids in school, and fueling democracy's rise.

But now, many of these trends have moved into reverse. The pandemic decimated health systems, leading to a resurgence in diseases from measles to tuberculosis. It also battered many nation's finances. After a decade of heavy borrowing and more recently rising inflation—exacerbated by Putin's war—60 percent of the world's poorest countries are at or near debt distress. And natural disasters are increasing in frequency and intensity, leading to a sharp rise in humanitarian needs. The upshot of it all is stark: For the first time in decades, human life expectancy is on the decline—while extreme poverty is on the rise.

At the same time, democracies everywhere are under attack. Our rivals are using transnational corruption, digital repression, disinformation—and in Ukraine, actual artillery fire—to undermine freedom, elevate autocrats, and curry favor.

It's a daunting list of challenges. And I know some question whether the United States should be taking on these challenges through our development investments, or whether the scope of the challenges is too great to make a meaningful difference.

But the fact is our national security hinges on this work. Deprivation and indignity abroad can fuel resource competition, political fragility, and extremism that endangers us here at home. Disease outbreaks can cross oceans, and recessions in foreign markets can threaten our own economic growth.

And if we don't lead efforts to take on these challenges, the People's Republic of China and Putin are ready to step in, whether through opaque loans on unfavorable terms, or with mercenaries in tow.

An international order that values democracy and human rights and respects international borders is not a given. Indeed, authoritarian actors are challenging and aiming to reshape it. We have to invest in the stable and humane world we need.

USAID is privileged to have a leading role in tackling the most significant challenges of our time, in close coordination with our interagency partners advancing diplomacy and defense. And we are grateful to the American people—and to you—for giving us the resources to make a major difference.

That said, we know that to drive progress on the scale we need, we have to bring other donor countries, the private sector, multilateral institutions, foundations, and local organizations in our partner countries along with us.

So USAID has set a new reform agenda aimed at delivering progress beyond our development programs—using our expertise, convening power, and advocacy to draw in others, leverage more resources, spark innovation, and inspire broader movements for change.

The Biden-Harris administration's FY 2024 request of \$32 billion for USAID's fully- and partially-managed accounts will allow us to make more of that transformative impact.

Alongside our partners, we'll invest in countries experiencing democratic openings, helping them show that democracy delivers tangible results for citizens. We'll work with nations to attract private sector investment and drive broadly shared economic growth. We'll support countries that are rebuilding their decimated health systems. And we'll meet growing humanitarian needs not just with emergency assistance, but long-term investments in resilience.

And, crucially, we'll invest in our workforce to carry out this ambitious agenda. Since 2019, our operating expense funds have increased at half the rate that our programming has grown—giving us more to do with fewer people and resources. But this budget will help us invest in the people and systems we need to power an Agency that is nimble and responsive.

We know that, with the United States leading the way, the world can drive meaningful progress against our toughest challenges—because we have decades of gains in global health, education, and prosperity to prove it. It's on us, now, to resume that progress.

A few months ago, President George W. Bush posed a question. "What's the role of a great country in the world? Is it to look inward? Is it to think about how to solve big problems?" As he said, "We all decided to work together to solve big problems." Let's continue that legacy.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. We will start a round of 5-minute questions.

The Administration has sent over an ambitious mandatory spending proposal to outcompete China with line items for the compacts of free association, hard infrastructure spending, equity for the Development Finance Corporation, and the Indo-Pacific strategy. What is USAID's role in the outcompete China proposal?

Ms. POWER. Well, we already are making great use of the countering Chinese influence fund. It gives us flexibility to do everything from support an open internet to supporting right to information laws that are being used increasingly around the world to actually publish for the first time these opaque contracts that charge these inordinate fees on infrastructure investments.

Those contracts, as you know, are famously concealed often from the publics in the countries in which this debt is being incurred.

I think the entire USAID model stands in contrast, as you noted, I think at the beginning in helping countries work toward—

The CHAIRMAN. What I am trying to find out, Administrator, what specific—I gather the broad strokes.

Ms. POWER. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a specific component of the outcompete China that has been delegated to your agency?

Ms. POWER. Well, I think—there are a number of sub-components, let us say, of the outcompete China approach. There is the request that Senator Risch alluded to with additional funding to really amp up what that looks like.

At present, what USAID does is we are often the ground game for the Development Finance Corporation in identifying, for example, the Dominican Republic, a country you and I know—both know well where tenders are—can be put out in a manner that requires open and transparent competition in a manner that would almost necessarily benefit U.S. companies.

That has happened in a major port in the Dominican Republic. We are opening a new mission finally in Fiji starting in September. That is part of the Pacific Islands amp up that is occurring as part of the outcompete China program, and happy to get you specifics within the mandatory funding proposal.

The CHAIRMAN. I would very much appreciate seeing that.

Turning to Sudan, are you making provisions for the safety and security of all USAID employees including local employees?

Ms. POWER. We are working around the clock in pursuit of that objective in a very challenging set of circumstances. Six USAID staff were evacuated as part of the evacuation that you mentioned at the outset, four Americans and two third country nationals from Pakistan. They arrived in Washington 2 days ago.

We spoke yesterday to our Sudanese staff. We still have 29 Sudanese staff who are in Sudan, 27 of whom are in Khartoum and are basically in—most of whom in neighborhoods that are—that are incredibly hard to move around in.

We are helping them secure onward destinations in terms of our USAID mission, for example, in Egypt or in Ethiopia so that if they want to leave the country they will have someplace to work.

We have given them advance payments, salary increases, those kinds of things, but to be honest, Mr. Chairman, it is extremely difficult to access banks right now because even banking employees cannot get to the bank.

It just underscores, again, the irresponsibility and recklessness of the leader of the SAF and the RSF in pursuing this conflict, but we will not rest unless and until our people are safe.

The CHAIRMAN. Please keep the committee abreast of where you are at in evacuating USAID employees, assuming they want to leave and I assume that under the present circumstances the majority of them would want to leave.

Ms. POWER. That is the impression we have for sure.

The CHAIRMAN. Last year in our hearing with your budget, I raised my concerns about violence Armenians are facing in Nagorno-Karabakh.

I appreciate—I see \$40 million in the budget requesting assistance to Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia, funds for Armenia in part to assist with recovery from the humanitarian impact from recent Azerbaijani assaults on Nagorno-Karabakh.

I am concerned that these funds will be split among a number of assistance priorities and that the assistance will not reach vulnerable Armenian populations in Nagorno-Karabakh.

How much of this assistance would go towards meeting the needs of vulnerable communities in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh as they recover from Azerbaijani aggression?

Ms. POWER. I do not have that figure off the top of my head and I think everything is very fluid there, especially in light of developments this week.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Would you get that to the committee, please? I would like to—

Ms. POWER. As soon as we have it, but again, these are decisions that are made on a weekly basis on the basis of—

The CHAIRMAN. Well, there must be some concept out of \$40 million for what you expect to use—

Ms. POWER. Well, we have conducted two assessment missions to the region to look at the needs specifically in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The CHAIRMAN. When you get the assessment, I would like to see the assessment.

Ms. POWER. Okay.

The CHAIRMAN. Particularly how you are going to help be able to achieve delivering humanitarian assistance in the Lachin corridor.

Lastly, I published a comprehensive plan for securing our borders and managing migration and refugees in the Americas, a plan recognizing the fact that most migrants and refugees on the move in our hemisphere are not seeking to come to our border.

There is 20 million people who are displaced in the Southern Hemisphere already throughout countries, some refugees, some seeking asylum. Others are economic refugees. The bottom line is they are all over the hemisphere.

Now, unless we work with those countries to create pathways of stability, there will be 20 million people on the march and what we are facing at the southern border now will be minor in comparison to what we can.

It seems to me that we have to come with an approach that understands it is a hemispheric challenge, not just simply a southern border challenge.

When the United Nations Commission for Refugees ultimately says that 20 percent of the world's refugee problems is in the Western Hemisphere, they only spend 8 percent of their funds on it.

When Colombia takes in nearly 2 million Venezuelans, something has got to give, and the list goes on and on. Now, I know that USAID under your leadership has started to move in a direction to support the integration of displaced populations, but we have to do more to address the migration and refugee crisis not only from Ukraine and Syria, but also in our own hemisphere.

What can be done to significantly scale up USAID funding for integration initiatives in the hemisphere and can I get your commitment to work with me in the appropriations process to encourage the establishment of a \$300 million integration fund so that we can work towards making sure that we do not have 20 million people on the march?

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me just say that I think the President is broadly aligned with the view that you have laid out and we are surging our support as best we can for integration efforts including the really in-

credible effort made by Colombia to integrate more than 2 million migrants.

Those efforts at integration have a direct effect on, as you said, who comes to the border, who seeks to go further north, and just give you one example, Venezuelan arrivals to the U.S. border nearly doubled after Colombia actually cut off the TPS registration deadline back in May of last year.

We see that also displacement increased—inside the hemisphere is increasing at a rate 17 times that which the rate to the border is increasing, which is extraordinary when you think about this—how substantial those flows are writ large.

We already do work with the Colombians on TPS and in trying to provide support in the communities that are housing Venezuelans who have come in, but we would be very interested in talking to you about what more we can do for countries all along the route north.

The CHAIRMAN. This is a question of stability in the hemisphere, stability for the countries that have shown their willingness to accept refugees, and stability at the southern border of the United States. It should be a no-brainer.

Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

On April 6 this year, your agency notified this committee of the discovery of widespread diversion of U.S. branded food aid in Tigray.

The war in northern Ethiopia featured severely restricted humanitarian access, we understand, and looting of humanitarian warehouses. Since the initial notification from USAID, our committee has not been briefed on the diversion of U.S. food aid in Tigray despite requests.

While I understand the acute situation in Sudan has captured attention within USAID, we should be able to do multiple things at the same time.

I am sure you know that in our oversight capacity we are deeply troubled when these kinds of things happen and our constituents are even more deeply troubled, and for those that have reservations about all this stuff, this gives ammunition.

Can you give us an update on the diversion of the U.S. food aid in Ethiopia?

Ms. POWER. Thank you. I absolutely share your outrage and that of your constituents at what looks to be fairly substantial diversion of assistance meant for what were people in Tigray who were facing famine conditions.

We have dispatched our deputy assistant administrator for humanitarian affairs to the region and he and a team is actively looking into what happened and we do have some preliminary indications of, effectively, collusion between parties on both sides actually of the conflict.

Senator RISCH. Is that team still there or are they back here?

Ms. POWER. Our deputy assistant administrator, I believe, is back, but the team on the ground working out of our mission in Ethiopia is still uncovering this and we have engaged the Ethiopian Government as well as the Tigrayan authorities.

It looks—there is plenty more to be said when we have the actual facts in a right position, I think, to convey to you, but it looks as though this is something that started in the wake of the cessation of hostilities so a more recent instance of collusion.

We have retrieved much of the assistance that was out on open markets, but there is no question, again, that this is outrageous and above all, the people in Tigray are the ones to have suffered because they will not have received access to food in the course of distributions because of this criminal network that was established, again, it looks like somewhere between November and February of this year.

Senator RISCH. We are looking forward to that and I got to tell you, there is going to be a lot of pressure from this committee to see what you are going to do about this because this—just saying, well, this happened and we are concerned.

Ms. POWER. I could not agree more and—

Senator RISCH. We got to have a plan going forward that is much more reliable than what we have got here.

Ms. POWER. I want to stress how unusual the circumstance was, but not unique and so your concerns are very well-founded, but it really was, again, the denial of access for our disaster response team that deprived us of the safeguards and the oversight that we normally have.

We did have third-party monitors and others we were relying upon, but, obviously, we have to look at what amounts to a system failure if, in fact, again, this was allowed to happen at scale.

We know we owe you ample not only accounting for what has happened, but also some institution of additional safeguards that will give you the assurance that you need in light of all of the resources that we are expending globally to try to meet food needs.

Senator RISCH. Let me turn for a minute to the Palestinian question. You heard my opening statement. I am really distressed by the fact that we are bumping up money in this area.

Look, we have been at this for decades and we keep trying to pound a round peg into a square hole. We keep doing the same thing. We keep getting the same results. What is the situation with this in what I think is a very significant increase in this area in the budget?

Ms. POWER. Well, I think that, again, while it is—there is no question that development assistance or humanitarian assistance has not brought peace to this region, I think the individuals who are affected by this programming have felt the impact of this programming over the years and whether that is those who access education through State Department funding who would otherwise not have access to schools, whether those who access clean water and, again, some of the sanitation programming we are trying to do would have cross-line benefit as well.

Civil society programming is about holding also the Palestinian Authority to account and for there to be more pressure from the outside to improve governance, which I know is something that has concerned you.

Even career skills training for young people—every one of the 10,000 youth that receive those career skills training has the opportunity potentially to find a career that they would not otherwise

have found, which means potentially being less attracted to the path of extremism, which, of course, there are always people there willing to be—trying to exploit a sense of deprivation or grievance.

Senator RISCH. Well, Samantha, I do not disagree with what you have said about the money doing some good. The problem I have got is this is not our responsibility. This is not the responsibility of the American people.

Certainly, we do our best to try to get people up on their feet and going, but when you get a situation like this that is not only gone on for decades, it has gone on for generations, and we do the same thing over and over and over again. They do the same thing over and over again, and I am just disgusted with it and through with it, to be honest with you, and yet here there is another \$250 million going into it. It is just—I have real difficulty with this. Real difficulties. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Administrator Power, welcome. I want to associate myself with the chairman's comments. We are glad to see your budget is moving in the right direction.

I do not believe there is enough being requested to meet the needs that are out there. I know I am joined by other members of our committee. Senator Coons raises this issue frequently in his role on the Appropriations Committee on the challenges that he has on the allocation of the funds.

Let me start with the proposal that is coming out of the House Republicans, that as I understand it would mean about a 45 percent cut in the foreign aid budget. What impact would that have on your ability to carry out your mission, recognizing that you said you are looking for partnerships? Can you sustain a 45 percent cut and America still be able to maintain its international presence?

Ms. POWER. Where to start? I think I testified last week and the number that was floating around was a 22 percent cut and so that was 13 million children who would not receive vaccinations with a 22 percent cut. Presuming one would double that, that would be 26 million kids without vaccinations.

I think, again, at the same time that we see these proposals for these really substantial cuts, we see very strong demand signals up here from both parties, rightly, for the United States to be out there competing with the PRC, supporting democracy, fighting corruption, securing stable investment climates for American companies, showing, again, the contrast between the U.S. approach, pursuing an open free internet, supporting civil society on the one hand, again, in contrast with the more extractive approach that the PRC has taken in its development objectives.

In terms of humanitarian assistance, you have 230 million people facing acute food insecurity right now. If you were to cut half of what we did this year—the United States is the leading humanitarian donor in Afghanistan and Somalia, in Ethiopia—if you imagine what Ukraine would look like without the support that we have been providing, Putin could win the war without having to fire a bullet if the Ukrainian Government collapsed.

Senator CARDIN. I am sure you could go on and on and on.

Ms. POWER. I could.



Senator CARDIN. I knew the answer to the question, obviously. We have traveled to many places in the world and we visit with the USAID people and they all are in need of additional resources in order to match the activities that are occurring in China globally as well as the needs that are out there to promote American national security.

We recognize that would devastate your program. I want to raise one issue where I am disappointed you are not seeking more funds and that is in localization. When you look at the success of PEPFAR, it is not only dealing with HIV/AIDS.

It is also local capacity to develop a health care infrastructure that can deal with pandemics or other types of challenges. You have a goal of 25 percent on local aid by, I think, 2025. When you look at the direct appropriations of your budget, it is actually a cut of close to 50 percent.

You have other areas for local partnerships that could make up for some of those funds. Tell me how this budget will allow you to reach your goal of 25 percent.

Ms. POWER. Well, let me just acknowledge the degree of difficulty in meeting that goal. We in the last year have increased foreign assistance to local partners from what looks like it was around 7 percent to probably 10½ percent and that is with a concerted push that not only includes dedicated resources like Centroamérica Local, but also intensifying staff attention because to partner with a local organization, given the complexity of compliance requirements in working to be good stewards of taxpayer resources requires much more staff, focus, left-sy and right-sy with the local organization.

I would look both at the budget request for our seriousness of purpose here, but also at the efforts we are making to reduce bureaucratic burdens on staff, and if you could look as well at our operating expense requests as we seek to increase the number of Foreign Service officers, civil service officers, and Foreign Service nationals who will help us actually work with those local organizations so they can compete with much larger established groups.

Senator CARDIN. I appreciate that, and I hope that you would keep us informed. We want you to meet that 25 percent goal, so we are interested in helping you.

Ms. POWER. Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. One last question, if I might. We talked about Sudan. Let me talk about Haiti for one moment.

We know the chaos of—I should not say chaos—the safety issues in Haiti itself. Are we able to provide humanitarian help to the people of Haiti, considering the challenges we have with safety in the country itself?

Ms. POWER. We are providing humanitarian assistance, but access to neighborhoods that even a year ago was relatively smooth is now severely impeded and there is no substitute, again, for marrying access and assistance.

We have substantial assistance. The UN is issuing its largest appeal since the earthquake in terms of humanitarian needs, but whole parts of Port-au-Prince, neighborhoods you have probably visited, I visited, are now off limits for humanitarian actors because of the prevalence of the gangs. Again, humanitarian without

security inevitably is going to limit access and it is only the Haitian people who suffer.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Paul.

Senator PAUL. Ms. Power, did USAID fund coronavirus research in Wuhan, China?

Ms. POWER. We did not fund gain of function research, as you know.

Senator PAUL. That is not the question. The question is did you fund coronavirus research in Wuhan, China.

Ms. POWER. Before my time, there was the PREDICT program with which you are familiar, which ended in China in 2019.

Senator PAUL. This is a \$200 million program and the GAO has also identified that some of these grants went directly to the Wuhan Institute of Virology where there is a suspicion that the lab leak began that began the pandemic.

Has USAID awarded funds to the Academy of Military Medical Sciences in China?

Ms. POWER. Not to my knowledge, but I would have to get back—

Senator PAUL. I think the answer is once again, yes. GAO has found that there have been sub awards of NIH money probably as well as USAID money that went to the Academy of not just Medical Research, Military Medical Research in China.

Now, part of the unknowns here is we cannot get the records to look at this. I have been asking for months and months for records. In September of last year, I wrote, Ms. Power, USAID a request asking for records from the PREDICT program.

These are not classified. These are simply records of scientific research and we want to read the grants to find out what they were doing and whether the research was dangerous or not.

The response I got from your agency was USAID will not be providing any documents at this time. They are just unwilling to give documents on a scientific grant proposal. We are paying for it. They are asking for \$745 million more in money and we get no response.

Two weeks ago, the Ranking Member Risch, myself, and 25 other Republican senators, unfortunately, so far signed a letter once again. Still no response. We are not asking for classified information. We are not asking for anything unusual.

Twenty million people died around the world. You are supposed to be an agency that cares about the death of people around the world.

We talk about starvation and famine, and 20 million people died from a virus and you will not give us the basic information about what grants you are funding around the world and who you are funding.

Should we be funding the Academy of Military Medical Research in China? They are now off limits, but did we fund them and who was making the decision?

You know who ran the PREDICT program? UC Davis. Have you had any conversations with UC Davis about research in China and whether it was advisable?

Ms. POWER. Again, to set the record straight, first of all, the PREDICT program ended in 2019. We have people—

Senator PAUL. Yet, it goes on in other forums in other names.

Ms. POWER. That is certainly not USAID programming.

Senator PAUL. Well, you have a program called emergency pandemic threats program still, do you not?

Ms. POWER. If I could just finish in response to the first set of allegations. We have provided hundreds and hundreds of pages of documents related to the PREDICT program for the very reason that you say, because we are—

Senator PAUL. Not to us.

Ms. POWER. We are, again, as I know you had an exchange with Secretary Blinken as well, consistent with long-standing practice—

Senator PAUL. Not going to give them to us.

Ms. POWER. —we have been responsive to the committees of jurisdiction including this—

Senator PAUL. Not going to—you have been consistent in not giving us any information, but what you are saying is—

Ms. POWER. That is not true. We have provided hundreds of pages in response to the chair and ranking.

Senator PAUL. To who? To whom?

Ms. POWER. To the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, for example. We have had extensive engagement with this committee.

Senator PAUL. We have been requesting this and gotten none of it. I am on that committee as well.

The thing is, is what we get from you and from the State Department at-large is that if Senator Menendez signs it, you will give it documents.

Until then, you will give us nothing and we have gotten nothing, zero. You said will not be providing any documents. I now have 25 senators have sent you a letter and you all are not responding. We do not—

Ms. POWER. Well, we certainly respond—

Senator PAUL. We want to see the scientific grants. We give you the money. The taxpayers give you the money. We deserve to know where the money went, whether it happened.

Look, you are right. It ended in 2019. When did the virus come about? In about 2019. Some of the research proposals that came about in 2018 were Wuhan Institute of Virology asking for money to create a virus with a furin cleavage site in it. Coronavirus, a SARS-like virus with a furin cleavage site, that is exactly what COVID turned out to be.

They wanted money to create such a virus. We want to know are there other research proposals that you either granted or denied that were on the same veins of creating viruses that could have become COVID-19. We cannot tell because you will not give us the information.

Ms. POWER. Again, we—consistent with longstanding practice, we are providing extensive documentation. We have a whole team of people who do nothing—

Senator PAUL. That is just not true. That is just not true.

Ms. POWER. —other than look back at PREDICT.

Senator PAUL. That is not true.

Ms. POWER. It is factually accurate.

Senator PAUL. That is not true.

Ms. POWER. It is. It is accurate.

Senator PAUL. Everything we have asked we have not gotten. I have not seen one document on the PREDICT program.

Ms. POWER. I understand that. Again, consistent with common practice across the Administration——

Senator PAUL. Consistent that you are not going to give it to any senator who has asked.

Ms. POWER. No. No. No. We are providing all of the kinds of documentation that you are describing.

Senator PAUL. You are not. You are being dishonest.

Ms. POWER. We are. No, I am not. I am absolutely not.

Senator PAUL. We have not gotten one scrap of paper from you. Not one scrap of paper.

Ms. POWER. Again, with the committees of jurisdiction we are providing all of the paperwork that have been requested by the chair and the ranking member.

Senator PAUL. You are not. I am on the other committee. I am the ranking member on the other committee and I have not seen a scrap of paper from that committee either.

Ms. POWER. Well, that is——

Senator PAUL. See, here is what the American people——

Ms. POWER. I can tell you what is happening. Actually, I cannot tell you what is happening at the committee.

Senator PAUL. The American people think this, that because you will not respond and because you respond with a nonresponse that you have something to hide. I do not know if you have anything to hide or not.

I want to see every grant proposal that had to do with coronaviruses that went to China from the U.S. Government, from all facets of the U.S. Government, and every bit of the Biden administration is stonewalling us and will not give us the information. It makes us think and it makes us suspicious that you are hiding something.

It was not even you. This was the previous Administration. We go back two or three administrations. We just want to see the information and yet you sit there and you say we will do something—we are doing something, which is absolutely the opposite of the truth. You are not being honest.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and thank you, Administrator Power, for your testimony today.

Know that we are following closely developments in Sudan and care deeply about the security and safety of the development professionals who are there and about the restoration, hopefully, of stability and of your mission, going forward.

Administrator? Hi. If I could, I would like to continue a conversation we were having at the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee hearing recently about resiliency and about how we can and should work together to address food security and food resiliency.

The Feed the Future program, now expanded from 12 to 20 countries, is a critical part of the long-term strategy of this Administration and previous administrations to invest in systems transformation and resiliency.

Chairman Menendez, in his opening remarks, talked about the critical need to invest in systems transformation. I would be interested in hearing more from you about what you think Feed the Future is doing or could do to be more effective at systems transformation.

In the last year, partly through supplementals, we invested a huge amount in humanitarian relief. In this year's budget request, you request a modest increase in humanitarian relief and there is a significant need for long-term systems transformation.

I would love to focus for a moment on Feed the Future and where you see it going and how we might work together to strengthen it as an agriculture transformation program.

I would also welcome any advice you have or input, because this is the Farm Bill year, on the challenges and opportunities you have as an agency in administering Food for Peace, one of the critical Title II programs in the Farm Bill. Thank you.

Ms. POWER. Thank you. Thank you, Senator.

Let me just actually echo something that Ranking Member Risch said at the beginning, which is a friendly amendment to what you have said, which is that actually compared to the \$11.9 billion in humanitarian assistance we provided this year, this coming year, even though the needs, as we know from Sudan, from the earthquake in Syria and Turkey, the needs are going up and up and up, sixth straight season—failed rainy season in the Horn of Africa. We are actually coming in with a base request, right, which even if properly funded—

Senator COONS. Yes.

Ms. POWER. —would be only half of what we had last year, despite the needs being up probably like close to 30 percent and we do not even know what Sudan holds in store for us.

On Feed the Future, specifically, which is a great, great program and a great question, we have been operating with multiple lines of effort. Part of the idea is to ensure that we have the research into heat resistant, drought resistant, pest resistant seeds, the kind of cutting-edge research that American farmers are drawing from.

Sometimes actually the research out of Feed the Future labs can benefit American farmers because the discoveries can happen anywhere on the earth, and then getting those discoveries, those innovations, into the bloodstream of the places in which we have Feed the Future programs. Most of those are in sub-Saharan Africa. We increased the number of target countries this year.

To be honest, Senator, we were able to match the selection of new target countries in Feed the Future with additional resources by virtue of the Ukraine supplementals and the recognition that Putin's war was having a catastrophic effect on farmers in Africa and beyond because of fertilizer prices, fuel prices, and the like.

Senator COONS. This is an area of particular interest to me, especially given recent indications the Russians are once again threatening to not extend the grain deal, given the way we have seen de-

stabilization, steady increases in the costs of inputs like fertilizer and fuel, and the real risk that there will be broad scale hunger.

Let me briefly reference two other things since we are almost out of time. One is the *Global Fragility Act*, as you know, a law that Senator Graham and I worked on hard over a number of years, signed into law by the previous Administration, now more than 3 years in effect.

I am following closely and very interested in its actual implementation, in particular in global West Africa and in Mozambique. Rob Jenkins from the Conflict Prevention and Stabilization Bureau led a very capable and engaged team from USAID in a conversation I had yesterday with State, DoD, AID, about sort of where are we really going in implementation.

I want to know that I can count on your active engagement and support for this not just as a new funding stream, but as a new approach to bringing development, defense, and diplomacy into common alignment in areas that are genuinely fragile. Is that your view of this law and its path forward?

Ms. POWER. It absolutely is and I think has already had the desired approach. I know we have not moved out with implementation as quickly as you would have liked or circumstances on the ground would certainly have benefited from.

I think we now have all the agencies of the U.S. Government aligned and, frankly, the list of countries that have been chosen are those that would not otherwise necessarily generate a lot of high-level governmental attention.

Those countries have been neglected over the years in terms of interagency focus and push and the GFA provides a framework to ensure that does not happen, including in Papua New Guinea, which is—also overlaps with our broader effort to invest in the Pacific Islands in new ways.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

One last question, if I might, about economic growth. We have also discussed this. At a time when the debt burden, as you mentioned in your opening testimony, for so many countries in the Global South, so many developing countries has become overwhelming and so many countries are asking for our help with economic growth assistance, where does USAID fit into the challenge of providing critical resources, advice, support for economic growth and where could we help by providing you more tools and more capacity for that engagement with our development partners?

Ms. POWER. Well, I am sure, Senator, you know the statistic, but I have to repeat it because it is so staggering, that African countries will spend \$70 billion in debt servicing payments in 2023. That is more than the entire total of development aid that will flow to those countries.

I think USAID has a critical role. We are the ground game for American foreign policy. Our teams on the ground have economists, have the technical expertise, can find the implementing partners that could offer, again, the kind of technical counsel needed to go into these debt restructuring talks with private creditors as well as with the PRC who are the largest public holder of debt.

As you know, we are a very earmarked agency. Many of the—all of the earmarks are very worthy in areas that you and I both

care an awful lot about and that the American people want to see us active in.

The result of that is that while everybody would be for, I think, USAID stepping into this role when these countries are facing such debt crisis, recognizing that debt impedes education, health, governance, every other sector that we work in, the very limited amount of discretionary funding that USAID has on offer means that that kind of work gets crowded out, again, by these very—

Senator COONS. Thank you. Thank you, Administrator. I look forward to working with you to deliver the kind of flexibility that you believe the agency both needs and deserves in order to accomplish these complex goals in coordination with this committee.

Senator SHAHEEN [presiding]. Thank you, Administrator Power. Senator Menendez was called to another hearing so I will continue.

Last week at the Appropriations Committee budget hearing, I talked about a recent trip that I made to Latin America and we discussed some of the work that USAID is doing in the region to counter efforts by the PRC and China.

Part of our trip was specifically to assess what the PRC is doing in Latin America, and just to follow up on Senator Cardin's question about what the impact of the cuts that are being proposed by the House majority would have on USAID's ability to counter Chinese investments in Latin America, can you talk specifically about what the impact of that might be in a region where we have a lot of work to do at the outset to catch up with the kind of investments that China has been making?

Ms. POWER. Well, let me give you a couple examples, and thank you for your trip to the region and for engaging on this.

I would say one of the demand signals that we have heard from Congress across both parties is why are we not doing more in the Caribbean, given the acute development needs, given the income inequality, and given the PRC investments that are being made.

USAID is working with many up here to substantially increase our work with Caribbean countries who face these big development barriers. That would be impossible.

If we are talking about cutting back from what we are doing now, never mind not meeting the President's budget request, but actually going back to earlier levels, that kind of work would not be possible. We would not even be present in the way we need to be, to be competing.

I think also a lot of the countries in the region are suffering, and this affects Americans who work and travel in the region as well, cyber-attacks and intellectual property theft and crimes of that nature. We are working with many of the countries in the region to help them strengthen their cybersecurity safeguards.

Then we talk a lot about the two different governance models—the democratic transparent civil society empowerment model on the one hand and then a more top-down authoritarian or autocratic model.

A lot of the work that we do in the hemisphere is about strengthening democracy and the trend lines are not good at all.

Whether it is supporting countries that are moving out on anti-corruption reforms, for example, the Dominican Republic, and trying to ensure that there is a dividend on democratic reform or

whether it is supporting independent media, civil society, and others who are holding governments that are backsliding accountable, a lot of that work would fall away in the face of those cuts.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Ms. POWER. I think I gave you the poll as well that PRC's standing is falling and has fallen substantially in just the last few years in the hemisphere. To miss a moment of opportunity and to actually dial back rather than dial up against that backdrop would be a travesty.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I hope that message will be heard.

One of the countries where there is that internal battle going on between autocracy and democracy is the country of Georgia where it is very clear that the people of Georgia want to look west to Europe. They want a democracy.

Senator Risch and I were there in 2012 to observe the elections when Georgian Dream took over in that country and what we have seen is the Government of Georgia move increasingly towards autocracy.

One of the defining opportunities will be the upcoming elections in 2024 and we will have a critical role in supporting those elections and hopefully encouraging an election observer mission.

Can you talk about how important that will be and whether USAID is proposing to be engaged in a long-term election observation mission to support Georgia?

Ms. POWER. I do not have the specifics yet of what that program is going to look like, but I wholeheartedly agree with you that the attacks on civil society, some of the laws that have been introduced of late, extremely troubling.

On the other hand, the pushback shows the strength of civil society and the citizen power in Georgia to chart its own course or to fulfill its own democratic aspirations.

I think, to your point, we broadly need to be targeting resources toward election integrity, knowing that this is the next real opportunity for the citizens to be heard from and I think that in all likelihood will include short-term observation and long-term at the same time. You need both.

Senator SHAHEEN. I think this committee would be very supportive of that and I would hope that if you need additional funding in order to engage in that kind of a long-term mission that you will let the committee know so that we can ensure that those funds are available.

My final question has to do with girls' education because, as we know, in countries around the world, girls, particularly when they get to the secondary education level, are much more likely to be out of school than boys for a variety of reasons, particularly in conflict countries.

Can you talk about why it is important for us to ensure that adolescent girls have access to education and we have a global strategy to empower adolescent girls to address barriers that girls face? Can you talk about USAID's engagement on updating that plan?

Ms. POWER. Thank you. Again, wholeheartedly embrace the premise. Would just say our investments in basic education alongside our commitment to double our gender attribution funding this



year or programs that have gender components, I think, create a great opportunity because we are looking across all of our programming across all sectors to look to see where we can make sure that women and girls are, again, a particular area of focus or a kind of design feature of our programming, recognizing how many more barriers they have to continuing education, particularly, as you say, at the adolescent level.

I can get back to you on when that strategy will be revised. Just please know that I and our gender coordinator, Jamille Bigio, who I think you know, are looking to work across our education portfolio to make sure that in the wake of COVID, especially where so many girls have been left behind, that we are going out of our way to try to bring girls back to school and help ensure that the development environment that includes not only education programming, but, more broadly, barriers in health, barriers in governance, social norms, et cetera, what those things are as well as part of that ecosystem can be a major factor in holding them back, so thinking about it more comprehensively.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I appreciate that. For the benefit of anybody who may be watching, I think the important thing to remind everyone of is that when we empower women and girls in societies, we have more stable societies, they can give back more consistently to their communities and to their families and to their countries than men do, and so this is a very important foreign policy initiative that we need to stay focused on.

Thank you, Administrator.

Senator KAINE.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thanks to the administrator for all your good work.

I want to follow up just really on two items. One, to Senator Paul's point, just to give it some context, nothing is more frustrating than to be a U.S. senator and to request information about a committee that you sit on and to not be given the information, and I had that experience in the previous Administration—making multiple requests for information and then would not get anything.

I will give the ranking member, who was then chair at that time, some thanks because he would eventually go to bat for me so I could get information I needed, but it should not require that.

You talked about, you are trying to respond, and I know the requests from 535 members can be voluminous, but you are trying to respond consistent with previous practice. Let me ask about that practice.

Is there anything within the USAID budget that is not within the jurisdiction of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee?

Ms. POWER. No.

Senator KAINE. Okay. Any questions about USAID projects, funding, et cetera, are all within the ambit of the SFRC? There may be overlapping jurisdictions.

There occasionally are, but I do not think there is anything within the SFRC space that is not within the jurisdiction—I am sorry, within the USAID space that is not within our jurisdiction. Is that your understanding?

Ms. POWER. Yes.

Senator KAINE. Okay. Then the second thing is consistent with previous practice, different administrations have been different on this practice. Does a records request from a committee member have to be sort of validated by the chair of the committee for you to believe that you have an obligation to respond?

Ms. POWER. I can check with our general counsel, but my understanding is that the chair and ranking, when requests from the committee of jurisdiction come in, then we are absolutely responsive and, again, have been responsive on COVID origins and on the PREDICT program from the—

Senator KAINE. I may want to follow up on that. Because if a request from a committee member who is voting on the USAID budget, who is considering an authorizing bill, if that is not enough and if there needs to be a sign-off by the chair and ranking, that really disempowers committee members. I am not saying that about this committee, but it could be the—I certainly know other committees requiring the sign-off of both the chair and the ranking would lead to a high level of inequality in terms of who is able to get information about the jobs that they do.

I may want to follow up on what that practice is, but I hope we may assist Senator Paul in getting answers to the questions that he has posed, particularly given your statement that the programs he is asking about terminated in 2019, it would seem like. Members should get that information and there should not be a reluctance to produce it.

Second, be a problem solver with me because you have such a breadth of experience and I am thinking about your UN role in addition to your USAID role.

I was in Latin America recently as well and visiting nations that have some really strong ties to the U.S. like Ecuador in the past 6 months—Ecuador, Chile, growing ties. Uruguay, strong ties. Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Panama.

You are under some restrictions that we put on you about the degree to which USAID can provide support in nations once they pass a certain income threshold, and that is not your restriction—that is Congress' restriction.

What we hear from some of these nations is, hey, we are the ones doing things right and the fact that we may have passed an income restriction does not mean they are not impacted areas that are either incredibly isolated or where the poverty is intense, and when we pass an income level and then suddenly USAID cannot be a partner, it is not like China says, oh, your median income is so high that we will not partner with you.

I know this is not your challenge. It is ours, but what can we do to partner better with the nations of the Americas that are doing things right, but that may in doing things right have exceeded some of the limitations that then put restraints on the services that USAID can offer?

Ms. POWER. Thank you.

Well, first of all, again, in a resource-constrained environment every day, regardless of the restrictions, we would be making choices and some of those choices would be on vulnerability grounds.

As you said, there are countries that are doing very well, but communities, for example, in Panama, look at the Darien Gap and the communities along the path that so many are taking north.

I was just in Panama as part of a U.S. delegation negotiating around some border enforcement questions and this was the very question posed to me by the Panamanian leadership to me and my colleagues, which is you want us to do integration along lines of what the chairman and I were talking about earlier of migrants who are passing through, but we do not have the additional resources to do that.

It is politically a contentious issue, at the very least, even if it ends up being an economically beneficial one over time. What about helping us in this part of Panama even if your mission closed X number of years ago, and we do some programming through regional programming if there is some cross-border impact.

Of course, more flexibility is only to the good for any Administration trying to be nimble in a world of complex challenges. At the same time, we do have to look at other major players in the development space.

For example, I think the evolution conversation about multilateral development bank reform really speaks to your question because that is about looking at places that either countries where the World Bank would itself not be able to operate generally because it had also achieved a certain income status and yet maybe actually putting out a share of emissions that are contributing to the ravaging of Caribbean countries that are low-income countries.

There are global public goods that we have an interest in advancing or protecting and that might require also investments and so that is part of the conversation about the MDB I take really seriously.

Senator Coons and I have talked about this an awful lot, but our role at USAID is being vice chair of the DFC board and there, again, it is a mix because we want the DFC to do much more in poor countries and developing countries and be able to absorb more risk to operating in those kinds of difficult environments.

At the same time we want the DFC, particularly as we talk about infrastructure projects and big investments like that, to be operating in places maybe where, again, there might be some temptation to foreclose their involvement.

I think the more expansive, the more flexible, and then leaving it to the judgment about how then to make really hard choices about where you would dedicate your resources because the more flexibilities we have the more competition there will be, of course, for those resources.

Senator KAINE. Right. Tough, tough challenges. I am over my time. I yield back. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Van Hollen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Administrator, great to see you. I understand that the Chairman and Senator Coons have raised some of the issues surrounding Sudan.

I am really glad to see that our folks at the State Department, including the USAID contingent in Sudan, have been successfully

evacuated. I look forward to working with you on next steps, going forward.

Senator Coons and I took a trip there back in May 2021 and it was a time of hope, but it is also time that you could see what is playing out now. All the ingredients were there and I do think we have to look back to see what we might have done differently in the meantime. Obviously, much of it beyond our control.

Let me turn to the issue of infrastructure. I have been a supporter of the President's announcement at the G-7 on the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment.

I think that that is a really important element of our overseas strategy including countering China's efforts to export its authoritarian model in many countries through infrastructure projects.

Now, we have a lot to offer and USAID provides all sorts of important programs—health care, education, things that I think are vital and also can win the hearts and minds of people around the world.

I also think that we need to be competing in areas of infrastructure because this is the primary tool that China uses to try to export its influence.

I see in the budget you also have \$4 billion over 5 years in mandatory funding to, “create a new international infrastructure fund which will outcompete China by providing a credible, reliable alternative to PRC options and make game changing investments in the Indo-Pacific to strengthen partner economies.”

Having just returned from a trip to that region with Senator Merkley, including stops in Vietnam and Indonesia, I think this is really important.

Can you talk a little bit about the relationship between this program you are discussing this budget and the President's Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment?

Ms. POWER. One would want to almost go country-by-country to talk about the different ways that USAID would plug in.

One of the aspects of USAID's governance work that we do—and I had an exchange with Senator Coons as well about our desire to do more in the realm of economic development, of economic governance in these countries—but where USAID's sort of niche is against a backdrop, again, of huge resources coming in to do the infrastructure investments themselves, whether from the MDBs or from the DFC or from whomever, but our niche is on standards.

It is on what the enabling environment actually is for those investments to be made. It is on the transparency of procurement, working with a country on a procurement law. If you are going to do the big infrastructure, well, that is a recipe for, potentially, some—could be a recipe in some of the countries in which we work for some problematic pilfering by various players.

Well, that cannot happen. This has to be—we have to be stewards of taxpayer investments in infrastructure as well. I think that our work with nongovernmental actors as well to ensure, for example, environmental advocates, environmental actors, institutions on the ground, to make sure that the infrastructure investments we make are not extractive in their nature, that they respect labor rights, that there is accountability, again, for how these projects are conducted that would, again, be in marked contrast with the

way some of those projects were done through the Belt and Road Initiative.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I appreciate that. Maybe—and I realize that USAID only has a part of this overall.

Ms. POWER. A small part, yes.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Maybe if someone could get back to me just on the relationship between these two funds, what USAID's portion is, that would be helpful for me. I appreciate the role USAID plays in addressing exactly the kind of governance issues you raised.

If I could quickly ask you about the request for ESF funds for Syria—northeastern Syria. I understand USAID has a piece of this, as well. I think that assistance has been very important in an area that is vital.

Obviously, been impacted by earthquakes, but also by all the other fighting going on. Could you talk briefly about that money and its purpose?

Ms. POWER. Great. Well, just to distinguish the humanitarian assistance that we are also seeking the broad humanitarian assistance budget of which a large share would go to Syria and to Syrian refugees in Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, and elsewhere.

The ESF, I think, first of all, we do not do stabilization work in regime-held territories. We are looking a lot at the al-Hol challenge, which I know many up here are very interested in.

You have about 18,000 of the people in that facility are Syrian, but to simply—given the backgrounds of many of them, also the—what actually has gone on in al-Hol, the question of reintegration is very complicated.

Part of our request this year is also looking at not only support for their reintegration into communities, but also the communities to which they are returning to make sure that those communities are seen to benefit because there is a lot of stigma and desire not, in fact, to welcome people back.

I think, generally, we also still are looking at accountability for atrocities, if there are stopgap ceasefires on the ground, how to be nimble and coming in in support of those ceasefires.

Ultimately, even though it feels very elusive right now, still looking through our development resources to look at if there is any way to support political resolution, more broadly. Again, that feels very far afield at the moment.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

Ms. POWER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Duckworth.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Administrator Power, for being here today.

We have no shortage of crises that we could talk about in the world today from Ukraine to Sudan to Haiti, from migration to public health and climate change.

I think the news media tends to focus relentlessly on a response to these crises. They do pay significantly less attention to the work of our government, USAID in particular, to address the problems around the world before they become crises.

I want to start by thanking you for your work in this regard. In February, I led a CODEL to Jakarta to engage with ASEAN as an

institution and with Indonesia bilaterally. There I saw firsthand the eagerness of our partners for more, not less, U.S. engagement and more beyond just a military engagement.

Can you explain how this budget will help address the continuing need to strengthen ties with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly with the ASEAN nations, in order to advance our Indo-Pacific objectives? In particular, can you highlight some key projects happening in the region in the global health environment space?

Ms. POWER. Okay. I guess I would say a couple of things.

One of the main demand signals we are hearing from countries in Southeast Asia—and this is true, really, across the whole Indo-Pacific—but is around climate adaptation. I am sure you heard that.

Indonesia is, of course—we are working very closely with them on clean energy renewable projects on mitigation, on lowering their emissions since they are a substantial emitter of carbon.

Where they are really feeling the effects, and I myself was just in Vietnam and it is very much the same way there in the Mekong Delta region and beyond, but is—even rice farming now becoming—the weather patterns becoming too unpredictable so needing to do new skills training or provide new sources of livelihoods to farmers and so forth.

I think this budget request and especially, again, our desire to get more discretionary money to do economic development, livelihood program, jobs programs, and so forth, much of this—the economic needs are growing as the effects of changing climate are ravaging particularly rural communities, but not only the agricultural sector.

That is something we are looking for in this budget. We had an exchange earlier about the mandatory request, which is very substantial investments. You heard my exchange with Senator Van Hollen in infrastructure.

In general, just being in a position to scale up when a country like Indonesia really wants to elevate the partnership or, for example, with Vietnam, we are celebrating 10 years of a comprehensive partnership and very eager to elevate that to a strategic partnership to be in a position to surge resources commensurate to that appetite and that is what the mandatory request seeks to put us in a position to do.

Maybe just on global health I can get back to you with details across the ASEAN countries, but Indonesia really stands out because USAID is making a heightened emphasis now or putting much more focus on primary health investments and Indonesia stands out more than most countries in the world for actually moving from spending 10 percent of its health budget on primary care to 25 percent.

We, our mission, but also working with the World Bank and others who are the big spenders in the health sector in Indonesia are looking to support that effort including through health care worker training because so many health care workers, mostly female, are unpaid or poorly paid.

This is a new area of emphasis for USAID. It is, obviously, a crying need everywhere in the world, but we have been very disease-

based in focusing on TB, malaria, HIV/AIDS, all these incredibly important diseases, even global health security and pandemic prevention risks.

If you focus only on those threats and those villains and we miss out on the primary health care foundation, that would be a short-sighted investment indeed and Indonesia is one of our key partners now in a new primary impact program. Indonesia is one that has been chosen to partner with.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you. In my remaining time I would like to talk about access to clean drinking water. It is a global driver of conflict, and in March of last year the Biden administration pledged to provide \$1.2 billion in support of a U.S. global water strategy.

Can you go into some detail about how this budget addresses that commitment in 2022 and how it will help meet the growing need for consistent access to clean drinking water?

Ms. POWER. Yes. I am really excited about this actually because, again, with water scarcity becoming a growing challenge and, indeed, there is a risk, I read the statistics, in fact, just a few days ago that by 2025, two-thirds of the world's population could face water scarcity.

I think you are going to see—you have a long-standing interest in this. I do not hear a lot about it up here, but I think that is on the verge of changing.

What we have asked for are \$700 million to support 22 priority country plans and this is with an eye, again, to reaching 22 million more people with safe water and 22 million more people with safe sanitation because that is something that is also lacking.

This is over, of course, a longer period of time, but I think that U.S. leadership in this space, given the demand signals that we are hearing, really can be pivotal also in galvanizing resources from other donors. Thank you.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you. I am out of time, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Duckworth.

Senator Hagerty.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Administrator Power. I would like to talk about the energy policies reflected in the budget that is being proposed today.

To develop economically, developing countries need reliable sources of energy. I would like to go to a specific example and that is Uganda.

Uganda's President has said, "Many developed nations are pushing an accelerated transition to renewables on Africa. This earns them praise in the U.S. and Europe, but leaves many Africans with unreliable and expensive electricity."

He goes on to say that, "this stands to forestall Africa's attempts to rise out of poverty, which require reliable energy. African manufacturing will struggle to attract investment and, therefore, to create jobs without consistent energy sources.

"Agriculture will suffer if the continent cannot use natural gas to create synthetic fertilizer or to power efficient freight transportation."

Administrator Power, do you agree or disagree with Uganda's President?

Ms. POWER. Well, what I will say is that Power Africa, our flagship energy program, as you probably know, has gotten first-time electricity to about 165 million people in Africa.

We are very much on the same page in seeking electrification, energy access, particularly for the poorest. Renewables are a critical part of the solution. We are now—

Senator HAGERTY. Let me go specifically to fossil fuels. Is USAID opposed to financing fossil fuel development, as Uganda's President is talking about?

Ms. POWER. I would have to get back to you on our engagements with President Museveni's ministers, but my impression actually in Uganda is that we have gotten very loud demand signals with regards to solar production and we do have exceptions.

We have a preference for renewables because we do want to see carbon reduced, but there are circumstances in which, again, securing rapid access to clean energy in very low-income countries requires more stable or additionality and—

Senator HAGERTY. I believe that is exactly right. What I am concerned about, Administrator, and I want to make this very clear, is that the goals that are reflected in this budget, particularly with respect to energy, are really missing the mark and what it does—and I think Uganda's President articulates this well—is that it puts green colonialism over the real economic development needs of these countries.

You take Uganda, for example. Thirty percent of the population lives on \$1.77 a day. These countries have been devastated by the pandemic. They are trying to climb out of a true economic crisis. They have got crime that is rampant in many of these nations.

They are trying to fulfill the most basic economic needs and to do that they need to have consistent, stable, reliable, and, frankly, affordable energy.

That is what the President of Uganda is getting at and he is arguing that I think our policies, again, the policies touted by America, rich European nations, that in many cases discourage and will not support fossil fuel development are not allowing him to move along, not allowing his nation and others like it to move along a reliable progression.

Instead, what we are trying to do is leapfrog our way into technologies that I think, perhaps, theologically or ideologically, again, receive praise and plaudits here, but do not fill the void—do not fill the need there in developing countries like Uganda, and when we fail to do that, we create a void and that void right now is being filled by China.

I think it was former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers who just recently talked about his discussion with the leader of a developing nation who said that when it is time to think about economic development in his country, when China shows up, they deliver an airport. When we show up, we deliver them a lecture.

My goal and my sincere hope is that we can get past the ideological underpinnings that are reflected in this and look at real pragmatic ways to deliver solid economic development, reliable energy, affordable energy to these countries that desperately need it.



Ms. POWER. Senator, I just would love to respond. I have made clear, again, that we support, for example, natural gas programming in instances where it can create energy access while not delaying plans toward clean energy because, again, the collective carbon emissions even from developing countries were all part of the solution when it comes to mitigation.

We are working with countries, but I do not know if you have had a chance to travel to Uganda and engage directly, again, with entrepreneurs or with farmers. Again, the idea that USAID or with USAID staff, including our Ugandan staff—two-thirds of our team in Uganda are in fact citizens of Uganda—but the idea that we would be putting ideology and colonialism over the development needs of the people in that country, a country we have worked in, basically, since independence, I just reject that premise and I think if you—and I would love to travel with you if you would like to go and see up close the demand signals that we get, again, from everything from government officials to civil society organizations to farmers to entrepreneurs who want to do clean energy partnerships.

This is not some imposed vision by Samantha Power or Joe Biden or John Kerry. This is about actually working in partnership with the communities that we have worked in for decades.

Senator HAGERTY. I will ask you to submit this piece for the record. It is titled “Solar and wind force poverty on Africa” and it is written by the President of Uganda.

I hope you will take a look at this, Administrator Power. Again, he makes it very clear that he needs help today with reliable and affordable energy, not some aspirational goals that we are not supporting.

Ms. POWER. I hope you will allow us to provide you as well or maybe we can put in the record Uganda’s own nationally determined contribution to the Paris Agreement, which is its plan for curbing emissions because that is actually the government’s plan irrespective of what President Museveni, who says a lot of things, may have said in a particular speech. We are working with him on the implementation of their plan.

Senator HAGERTY. I hate to see us put carbon emission reduction over the actual needs to fulfill the rising from poverty that we are trying to accomplish here.

Ms. POWER. I hope you will agree that USAID cares an awful lot about helping lift people out of poverty and that we have demonstrated that over many decades and—

Senator HAGERTY. I want to ensure that we continue to do so and that—

Ms. POWER. We will continue to do—

Senator HAGERTY. —that USAID’s goals is to basically win friends and bring about people into our fold as opposed to pushing them into the arms of China, which seems to be happening.

The CHAIRMAN. I want to assure both of you that the record is replete with your views.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, Senator Hagerty’s request shall be—document shall be included in the record.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Paul has come back. He has another question and I am happy to recognize him at this time.

Senator PAUL. Will you be testifying, Ms. Power, to Homeland Security of your budget as you have done today to USAID?

Ms. POWER. No.

Senator PAUL. You mentioned that the records that I have requested from the PREDICT program is part of USAID concerning coronavirus research, that you gave them to the committee of jurisdiction.

You are not testifying before Homeland Security. You are sitting here today before the Foreign Relations Committee. I would wonder why the Foreign Relations Committee would not be the committee of jurisdiction.

Ms. POWER. Thank you. Senator Kaine made a similar point and so let me just, I guess, clarify, but USAID has provided hundreds of documents—

Senator PAUL. To whom?

Ms. POWER. —to both—to both SFRC and the Homeland Security Government Affairs Committee.

Senator PAUL. You are saying that all the documents that I want from the PREDICT program you have already given to Senator Menendez?

Ms. POWER. I cannot—I know you are asking for a range of things. There are some that we are not—

Senator PAUL. Senator Menendez, are you aware of having documents on the coronavirus research that I am interested in?

The CHAIRMAN. I am happy to let you ask questions of the witness. I do not intend to be put under this process.

Senator PAUL. No, I do not mean to be critical. I just—

The CHAIRMAN. No, I am going to respond to you in my own—

Senator PAUL. Yes. I do not think he does because I have been requesting this and if his staff does have all this information you would think somebody would be forthcoming with saying, oh, we have already got all this.

I do not think what you are saying is honest and so my question is you say you have given it to Senate Foreign Relations and you say you have also given it to Homeland Security. To whom with those committees have you given this information?

Ms. POWER. I have not personally handed over the information.

Senator PAUL. Somebody gave it. Did they give it to—

Ms. POWER. We will absolutely get back to your staff to ascertain exactly where the documents are.

Senator PAUL. The reason I need to know is we need to ask them did you give that to the Chairman of this committee—did you give it to the Chairman of Homeland Security?

You do not know if the correspondence was with the Chairman or if it was with someone else. I would presume it would have to be through the Chairman.

Ms. POWER. What I know is that we have provided hundreds of documents to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Senator PAUL. I am not worried about—

Ms. POWER. I apologize for not saying that earlier and mentioning only the other committee.

Senator PAUL. My question is not just about hundreds of documents. My question is about coronavirus research that USAID has funded in China.

Ms. POWER. Oh, sorry. Yes. I mean, on the PREDICT program specifically. I do not mean the documents in the abstract. Yes.

Senator PAUL. On the PREDICT program. On the PREDICT program, but specifically on coronavirus research either granted or denied. Some of the most important information we have is actually a DARPA grant where Wuhan Institute of Virology asked for money to create a virus that looks like what COVID became. We did not fund it, but it shows that they were already interested in creating a virus similar to what COVID-19 is.

We want to know did the PREDICT program give grant proposals for the creation of viruses that were similar to COVID-19 or that might have become COVID-19 and we also want to know if you denied any of these programs.

It is important to us to know if they were asking for other money from you to do research that could have become COVID-19, but what I have gotten from you is not an answer.

You are saying, oh, somebody else has all this information, and we will pursue it, but then you will be gone and then in 6 months' time we will come back and say, well, we asked the Chairman of this committee and that committee. They do not have it.

The thing is, is it makes us all suspicious. You will not give it to me. Oh, you are going to give it to somebody else. You are going to give it to a Democrat Chairman, but not to someone from the minority party. This is all very unfortunate and it makes us concerned about the transparency of your Administration.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Paul, if I may.

First of all, it is not the question of a Democratic Chairman. The question is if the procedures historically have been that upon requests or when documents are provided, they are provided to the Chair of the committee regardless of who the Chair is at any given time. When Senator Risch was the Chair, it would have been the same thing.

However, since you first raised this earlier today, my staff informs me that USAID has in fact provided a number of documents related to your area of interest on COVID and I am happy to work to facilitate a review of those documents with you.

My understanding is at a staff level we have been discussing with Senator Risch's staff how to make those available to you. There are likely thousands of documents and we are working to set up a system so that can be viewed electronically in camera, which we believe is a workable set of circumstances. I am happy to follow up and make sure that we come to a conclusion on that.

Senator PAUL. Thank you very much.

The only problem with not being able to actually hold the documents, print them out, and write on the documents is it is very limiting, as you know, for me to sit in your office and read them.

None of these are classified. If there is anything in there that reveals some spy's name somewhere, which I do not know how that would be in a science grant, we can redact it.

The CHAIRMAN. I am not suggesting that you have to read it. I am sure that we could have your staff read them on your behalf and give you an executive summary, but we will work to see if we can come up to an accommodation.

The question here is a more precedent setting one and it has not been the role of the committee that when the Chair and/or ranking member request documents to then just hand those documents over to members of the committee.

It has always been that it has been kept in a process that then can be reviewed when the Chair and/or ranking member decide to do so. It is a bigger question than your specific interests.

Senator PAUL. It has also taken this exchange for me to even discover you have some of the documents. I still do not know if you have all of them that we requested.

The CHAIRMAN. I do not know that I have all of them that you want. I have no idea of the universe, the totality of the universe.

Whatever we have been given we are happy to—now that we—I know that we have been given documents, we are happy to find a way for you to review them and see if that, hopefully, satisfies your curiosity.

Senator Cruz.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Administrator Power, welcome. Good to see you again.

It is no secret that I have been deeply concerned with the direction of the Biden administration's foreign policy and you and I have had many discussions in this area.

I would hope, though, that we both agree that, first, USAID has a valuable role to play regarding development assistance and, second, that USAID's mission should remain separate from controversial debates that often divide other parts of the State Department.

One of the controversies has been the Biden administration's deliberate, systemic, and reckless appeasement of terrorist groups everywhere from the Western Hemisphere to the Middle East.

From day one, the Administration has removed the terrorist designation and provided resources to Iranian-linked terrorist groups around Israel's border, including pouring money into Hamas-controlled territory.

In the Western Hemisphere, they did the same thing with the revolutionary armed forces of Colombia, the FARC, which provided enormous and dangerous momentum to anti-American movements across the hemisphere.

Now, we can disagree about the wisdom of those decisions, but I would have hoped we would have agreed that USAID should not be entangled in these deeply divisive decisions.

I guess what I would ask—let us start by talking about Colombia and the FARC. Why is it that USAID actively participated and supported the revocation of the terrorist and narcotics-related designation of the FARC?

Ms. POWER. I would have to get back to you. I am not aware of the process and deliberations that you are talking about.

Senator CRUZ. Okay. Well, let me help you on that. On January 24, 2022, there was a decision memo in USAID. The USAID, the subject, has request for concurrence to modify USAID programming

following revocation of the terrorist and narcotics-related designations of the FARC.

You signed that memo. You approved that shift. The memo explicitly embraces modifying USAID programming to enhance our support in light of the revocation of terrorist and narcotics-related designation of the FARC. Why is USAID getting in the middle of that?

Ms. POWER. Well, let me say what we are in the middle of in Colombia. We are in the middle of trying to support the peace process, the peace process that culminated in a peace, but the implementation of a peace, and we have worked for decades in the most underdeveloped areas from which the FARC recruited over so many years in agriculture, in livelihood support, and transitioning people away from growing things that are not in anybody's interest for them to be growing.

I apologize for not being able to recall this particular piece of paper that you are describing, especially if my signature is on it. I will get back to you on that.

On the general thrust of our programming on the ground in Colombia, we do work in trying to ensure that soldiers who have gone back to their communities have an alternative source of livelihood so they do not pick up guns again.

I suspect that that is in general the logic of the adjustment to be able to do that.

Senator CRUZ. I will say the Biden administration's decision to embrace the FARC was a huge blow to Ivan Duque's government, which was pro-America, which was a strong ally, and the pattern we have seen from the Biden administration is they actively undermine strong allies, particularly in Latin America, and the result is—congratulations to the Biden administration—they pushed and ended up getting the first Marxist President in power in Colombia who is explicitly anti-American, Gustavo Petro.

By the way, Biden has managed to do the same thing in Brazil. Over and over again, the Biden administration is hurting U.S. national security interest because ideology is a higher priority.

Let us shift to another part of the world, the Middle East, the Gaza Strip. USAID pours resources into the Gaza Strip and usually USAID lists its grants for public scrutiny and disclosure.

Last year a mysterious \$10 million grant appeared on the website. It was for \$10 million, it had no recipient, and it was listed as going to the West Bank.

After my office began investigating what this, was your office let us know that every detail of that was wrong, that the millions were actually not sent to the West Bank. They were sent to the Gaza Strip.

The amount was wrong. It was \$5 million and not \$10 million, and that the organization should have been listed, but it is an organization that only works in the Gaza Strip so if it had been listed it would have been obvious that it was going to the Gaza Strip and the public designation was wrong.

Did you launch an investigation as to why that public disclosure was so wildly wrong, every aspect of it was less than forthcoming and accurate about what USAID was doing in the Gaza Strip?

Ms. POWER. I will, going forward, look into those discrepancies. That is unusual.

Something like that has not been brought to my attention before, something that goes out publicly claiming one thing about a grant recipient when something else entirely is true. I will absolutely look into it. Thank you.

Senator CRUZ. I appreciate the follow-up—the results of your investigation.

Ms. POWER. Thank you.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Just a couple of final questions, Madam Administrator.

Do you have any effort to get other countries in the world that are like-minded, share our values, in which we can join together in an effort to create a force multiplier in our development assistance globally?

I think about what China does and I think about if many of our friends in Western Europe, Canada, Korea, and elsewhere were to engage in development assistance in a coordinated fashion, we would have a force multiplier that would equal to or surpass. Is that something that is at all being thought about in your operation?

Ms. POWER. It is our daily—obsession is probably too strong, but if we cannot multilateralize what we do, we cannot keep up, not only with the PRC, but with the needs in the communities in which we work.

We have MOUs that we have signed just in the last few years with Japan, with the Republic of Korea. I just did a kind of sub-MOU last week or the week before with the United Kingdom on education specifically about how we leverage what we are doing in order to get the UK, which is cutting back assistance in so many sectors, but to get them at least to hold steady or potentially to increase in that sector.

I know Ukraine is not really the focus of your question, but I do think it is noteworthy that a country like Norway has committed 1.7 percent of its GDP to Ukraine-funding and that is everything from humanitarian assistance to core development funding in terms of governance institutions.

I can get you a rundown of where we are capitalizing on this. We just launched a partnership with Ireland, which has provided \$50 million on ready-to-use therapeutic feeding to prevent wasting in children.

The CHAIRMAN. I would appreciate seeing that.

Ms. POWER. That is country of a tiny population, but that is stepping up again in a specific sector. I think what is—

The CHAIRMAN. I would appreciate seeing it because—and I appreciate some of the examples. In my mind, the question is more of a holistic coordinated approach versus a series of one-offs.

Can we ultimately engage in a joint compact in which we can leverage our collective assistance in a way that we will do the good that we seek to do on the USAID like create a force multiplier?

Ms. POWER. Yes. What I would say is the OECD and the DAC—there is a Development Assistance Committee that is exactly, I think, what you are describing.

Every country has its own politics just as we do and its own members of parliament, let us say, who have their own specific development agenda maybe or a specific line of effort that they want to see pursued.

What the DAC does is, I think, finds synergies, but I think fundamentally we so far have found it more productive to work bilaterally and particularly in the field because that is where we identify where the greatest needs are or where we can reinforce—

The CHAIRMAN. I will follow up with you.

Ms. POWER. Okay. That was a great question.

The CHAIRMAN. I recently traveled to South Africa where the United States is doing some incredible development and humanitarian work, but my sense is that despite our success and people's perception still seems to be that China is the better partner for growth. This is bigger than just branding and slapping flags and logos on boxes, books, and plaques. This is about having a comprehensive strategic community outreach plan that reaches the masses.

What is USAID doing to ensure the general populations of beneficiary communities not only see USAID's presence, but feel and understand how they benefit from USAID's work?

Ms. POWER. Well, as you know, we are very attentive to branding, but I agree with you that slapping a logo on a shelter that has been built or a school that has been built is not the same as communications.

Look, I think we are—as part of our new policy framework, which we put out about 6 weeks ago, we have for the first time a dedicated reform effort on communications because I think it is not only the PRC's large loans and the infrastructure that has yielded and that is the backdrop for our assistance and where our grants because there is—China does nine to one loan to grant. We do nine to one grant to loan as a government in foreign assistance.

It is also in the disinformation environment we operate in. I think, frankly, we have a long way to go in knowing how to project what we are actually doing in communities over the noise of false claims about what USAID or what the U.S. Government as a whole is doing.

We are not terribly well-resourced in this domain. I think we did over the decades get used to the programs kind of—and the projects speaking for themselves, the impacts speaking for themselves. Anybody who has been touched by a USAID program, certainly, in my experience has never forgotten it.

We are operating in a very different information ecosystem now and I think you are absolutely right that between disinformation and PRC kind of large infrastructure investments we have our work cut out for us.

The CHAIRMAN. We would love to work with you to either resource and/or help. The American people are very generous with their money, but would like, at the end of the day that the beneficiaries say the United States of America did this for me and having that, I think, is a critical part of the ability to continue to find the support in Congress for that.

If we can make that correlation, which I believe exists, but does not necessarily get realized by the beneficiaries, I think it would

have—as part of our overall public diplomacy, it would be an important factor. We would like to work with you on that.

I want to turn to food insecurity for a moment. Due to limited USAID resources, the World Food Programme is cutting food rations in refugee camps worldwide. Meanwhile, food insecurity is continuing to rise while people flee from violence in places like the Sahel, Sudan, Burma. Devastating choices are being made whose consequences will be borne by the world's most vulnerable people.

How is USAID weighing and planning to deal with these competing food assistance needs to respond in differing contexts equitably and effectively?

Ms. POWER. Let me just say it is an impossible task. There is no other way around it. We, this year, will literally be debating where rations get cut all together, where they get cut in half.

With the outbreak of violence in Sudan, you are both horrified and heartbroken for the people of Sudan and then you immediately think as well of all the people in other countries like the Horn of Africa, Somalia, who, because of these new needs, those resources inevitably will be scaled back.

The only answer—we can brief you on what our methodology is. It is a very sophisticated methodology which takes UN appeals, including from the WFP, as a baseline and then looks at issues of access and—but again, vulnerability and the greatest need is the driver.

Fundamentally, we are going to reach far fewer people with far less this year because last year through the Ukraine supplementals, you all were generous enough and farsighted enough to write those supplementals in the broadest terms, allowing us flexibility to use the humanitarian assistance in those supplementals in countries that were affected by Putin's war in Ukraine.

Because the Horn of Africa and Somalia gets 95 percent of its wheat from Ukraine and Russia, for example, we were able then to draw on those supplemental resources. This year is just going to be excruciating.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, we would love to see the—how you come to those decisions. Do you think we are treating food beneficiaries equally in the Global South as we are elsewhere?

Ms. POWER. Could you elaborate on the question?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. I mean, are we treating those in the Global South the same that we are treating elsewhere as we deal with the question of how—who do we feed and how do we succeed at feeding them?

Ms. POWER. We mainly operate in the Global South so I am not sure—do you mean across countries within the Global South?

The CHAIRMAN. Right.

Ms. POWER. I think, again, the primary first factor is this question of vulnerability and so if you are in what is called IPC 5, facing almost famine levels of food insecurity, that is going to be our first port of call, but not if access is obstructed or if we have a government who is an unwilling partner in providing that assistance.

If I understand your question, again, it is need based, but that is only part of the answer because we cannot meet all needs.



The CHAIRMAN. Are we treating the Global South the same we are treating Ukraine?

Ms. POWER. Oh, that is what you mean. Okay. Sorry. I did not hear your reference to Ukraine. Well, I think the Congress has, again, provided very, very substantial resources to deal with Ukraine because of the massive carnage and the massive geopolitical stakes of that conflict.

If you are asking per capita if a Ukrainian refugee is receiving more in Europe than a South Sudanese refugee in Uganda, the answer is yes, they are receiving more in Europe.

Again, my objective would be to see everybody properly sheltered, properly cared for, properly schooled when they become a refugee and we are grateful, again, to Europe both for providing substantial assistance in Ukraine and—

The CHAIRMAN. When we have just to—

Ms. POWER. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. —just to put a fine point on it, so when we have millions—we talk about the millions of refugees that have fled Ukraine and, of course, we should respond to that and be as helpful as we can, but we have had nearly 5 million Venezuelans flee Venezuela.

Ms. POWER. We have provided \$1.8 billion in humanitarian assistance to Venezuelans who have fled, thanks to you all.

The CHAIRMAN. I would look at that in comparison to what we have done with Ukraine and what would that number be.

Ms. POWER. Okay.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Democracy and governance—final question. You recently wrote in Foreign Affairs that we have to, “look at our all-economic programming that respects democratic norms as a form of democratic assistance.”

Economic assistance, certainly, is popular with governments and it can help us move the needle on some things like labor protections and good governance, but it makes a very small percentage of USAID’s programming.

How are we—I am increasingly concerned that USAID moves away from its democracy, human rights, and governance part of its mission and when I hear economic assistance is going to be the essence of how we are looking at democracy assistance and I see such a small percentage of USAID’s programming, we are not going to do much on democracy, human rights, and rule of law.

Tell me why I am wrong because I see you shaking your head.

Ms. POWER. Yes. I would love to have a longer conversation with you, a deep dive on our expanded democracy assistance programming. It is everything from greater protections from—and insurance for journalists who are—and civil society organizations that are coming under attack to greater transparency in extractive industries to the need, again, to fund programming that can bring about a digital and open internet in countries that are backsliding and moving in the wrong direction.

It is election assistance and so much of the assistance that we know well from decades of seeing democracy assistance.

What is new is the recognition that when there is a reform or the application of the recognition that when there is a reform opening in a country where a leader is doing hard things, bucking the

anti-democratic trends globally, we are trying to see in our very slender sort of discretionary program area whether there is some way, for example, to create a private sector partnership where farmers will see low interest loans with a local bank more readily available, where—when a leader like the President of Zambia is doing away with a defamation law, but the economic headwinds are intense is there a little plus-up in our programming there in food security, given the fertilizer shortage, that we can mobilize.

Again, our core democracy programming remains broadly familiar, but the fact that we are not doing economic development programming despite being a development agency at scale in the way that I firmly believe we should be means that we have to go looking into preexisting pots, like an agricultural pot, or maybe there would be a vaccine delivery that could occur in a high profile way with a leader, again, who is doing hard things in the political domain.

The point here is it goes well beyond what USAID is doing. It can also be about high level visits. It can be about it encouraging tourism to places where, again, pro-democratic things are happening.

I think if you look back over the last 20 years of democratic backsliding or 17 years of democratic backsliding, I think we can all agree we paid insufficient attention to those reform openings that occurred and if we can now do a better job flooding the zone and trying to be responsive to the needs of civil society or leaders who are doing hard things, I think then we have a better chance of supporting them, implementing their reform agenda.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. The slide in democratic backsliding is particularly relevant in the Western Hemisphere in our own front yard.

Ms. POWER. Sadly, it is relevant globally, but yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Whereas one time there was only one country in the hemisphere that was totally a totalitarian dictatorship, which is Cuba. Now you have Venezuela, you have Nicaragua, you have Cuba continuing, and you have others moving in the wrong direction.

When I see people like President Lasso of Ecuador, who is fully committed to a democratic agenda, aligned with American values, aligned with American issues, it seems to me that countries like that need to have the aid of the United States so that when you follow those values and you share them and you actually not just say it, but you implement them, that then there is a response by the United States that sends a message not only to that government that you are doing the right thing where you partner, but sends a message to others in the hemisphere that when you act in a way that is in pursuit of democracy, rule of law, and human rights there is a benefit.

I just think that there is a disconnect between that reality and—the desire for achieving that and the reality of what we do. If it is a question of resources, we should talk about it because we are badly beaten in the Western Hemisphere, I can tell you that right now.

I just finished a four-country tour in the recess. Before that, I was down there again. We are badly beaten in the Western Hemi-

sphere and our allies are under siege and we do not seem to be able to be nimble enough to deal in ways to help our allies and send a message within the hemisphere that when you are aligned with us in terms of values and you execute on them, we are there. More for maybe a longer conversation than this hearing.

The record for this hearing will remain open until the close of business on Friday, April 28, 2023. Please ensure that questions for the record are submitted no later than next Wednesday. Senator Risch, thank you.

Administrator Power, with the thanks of the committee for your testimony this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:01 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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#### ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF MS. SAMANTHA POWER TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

*Question.* United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said last week that the humanitarian situation in Sudan was “already precarious and is now catastrophic.”

What is the plan for humanitarian operations and the provision of aid to the Sudanese people in the current circumstances?

What steps are you taking to raise resources, especially from the Gulf, to respond to the growing humanitarian need in Sudan?

How are we supporting the Sudanese organizations that are trying to provide assistance in the midst of the current chaos?

*Answer.* On April 23, USAID deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to lead the U.S. Government’s response to the humanitarian crisis in Sudan. USAID has worked with partners to use existing programs and resources to pivot emergency programming, and is now working with partners to identify where additional resources are needed both in Sudan and in neighboring countries. Additionally, USAID is working closely with our colleagues at the Department of State and the UN to advocate for increased humanitarian access and the scaling up of humanitarian operations in Sudan, including by exploring overland routes and air bridges from neighboring countries and within Sudan to facilitate the safe passage of goods and personnel. USAID is also asking government entities in Sudan and its neighboring countries to decrease bureaucratic barriers that limit relief organizations’ ability to respond to this crisis at scale—for example, by expediting customs procedures, issuing visa waivers for aid workers, and waiving requirements issued by the Sudanese Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) to fast-track humanitarian activities.

USAID continues to engage with international donors, including those from the Gulf, to provide additional contributions to the Sudan response and to coordinate joint advocacy on humanitarian access in both bilateral and multilateral fora.

USAID’s long-standing humanitarian partners with strong national networks in health, nutrition, protection, agriculture, and water, sanitation, and hygiene are operating with limited capacity and using dwindling prepositioned supplies in pockets of Gedaref, Blue Nile, White Nile, South and West Kordofans, Khartoum, and the Greater Darfur region. Since April 15, they have relied significantly on national staff to continue life-saving activities. USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) is also supporting more than 37 Sudanese implementing partners as sub-recipients through the USAID-funded Rapid Response Fund implemented by the International Organization for Migration and existing USAID awards with international non-governmental organizations. USAID also provides annual contributions to the United Nations Development Program-managed Sudan Humanitarian Fund, which can disburse emergency allocations to support multi-sectoral interventions across the country through national non-governmental organizations.

*Question.* The Senate takes its oversight responsibilities very seriously, and I am grateful to USAID for keeping the Committee well informed about the numerous layers of protection we have on the direct budget support USAID is providing the Government of Ukraine.

What are the accountability mechanisms that USAID is implementing to help protect taxpayer dollars while helping Ukraine endure Russia's brutality?

Answer. USAID prioritizes oversight of and accountability for U.S. taxpayer dollars. USAID has an unprecedented level of oversight and accountability mechanisms built into our assistance to Ukraine. The following accountability mechanisms are in place to ensure oversight of Direct Budget Support (DBS), development, and humanitarian assistance.

#### DIRECT BUDGET SUPPORT OVERSIGHT

USAID currently delivers DBS to Ukraine through the World Bank Public Expenditures for Administrative Capacity Endurance (PEACE) mechanism, which reimburses the Government of Ukraine (GOU) for expenses incurred in pre-approved expenditure categories. Funding is only disbursed to the GOU following verification of expenses by the Ministry of Finance and World Bank, which minimizes risk of diversion. In addition to a reimbursement-only approach, the PEACE mechanism provides for accountability and transparency through monitoring, reporting, and audit requirements. The World Bank provides USAID with verification reports, Implementation Status and Results reports, progress reports, and other reporting.

The World Bank anticipates that two project audits will be completed for the PEACE mechanism, and the Bank is required to provide USAID with those auditors' reports. In addition, the World Bank prepares an annual single audit report covering all World Bank cash-based trust funds. The World Bank is supplementing these audits with several "Agreed Upon Procedures" reviews conducted by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC).

USAID contracted an independent third-party monitor, Deloitte, to review financial controls and procedures utilized by the GOU to track and oversee U.S. funds being used for DBS. Deloitte's experts are reviewing the Ukrainian Ministry of Finance's existing monitoring, transparency, verification and reporting systems and procedures, identifying and strengthening responses to gaps, and supporting reporting on DBS tranches. Deloitte is conducting three tiers of spot checks to trace payments from the U.S. Government (USG) through the World Bank to the GOU's Single Treasury Account (Tier 1), then to recipient governmental organizations and institutions (Tier 2), and ultimately down to individual beneficiaries (Tier 3).

In addition, USAID is in the process of establishing a contract with a separate auditing firm to conduct an independent, third-party audit of DBS payments, to supplement and complement other audits and procedures. USAID is not planning for Deloitte to be the independent auditor since they assist the GOU in identifying gaps and strengthening Ukraine's systems, including those which involve the DBS transaction. USAID expects to award this contract no earlier than September 2023.

USAID has also entered into an interagency agreement with the U.S. Government Accountability Office's (GAO) Center for Audit Excellence to build the capacity of the Accounting Chamber of Ukraine to effectively and accurately monitor, audit, and report on U.S. budget assistance. The GOU will conduct its own audit of direct budget support funds.

In addition to these measures, USAID has identified several existing GOU hotline systems established at Ministries, audit institutions, and for specific purposes (e.g., pensions) that can collect information on the potential misuse of DBS funding. The World Bank has its own grievance mechanism hotline, and the Inspector Generals for USAID, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense, have created a whistleblower hotline available in English and Ukrainian.

#### DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE OVERSIGHT

USAID has several layers of oversight processes to ensure that taxpayer funds are accounted for while providing development assistance. This includes mission-level monitoring by staff at USAID's Mission in Ukraine, oversight by our implementing partner staff, and third-party monitoring of select activities.

All 42 USAID programs continue to operate through the work of nearly 1,400 implementing partner staff. Despite the ongoing war, USAID continues to implement standard oversight, monitoring, and accountability procedures in line with Agency directives. Requirements for monitoring, accountability, and oversight of USG funds and USG-funded equipment are included in all contracts and grants. Our implementing partner staff are vital to these efforts—of nearly 1,400 implementing partner staff from USAID's Ukraine Mission programs, over 1,000 remain in Ukraine.

Mission staff continue to fulfill their activity management and monitoring responsibilities. They do this through in-person or virtual meetings with implementing partners and program beneficiaries and by reviewing reports, deliverables, photos,

videos, and work plans to ensure activities are on track. To the extent possible they also conduct site visits.

Project monitoring by individual staff is augmented through Mission processes and support. The overarching guiding procedures for monitoring and oversight include the Mission-wide Performance Management Plan, which is regularly updated and reviewed, and annual Portfolio Reviews, which examine each activity. Annual performance reporting through the Performance Plan and Report assesses the level of achievement of indicators and targets by activity/implementing mechanism. Quarterly financial reviews of all activities ensure that funding is tracked and allocated within legal and policy requirements. The Mission also uses Geographic Information Systems and draws upon a \$16 million Ukraine Monitoring and Learning Support Contract (2020–2025) to enhance the effective monitoring of programs and learning from experience. Through this mechanism, USAID has trained 22 third-party monitors, who began to conduct monitoring visits for select activities across 8 oblasts in April.

USAID engagement with Ukrainian Government counterparts and civil society organizations increases visibility on assistance delivery and impact. Almost all Mission activities undergo a third-party evaluation.

Activity-specific accountability includes the role of the Contracting/Agreement Officer's Representative to ensure compliance with monitoring and evaluation procedures and policy. This is supplemented by the Mission's overarching monitoring and evaluation team. Every activity has a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan with specific indicators and quantifiable targets. Work plans, regular reporting, and Risk Assessment and Management Plans are all required.

Finally, the Mission in Ukraine has established an internal Accountability Unit to ensure that all USAID programs are implemented in accordance with USAID's rules and regulations, ensure audit management is carried out efficiently and effectively, and that any audit findings are addressed and resolved in a timely and appropriate manner. The Unit meets monthly and is chaired by the Ukraine Mission's Office of Financial Management Controller.

#### HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE OVERSIGHT

In order to implement humanitarian assistance, the USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Assistance Response Team, currently composed of humanitarian experts based in Rzeszow, Poland, and Kyiv, is augmented by a Response Management Team in Washington and supported by additional Monitoring and Evaluation and Risk Management specialists.

USAID has developed a risk management framework to deliver timely and principled humanitarian assistance at scale in high-risk environments around the world. This approach seeks to ensure compliance with all policies, regulations, and laws in order to lead and coordinate an effective, accountable response to meet priority humanitarian needs of vulnerable populations in Ukraine. USAID has safeguards against diversion, waste, fraud, abuse, and other fiduciary risks in Ukraine consistent with its approach in other high-risk environments. Safeguards include award-specific risk assessment and management plans, established internal controls, safety and security plans for staff movements and transport of cash and program materials, and numerous reporting requirements. USAID requires partners operating in Ukraine to assess and manage the risk involved in their work before receiving funding. At application stage, all partners—public international organizations and nongovernmental organizations—are required to submit a Risk Assessment and Management Plan, which outlines internal controls related to mitigating and managing the risks associated with the potential misuse of USG resources and additional safeguards to ensure the provision of U.S. foreign assistance does not result in a violation of applicable sanctions. USAID requires our partners to have a context-specific approach to risk management in Ukraine, which acknowledges the severe restraints to access and monitoring of activities, the USG sanctions in place against the Government of Russia, and the heightened exposure to risk commensurate with the scale of the response.

USAID centrally tracks and follows up on the reports which partners submit to Agency and/or the OIG regarding diversion, fraud, waste, abuse, and sexual exploitation and abuse. Staff continually assess such incidents to ensure that USAID assistance is reaching those for whom it is intended, and that implementing partners have effective mitigation measures in place to help safeguard against similar incidents.

USAID utilizes direct monitoring, third-party monitoring, and implementing partners' own monitoring and reporting, and continuously assesses and mitigates risks related to the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Ukraine. Despite a limited

footprint in Kyiv, USAID conducts direct oversight of humanitarian assistance award activities with the approval of the U.S. Embassy's Ukraine Regional Security Officer. USAID also uses third-party monitoring in Ukraine to mitigate access limitations and independently monitor our humanitarian assistance partners' activities. Direct monitoring and third-party monitoring complement monitoring by implementing partners to provide greater oversight, accountability, and visibility into the efficacy of USAID programming.

#### USAID'S OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL (OIG) OVERSIGHT

USAID's Office of Inspector General (OIG) provides independent oversight of all USAID programs, personnel, and operations. The OIG Acting Deputy (performing the duties of the Inspector General) Nicole Ambarella recently testified to the House Foreign Affairs Committee that "providing timely, impactful, and independent oversight of USAID's Ukraine response is [her] office's top priority."

USAID OIG has been assigned two designated positions for their criminal investigators at Embassy Kyiv, which will greatly enhance their ability to investigate allegations concerning misuse of funds in Ukraine. In total, OIG has more than 60 staff supporting its Ukraine portfolio and over 22 planned and ongoing oversight projects. This work will provide oversight over USAID's major programs, objectives, and funding in Ukraine, including direct budget support, humanitarian assistance, agriculture resilience, energy security, and anti-corruption efforts. The OIG also operates a hotline to provide a confidential, reliable means to report allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse of U.S. assistance to Ukraine. In January 2023, the OIG published a joint hotline poster with the State Department and Department of Defense, with information in both English and Ukrainian, encouraging the timely and transparent reporting of corruption and abuse.

Further, the OIG has been working closely with its oversight counterparts at bilateral and multilateral organizations to ensure that it has the access, relationships, and sources necessary to conduct its comprehensive work to safeguard U.S. assistance in Ukraine. We defer to the OIG's congressional affairs office to respond to specific questions regarding its past, completed, and ongoing work.

*Question.* Russia's war has caused significant damage and destruction to Ukraine's critical infrastructure.

How is USAID working to mobilize the private sector to prepare bids on reconstruction projects?

If U.S. partners are disinterested in these efforts, what are the risks of state-owned industries from China taking the lead on the task of rebuilding Ukraine?

*Answer.* USAID is working in collaboration with the broader U.S. Government (USG) interagency (the National Security Council, Department of State, Department of Commerce, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), and others) to mobilize the private sector to invest in Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction. For example, USAID is supporting this year's flagship Ukraine Recovery Conference in London, UK on June 21 by encouraging our private sector partners to sign a business compact for responsible and ethical investing in Ukraine's priority sectors. To unlock further foreign direct investment, we are working with the USG interagency to ensure that Ukraine continues making progress in its anti-corruption efforts in critical sectors such as the judiciary and energy, which are priorities to improve the business investment climate for U.S. companies considering investing in Ukraine. USAID, in collaboration with the American Chamber of Commerce of Ukraine, released a business climate report on April 13, 2023, surveying over 130 U.S. and Ukrainian companies. The report recommended priority reforms the Government of Ukraine should undertake to spur private sector investment, such as developing a more coherent foreign direct investment policy, strengthening a national level investment promotion agency, and continuing anti-corruption reforms. Finally, we are ensuring that the supplemental appropriations for Ukraine's economic support are implemented quickly and efficiently including looking to find ways that USG assistance can support Ukraine's export infrastructure and economic recovery needs.

There is a risk that Chinese companies will participate in Ukraine's reconstruction. The People's Republic of China (PRC) has authority to direct its companies to invest even at a negative return on investment in aims to further its influence in a key region. USAID and the USG interagency have raised repeatedly and will continue to raise with the Government of Ukraine the risks and costs associated with Chinese companies, and the need to consider the full life cycle of a project before choosing a Chinese bidder. Unlike in the PRC, the USG cannot direct its companies to invest in Ukraine; U.S. companies will do their own assessment of the risks and business climate in Ukraine. For that reason, USAID continues to engage at the

most senior levels within the Government of Ukraine to underscore the important linkages between Ukraine's reconstruction and anti-corruption and transparency reforms.

*Question.* How is USAID engaging with Ukrainian authorities to ensure the equitable distribution of reconstruction efforts across Ukraine and avoid neglecting any regions or populations?

Answer. USAID is actively collaborating with the interagency, international community, and the Government of Ukraine to coordinate development assistance and plan future investments to facilitate the massive task of rebuilding Ukraine and its economy after the war. Our Mission in Kyiv has close and regular contact with national, provincial, and municipal Ukrainian Government representatives. The Government of Ukraine actively seeks out USAID's engagement and input in its planning for recovery and reconstruction.

USAID is encouraging Ukrainian authorities to include the participation of local civil society in the recovery conversation to ensure reconstruction processes are implemented with an inclusive lens. USAID envisions a decentralized, reform-based recovery for Ukraine and will engage multiple stakeholders at all levels, including civil society and the private sector. Transparency and the ability of civil society and the private sector to hold the Government of Ukraine accountable, fight corruption, and monitor progress on reforms will support a sustainable and resilient recovery for Ukraine.

USAID's participation in international forums, including this year's 2023 Ukraine Recovery Conference in London and the prior year's Lugano Conference, are critical to helping Ukrainian authorities start preparing for resilient and inclusive reconstruction by emphasizing the need for reforms, transparency, and accountability mechanisms to ensure efficient use of funds, build public trust, and get communities and citizens on board with the recovery process.

*Question.* The State Department is in process of standing up a Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy. Adm. Power announced the new Global Health Emergency Management Systems Response—an incident response management system for emerging health threats, based on lessons learned from humanitarian emergencies. It will be a rapid surge response with prevention, detection and response to emergency health threats/pandemic response.

How do you see this new initiative coordinating with efforts of the proposed State Department Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy? How will State and USAID ensure there is clear communication, collaboration and avoid duplication?

Answer. The Global Health Emergency Management System (GHEMS), which Administrator Power announced on April 20, refers to a set of internal USAID Bureau for Global Health (USAID/GH) business processes for standardizing and managing the Bureau's operational responses to health emergencies. GHEMS provides consistency in planning, staffing, implementation and learning to ensure that technical expertise within USAID/GH is coordinated for swift and efficient responses to outbreak and non-outbreak health emergencies. As the internal USAID/GH focal point for response to a specific health emergency, an activated GHEM Team would strengthen and streamline engagement with the State Department (as well as all of our interagency partners), providing a clear node for communication and collaboration around specific emergency issues, thereby, avoiding duplication and ensuring that decisions are made transparently and collaboratively.

*Question.* USAID has struggled to fill vacancies and staff in the Global Health Bureau both in Washington, DC as well as overseas. I expect the Government Accountability Office to issue a report I requested to examine this issue in the coming weeks. I hope that your staff will respond to the draft in a timely manner; agency comments are due May 5.

How is USAID planning to staff these initiatives given what I understand are already existing vacancies?

Answer. The Agency submitted a response to the GAO Draft audit report (report titled USAID: Management Improvements Needed to Better Meet Global Health Mission) on May 2, in advance of the deadline. USAID's response welcomed and agreed with the report and noted an eagerness to take action on each of the six audit recommendations, the first of which recommends that "the USAID Administrator ensure that the Assistant Administrator for Global Health develop and implement a workforce plan for the Bureau." USAID will ensure that the plan developed in response to the recommendation communicates the Bureau's optimal mix of direct hire and non-direct hire staff, as well as senior leaders; outlines key actions to better align our staffing with our mission, priorities, and funding; and articulates how

we plan to address persistent vacancies in civil service (CS) positions and the under-representation of certain racial or ethnic groups in our workforce.

Even before implementation of this recommendation, the Bureau is pleased to report that great progress has been made in reducing the number of CS Operating Expense (OE) funded position vacancies in the Bureau. Currently, 126 out of the GH Bureau's allocated 136 CS permanent positions are filled. Hiring actions are underway for filling the 10 vacancies. This is a great improvement over the more than double the number of vacancies reported by the Bureau just 1 year ago.

Similarly, the Bureau has also made great strides in reducing the number of vacancies in program funded CS positions (relying on specific legal authorities to use HIV/AIDS funding to hire CS positions in the GH Bureau's Office of HIV/AIDS). Currently 100 out of 134 GH Bureau's CS HIV program funded positions are filled. Although that means that 34 positions are currently vacant, all 34 positions are currently actively under recruitment and this represents a significant reduction over the number of vacancies just 1 year ago.

*Question.* The President has prioritized a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Initiative and repeatedly voiced his commitment to DEIA as have you. However, data from USAID continues to reflect significant racial, ethnic and gender disparities, especially at senior and mid-management levels.

Can you provide concrete examples of how you have created visible impact, changes at senior and mid-level management?

Answer.

- DEIA has been integrated into the governance and decision-making of the Agency with the creation of the DEIA Office in early 2022 and through the development of an Agency-wide Leadership Philosophy that reflects principles and priorities of DEIA for all leaders at USAID, and a DEIA Statement to display the Agency's commitments to DEIA and expectations of the workforce. USAID is also actively working to update automated directive systems (ADS) and policies to incorporate DEIA into Agency missions and goals.
- In FY 2022, 48 percent of Civil Service (CS) employees and 34 percent of Foreign Service (FS) employees identified as racial or ethnic minorities.
- USAID redesigned the FS promotion process beginning in 2019 and continuing into 2021. The 2021 FS Promotion Report found that the 5-year average promotion rate was 20 percent for both promotion eligible white employees and promotion eligible employees who identified as a racial or ethnic minority.
- We have made some progress since 2020:
  - We have more women reaching the senior levels of the Civil and Foreign Service. The combined percentage of women in senior level Civil and Foreign Service at USAID increased from 40.3 percent in 2015 to 48.7 percent as of the end of fiscal year 2022. Similarly, the percentage of women in mid-level CS and FS increased from 53.2 percent to 56.8 percent as of the end of fiscal year 2022.
  - Trends for racial and ethnic minorities were similar in the senior level CS and FS. Asians increased from 2.9 percent to 6.2 percent, Hispanics/Latinos increased from 3.9 percent to 4.1 percent, and other racial and ethnic minorities declined from 0.5 percent to 0 percent. Similarly, the percentage of African Americans/Blacks remained consistent at the senior levels (11 percent in 2015 and 11 percent in 2022).
- USAID tripled the number of participants in the International Career Advancement Program ([https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbGl9saW5rX2lkLjoxMDYsInVyaSI6ImJwMjppbGlljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd3d3LmljYXBhc3Blbi5vcmcvP3V0bV9tZWRRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzA0MjguNzU5NDY4MzEifQ.1PvHj4XzSmdNor-mDTR9WG UZy5gfX4lLocUMEE4\\_70l/s/2141424411/br/167256632609-l](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbGl9saW5rX2lkLjoxMDYsInVyaSI6ImJwMjppbGlljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd3d3LmljYXBhc3Blbi5vcmcvP3V0bV9tZWRRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzA0MjguNzU5NDY4MzEifQ.1PvHj4XzSmdNor-mDTR9WG UZy5gfX4lLocUMEE4_70l/s/2141424411/br/167256632609-l)), a professional development and leadership program for mid-career professionals in international affairs in the U.S. managed by USAID's Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM), from six staff participants to 20 in 3 years.
- In FY2023, USAID embarked on a Skills and Competencies Reform to identify and celebrate the critical skills that drive USAID's success today, while actively enhancing the skills needed to address emerging challenges. DEIA is one of those critical skills and competencies. During the initial phase of this initiative, stakeholder groups looked across the existing critical skills and competencies needed for the Critical Elements and identified areas where language could be



updated to better capture the essence of the DEIA competencies. The Agency is currently working to update Annual Evaluation Forms to capture updated DEIA language.

- HCTM's Office of Employee and Labor Relations kicked off a year's worth of monthly trainings for Agency leaders on how to better hold personnel, including our supervisors, accountable for their behavior. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) similarly bolstered their supervisory training resources and both offices are working together to address specific incidents of inappropriate behavior as they occur.
- From the lens of the OCR Affirmative Employment Division, impact is achieved through the annual MD-715 report to help USAID become and remain a model EEO Program at all levels and in all areas of the employment lifecycle.
  - In this report, there is a self-assessment checklist where specific items are listed as required parts of manager/supervisor's performance plan. If these items are not included in the plan, we have to develop an action plan to address that.
  - Barrier Analyses determine whether there are barriers that exist to any particular group in getting into the Agency, moving around the Agency, and generally enjoying the benefits and privileges of employment at USAID. If a Barrier Analysis shows that there is, for example, a trend of certain types of complaints or unconscious biases, we develop a plan to address those issues.
- Since May 7, 2021, OCR's Disability Employment Division's Reasonable Accommodation Program (OCR/DE/RA) has been actively meeting with senior- and mid-level management domestically and overseas to provide training and build awareness of the Agency's ADS 111—Procedures for Providing Reasonable Accommodation for Individuals with Disabilities. To date, 700 domestic and overseas management officials have received this training. OCR/DE/RA continues to meet with senior- and mid-level management to help them understand how to accommodate their staff.

*Question.* There is also concern that individuals who have been hired through mechanisms aimed at expanding diversity have not been retained for differing reasons, including an unwelcome working environment.

What steps have you taken with regards to retention?

Answer.

- In support of the global workforce, USAID is working to expand and strengthen leadership, learning, and professional development opportunities; build on the successes of its Staff Care Center (SCC) services that promote well-being, work-life balance, and organizational resilience; and strengthen human resources operations and systems. Underpinning all of our efforts is a focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA).
- In October 2022, the Agency successfully launched the inaugural DEIA survey to help USAID better understand our workforce in order to better manage and meet their needs. The survey had a 60 percent voluntary participation rate with a full 70 percent of respondents having a favorable approval of the Agency's DEIA efforts. The survey included data points on expanded demographics and identity categories. This is also the first DEIA survey to capture information across all hiring mechanisms.
- To improve the working conditions and culture for the Foreign Service Officer (FSO) corps, under the leadership of the Agency Counselor, USAID is looking at ways to:
  - expand professional development through better onboarding of new officers and mission leaders, greater training, coaching, and mentoring throughout a person's career;
  - streamline, standardize, and make more transparent the assignments process;
  - enhance FSO performance management and address concerns about promotions; and
  - reinforce expectations and accountability among FSO leaders.
- USAID is currently working on various initiatives designed to enhance recognition for the value that Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs) bring to the Agency, and to enhance morale among this important part of the workforce. Specifically, USAID is working to:

- increase leadership opportunities for FSNs at all levels;
- increase FSN Fellowship programs;
- increase the number of senior-level FSN-13 positions;
- expand professional development and training opportunities; and
- expand the use of ladder positions within the FSN workforce.
- In FY 2022, USAID established an Annual Performance Goal (APG) to increase the hiring and retention of Persons with Disabilities to make progress toward meeting government-wide goals of 12 percent of our employees being Persons with Disabilities and 2 percent being Persons with Targeted Disabilities. We are currently at 6 percent of our goal of employees being persons with disabilities.
  - To support the recruitment of Persons with Disabilities, USAID has joined the Workforce Recruitment Program through the Department of Labor (DOL) and prioritized the use and awareness of the Schedule A and Disabled Veteran non-competitive hiring mechanisms.
- The Agency provides a suite of program offerings managed by the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM) to provide employment opportunities, career experiences, and multiple approaches for Veterans including the USAID Temporary Employment Program, SkillBridge Program, Military Spouse Employment, and Veteran Appointing Authorities to non-competitively hire veterans.
- To ensure that staff from non-direct hiring mechanisms are afforded more equity in working conditions, USAID is implementing paid parental leave and relocation expense benefits for our U.S. Personal Services Contractors (USPSCs); a new relocation expense benefit that will provide eligible USPSCs a miscellaneous expense amount; and a pre-departure subsistence reimbursement to offset relocation transfer costs.
- USAID's Staff Care program, now in its 11th year, offers a broad range of counseling, health and wellness programs, assistance with day-to-day life responsibilities, organizational and individual resilience support, and much more.
  - During FY 2022, USAID employees and their family members accessed Staff Care support services and educational resources more than 25,000 times, a 21 percent increase compared to FY 2021. Highlights include:
    - ◆ Conducting more than 3,500 counseling sessions;
    - ◆ Designing and delivering 26 customized Organizational Resilience programs benefiting 2,000 employees;
    - ◆ Offering 82 Agency-wide webinars for 6,382 employees on a variety of health, wellness, and work-life topics; and
    - ◆ Hosting three engaging wellness challenges, with over 1,855 participants.
- OCR's Affirmative Employment Division will be conducting staff assistance visits across the Agency's footprint as a measure within the annual Management Directive 715 (MD-715) report. These visits will seek qualitative data from all hiring mechanisms on their lived experiences within the Agency related to the entire employee lifecycle, from recruitment to separation. This data can be used to identify barriers or conditions regarding retention and diversity and inclusion, and provide insight that can help the Agency change appropriate policies, practices, or procedures. While the MD-715 focuses on U.S. Direct Hires, the data can be shared with M Bureau, DEIA, HCTM, and other Agency stakeholders for further analysis, regardless of staffing mechanism.

The FY 2022 gains and losses from USAID 2022 permanent (direct hire) workforce show three potential triggers requiring further analysis to determine if a barrier exists. The following triggers were identified:

- Black/African American males and females are exiting the agency at a higher rate than the group gains.
  - Black/African American males are leaving the agency at a rate of 10.60 percent in comparison to a 10.47 percent entry rate, for a -0.13 percent difference.
  - Black/African American females are exiting the agency at a rate of 19.35 percent, in comparison to entering the agency at a rate of 15.20 percent, for a -4.15 percent difference.

- Employees with targeted disabilities exited the agency more than three times their entry rate of 1.35 percent, with an exit rate of 5.17 percent, a difference of -3.82 percent.
- OCR's Disability Employment Division (OCR/DE) actively partners with HCTM, the Employees with Disabilities Employee Resource Group (EWD ERG), and other internal stakeholders to provide training and awareness, participate in forums, Agency work groups and other subject matter expert panels, to be a resource within the Agency on the ADS 111—Procedures for Providing Reasonable Accommodations to Individuals with Disabilities, and to promote the hiring, retention, and promotion of individuals with disabilities. Each October, OCR/DE partners with the EWD ERG to promote and organize events for National Disability Employment Awareness Month. USAID has partnered with the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy and other internal and external resources to provide quality events and training for all staff.

*Question.* Due to limited USAID's resources, World Food Program (WFP) is cutting food rations in refugee camps worldwide. Meanwhile, food insecurity is continuing to rise while people flee from violence in places like the Sahel, Sudan, and Burma.

How is USAID weighing and planning competing food assistance needs to respond in differing contexts, equitably and effectively?

*Answer.* USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) is focused on meeting emergency needs of populations who face the most life-threatening conditions across the globe, and remains deeply committed to providing lifesaving humanitarian assistance to populations affected by the global food security crisis. The powerful, combined effects of climate change, the COVID-19 post-pandemic effect, protracted complex emergencies, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine will continue to create elevated levels of emergency needs for years to come.

While USAID will continue to prioritize available resources for the most acute emergencies and needs, significant resources are needed to address unprecedented humanitarian needs worldwide. Humanitarian needs are far outpacing global resources and we are facing difficult trade-offs for concurrent emergencies. As a result, USAID continues to advocate with other international donors to increase their contributions to responses and elevate best practices in program planning.

Thanks to the generous supplementals enacted by Congress, USAID provided \$5.8 billion to WFP in FY22 and remains its largest donor. USAID has continued to robustly support WFP operations in FY23 and has clearly communicated funding availability and constraints to WFP in order to facilitate program planning. USAID continues to encourage WFP to effectively prioritize its global programming and proactively manage operational pipelines, including through finding efficiencies across its emergency programming and prioritizing existing donor resources to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are met.

USAID/BHA's internal budget allocation process emphasizes the importance of addressing the most severe needs across the globe. It includes quantitative comparisons of the scale and severity of needs that inform internal budget allocation decisions. Our field teams work diligently to assess the scale and severity of needs in their countries and recommend response approaches that prioritize meeting the needs of populations that are in most dire need of emergency assistance. The Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) and reporting from the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) are critical forecasting and analysis tools used to inform decision making by USAID, other governments, and implementing partners when responding to acute food insecurity. The IPC, a five-phase scale classifying food insecurity at household and area levels, allows the humanitarian community to compare the scale and severity of current and forecast food insecurity across countries and time horizons.

*Question.* Are we treating food beneficiaries equally in the global south as we are elsewhere?

*Answer.* Yes, all USAID food assistance responses are designed to meet the same nutritional requirements, wherever project participants are in the world. USAID implementing partners design food assistance rations to address assessed nutrition gaps, although the exact food basket and commodities provided will vary based on cultural appropriateness. The modality through which food assistance is delivered may also vary depending on needs, market availability, and access. USAID follows minimum humanitarian standards, such as the Sphere Standards, in all of our responses. We also encourage our partners to participate in the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) Cluster System to establish common standards for each response

that are adequate and culturally appropriate, striving to ensure that all project beneficiaries have access to an equitable minimum level of assistance.

*Question.* Which donors could be doing more to address global food insecurity and what else can we do to convince them to contribute their fair share?

*Answer.* The United States is working with donors to increase their long-term food security programming in order to sustainably address food insecurity and strengthen food systems that are more resilient. For example, USAID and Ireland's international development programme, Irish Aid, recently announced funding to build more sustainable food systems to help fight global hunger and prevent the next food crisis in sub-Saharan Africa. In a new co-partnership that invests more than \$75 million in sub-Saharan Africa, USAID will work with Congress to provide \$38.6 million and Irish Aid will contribute at least \$37 million to support the transformation of food systems to become more climate resilient, provide more nutritious food to the population, and support sustainable economic growth, including increased income for farmers, including female farmers.

Between 2012 and 2017, international humanitarian assistance grew annually by more than 10 percent, but it has grown by just 2.6 percent in the 4 years since then. While USG funding has played a pivotal role in preventing famine to date in places like Somalia, the USG will not be able to shoulder the funding burden alone in the absence of significant funding from other donors. Significant global need necessitates a broadened and deepened bench of international donor support; however, that same high level of need also creates donor fatigue and overstretch. Nonetheless, we are engaging the G7, the G20, private-sector and multilateral organizations, and others, advocating for substantial increases in emergency and long-term development assistance targeting the most vulnerable countries already suffering from high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition.

*Question.* I remain deeply concerned about the continued imbalance between our support for development, democracy, and defense in Chad.

Why don't we have a direct hire Foreign Service officers in Chad to oversee development assistance programming?

How much money are we providing to civil society organizations working on democracy and human rights?

*Answer.* We are aware that Chad is of growing importance to U.S. policy in the Sahel, and this is reflected by the increase in development assistance (DA) to Chad from \$1.5 million in FY 2021 to \$4.9 million in FY 2022. Even with this increase, a DA budget of this size does not typically warrant a U.S. Direct Hire (USDH) Foreign Service position. Further, USAID faces significant limitations in our operating expense (OE) budget, which constrains our ability to place USDHs everywhere we would like them. However, USAID's Africa Bureau is currently examining its overall overseas footprint, and careful consideration will be given to Chad in that analysis.

USAID supports civil society organizations working on democracy and human rights through our Chad Civil Society Strengthening Activity (CCSSA). The activity duration is 2019–2024 and a planned funding amount of \$8.5 million (subject to availability of funding). CCSSA strengthens democratic culture in Chad in a number of ways including:

- Increasing the capacity of civil society organizations and media sector organizations to support and promote citizen participation in governance at local and national levels.
- Facilitating a better informed, engaged citizenry with increased understanding of their civic rights and duties.
- Improving the enabling environment for civil society and media organizations through building the Government of Chad's capacity to engage civil society.
- Empowering civil society organizations and citizens to recognize and combat mis- and dis-information.
- Strengthening participation and empowerment of people with disabilities in governance.

CCSSA's recent accomplishments include: supporting civil society organizations to participate in the National Dialogues; supporting several Chadian-led campaigns that help citizens know their civic rights and organize collective action; and working with the Ministry of Education's National Curriculum Center to update civic education textbooks for primary and secondary schools and create guides for teachers.

*Question.* A perennial staffing issue that USAID struggles with are the constraints the Agency has to hire career professionals who are directly employed by the Agency, versus having to hire personnel as contractors using program dollars.

What are the constraints, and the proposals, the Agency would pursue to make it easier for the Agency to hire personnel as staff as opposed to hiring contractors?

- *1a. Constraint:* Insufficient Operating Expenses (OE) over many years has distorted the composition of USAID's workforce. USAID's workforce now comprises 70 percent contracted staff and 30 percent U.S. direct hire (USDH) employees. More career USDH employees are needed to manage inherently governmental functions and other functions that are not appropriate for contractor staff, to mitigate the labor-intensive and administrative burdens generated by this severe staffing imbalance, and to resolve equity challenges across staffing mechanisms.
- *1b. Proposal:* The OE account is authorized as the sole account to fund USDH positions (i.e., Civil Service and Foreign Service), with limited exceptions. As USAID's programmatic funding levels have increased to address global challenges, the Agency has not received a commensurate increase in the OE level. As a result, USAID has resorted to predominantly relying on a program-funded contracted workforce. USAID requests congressional support for a more robust OE account to keep up with increased funding on the programming side. If an increase in the OE account is not possible, USAID requests the authority to allow for greater flexibility in the use of USAID's program funds to cover permanent staffing and administrative costs.
- *2a. Constraint:* USAID faces ongoing challenges with hiring, position management, retention, and professional development for USAID's Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs), our local staff. This is because their employment agreements fall under Federal Acquisition Regulations and other laws governing open competition and federal contracts, which complicate these efforts. FSNs make up over a third of USAID's total workforce and 70 percent of our overseas workforce. Therefore, the administrative burden placed on USAID's contracting staff who must manage thousands of contracts for these staff members reduces their bandwidth to focus on programmatic matters.
- *2b. Proposal:* USAID requests its own Personal Service Agreement (PSA) authority, which would allow the Agency to enter into employment agreements with FSNs that would allow the Agency to establish human resources policies and procedures that align with those for USDH staff more easily than Personal Services Contract (PSC) authority allows (PSCs are subject to U.S. Government contracting processes).
- *3a. Constraint:* USAID's crisis operations work currently relies heavily on contractors, resulting in a workforce without sufficient ability to perform certain inherently governmental functions and that often experiences high vacancy rates.
- *3b. Proposal:* In the FY 2024 budget, USAID requested continuation of the Crisis Operations Staffing (COS) authority, which Congress first provided in the FY 2023 Omnibus Appropriation Bill. The COS authority would ensure that USAID can continue to hire and retain diverse talent, at the right time, in the right place, for the right duration to address complex crises. This authority does not add new positions but allows USAID to use existing program funds to do this hiring, converting existing contract positions to temporary federal employee positions.

*Question.* Rather than focusing solely on security assistance, the United States can broaden its cooperation with Pakistan to include supporting its energy transformation and agricultural innovation, as well as building resilience capacities to adapt to changing global climatic systems.

How does USAID currently view its relationship with Pakistan in terms of bilateral assistance?

*Answer.* USAID has long maintained a collaborative relationship with our Government of Pakistan counterparts. This relationship has a stronger bilateral focus post-withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. The relationship will continue to remain an important one for USAID and the USG as we move forward on shared development priorities, such as broad-based climate-resilient economic growth, inclusive democratic governance and accountability, a healthy and educated population, and recovery from the 2022 floods.

Energy is a key need for sustainable economic growth. The Pakistan Government is strongly concerned about climate trends that have led to increasing heat waves, glacial melt, flooding, and water insecurity in Pakistan. It has set its own targets and asked USAID for help reaching them. In Pakistan, carbon fuel for energy adds to the debt since it must be purchased or imported, so renewable is a much better

option. FY 2024 resources will support climate adaptation and mitigation, particularly in clean energy development, a sector that shows promising potential for U.S. investment in Pakistan. Success in this sector will draw in the private sector and boost the energy supply. Clean energy is not only more cost effective, it also does not add to Pakistan's significant loan debt.

Regarding flood recovery, in 2022 alone, the United States provided over \$100 million to support immediate flood relief efforts, disaster resilience, and food security needs, as well as financing for relief logistics. We know that the needs of flood-affected communities go beyond the one-time provision of emergency assistance. In Geneva this January, the United States pledged an additional \$100 million dollars of recovery funding, bringing the U.S. Government's total contribution to more than \$200 million dollars.

The additional funding is helping to strengthen climate-smart agriculture and food security systems; scale up essential health services in flood-affected communities; and expedite a return to learning among marginalized populations, particularly girls. It also helps our Pakistani partners make critical investments in protection and citizen-responsive governance, disease surveillance, economic growth, clean energy, and reconstruction of damaged infrastructure, including drainage infrastructure.

*Question.* Where is the Administration in terms of fulfilling its \$200 million pledges for Pakistan's flood response and recovery?

*Answer.* In 2022, the United States provided more than \$100 million to support immediate flood relief efforts, disaster resilience, and food security needs, as well as financing for relief logistics. In the immediate aftermath of the flooding, USAID/BHA provided \$80 million for urgently needed food, nutrition, multipurpose cash, health, protection, safe drinking water, improved sanitation and hygiene, and shelter assistance.

Acknowledging that the needs of flood-affected communities go beyond the one-time provision of emergency assistance, in Geneva this January, the United States pledged an additional \$103 million dollars of recovery funding, bringing the U.S. Government's total contribution to more than \$203 million dollars since mid-August 2022.

The additional funding is helping to strengthen climate-smart agriculture and food security systems; scale up essential health services in flood-affected communities; and expedite a return to learning among marginalized populations, particularly girls. It also helps our Pakistani partners make critical investments in protection and citizen-responsive governance, disease surveillance, economic growth, clean energy, and reconstruction of damaged infrastructure, including drainage infrastructure, and law enforcement facilities.

The total U.S. Government commitment to flood recovery to date is greater than \$200 million, of which \$100 million was announced by Deputy Administrator Coleman at the Pakistan Pledge Conference in January.

Obligation Status of Flood-related commitments for Pakistan			
Date	Announcement	Commitment	Obligation to Date
8/30/2022	Ambassador Blome announces BHA funding	\$30,000,000	\$30,000,000
9/9/2022	Administrator Power announces additional BHA funding during her visit to Islamabad	\$20,000,000	\$20,000,000
9/9/2022	Administrator Power announcement increases running total, which includes BHA early recovery, risk-reduction, and resilience funding	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
9/9/2022	Administrator Power announcement increases running total, which includes DOD/OHDACA funding	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
9/19/2022	PRM announces funding for flood-affected Afghan refugees and Pakistani host community members	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
9/26/2022	Secretary Blinken announces food security funding to support flood-affected communities	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000
10/22/2022	DFC announces \$4.8 million partial loan guaranty to mobilize \$6 million in private capital from AlmaVest Ltd to Trella Holdings BV, who helps four NGOs move relief goods to flood-affected communities and raise donations for more relief goods.	\$6,000,000	\$6,000,000
10/27/2022	Ambassador Blome announces additional BHA funding in flood-affected district	\$30,000,000	\$29,781,143

1/9/2023	Deputy Administrator Coleman pledges \$100 million at International Conference for Climate Resilient Pakistan, including ESF and GHP-USAID	\$79,300,000	\$49,400,000
1/9/2023	Deputy Administrator Coleman pledges \$100 million at International Conference for Climate Resilient Pakistan, including PRM funding	\$14,700,000	\$14,700,000
1/9/2023	Deputy Administrator Coleman pledges \$100 million at International Conference for Climate Resilient Pakistan, including INCLE	\$6,000,000	\$0
	Total	\$203,000,000	\$164,881,143

*Question.* How has the United States worked with international donors to ensure that Pakistan's most urgent needs are being met?

*Answer.* In the immediate aftermath of the floods, the Deputy Chief of Mission for the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan, Andrew Schofer, coordinated monthly meetings at the Embassy with representatives of UN agencies, international financial institutions, and other donor nations on flood relief and recovery. USAID provided an early influx of \$80 million in emergency humanitarian assistance for the floods in order to play a leadership role to encourage other donors. Overall, the United States has provided support to the flood response, food security, nutrition assistance, disaster preparedness, and capacity building efforts.

USAID Deputy Administrator Isobel Coleman communicated a message of burden sharing in bilateral meetings with donor country counterparts from Germany, the UK, and others during the January 9 International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan in Geneva, from which more than \$9 billion in new grants and loans for flood relief and recovery emerged. The Embassy also participated in the March 2023 International Partner Support Group for Flood Recovery, hosted by the Pakistan Minister of Economic Affairs.

Administrator Power's visits to the flood affected areas, and meetings with the international community reinforced U.S. Government (USG) priorities of a closely coordinated international response and the importance of ensuring the financial burden is shared among donors to respond to the unmet humanitarian and recovery needs. As a whole, the USG is among the largest donors to the flood response in Pakistan, having provided more than \$200 million to date. In addition to the humanitarian response funding, the USAID/Pakistan Mission has reprogrammed resources to support food security and nutrition programming, as well as ensuring funding to support the implementation of effective climate-smart approaches that are acceptable and beneficial to smallholder producers, including women.

The USG continues to advocate, in concert with like-minded donors and UN agencies, for greater Government of Pakistan (GoP) support for flood victims. These advocacy efforts have helped catalyze new spending, such as the GoP's recent decision to increase coverage of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP)'s Nashonuma program—a GoP initiative to provide conditional cash assistance and supplemental nutritious foods to vulnerable women and children—in 80 flood-affected districts. The change is expected to help BISP Nashonuma expand its reach from the current 600,000 to approximately 1 million beneficiaries over the coming months, according to the World Food Program. With the growing concerns of acute malnutrition in the country, the concerted efforts of the U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome has not only prompted other donors, like Australia, to fund emergency nutrition activi-



ties, but also helped prioritize nutrition amongst the highest levels of the Pakistani authorities.

USAID will continue to monitor humanitarian conditions in Pakistan and to work with the GoP and international partners to support critical relief and recovery activities.

*Question.* Credible and transparent elections in December 2023 are crucial for future peace and security in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

What can USAID do, between now and the December election, to increase the transparency and thereby the credibility of the DRC electoral process?

Answer. USAID's programming is working to increase the transparency of the electoral process. For example, through our Electoral Integrity Activity, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the International Republican Institute are working with the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) and civil society to improve elections administration, including by supporting civil society efforts to engage with CENI. Additionally, national and international monitoring of the electoral process is also critical to fostering a more transparent and credible electoral process.

This programming has already played a key role in increasing CENI's transparency. Following a challenging start to voter registration, CENI took the advice of our implementer, IFES, to rework its operational plan, publicize the changes, and publicly acknowledge the process's shortcomings. Additionally, CENI allowed unimpeded access to the 450 USAID-supported domestic election observers to monitor the voter registration process. CENI promptly accredited the domestic observation mission and USAID staff as observers, allowing our partners to deploy to one-in-three voter registration sites nationwide and collect important information on the performance of the voter registration system. USAID and our interagency partners are also engaging diplomatically with CENI to encourage greater transparency.

There is still more work to be done to press for greater transparency and this is, and will continue to be, a top priority of our teams in Kinshasa and in Washington, as transparency is essential to building the public confidence that will be required for DRC to hold successful elections in December.

*Question.* What actions by CENI leadership would prompt us to withdraw our support, and/or move forward with sanctions on CENI leadership?

Answer. While there have been issues, we assess that CENI has the capacity and will to professionally organize DRC's presidential, legislative, and local elections in December in accordance with internationally recognized norms and standards, and in conformity with the DRC constitution and relevant legislation. However, we will continue to update our assessment as key upcoming milestones are reached, the redistricting and legislative seat allocation process, candidate registration, and accreditation of domestic and international observers for election day monitoring.

As USAID has done throughout the voter registration process, we will closely monitor these milestones. USAID will also monitor the conduct of the campaign period, as it is critical that candidates can campaign without intimidation and that state resources are not used to favor certain candidates over others. If circumstances were to warrant it, a decision to withdraw support or otherwise change U.S. diplomatic posture towards CENI would be taken in coordination with interagency partners.

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RESPONSES OF MS. SAMANTHA POWER TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

*Question. Management: Presence and Risk Management:* As I've said many times, effective diplomacy and development cannot be conducted from behind the walls of an Embassy compound. Even as USAID operates in some of the most dangerous places in the world, the agency needs to take a forward leaning approach towards risk management so staff can directly engage with local partners and beneficiaries while conducting direct oversight of its programs and operations.

Do you believe that the Agency's current risk tolerance in medium-to-high-threat posts is appropriately tailored? Do you believe that it should be improved, and if so, how? What will you do to bring about that improvement?

Answer. USAID applies an intentional risk management approach to identify, evaluate, and mitigate critical risks to our programming and core operations. USAID has a long history of operating in higher risk environments and a wall of remembrance that honors our USAID colleagues who have died or been killed as a part of their service.

USAID depends on the interagency to enable our Foreign Service Officers to conduct site visits and work closely with local partners and beneficiaries. At Post, USAID staff are under the security authority of the Chief of Mission, who sets policies and guidelines for our staff to conduct fieldwork. We work closely with Diplomatic Security and their Regional Security Officers (RSO) to identify USAID's field work requirements and inform their security support.

USAID has implemented measures to prepare our foreign service officers for higher risk areas, and provide security advice and assistance to our implementing partners. USAID has increased its security training for new officers, and travels to our Missions to provide tailored security training for the environment.

USAID continues to expand its security advisory support to our implementing partners. This effort includes analyzing and sharing security information, advising partners on their security plans, and establishing a network of networks amongst the partners to keep them safe.

USAID purposely participates in the National Security process and coordinates with the interagency to communicate its needs and risk tolerance. Additionally, USAID has staff assigned to Diplomatic Security and liaisons between the Combatant Commands to ensure effective security assistance planning and day-to-day support.

USAID is grateful for the support of our State and DoD colleagues who have provided us security support as we strive to implement our programs. We recognize the sacrifices of our State colleagues to assist us, as demonstrated in the loss of life of local employed staff members in Nigeria in May 2023 when a convoy advancing a USAID site visit was attacked. USAID will continue to advocate for additional resources for Diplomatic Security, where appropriate, to further enable our forward leaning approach in high and medium risk areas.

The Agency utilizes an Enterprise Risk Management framework to both identify, evaluate, mitigate and elevate critical risks to our programming and core operations.

The Agency has successfully revised and integrated its Risk Appetite Statement to support Missions, Bureaus and Independent Offices in risk management, which includes understanding our tolerance for risk in key areas and in developing tailored responses that are sensitive to various country contexts and operating environments.

The risk appetite statement provides guidance on the programmatic, operational, reputational, legal, information technology, security and human capital concerns that may impact medium-to-high threat posts and emphasizes an inclusive "whole of mission" approach to identifying and mitigating threats. The risk appetite statement has been improved to enable more direct engagement with local partners balanced with the provision of training and oversight.

At the Country level, USAID deploys numerous program and activity specific safeguards to manage risks and enable additional tailoring to include pre-award surveys and risk assessments, representation and certification requirements, special award conditions, partner vetting, entity screening/restrictions and corruption reporting, financial and accounting requirements. The Agency will continue to provide training and resources to further hone this discipline.

*Question.* What lessons has USAID learned from its evacuations from Afghanistan and Ukraine that may be applied in future circumstances in which security conditions rapidly deteriorate, particularly with regard to: early warning; staff evacuations, care and support (including locally engaged staff and American implementing partners); and remote monitoring and evaluation to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse?

*Answer.* USAID continues to learn from the evacuations from Afghanistan and Ukraine and has conducted an After Action Review (AAR) after the Afghanistan evacuation which has further informed our protocols. The Agency holds in the highest priority the safety and security of staff, as well as the effective delivery of assistance. In every location USAID responds, we work closely with individual Missions and with the Department of State to anticipate security conditions, respond in crisis situations, and learn from challenging experiences to continue to adapt and improve Agency response to staff safety and care.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, USAID has repositioned and prioritized operational readiness. The Agency established the USAID Critical Coordination Structure to bring together the inputs of relevant Bureaus and Independent Offices, establishing Task Forces as needed, and advancing Agency-level operational emergency response strategies focused on the protection and safety of the USAID workforce, facilities, and overseas management operations. The Agency established the USAID Command Center as a 24/7 resource to monitor significant

activities, notify and support leadership and staff, and coordinate with the Department of State's Operations Center and Department of Homeland Security's National Operations Center. We increased our collaboration with the Department of State and established quantifiable standards for readiness, memorializing them in the Joint Strategic Plan FY 2022–2026. We also drafted the Strategic Action Plan for Operational Readiness FY 2022–2026, which establishes an Agency-wide integrated approach to maintaining a comprehensive and effective readiness posture consistent with the Federal Mission Resilience Strategy.

*Before a Crisis:* While all USAID staff overseas are directly accountable to the Chief of Mission, USAID has responsibility for our workforce and must be operationally ready to assist our staff, coordinate with our implementing partners, and support our interagency colleagues during a crisis event. We developed the Mission Continuity Plan Template to assist Missions in developing Agency-level crisis response plans that account for USAID equities unique to the Missions' operating conditions; equities which include the safety and security of USAID's entire overseas workforce and our implementing partners. USAID's Office of Security provides security training to support USAID staff and the Missions, to include tailored training provided at our Missions based on the security environment.

The Office of Security manages a personnel recovery program that is based on providing advanced training to prepare staff for emergencies and isolating events, and to teach and equip them with communication devices, including satellite phones and personal locator beacons. We developed a toolkit for Contracting Officers to expedite coordination with implementing partners, devised new crisis response training for Missions, created new training for domestic staff to better respond to a crisis, and are finalizing a standard operating procedure for Emergency and Crisis Management for Locally Employed Staff. USAID provides additional support to staff whenever possible, including pre-departure briefings and training, mental and emotional health services, and assists in supporting both staff and their families during and after critical incidents that impact their wellbeing.

USAID draws from the challenges that were faced and lessons learned through Afghanistan, Ukraine, Sudan, and other evacuations to shape our Staff Care Center offerings, which include training sessions on resilience, stress management, and adapting to change. USAID develops these training programs and other forms of support in close coordination with the Department of State's Center for Excellence in Foreign Affairs Resilience and Employee Consultation Services, who also collaborate on a Resiliency Working Group that is building a comprehensive strategy for promoting staff resilience and protecting mental health.

USAID partners use their own individual security models. However, USAID has regular communication with partners in our Posts, both between individual partners and USAID's Contracting Officer's Representative or Agreement Officer's Representative on day-to-day coordination and oversight, and collectively on a regular basis between Mission leadership and partners. This includes sharing security-related information as appropriate. USAID provides safety and security support to its implementing partners around the globe via the Partner Liaison Security Office program at numerous high-threat posts and remotely during emergencies through the Office of Security. Partners implementing humanitarian and development relief operate independently of the U.S. Government and are responsible for all of their risk management decisions and for providing staff support related to their operations.

*During a Crisis:* USAID coordinates with, and provides support to, the Department of State where appropriate during an evacuation, including by liaising between the Office of the Assistant Administrator for the USAID Bureau for Management and the Office of the Under Secretary for Management at State. Within USAID, the Bureau for Management's Crisis Response Unit coordinates with the Regional Bureau, the Mission, the Regional Support Mission and offices across the Agency to coordinate an operational response focused on operational services and the health and safety of personnel at post. The USAID Office of Security has a liaison assigned to Diplomatic Security to ensure close coordination and information sharing.

While each crisis has unique circumstances, USAID has learned from prior experience to inform crisis response, including increased access to Staff Care services, situation-specific training on safety and security, augmented staff to ensure continuity of operations and connectivity to the workforce and implementing partners, and liaison staff to coordinate with the Department of State. For example, we applied learning from previous evacuations when the crisis in Sudan broke out in April 2023. Within hours, we had verified the location and security situation of all USAID staff.

*Post-Crisis:* USAID uses multiple tools to conduct evaluation post-crisis. The Agency maintains a repository of Lessons Learned Cables and relevant After Action Reports to develop policies and procedures related to a crisis. The Critical Coordina-

tion Structure then organizes an Agency response to implement key lessons learned. USAID, through its Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) conducts performance evaluations, impact evaluations and response level evaluations for specific global responses.

*Remote monitoring and evaluation to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse:* USAID recognizes the importance of assessing risk and integrating risk management into all of our foreign assistance. USAID has found that when a crisis event occurs, implementing partners and the host government often evacuate to common safe locations; therefore, USAID seeks to position staff for continued coordination and oversight directly with the partners. Development programs may pause temporarily during the onset of the crisis event as the focus is on immediate needs of staff. Though a crisis event may be ongoing, after implementing partners or host governments reconstitute operations, USAID assesses risks and may implement increased monitoring or control measures to mitigate the increased risk. USAID is working closely with the Department of State on application of the Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act of 2022 for temporary operating locations to position staff in a safe location in close proximity to the crisis.

For humanitarian awards, USAID implements risk management practices beginning at the application phase. We require humanitarian partners to take appropriate and necessary steps to ensure that they are demonstrating that they have assessed the risks of fraud, waste, abuse, including mitigating the risk that the provision of U.S. foreign assistance does not result in violating U.S. law. BHA's risk mitigation approach includes a requirement for all Non-Governmental Organization partners to submit risk assessment and management plans, specifying how the organization plans to mitigate and manage the risks of potentially misusing U.S. Government resources in their proposed activities/modalities.

In addition, for any humanitarian partners operating in high-risk environments, such as Afghanistan and Ukraine, BHA requires humanitarian partners to submit additional risk mitigation measures they will take to decrease present risks associated with complex operating environments. This includes requiring them to detail the measures they have in place to mitigate the risk of engaging in transactions with or providing material support to sanctioned groups and/or individuals, including policies for screening vendors, contractors, and suppliers, money transfer service providers, as well as measures to mitigate the risk of sanctioned group(s) and/or individuals interfering with, or influencing beneficiary identification, selection, and verification processes.

Finally, USAID's monitoring and evaluation has built on these experiences to ensure effective prevention of waste, fraud, and abuse in both crisis and steady-state contexts through external technical guidance and internal monitoring site visit guidance. These documents provide both BHA and implementing partners with monitoring, evaluation, and reporting standards, templates, and best practices that aim in part to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse.

*Question. Staffing:* As I've stated in each of the past 3 years, USAID's most valuable asset is its people. Unfortunately, with at least 22 different hiring mechanisms and outdated assumptions about how specific missions, bureaus, and offices should be supported, the agency is in desperate need of a modernized strategic staffing plan that is flexible and adaptive to today's challenges.

Noting that the FY 2024 budget includes a request for an additional 230 direct hires, when will I see USAID's comprehensive strategic staffing plan that aligns positions, skills, and resources across the agency, transparently and effectively streamlines hiring mechanisms, and reduces reliance upon program funds, costly institutional contracts, and Participating Agency Service Agreements (PASAs) to meet modern staffing needs?

Answer. The current request for 230 new positions includes 105 CS and 125 FS positions. The Agency's Global Development Partnership Initiative (GDPI) seeks to change our workforce composition by increasing the number and percentage of direct hire, but specifically, career employees, both Civil Service (CS) and Foreign Service (FS). Currently, USAID's workforce is about  $\frac{1}{3}$  U.S. contracted staff,  $\frac{1}{3}$  Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs), and  $\frac{1}{3}$  U.S. direct hire staff (both career and term-limited FS and CS). If GDPI were fully funded alongside our term-limited direct hire authorities, USAID would be able to shift this to about 22 percent U.S. contracted staff and 43 percent U.S. direct hire staff while maintaining a similar level of FSNs.

*Question.* Will the request for an additional 230 direct hire positions (105 civil service and 125 foreign service) be funded with OE or program funds?

Answer. The request is for OE-funded positions.

*Question.* Will the proposed increase in direct-hire positions be paired with a decrease in contractors? If not, why not?

*Answer.* The goal of GDPI is to increase the number and percentage of career employees (both Civil Service and Foreign Service) and accordingly decrease the number and percentage of non-career employees. While the Agency will continue to need and utilize non-career staffing mechanisms, an increase in career employee opportunities promotes DEIA, increases institutional knowledge, and provides improved career paths for our top talent. Under the current GDPI planning, USAID would reduce the U.S. contracted staff from about 33 percent of our workforce composition to about 22 percent.

*Question.* How will new direct hire positions be prioritized and allocated?

*Answer.* For the CS, USAID is prioritizing management positions including human resources (HR), administrative management, security, legal, and contracting; gender and inclusive development; diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA); global health security; and humanitarian assistance. The Agency would also like to increase CS staffing in climate and democracy. Approximately half of the increase in FY 2022 for the CS was for fundamental staffing requirements that have gone unfilled or that have been filled with short-term approaches. This includes priority areas like contracting officers (including for humanitarian assistance programming), as well as desk officers, lawyers, and HR specialists.

FS priorities will be determined by our Overseas Workforce Planning Model; currently identified priorities include Program Officers, Contracting Officers, Health Officers, Democracy Officers, Executive Officers and Humanitarian Assistance Officers.

*Question. Travel:* What is the agency's Temporary Duty (TDY) travel budget?

*Answer.* The Agency does not develop a specific budget for Temporary Duty (TDY) travel for the President's Budget Request, but instead provides budget allocations to operating units that determine their individual travel requirements. In FY 2022, the Agency obligated approximately \$29.7 million in Operating Expenses (OE) and \$62.8 million in program funds for TDY travel. USAID estimates a slight increase in these levels for FY 2024. Please note that TDY travel is discretionary and excludes mandatory travel, such as post assignments and permanent change of station (PCS), home leave, rest & recuperation (R&R) and other mandatory entitlement travel.

*Question.* Is TDY travel from headquarters (whether overseas or domestic) funded by OE, program funds, or both? If both, please provide a breakdown by category and purpose.

*Answer.* TDY travel is funded by both OE and program funds, depending on the account that funds the traveler's salaries and benefits. Thus, with limited exceptions, the OE account funds travel for OE-funded staff while program accounts cover travel for program-funded staff.

TDY travel includes operational travel, site visits, conferences, seminars, meetings, and retreats. Since the Agency's financial management system cannot easily identify TDY travel solely from headquarters, the information below includes all TDY travel (from headquarters and missions).

OE and program obligations in FY 2022 for TDY travel are shown in the table below.

(\$ in millions)	OE	Program Funding
TDY Travel - to Washington DC or Other US Locations	\$1.8	\$2.3
TDY Travel - to Missions and Foreign Areas	\$19.4	\$43.0
Conferences/Seminars/Meetings/Retreats Travel	\$5.5	\$6.8
Assessment and Evaluation Travel	\$3.0	\$10.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$29.7</b>	<b>\$62.8</b>

This data is pulled from Phoenix, the Agency's financial system of record, and is as of year-end, September 30, 2022.

*Question.* How many TDY coach class air travel waivers were granted in FY 2022 and FY 2023, to date? Please break such waivers down by category.

*Answer.* The following information is based on data in E2, the Agency's travel system.

In FY 2022, USAID issued 165 TDY coach-class air-travel waivers. The waivers include medical disability, travel in excess of 14 hours, no space in coach, paid for by a non-federal source, and for safety and security reasons.

In FY 2023 to date, USAID issued 248 coach-class air-travel waivers. The waivers include medical disability, travel in excess of 14 hours, no space in coach, paid for by a non-federal source, and for safety and security reasons.

*Question.* Have any blanket waivers for TDY coach class air travel been issued? If so, how many, under what circumstances, and at what cost?

*Answer.* USAID does not issue blanket waivers for TDY coach class air travel.

*Question. Global Health: Global Health Security:* Of the \$1.245 billion requested for Global Health Security, \$745 million is for the U.S. Agency for International Development and \$500 million is for the newly established Pandemic Fund, housed at the World Bank. The *Global Health Security and Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response Act*, enacted as part of the *FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act*, caps U.S. contributions to the Pandemic Fund at 33 percent.

What is the status of other donor contributions to the Pandemic Fund? Is the \$500 million U.S. contribution proposed in the budget request realistic or aspirational?

*Answer.* As of April 26, 2023, the Pandemic Fund has received signed Contribution Agreements totaling \$1,664,970,000. This includes \$450M contributed by the United States Government.

The World Bank and WHO estimate that an additional \$10.5 billion per year will be needed from multilateral development banks to strengthen pandemic preparedness and response capacities in low- and middle-income countries. This is in addition to almost \$20 billion per year that low- and middle-income countries will also need to contribute through domestic resources. President Biden's FY 2024 budget request includes an additional \$500 million for the Pandemic Fund, within the GHP-STATE account, to help bridge this funding gap and catalyze additional funding from partner governments and organizations.

With current and proposed Pandemic Fund contributions, the U.S. Government will continue to consider the amounts of future contributions by other donors over the course of the 5-year period designated in the *FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act*.

*Question.* To date, USAID has exercised dangerously poor oversight of its partners engaged in research of pathogens of pandemic potential.

What safeguards have you put in place to ensure that the resources in the FY 2024 budget request, as well as prior-year funding that has yet to be obligated, are not directed toward partners that have demonstrated poor compliance with U.S. requirements relating to research of dual-use concern, data quality, data sharing, performance standards, and fiscal controls?

*Answer.* First and foremost, USAID has never authorized or funded Dual Use Research of Concern or Gain of Function Research nor is there an intent to do so in the future. USAID takes biosafety and biosecurity considerations very seriously. The Agency is working to continually improve and refine how we survey the landscape of biothreats, examine risks associated with activities, as well as design stringent safeguards to address the full range of biosafety and biosecurity concerns.

USAID implementing partners are required to comply with all standard provisions included in their awards, including those related to data submission, performance, fiscal responsibility, and others. USAID ADS Chapters 302 and 303 contain a detailed description of USAID and partners' roles and responsibilities related to the administration and monitoring of contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements. As a general matter, the USAID Agreement Officer's Representative performs award oversight and management of assistance awards within the scope of USAID's permitted substantial involvement. For sub-awards, the prime implementing partner is required to flow down all requirements to sub-awards, and to monitor compliance of its sub-awardees.

*Question.* Has USAID's Office of Acquisitions and Assistance reviewed EcoHealth Alliance's compliance with all obligations, both in body and in spirit, with U.S. requirements relating to data transparency and fiscal and performance management?

Has EcoHealth Alliance been subject to suspension or debarment proceedings? If not, why not?

Does EcoHealth Alliance continue to receive funding from USAID for any purpose, whether as a prime, sub-, or sub-sub awardee? If so, where and for what purposes?

Answer. In October 2021, USAID became aware of information raising concerns about EcoHealth Alliance's work under an NIH award. In addition, several members of Congress have requested that HHS and USAID investigate and determine whether EcoHealth Alliance should be excluded from receiving federal contracts and grants based on concerns related to NIH work. USAID referred the information to USAID's Office of the Inspector General and facilitated a conversation with interested congressional parties.

As of April 26, 2023, EcoHealth Alliance is not under review for suspension and debarment consideration by USAID's Compliance Division within the Bureau for Management, Office of Management Policy, Budget, and Performance, which coordinates its work with USAID's Office of Acquisitions and Assistance. USAID Compliance recommends suspension and debarment efforts on an on-going basis and those decisions are posted in the System for Award Management (*sam.gov*) for suspensions, proposed debarments (under the Federal Acquisition Regulation only) and debarments. Matters leading up to these actions are pre-decisional and, as such, are not shared beyond a need-to-know basis.

EcoHealth Alliance is currently the prime implementing partner for the Conservation Works Activity in Liberia. Conservation Works employs One Health strategies to conserve biodiversity and promote sustainable economic growth throughout Liberia by improving protection of forest resources and biodiversity and building conservation-compatible economic opportunities for communities relying on those natural resources. USAID does not have any other direct awards or sub-awards to EcoHealth Alliance at this time.

*Question. Sexual and Reproductive Health:* Does the term "sexual and reproductive health", as it relates to USAID assistance, programs, and engagement in development forums, include access to "safe and legal" abortion?

Answer. No, it does not. USAID does not fund abortions. We take seriously all applicable laws and implement measures with Missions and partners to ensure compliance with these requirements in their programs.

*Question.* Can you confirm that all USAID grants and contracts, including all subgrants and subcontracts, that provide for the utilization of U.S. foreign assistance resources, regardless of account and regardless of targeted health sector, include specific prohibitions on the use of funds to perform or promote abortion, or lobby for or against the legalization of abortion overseas?

Answer. Yes, the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and USAID's annual appropriations acts set forth a number of statutory restrictions related to abortion, including the Helms, Leahy, Siljander and Biden Amendments. These restrictions apply to all U.S. foreign assistance funds, including through subawards and subcontracts, across all sectors and partners, and have been in place for a number of decades. USAID implements the abortion restrictions through mandatory standard provisions included in our grants and contracts.

*Question.* Can you confirm the same for all USAID grants and contracts, including all subgrants and subcontracts, that provide for the utilization of U.S. foreign assistance resources, regardless of account, to promote human rights and gender equality?

Answer. Yes.

*Question.* Is access to "safe and legal" abortion included among the health, human rights, and/or gender equality initiatives that USAID seeks to advance through utilization of U.S. foreign assistance funding?

Answer. No, it is not. USAID does not fund abortions and takes seriously the legislative restrictions and compliance measures related to all applicable laws.

*Question.* Does USAID utilize U.S. foreign assistance funds, regardless of account, to provide gender affirming surgery or therapy?

Answer. USAID does not fund gender affirming medical interventions, which include surgeries and hormone therapy.

USAID, via the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), supports comprehensive HIV services for key populations or those at increased risk for HIV due to structural barriers, including stigma and discrimination in health settings and specific higher-risk behaviors, irrespective of the epidemic type or local context. Transgender individuals are one of these key populations, as defined by UNAIDS, and are 34 times more likely to be living with HIV.

In select HIV programs, national authorities have elected to offer gender-affirming hormone therapy as a strategy to increase the use of HIV services. While not

using PEPFAR funds for hormones, program partners coordinate with and leverage other development partners and governments to offer these services as a comprehensive package targeted at high-risk transgender individuals. For example, in South Africa, the National Department of Health procures hormones for use in clinics supported by USAID partners. In India, clinics provide HIV services through USAID support, but use other means to cover the cost of the hormones, such as clients paying out of pocket. No U.S. foreign assistance funding is used to provide hormone replacement therapy or gender-affirming medical interventions.

USAID also strengthens mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services available to LGBTQI+ individuals and other marginalized communities. This includes offering services and referrals for LGBTQI+ mental health and gender-based violence support; developing training materials for MHPSS providers working with these clients; and developing resources for LGBTQI+ individuals to mitigate challenges associated with violence, discrimination, stigma, and abuse.

*Question. Malaria:* The President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) has undertaken a market shaping effort to bring a diversity of manufacturers into the malaria commodity market to ensure a resilient supply chain for the millions and millions of malaria commodities it purchases each year.

What are the policy changes or priorities that PMI has identified as critical to its effort to shape a healthy market for malaria commodities?

Answer. The U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) promotes a healthy market for malaria products to ensure the sustained availability of high quality, affordable life-saving products. PMI defines a healthy market around four dimensions: (1) global capacity (sufficient supply to meet demand), (2) affordability, (3) supply risk (diversified supply base), and (4) product quality/appropriateness (quality and innovation). To promote a healthy market, PMI works on all of these critical priority areas. For example, PMI allocates demand across multiple suppliers and manufacturing sites for a secure, diversified supply base. In 2022, PMI procured malaria pharmaceuticals from 12 suppliers with manufacturing sites in six countries. PMI also supports new product introduction to bring innovative products to market and make them affordable. Working with key partners—including the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Unitaid, MedAccess, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation—PMI supported the introduction of the first insecticide-treated net with two active insecticides (dual AI nets) in areas with high insecticide resistance. Our collective efforts brought the nets to market faster, reduced the price of the net by half, and expanded production capacity three times from the initial capacity.

*Question.* Is prioritizing manufacturers that invest in innovating the next generation of malaria tools one of the criteria PMI has identified is crucial to their market shaping initiative? If so, how is PMI or its procuring partners ensuring that malaria innovators are prioritized in the evaluation criteria?

Answer. PMI uses several approaches to support critical innovation across its commodity portfolio. We fund multiple product development partnerships that work with industry to ensure a healthy research and development pipeline of innovative products including new drugs for treatment and prevention of malaria and new insecticides. We also include evaluation criteria in our tenders that award points for manufacturers that are investing in innovation. Finally, we work to reduce the development to market timeframe, as described above for dual AI nets, to make innovative products available and affordable so they reach more people more quickly.

*Question.* How does the market shaping initiative take into account U.S. company suppliers versus supplier companies headquartered outside of the United States?

Answer. PMI does not evaluate where a company is headquartered in our tendering and evaluation process. PMI does, however, look at where the product is manufactured to ensure a geographically diverse supply base and promote supply chain resiliency. From 2022, PMI includes evaluation criteria related to manufacturing in Africa to bring supply closer to demand and ensure a responsive and resilient malaria supply chain. This shift reflects that 95 percent of malaria cases and 96 percent of malaria deaths are in Africa, but manufacturing of quality malaria commodities on the continent is currently negligible. Inclusion of the evaluation criteria has increased our allocation to qualified manufacturers in Africa and provides a demand signal to industry to invest in expanding African-based manufacturing. Several current suppliers are actively working on technology transfers or partnerships with local manufacturers to strengthen their capacity.

*Question. Food Aid and Food Security:* The budget request "reflects the importance of in-kind agricultural commodities to humanitarian response, but also ac-



knowledges the opportunity to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of U.S. food assistance programs through the reauthorization of the Food for Peace Act.”

What reforms are you seeking to make U.S. food aid more efficient and effective? Please be specific.

Answer. At this time of record global hunger, the reauthorization of the Farm Bill provides an opportunity for Congress and USAID to work together to ensure the U.S. Government has the best tools at its disposal to meet global need. USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) has identified several technical changes to the Title II authorities which would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our Title II food assistance programs, without reducing the use of U.S. commodities, to more efficiently feed those in need.

*Provide Partners More Choice in Programming Without Reducing Use of U.S. In-Kind Commodities*

USAID’s non-emergency Title II programs are designed to build resilience in vulnerable communities, reducing communities’ reliance on food aid and potential need for humanitarian assistance in the long term. This programming can include a broad range of critical activities including natural resource management, disaster risk reduction, and training. However, there is a cap on the amount of Title II funding that can be used for these purposes, and this cap often requires partners to program in-kind commodities even when different interventions would create a more lasting impact on the resilience of a specific community. USAID can build more sustainable outcomes with non-emergency programs by allowing partners to design programs around the needs of each community, whether that includes the provision of in-kind commodities, resilience-building activities, or both over the course of the program.

USAID analysis indicates that the cost per metric ton (MT) to program U.S. in-kind commodities for non-emergency programs is approximately twice as high as the cost to program them for emergency programs. For the same price, shifting the commodities used for non-emergency programs over to emergency programs would allow USAID to potentially purchase more commodities and increase the number of people receiving U.S. food assistance, while maximizing efficiency and effectiveness of food assistance programming.

*Proposal:* Directly authorize the provision of assistance to eligible organizations for non-emergency programs, while exempting non-emergency programs from the 202(e) funding cap and removing the directive to provide a minimum level of U.S. in-kind commodities for such programs each year.

- USAID would be authorized to provide assistance directly to partners that is not subject to the 202(e) cap and would not be required to provide a minimum of 1,875,000 metric tons each fiscal year for non-emergency programming. The requirement to spend not less than \$365 million on non-emergency programming would remain.

*Simplify Overly Burdensome Accounting Requirements*

Current law imposes a rigid and complicated accounting structure on Food for Peace Act food assistance, which costs the Agency time and resources that could be better spent on programming. The law also requires the same of our partners, often requiring them to invest in expensive, custom financial tracking software to comply.

*Proposal:* Eliminate cost categories for Title II, making the authority similar to the International Disaster Assistance (IDA) and Development Assistance (DA) authorities in the Foreign Assistance Act, which do not specify separate cost categories.

- USAID would rely on the “necessary expense doctrine” as it does when programming IDA and DA funding, where a specific appropriation can be used to pay any associated expense, provided that it is necessary or incident to the achievement of the underlying objectives of the appropriation; not prohibited by law; and not otherwise provided for (i.e., not within the scope of some other appropriation).
- Include a floor of approximately 30 percent (based on prior year average) of Title II funding to be spent on U.S. in-kind commodities for emergency programming.
- This change would reduce barriers to entry for new and local partners who are interested in programming Title II assistance.

*Consolidate Food Assistance Reporting Requirements*

Current law requires a report on international food assistance provided through the Food for Peace Act and another report on international food assistance provided

through the Foreign Assistance Act. Each of these reports paints an incomplete picture of U.S. food assistance programs, so USAID is proposing to consolidate them into a single report.

*Proposal:* Consolidate the Emergency Food Security Program report and the International Food Assistance Report into a single report covering the breadth of food assistance funded by both IDA and Title II.

- The single, consolidated report would include all the information currently captured by the two individual reports, creating a more holistic view of USAID's food assistance programming while still providing the same level of granular detail.
- Consolidating the two reports would also save 160 staff hours and approximately \$6,000 taxpayer dollars per year.

*Streamline Monitoring and Evaluation of Programming*

While USAID often has multiple food assistance funding streams in a given country, current law only permits the Agency to use Food for Peace Act funding to monitor Food for Peace Act food assistance programs. BHA staff and partners carrying out these types of technical assistance activities must either deal with the administrative burden of allocating and accounting from different funding streams in the same country to track expenses or they must enter into separate awards to carry out these activities by funding stream. In either case the result is inefficient, leads to delays in carrying out activities when funding may not be readily available, and undermines the effectiveness of USAID food assistance programming.

*Proposal:* Broaden the authorizations for 202(h) and 207(f) to allow Title II funds authorized in these sections to support all BHA food assistance programs, regardless of funding stream.

- Congress has already provided the authority for Community Development Funds (CDF) to be broadly used for Title II purposes; however, there is no comparable authority to allow Title II to be used for CDF, IDA, or ESF purposes. This change would allow USAID to use Title II funds for food aid quality and for monitoring, oversight, and evaluation purposes across all food assistance programs.

We look forward to working with Congress ahead of the upcoming Farm Bill reauthorization to maximize the ability of the legislation to support USAID to more effectively respond to crises, build resilience among communities, and improve stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

*Question.* What are the current cost differentials between USAID's existing food aid modalities, including: (1) food aid provided in the form of "market-based assistance," such as biometrically verified electronic transfers and vouchers; (2) food aid commodities procured locally or regionally; and (3) food aid commodities procured and shipped from the United States?

What are the key drivers of those cost differentials?

*Answer.* The exact cost differentials between different food aid modalities vary widely based on the unique response context, including the type of commodities provided as food aid; the geographic location and its proximity to ports; and, to a certain extent, the efficiencies gained when USAID implementing partners are able to provide food aid at scale. In general, when sufficient quantity and quality of commodities are available in local markets, buying locally—whether through individual cash and voucher assistance or humanitarian organization's local procurement—often saves money over U.S.-based or other international procurement of the same or similar commodities.

However, there are many exceptions to these broad trends, including, for example, instances in which the local food prices remain very high compared to the international market price or the U.S., or instances where the types of food that cash or vouchers are intended to purchase are relatively more expensive than the non-perishable bulk staples usually provided in large in-kind food assistance programs.

For market-based food commodities, the key drivers of price differentials include A) local market conditions and prices, and B) financial service provider fees. The types of food that the cash and vouchers are intended to purchase will also factor into the per-unit price of cash or voucher assistance.

For in-kind food commodities, the key drivers of price differentials are A) the price of the food commodity in the country where it is procured, B) the price of transporting that food commodity to the country where it will be distributed, and C) the cost of warehousing and physically distributing the commodities in-country. Procurement and contracting economies of scale often factor heavily into these drivers; pro-

curing larger quantities of food at a single time will often result in lower per-unit prices.

Illustratively, in 2022 in Burkina Faso, USAID implementing partners could provide a 60 percent ration using food commodities procured and shipped from the U.S. for \$14.80 per person per month. An equivalent cash ration for a household to purchase food in local markets costs \$13.46 per person per month—a 9 percent savings. In South Sudan, USAID partners could provide a 50 percent ration for \$21.19 per person per month using food commodities procured and shipped from the U.S. or \$20.41 per person per month using regionally-procured commodities—a 4 percent savings over food commodities procured and shipped from the U.S. An equivalent cash ration for household food purchased in local markets in South Sudan cost \$17.80 per person per month—a 16 percent savings compared to food commodities procured and shipped from the U.S. It is worth noting that USAID intentionally programs U.S. purchased commodities where they represent a good value—cost differences between local purchase, regional procurement, and food commodities procured and shipped from the U.S. could be significantly higher in different contexts, demonstrating the value of utilizing flexible food assistance options.

Cost-efficiency is only one of several important factors that USAID uses to determine which type of food assistance is optimal for a given response context. Other components include the availability of food in markets, local market functionality, the operational feasibility of a specific modality, the specific objective that USAID is trying to achieve with the food assistance program, beneficiary preference, and any assessed protection risk factors associated with certain modalities of food assistance. USAID uses the USG Modality Decision Tool ([https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/USG\\_MDT\\_Final\\_2017.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/USG_MDT_Final_2017.pdf)) to guide this process.

*Question.* What is the current cost differential between U.S.-flagged and foreign-flagged ocean transport vessels carrying U.S. food aid commodities overseas?

*Answer.* USAID relies on two types of ships to transport U.S. food aid commodities overseas: liner vessels, which are appropriate for packaged food, and bulk vessels, which are appropriate for bulk grains or other commodities. Based on USAID's FY 2022 packaged and bulk procurements, U.S.-flagged Ocean liner vessel rates were approximately 25 percent higher than foreign-flagged ocean liner vessel rates. U.S.-flagged Ocean bulk vessel rates were approximately 48 percent higher than foreign-flagged ocean bulk vessel rates.

*Question.* To your knowledge, how many U.S.-flagged ocean transport vessels carrying U.S. food aid overseas remain in the U.S. commercial fleet? By whom are they owned?

*Answer.* Today, there are only four bulk vessels in the U.S.-flag fleet, three of which are owned by a single company, Liberty Maritime.

We understand that a primary limiting factor to increasing bulk vessel availability is the statutory 3-year waiting period for joining the cargo preference program. The Maritime Administration has also raised concerns about the impact of the waiting period on the supply of vessels in the fleet, including in a recent GAO report, "Actions Needed to Enhance Cargo Preference Oversight."

*Question.* In FY2021, how many Ocean Transportation Requests for Proposal (RFPs) were issued by USAID? FY 2022? FY 2023, to date?

Of those RFPs, how many received bids from more than one U.S.-flagged carrier? How many received no bids from U.S.-flagged carriers?

*Answer.* In accordance with the 1954 Cargo Preference statute, USAID performed the following Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) Food Aid freight procurements/shipments by Vessel Type: Bulker (Bulk) and Liner vessels.

Under the *Bulk Vessel category*, during the 3-year period FY 2021 through 2023, the following number of freight solicitations with total corresponding commodity volumes (per metric ton/MT) were recorded:

*Fiscal Year 2021*

- 19 Solicitations
- Total Tonnage: 1,295,020 MT
- U.S. Flag Carriers (P1) awarded: 399,210 MT
- Foreign Flag (P3) awarded: 895,810 MT
- Cargo Volumes that did not receive a U.S. Flag offer: 714,110 MT

\*\*\*\* Note, the U.S. flag carrier offers received/awarded: Liberty Maritime Corporation and United Ocean Services. Due to a lack of U.S. flag bulk capacity, when

a U.S. flag bulk offer is submitted it is awarded. No USAID bulk freight solicitation received more than one U.S. flag carrier offer.

*Fiscal Year 2022*

- 19 Solicitations
- Total Tonnage: 1,454,350 MT
- U.S. Flag Carriers (P1) awarded: 541,270 MT
- Foreign Flag (P3) awarded: 913,080 MT
- Cargo Volumes that did not receive a U.S. flag offer: 800,610 MT

\*\*\*\*Note, the U.S. flag carrier offers received/awarded: Liberty Maritime Corporation. Due to a lack of U.S. flag bulk capacity, when a U.S. flag bulk offer is submitted it is awarded. No USAID bulk freight solicitation received more than one U.S. flag carrier offer.

*Fiscal Year 2023*

- Released 6 Solicitations (YTD)
- Total Tonnage: 638,970 MT
- U.S. Flag Carriers (P1) awarded: 228,370 MT
- Foreign Flag (P3) awarded: 410,600 MT
- Cargo Volumes that did not receive a U.S. flag offer: 254,600 MT

\*\*\*\*Note, the U.S. flag carrier offers received/awarded: Liberty Maritime Corporation. Due to a lack of U.S. flag bulk capacity, when a U.S. flag bulk offer is submitted it is awarded. No USAID bulk freight solicitation received more than one U.S. flag carrier offer.

Under the *Liner Vessel category*, during the 3-year period FY 2021 through 2023 the following number of freight solicitations with total corresponding commodity volumes (per metric ton/MT) were recorded:

*Fiscal Year 2021*

- 19 Solicitations
- Total Tonnage: 438,156 MT
- U.S. Flag Carriers (P1) awarded: 250,638 MT
- Foreign Flag (P3) awarded: 187,517 MT
- Cargo Volumes that did not receive a U.S. flag offer: 1,915 MT

*Fiscal Year 2022*

- 20 Solicitations
- Total Tonnage: 371,746 MT
- U.S. Flag Carriers (P1) awarded: 197,712 MT
- Foreign Flag (P3) awarded: 174,034 MT
- Cargo Volumes that did not receive a U.S. flag offer: 0 MT

*Fiscal Year 2023*

- Released 11 Solicitations (YTD)
- Total Tonnage: 201,909 MT
- U.S. Flag Carriers (P1) awarded: 91,034 MT
- Foreign Flag (P3) awarded: 110,875 MT
- Cargo Volumes that did not receive a U.S. flag offer: 20,967 MT

\*\*\*\* Note, the U.S. flag carrier offers received/awarded: over the 3-year period Maersk Lines LTD. was the primary U.S. Liner carrier and often sole U.S. flag carrier. USAID receives limited U.S. Flag (P2) offers from APL/CMA and periodically from Hapag Lloyd. Liner offers are received sporadically from U.S. flag Break/Bulk carriers for limited destinations, those carriers are U.S. Ocean and Schuyler Lines. During FY 2023 (YTD), USAID only received offers from more than one U.S. flag carrier on 2 of the 11 freight solicitations issued.

*Question.* What is the average length of time required to program each of the existing U.S. food aid modalities, including: (1) food aid provided in the form of “market-based assistance,” such as biometrically verified electronic transfers and vouchers; (2) food aid commodities procured locally or regionally; and (3) food aid commodities procured in and shipped from the United States?

Answer. USAID does not currently track the speed of program implementation by modality across the entire food assistance portfolio of multiple countries. For mar-

ket-based assistance through electronic transfers and vouchers, the length of time required to program depends significantly on whether a humanitarian organization has pre-established contracts with service providers or vendors. With agreements in place with banks, mobile money providers, or other local financial institutions, cash transfers can potentially be distributed immediately after humanitarian organizations are able to establish a list of eligible recipients. Card-based cash/voucher operations will take longer, as will operations using paper vouchers. If agreements have to be developed with new service providers and/or voucher vendors, this may take several weeks before distributions can commence.

Food assistance commodities procured locally or regionally may be available within days of an emergency depending significantly on the emergency's proximity to the nearest prepositioning warehouse and whether any commodity shipments in transit can be re-routed. The World Food Program (WFP) maintains a stock of prepositioned food in regional warehouses and, in select countries, may preposition food in advance of anticipated shocks, which can be deployed in the early days of a response. New procurement still requires a tendering process that will typically take a couple of weeks, but availability for distribution varies widely depending on where the commodities are coming from.

A similar prepositioning dynamic applies to U.S. in-kind, prepositioned commodities. For new commodity procurement in the U.S., the time between issuing a procurement solicitation and its arrival in-country would average approximately 18–22 weeks.

*Question.* The recently reauthorized Global Food Security Act provides a framework to help food insecure populations move across the full continuum of U.S. food assistance—from emergency food aid to agriculture-led economic growth.

How is USAID linking these two initiatives? How and where is that reflected in the budget?

*Answer.* Strategically coordinating humanitarian and development assistance is crucial for building resilience and linking immediate needs with longer-term systems, growth, and sustainability. To do this, USAID is creating stronger linkages between our humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding initiatives through our long-term development work. We bring together experts from across these areas to work together to identify common problems, design responses; learn and adapt to increasing challenges. USAID highlights the necessity of coordinated investments across humanitarian and development assistance not only in the Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS), which is a requirement of the *Global Food Security Act*, but also in USAID's 2012 Policy on Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis and BHA's Strategic Framework for Early Recovery, Risk Reduction, and Resilience (ER4).

By transitioning food-insecure populations from emergency assistance that focuses on sustaining them during periods of acute shortage, to longer-term efforts that re-establishes livelihoods and builds resilience to future shocks, USAID reduces the likelihood of future humanitarian assistance needs. For more than a decade, USAID, led by the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (RFS) and the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), has worked across Bureaus to prioritize support and investment to strengthen resilience to recurrent and protracted crises and advance progress.

Since 2012, USAID has selected 15 Resilience Focus Countries that prioritized for support and investment to build resilience to recurrent and protracted crises and advance progress: Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. All of these countries are also GFSS target or aligned countries. Each country has a subnational resilience focus zone where USAID concentrates planning and programming across humanitarian, development, and peace resources.

For Resilience Focus Countries, RFS collaborates closely with BHA on transitioning affected populations from needing food assistance to providing food for themselves through restored livelihoods, so that resilience approaches and programming can then set the stage for long-term agriculture-led growth and more resilient livelihoods. This includes coordination on the selection and design of Resilience Food Security Activities (RFSAs), multiyear programs designed to address chronic food and nutrition insecurity. RFSAs often serve as a foundational layer of programming that facilitate multi-sectoral and market-based development investments by RFS, Missions, and other development actors that intentionally leverage and integrate with BHA programming to maximize long-term resilience outcomes.

For example, the Nawiri RFSAs in Kenya aim to sustainably reduce levels of persistent acute malnutrition in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) prone to cyclical food insecurity. In addition, in South Sudan, we are graduating farmers im-

pected by ongoing conflict and record flooding from multiyear BHA humanitarian emergency programming to resilient agriculture programming that strengthens market systems. We are integrating psychosocial support throughout this transition and coordinating with and through community groups to ensure local voices are front and center.

Over the last few years, approximately 25 percent (about \$250 million) of RFS's annual budget for Feed the Future has supported programming in the resilience focus zones of USAID's Resilience Focus countries. These resources are complemented by approximately \$300 million in resilience programming annually from BHA that are concentrated in the resilience focus zones of USAID's Resilience Focus countries.

USAID also addresses these issues at an organizational level. Last year, USAID published the Programming Considerations on Humanitarian Development Peace Coherence Note, after extensive consultation with partners, which provides a set of HDP principles and examples of HDP coherence in action. USAID is currently developing best practices and peer learning opportunities both internally and with partners to further HDP coherence.

*Question. Localization: Domestic Resource Mobilization (DRM):* With demands upon U.S. foreign assistance and other donor support on the rise, it is more important than ever that developing countries commit to raising and investing more of their own domestic resources to improve the health, education, and economic well-being of their people. Domestic resource mobilization (DMR) is vital to long-term self-reliance and accelerating country transitions from aid to broader forms of partnership with the United States.

What is USAID doing to build the capacity of partner countries to mobilize domestic resources in a manner that enhances self-reliance and reduces long-term dependence upon U.S. foreign assistance?

*Answer.* USAID provides technical assistance in domestic resource mobilization (DRM) in approximately 20 countries, both at the national and subnational level, and commits approximately \$20.5 million to such technical assistance annually. This assistance includes helping countries to improve legislation and level the playing field for citizens and domestic and foreign businesses. USAID's support also includes helping governments institute the processes and systems that ensure revenues are collected at low cost to the government and without undue burdens to the economy. This assistance is complemented by USAID's support to the management of public finances to ensure resources are allocated effectively, spent as planned, and generate value for money. USAID is also actively working to convene other donors and multilateral organizations to increase available support and promote policy coherence in this area, including as a founding member and co-chair of the Addis Tax Initiative.

*Question.* How is the agency connecting its DMR work with its localization efforts?

*Answer.* Effective DRM reform requires the buy-in and the political will of local actors, including host governments, civil society organizations, citizens, and businesses. USAID's DRM interventions are therefore co-designed with local counterparts and designed to reflect local demand and plans for reforms, as well as existing development objective agreements with host governments. USAID's DRM activities necessarily include components aimed at developing local capacity for DRM analysis and supporting the advocacy efforts of local civil society organizations. In its current local governance activity in Senegal, for example, USAID worked to involve citizens in over 40 communities in assessing what property was available to be taxed and in decisions about future spending. USAID noted increased revenue opportunities in communities where mayors committed to agreed upon spending priorities. For example, the commune of Bagadadji in Senegal, which had struggled to mobilize resources, was able to increase tax collections from \$221 to \$6000 (a multiple of 27, or 2700 percent) after USAID partnered with the mayor to engage residents in revenue and spending decisions. The commune leveraged these funds to build classrooms and complete bridge repairs. Where local capacity permits, USAID has deployed agreements to finance reforms undertaken by local actors.

*Question.* Do you have the necessary tools and resources for USAID's DRM work to be successful?

*Answer.* USAID continues to develop the skills of its staff to undertake DRM activities and to incorporate DRM interventions in support of other sectors. USAID provides a 4-day "Domestic Resource Mobilization" course, in which staff learn about the design and implementation of government revenue systems, national and subnational DRM trends and issues, as well as DRM programming choices and experiences. USAID also provides technical guides such as the Tax Policy Reform Primer.

These resources are yielding results at the country level. For example, with USAID support between 2014 and 2018, the government of the Philippines netted an extra \$6.2 billion in tax revenues and was able to raise infrastructure spending as percent of GDP by 1.6 percentage points. More recently, the Philippine Department of Budget Management repurposed funds of similar magnitude for the COVID-19 response.

*Question. Definitions & Indicators:* The definition of “local partner” under the Administration’s “localization” initiative has opened a lively debate. Chapter 303 of USAID’s Automated Directives System (ADS) references both “Local Entities” and “Locally Established Partners (LEPs),” which raises questions about just how “local” an organization needs to be in order to be counted toward the “localization” targets. The proposal to track an even looser indicator—i.e., a grantees’ SAM number—could further muddy the waters by allowing virtually any organization that says they are registered and headquartered locally to count towards the 25 percent localization target.

How will USAID make the determination that an entity is truly “local” in order to meet its targets?

Answer. USAID uses a multi-prong formula to determine whether a partner is “local” for purposes of the direct local funding indicator, for which USAID has a target of 25 percent. Specifically, we classify partners as “local” if:

1. The identified “country of incorporation” in the Federal System for Award Management (SAM) matches the “physical country” in SAM and the “place of performance—country” in USAID’s Global Acquisition and Assistance System (GLAAS); and
2. The physical country is classified as a developing country.

For obligations to partners that are not registered in SAM or who are utilizing a generic Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), a partner obligation is alternatively classified as “local” if:

1. The identified “vendor country” in GLAAS (pulled from USAID’s financial system, Phoenix) matches their “place of performance country” in GLAAS; and
2. The “vendor country” is classified as a developing country.

We selected these methodologies recognizing that the concept of what it means to be “local” is complex and often contextually nuanced. And that any effort to define it specifically will ultimately be imperfect. So we know that our indicator is a proxy for local partnership. Our goal was to come up with as good a proxy as possible, while minimizing the reporting burden on staff and local partners and using centrally reported, automated systems to the maximum extent possible. Using these systems also allows us to easily track progress compared to previous years, and on a real-time basis going forward.

We are committed to transparency around our Direct Local Funding data. Because there are a number of ways to measure funding to local actors, it’s important to be clear about what we’re counting. So when we release our progress report, we will also be publishing our complete dataset that codes awards as local, regional, and not local in order to enable independent analysis of the Agency’s Direct Local Funding data.

*Question. Transparency:* How does USAID plan to publicly share data on the objectives and progress toward meeting Administrator Power’s localization goals?

Answer. USAID uses two targets to track our progress on localization. First, by FY 2025, USAID will channel a quarter of its funding directly to local partners and second, by 2030, at least half of USAID programs will enable local actors to exercise leadership over priority setting, activity design, implementation, and defining and measuring results.

The first localization progress report, Moving toward a Model of Locally Led Development: Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Localization Progress Report ([https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/FY\\_2022\\_Localization\\_Progress\\_Report\\_June-12-23\\_vFINAL\\_1.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/FY_2022_Localization_Progress_Report_June-12-23_vFINAL_1.pdf)), was released on June 12, 2023. It documents USAID’s recent progress toward these goals and outlines the efforts we are making, as an Agency, to further these objectives. In issuing this progress report, USAID is holding itself accountable for implementing its commitment to a model of more inclusive, locally led development and humanitarian assistance.

The report highlights initial signs of progress. Notably, in FY 2022, direct funding to local partners—organizations, firms, and individuals based in the countries in which we work—reached nearly \$1.6 billion, or 10.2 percent of attributable obligations. This is the highest level and percent of direct local funding in at least a decade, and, in dollar terms, a 66 percent increase from last year. We also provided

\$199 million in government-to-government assistance and another \$57 million to partners working regionally. The report explores these data in more detail by sector, Bureau, region, and country. To be maximally transparent, we also published, alongside the report, the underlying data (<https://www.usaid.gov/localization/measurement>) for the analysis presented (with partner names redacted, as necessary, in alignment with redactions implemented in other public datasets).

The Progress Report also outlines the new indicator USAID will use to track progress on the equally important goal of shifting power and enabling more local leadership of USAID-funded programming. We will report initial data for this indicator in our FY 2023 localization report.

*Question.* Is USAID planning to make country-level data publicly available on both its 25 percent and its 50 percent indicators? If not, why not?

Answer. USAID released its first progress report on localization on June 12, 2023 “Moving Toward a Model of Locally Led Development: FY 2022 Localization Progress Report ([https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/FY\\_2022\\_Localization\\_Progress\\_Report-June-12-23\\_vFINAL\\_1.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/FY_2022_Localization_Progress_Report-June-12-23_vFINAL_1.pdf)).”

The report includes disaggregated country-level data on FY22 direct funding to local partners, for which the agency has a target of reaching 25 percent by 2025. Alongside the report, we also published our complete dataset (<https://www.usaid.gov/localization/measurement>) that underlies the analysis. We will first report data on the new Locally Led Programs indicator, for which USAID’s target is 50 percent by 2030, in the FY23 progress report.

*Question. Foreign Aid Transparency:* When, if ever, will USAID make available information on contractors and subgrantees on the foreign assistance dashboard, [www.foreignassistance.gov](http://www.foreignassistance.gov)?

Answer. *ForeignAssistance.gov* publishes contractors under the field “implementing partners.” This information can be found in the Data Query as well as on the “By Country” and “By Agency” pages. *ForeignAssistance.gov* does not publish subgrantees. There are currently no plans to make subgrantees available as that data is maintained by the prime recipients.

*Question.* How does USAID track and report information on Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements (NICRA)?

Answer. USAID’s Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreements are maintained in contract files in our Agency Secure Image and Storage Tracking (ASIST) System. Implementing partners with NICRAs are required to undergo annual audits to ensure that they fully comply with U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and applicable Cost Accounting Standards (CAS). The indirect cost rates within NICRAs are reviewed and renegotiated regularly, based on annual audits, to reflect actual costs incurred in previous accounting periods and ensure rates moving forward continue to reflect estimated future indirect costs. Annually, NICRAs are updated and related documents are maintained in the respective contract files in the ASIST System. USAID does not report on NICRAs.

*Question.* What is the average NICRA rate for USAID’s implementing partners working in the humanitarian space, including for international organization, international non-governmental organizations, local non-governmental organization, and contractors? Please note that this response, if deemed procurement sensitive, may be shared in a Committee Confidential manner.

Answer. Organizations determine how they will recover their costs, either directly or indirectly, and may elect to use one or multiple indirect cost rates. These cost recovery decisions and the associated indirect cost rates are all captured in NICRAs. As a result of the variability, there is no direct comparability of indirect cost rates between organizations and relatedly no average NICRA rate for USAID’s implementing partners. The indirect cost rates within NICRAs must be considered within the context of their associated bases of application. For example, a “lower” 5 percent rate applied to a base of application (e.g., total direct costs) of \$1 million will total \$50,000 whereas a “higher” rate of 35 percent applied to a smaller base of application (e.g., total direct labor costs) of \$140,000 will total \$49,000. The 5 percent and 35 percent rates are not comparable as they are applied to different bases of application and may not recover the same costs.

To compare costs between organizations, USAID evaluates the total proposed price to the USG for the same scope of work or program delivery. The proportion of an implementing partner’s budget that is direct vs. indirect reflects how the organization has elected to categorize and recover its costs; an organization with a higher proportion of indirect costs may still be less expensive overall. To ensure best value to the USG and good stewardship of taxpayer dollars, USAID’s contracting



and agreement officers ensure the correct usage of an organization's NICRA and consider what total benefits will be gained at what total cost when reviewing proposal budgets. Federal regulations governing cost accounting standards and NICRAs can be found in 48 CFR (FAR) part 30, 31.2, 42.707, and Chapter 99 for acquisition and in 2 CFR 200, in particular Subpart E, for assistance.

*Question.* USAID recently updated its Agency-Wide Learning Agenda to comply with the Evidence Act and to reflect the Administration's priorities.

How are you implementing this agenda, and how is your leadership team using lessons learned in your past programs and projects to adjust current and future programs?

*Answer.* USAID's Agency Learning Agenda, covering Fiscal Year 2022 to 2026, articulates USAID's priorities for learning and evidence to inform Agency decision-making. It advances learning and improvement in achieving priorities articulated in USAID's Policy Framework by working with operating units to channel resources towards Agency priority questions in their Performance Management Plans, evaluations, and learning efforts. USAID uses the Agency Learning Agenda to guide and link learning initiatives across USAID's partners, communities of practice, and working groups, and to coordinate sharing and use of available evidence. Most recently at the end of the first year of implementing the agenda, USAID hosted a month-long series of events under the theme, "Agency Learning and Evidence Month," to champion the use of evidence in programming and elevate evidence-building and use as a priority for the Agency. Throughout the month of April, USAID staff participated in over 35 events, with 19 sessions open to the public, tied to each of the nine Agency Learning Agenda questions, reaching more than 2,459 unique attendees from 115 countries and over 150 organizations.

USAID evaluations and research fill knowledge gaps prioritized by the nine Agency Learning Agenda questions, and lessons are shared across USAID in a variety of ways for staff to use in adjusting current and future programs. Lessons learned are used by Agency leaders to inform budget, policy, and management decisions, and by program managers to adjust the way in which projects deliver assistance for the greatest impact. For example, evidence of the efficacy of different types of mosquito netting used to prevent malaria allows project managers to fund distribution of the most effective equipment. Evidence generated through USAID evaluations are also used to inform and improve host country government policies and practices. For example, a recent evaluation of a USAID activity found that enhancing accountability and transparency can increase taxpayers' willingness to pay taxes, thereby improving local revenue collection. As a result, the host country increased revenues by changing the way they used projections and accounting information, and by updating financial procedures.

*Question.* Under the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA), USAID is required to make its evaluations public within 90 days of their completion.

How many evaluations has USAID made public by posting to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) in FY 2022 and FY 2023, to date?

Do you have plans to upgrade the DEC so that it is more user-friendly and conducive toward public access to its information?

*Answer.* USAID made 701 evaluations available to the public on the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) in fiscal year 2022 and has made 271 evaluations available to the public so far in fiscal year 2023, for a total of 972 evaluations from this time period. The evaluations are available for viewing through the DEC website at <https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/content/search.aspx>.

USAID is planning to replace the DEC to make it more user-friendly and conducive toward public access to its information through the Consolidated Digital Repository (CDR) project. The CDR will consolidate both DEC and the Development Data Library (DDL). The project is expected to kick off in FY 2024 Q1 with a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) implemented to replace the DEC in FY 2024 Q4.

*Question. Energy:* You stated in your hearing that: "We support...natural gas programming in instances where it can create energy access while not delaying plans toward clean energy because again the collective carbon emissions even from developing countries, we are all part of the solution when it comes to mitigation."

Please provide a list and description of all natural gas projects that USAID has supported or is supporting now since January 1, 2022.

*Answer.* Please see the table below.

Operating Unit	Activity Name	TEC (million)/ %CI	End Year	USAID Activity Description	Gas Component Description
<b>AFRICA</b>					
Power Africa	Project Preparation Grants (USTDA)	\$4.73	2022  follow-on to Dec. 2023 expected	Piloting of innovative U.S. technologies in the African marketplace. Proposed projects will support a variety of generation and energy access projects, ranging from gas-fired power, small hydropower, wind, solar, energy storage, transmission, and distribution.	N/A
Power Africa	DFC Power Africa Deal Teams	\$2.00	2023	Finance services to support the sourcing, review, execution and monitoring of DFC financing and insurance transactions, specifically, the creation of deal teams composed of finance, legal, environmental policy, and project monitoring experts.	DFC's planned \$217 million loan to finance an 87 megawatt combined cycle (LNG/LPG) thermal power plant and associated fuel and transmission infrastructure in Freetown, Sierra Leone will reach financial close in Q3 FY 2022.
Power Africa	West Africa Energy	\$73.85	2023	Expand the supply of and access to affordable and reliable	WAEP is helping partners convert their existing diesel, heavy

	Program (WAEP)			grid-connected electricity services in West Africa. Provide technical assistance, capacity building to power utilities and generation entities, and transaction support to achieve Power Africa's objectives in the West Africa region.	fuel oil and coal plants to run on natural gas in the short term as they work to introduce more renewables into their generation mix in the medium term. The program will continue to fund these activities into the future with non-RE earmarked funds. Power Africa provided technical assistance for the Tobene 115 MW Gas-to-Power Project. Support included analysis that provided a comprehensive overview of the sector and identified the factors that could impact the Tobene project, which include timing of gas supply, pricing, sourcing, and potential demand from other plants.
Power Africa	Southern Africa Energy Program (SAEP)	\$70.00	2023	Increase investment in electricity supply and access in Southern Africa by strengthening the regional enabling environment and facilitating transactions. This includes prior year technical assistance towards a regional strategy for natural gas, support to individual gas transactions, and coal-based methane projects in Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique and South Africa. SAEP is supporting South	From 2017 to 2021 Power Africa provided a transaction advisor to bring the Central de Termica Temane (CTT) Project, a 450 megawatt (MW) gas fired combined cycle power plant located next to the Temane & Inhassoro gas field in Mozambique, to financial close.  SAEP will be engaged in transitioning South Africa's energy sector from coal to clean energy and fuels under the JETP initiative. While

				Africa's transition from heavy coal reliance to renewable energy under the Just Energy Transition Partnership, a multinational effort announced at COP 26.	negotiations over assistance specifics are on-going, it is expected that SAEF will be called upon to help develop and/or implement strategies for repurposing existing coal plants and supply chains towards more sustainable and climate friendly uses. There is the possibility that a minority of such support may be considered a gas engagement.
Power Africa	Nigeria Power Sector Program (NPSP)	\$109.26	2023	Increase private and public investment in the energy sector, including on and off-grid, including off-grid business and consumer electricity connections primarily through the off-grid solar market. Improve the enabling environment for private sector participation in the power sector; and improved liquidity. Under this activity, the Nigeria Gas Flare Commercialization Program seeks to mitigate gas flaring from the petroleum industry, and utilize the captured gas for gas-to-power and industrial uses. Increased grid-based electricity will reduce usage of diesel generators.	NPSP is engaged in transitioning gas and hydroelectric generation assets to the private sector to provide for efficiency gains, which will help reduce GHG (CO2 and CH4) emissions per unit of generated output vs. current operations by government owned- entity. USG engagement in Nigeria's gas sector supports our development missions and allows us to address environmental and corruption concerns vs other bilateral donors. This assistance will continue to the extent feasible given the availability of future funding.

Power Africa	East Africa Energy Program (EAEP)	\$65.00	2023	EAEP works to optimize power supply, increase grid-based power connections, strengthen utilities and other power sector entities, and increase regional power trade. The program covers nine countries in the Eastern Africa region and provides technical assistance, transactions advisory services, capacity building and investment promotion to utilities and power generators.	The program is providing ongoing support to governments and IPPs to develop frameworks and strategies for fuel substitution of existing diesel and heavy-fuel-oil based generation facilities to natural gas in order to reduce GHG emissions.
Central Africa Regional	Pay Go Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) Program in the Congo	\$0.51	2023	The goal of this activity is to reduce deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions by replacing charcoal used for cooking with liquid petroleum gas (LPG).	This program will continue to seek reductions in black carbon, deforestation, and unhealthy cooking practices by substituting natural gas for charcoal. This program uses Sustainable Landscapes funding. USAID will assess the effectiveness of LPG in forestry programs in the future.
Zambia	Alternatives to Charcoal	\$25.00	2026	The USAID Alternatives to Charcoal (A2C) Activity works to reduce dependence on charcoal for household energy in Zambia and catalyze the increased use of low emission alternative technologies and fuels (ATFs) through innovation and increased private sector	This program will continue to seek reductions in black carbon, deforestation, and unhealthy cooking practices by looking at alternatives to charcoal, including LPG. This program uses Sustainable Landscapes funding. USAID will assess the effectiveness

				engagement (PSE) to reduce charcoal production-driven deforestation and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.	of LPG in forestry programs in the future.
<b>ASIA</b>					
Central Asia	Power the Future	\$28.00	2022	Accelerating Central Asian countries' transition to clean and renewable energy, diversifying energy sources, and getting clean power to USAID supported competitive regional power markets.	Conducted energy audits at combined heat and power facilities and recommended energy efficiency improvements.
Central Asia	Power Central Asia	\$39.00	2025	Strengthen the capacity of energy sector regulatory authorities to liberalize national energy markets, develop clean and renewable energy, and establish a regional power market.	Anticipated to support modeling of gas supply infrastructure to facilitate gas ramping and flexibility auctions. Ensuring grid flexibility is critical to the renewables integration focus of the activity and less than \$250,000.
Vietnam	V-LEEP II	\$36.00	2025	Will help Vietnam continue its transition to a clean, secure and market-based energy sector by increasing the deployment of advanced energy systems, improving energy sector performance, and expanding competition in the energy sector.	Strengthen the legal framework and increase the market competition for LNG trading, including setting up the standards for LNG terminals, building capacity for the policy makers and market regulators (including methane management requirements and safety specifications). V-LEEP II

					also supports increased system flexibility through LNG-to-power to maximize renewable integration and reduce coal in the power mix. V-LEEP II is currently working on a plan to wrap-up its support for gas in such a way that will maintain a positive relationship with GOV counterparts. VLEEP II will steeply curtail carbon-intensive programming by the end of 2022 and totally phase-out by the end of 2024.
The Philippines	Energy Secure Philippines	\$33.90	2025	Improve performance of energy utilities, deploy advanced energy systems, and enhance competition in the energy sector.	Gas-specific work advancing retail competition concluded in 2022.
Regional Dev. Mission Asia	U.S.-Asia Gas Partnership	\$1.50	2022	A public-private partnership involving government and industry representatives from the U.S. and Indo-Pacific countries to stimulate gas demand growth by optimizing gas network infrastructure development and developing domestic gas markets in Asia.	N/A
Indonesia	Sustainable Energy for Indonesia's	\$38.77	2026	Focus on: 1) Deployment of advanced energy, 2)	SINAR's small gas-to-power component using

	Advancing Resilience (SINAR)			Performance of energy utilities, 3) Best practices in procurement, and 4) Institutional framework and capacity for energy sector transformation.	FY 2018 funding phased-out in 2022.
<b>EUROPE AND EURASIA</b>					
Bosnia and Herzegovina	USAID Energy Policy Activity	\$7.50	2024	Improve coordination, management, and transparency at all levels of BiH's regulatory framework, simplify the energy policy environment, and provide targeted technical assistance.	Improving the efficiency of gas sector oversight operations. Overall project goal of EU integration and energy security will support coal phase-out and RE uptake.
Georgia	Securing Georgia's Energy Future	\$15.70	2026	Enhance Georgia's energy security by increasing domestic power production, developing a modern, competitive electricity market to incentivize private investment, improving local energy system planning capacity, improving critical infrastructure cybersecurity, and advancing regional energy trade.	Assisting Georgia in establishing market rules that encourage alternate natural gas supply. This work complements renewables programming and is directly tied to efforts to increase renewable penetration.
Moldova	Moldova Energy Transition Activity	\$1.75	2026	Address core vulnerabilities of Moldova's energy sector (1) physical and market integration, aligned with the EU's Third Energy Package; (2) increased domestic power generation; and	Support EU market integration and diversification away from Gazprom.



				(3) improved natural gas supply diversification.	
Ukraine	Energy Security Project	\$244.00	2023	Establishing competitive energy markets in electricity, gas, and district heating; 2) improving Ukraine's energy policy and strategy; and 3) diversifying Ukraine's energy supply. ESP will improve the legal and regulatory frameworks to comply with European Union (EU) energy legislation. Since the beginning of Russian aggression most new funding has been for power sector equipment.	The activity supports adoption of EU gas market rules and support to diversify the region's gas supply away from Gazprom.
E&E Regional	U.S.-Europe Energy Bridge	\$94.00	2026	(1) building partner country capacity to participate in competitive energy markets and trade with central European markets; (2) facilitating investment to diversify regional energy supplies and upgrade critical infrastructure to improve reliability and security; and (3) empowering utilities, governments, telecommunications providers, regulators, and other critical infrastructure operators to prepare for and respond to threats, such as natural	The activity supports adoption of EU gas market rules and support to diversify the region's gas supply away from Gazprom.

				disasters and cyberattacks.	
<b>LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN</b>					
Haiti	USAID Reforestation Project	\$39.30	2022	Address environmental degradation and loss of tree cover in the north and northeast regions of Haiti by supporting community resilience and providing environmental services.	Technical assistance will be provided to convert the energy use of 15,000 street food vendors from charcoal/woodfuel to LPG.
<b>MIDDLE EAST</b>					
Jordan	Energy Sector Support Activity (ESSA)	\$37.10	2026	ESSA is designed to improve the financial and environmental sustainability of the energy sector in support of USAID's strategic objectives related to economic growth and economic competitiveness. ESSA has four sub-objectives: improved grid management and resiliency; strengthened regulations; improved energy services; and increased sector opportunities.	Over the course of the activity feasibility analysis for oil to gas conversions for industrial heat applications is expected, as well as market design/development and regulatory oversight of natural gas and downstream petroleum markets.

*Question.* Is your statement that USAID will only support natural gas programs if it does not delay plans toward clean energy the official U.S. policy of the Biden administration? If so, please provide us with documentation where that is laid out or otherwise stated.

*Answer.* It is Administration policy not to provide U.S. Government financing to unabated natural gas projects, consistent with Executive Order 14008 on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad. This policy has exceptions in rare cases when there is compelling national security, geostrategic, or development/energy access benefits and no viable lower carbon alternatives accomplish the same goals. This policy has informed USAID's program implementation.

*Question.* In USAID programming on energy, how do you weigh net emissions reductions versus the energy needs of a partner countries? To say it another way: if a country puts forward a request or proposal for working on natural gas with the United States because of its energy needs, but USAID finds that the project would not result in a net reduction of emissions, do you in most cases decide not to fund the project?

*Answer.* USAID seeks to support our partner countries' energy sector development objectives across energy security, economic development, and decarbonization goals. If a partner seeks assistance that would increase natural gas generation, we assess whether there are credible alternatives to supporting natural gas that would also meet our mutual objectives per U.S. Government guidance. In cases where we find no credible alternatives, and the country is of geostrategic interest to the United States or is conflict affected, a small island developing state, or eligible for International Development Association funding, we may elect to move forward with supporting the natural gas project under U.S. Government guidelines. Net emissions considerations are a factor, but not the only factor in making determinations.

*Question.* What is USAID’s definition of “clean energy”?

Answer. Clean energy programs may encompass a variety of climate mitigation activities and are fully inclusive of renewable energy technologies and their enabling environments. Clean energy programs reduce and/or avoid greenhouse gas (GHG) and other climate-warming emissions while increasing access to affordable, modern energy services, providing economic opportunity and energy independence, reducing extreme poverty, and/or promoting opportunities for U.S. businesses. Clean energy programs help countries achieve their national climate mitigation goals, and support developing countries to develop and implement low-emission development strategies that further partner countries’ domestic priorities and international commitments. Clean energy practices include, but are not limited to: decarbonization strategies; renewable energy; renewable energy technology supply chain resiliency; end-use efficiency and electrification; energy storage; grid modernization, low-carbon transportation and industry programs; green hydrogen, carbon capture and storage, and nuclear; GHG accounting and inventory systems; evaluating economic and development benefits of clean energy, enabling environment and energy sector reforms necessary to support sustainable investments and energy systems; waste to energy; enhanced transmission, distribution, and operating systems; and renewable energy generation grid integration. Per U.S. Government guidance, expenditures on oil and natural gas are only allowed in instances where they address the emissions intensity of existing equipment or infrastructure, such as carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) or work on short-lived climate pollutants.

*Question.* Of all current global emissions, what percentage come from Africa?

Answer. According to the most recent data available from Climate Watch, as of 2020, sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 7.6 percent of current global emissions. This calculation includes emissions from Land-use Change and Forestry and all other major emissions sectors and includes all major greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases).

*Question.* Of all current global emissions, what percentage come from Latin America?

Answer. According to the most recent data available from Climate Watch, as of 2020, the Latin America and Caribbean Region contributed 8.2 percent of the total global greenhouse gas emissions. This calculation includes emissions from Land-use Change and Forestry and all other major emissions sectors and includes all major greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases)

*Question.* Of all current global emissions, what percentage come from South and Central Asia, other than India?

Answer. USAID works in a number of countries across both South and Central Asia. Many of these countries are still working on energy security and have identified energy transition as a key priority of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). Many of the countries are members of the Global Methane Pledge and are working to limit greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from land-use and land-use change. Based on the most current estimates from Global Climate Watch (<https://www.climatewatchdata.org/>), there were 49.76 Gt of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions in 2019. GHG emissions for South and Central Asia where USAID works, excluding India, in the same year totaled 1.44 Gt of CO<sub>2</sub>e, as summarized in the table below. This would represent approximately 2.9 percent of global emissions.

Country	MtCO <sub>2</sub> e (2019 data)
Pakistan	439.49
Kazakhstan	271.68
Bangladesh	237.70
Uzbekistan	185.39
Turkmenistan	157.33
Nepal	48.37
Sri Lanka	37.90
Afghanistan	28.79
Tajikistan	17.38
Kyrgyzstan	13.64
Maldives	2.60
Bhutan	0.36

*Question.* Of all current global emissions, what percentage come from Southeast Asia?

*Answer.* USAID works in a number of countries in Southeast Asia. Many of these countries are still working on energy security and have identified energy transition as a key priority of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). Many of the countries are members of the Global Methane Pledge and are working to limit emissions from land-use and land-use change. Based on the most current estimates from Global Climate Watch (<https://www.climatewatchdata.org/>), there were 49.76 Gt of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions in 2019. GHG emissions for Southeast Asian countries where USAID works totaled 3.43 Gt of CO<sub>2</sub>e, as summarized in the table below. This would represent approximately 6.9 percent of global emissions.

Country	MtCO2e (2019 data)
Indonesia	1959.71
Vietnam	438.11
Thailand	437.18
Burma (Myanmar)	242.95
Philippines	236.79
Cambodia	71.77
Laos	39.42
Timor-Leste	6.38

*Question.* Are there any earmarks or other statutory requirements that prevent USAID from supporting programming related to natural gas and nuclear energy? If so, please list them out in full.

*Answer.* The Clean Energy Directive definition adopted by the Department of State and USAID prohibits the use of Clean Energy Directive funding for natural gas assistance programming. Nuclear energy support is allowed under the definition. Natural gas work that is supported with funding outside of the clean energy earmark must be approved under the Administration's international energy assistance guidance. It is Administration policy not to provide U.S. Government financing to unabated natural gas projects, consistent with Executive Order 14008 on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad. This policy has exceptions in rare cases when there are compelling national security, geostrategic, or development/energy access benefits and no viable lower carbon alternatives accomplish the same goals.

*Question. AFRICA: U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit:* The Biden administration committed \$55 billion in investments in Africa over the next 3 years during the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit (ALS), "working closely with Congress."

How is this \$55 billion investment reflected in the FY24 budget request?

*Answer.* The President announced \$55 billion for Africa at the second U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit in December 2022. This funding level consisted of funding from many U.S. Government agencies, including State and USAID, over three fiscal years (FY 2021 through FY 2023) for North and sub-Saharan Africa. The FY 2024 Request total was not included in the \$55 billion total announcement.

The FY24 budget request supports sustained U.S. commitment to Africa thru investments in sectoral areas such as Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG), climate, security, health care, youth, and education to address shared priorities with African nations. It also supports the new African Democratic and Political Transition Initiative (ADAPT) and Digital Transformation with Africa (DTA). The Request continues funding for Prosper Africa, Power Africa, and the Young Africa Leaders Initiative (YALI).

*Question.* I understand that the \$55 billion figure is largely made up of prior year funds. How will USAID message to African governments, who have high hopes for a large influx of new U.S. investment, that this commitment is actually just a continuation of regular programming?

*Answer.* The Vision Statement for the U.S.-Africa Partnership affirmed "commitment to reinforce long standing areas of cooperation and expand our partnership to

better meet the shared challenges and opportunities.” Sustained cooperation is a joint priority and we will continue to enhance existing partnerships in sectors such as health, agriculture, and education. The U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit also emphasized that this investment is not just a continuation of regular programming; we are shifting our approaches to reflect greater cooperation and advance shared goals across a number of sectors such as expanded trade and investment, climate adaptation and resilience, and digital transformation. Our support will also help countries address emerging issues through innovative approaches.

*Question.* The African Democratic and Political Transitions (ADAPT) program was announced during the ALS, to “support emerging democratic governments and civil society at critical moments.”

What criteria will be used to determine “critical moments”?

*Answer.* A signature initiative of the Administration, President Biden announced Digital Transformation with Africa (DTA) in December 2022. DTA—referred to last year by the colloquial placeholder “Digital Africa”—aims to expand digital access and literacy and strengthen digital enabling environments across the continent. DTA aims to facilitate over \$450 million in financing, private investment, and donor funding for Africa in line with the African Union’s Digital Transformation Strategy and the U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa. DTA will support increased economic opportunity and improved e-government service delivery by fostering an inclusive and resilient African digital ecosystem, led by African communities and built on an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet.

*Question.* How will ADAPT be managed and implemented to ensure funds can be released quickly in order to enable a timely response to opportunities in critical moments?

*Answer.* The National Security Council is currently leading interagency discussions on the management and implementation of ADAPT, which USAID is engaging in. The discussions have prioritized rapid availability of funds to maximize ADAPT’s responsiveness to the needs of fluid situations surrounding transition. USAID and the interagency plan to utilize all available mechanisms to ensure these goals are met.

*Question.* I understand that \$25 million of FY22 funds and \$25 million of FY23 funds will be combined with the \$25 million FY24 request to make up the initial \$75 million investment in ADAPT. Where was the \$50 million from FY22 and FY23 taken from to make it available for ADAPT?

*Answer.* The funding allocations for FY 2022 and FY 2023 are still being finalized, and additional funding will be sought from the FY 2024 and FY 2025 budgets, subject to the availability of funds.

*Question.* The FY24 request includes \$50 million for an initiative announced at ALS called Digital Transformation in Africa. This follows a FY23 \$20 million request for Digital Africa.

Can you please provide more information on the new program Digital Transformation in Africa?

*Answer.* A signature initiative of the Administration, President Biden announced Digital Transformation with Africa (DTA) in December 2022. DTA—referred to last year by the colloquial placeholder “Digital Africa”—aims to expand digital access and literacy and strengthen digital enabling environments across the continent. DTA aims to facilitate over \$450 million in financing, private investment, and donor funding for Africa in line with the African Union’s Digital Transformation Strategy and the U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa. DTA will support increased economic opportunity and improved e-government service delivery by fostering an inclusive and resilient African digital ecosystem, led by African communities and built on an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet.

*Question. Prosper Africa:* Prosper Africa brings together 17 U.S. Government departments and agencies to foster two-way trade and investment between the U.S. and Africa, with a secretariat led by USAID. The FY24 request includes \$100 million for Prosper Africa. This follows a \$100m FY23 request, \$77 million FY22 request and a \$75 million FY21 request.

What are the concrete accomplishments of Prosper Africa to date?

*Answer.* Prosper Africa established a continent-wide deal facilitation platform with a pipeline of nearly 500 deals valued at over \$25 billion; launched robust continental services, including networks of African suppliers and U.S. buyers, and a catalytic investment facility, which are expected to boost African exports and U.S. investment by \$2 billion in the next 5 years; and helped mobilize \$1.5 billion of invest-

ment in climate, health, and sustainable infrastructure via new partnerships between the U.S. pension community and African counterparts.

*Question.* What will an additional \$100 million investment help Prosper Africa accomplish?

*Answer.* Prosper Africa used dedicated funding through USAID to launch an innovative, continent-wide program with offices in North and sub-Saharan Africa to de-risk transactions, scale opportunities, and attract new firms to African markets. Prosper Africa is redoubling its efforts by planning to invest \$171 million that will increase U.S. investment in Africa and African exports to the U.S. by \$2 billion in the next 5 years—a conservative estimate. The additional \$100 million in FY 2024 funds will enable Prosper Africa to dramatically increase the number of supported transactions, broaden its geographic coverage, bolster the activities and staff capacity of other U.S. Government agencies, and create more opportunities to leverage private capital. In Kenya alone, \$5.3 million in Prosper Africa funds have leveraged more than \$265 million to date—a 50:1 return.

*Question. Somalia:* The largest request for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance funding in Sub-Saharan Africa for FY24 is for Somalia (\$33 million), a 73.7 percent increase over the FY23 request. The security environment in Somalia, lack of political will for democratic reforms, an inability to hold one-person-one-vote elections for 50 years and limited freedom of movement of Somali and implementing partners makes democracy, human rights and governance programs difficult to implement and expensive.

*Question.* What adjustments in strategy, as compared to the strategy pursued from 2017–2022, will USAID pursue to ensure that investments of significant democracy, human rights and governance funds in Somalia achieve results?

*Answer.* In 2021, USAID developed a new country development cooperation strategy (CDCS) to guide its development and humanitarian investments in Somalia. The strategy focuses on two objectives: (1) preventing and countering violent extremism; and (2) strengthening capacity of individuals and households to prepare for and recover from crises such as drought and reduce the humanitarian caseload over time. USAID democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) programs were adapted to contribute to both objectives.

To advance these goals, USAID works to overcome the historical marginalization that al-Shabaab manipulates to build support and that makes households and communities more vulnerable to future climatic shocks. To do this USAID seeks to bolster governance processes that are more inclusive, particularly among traditionally marginalized groups such as women and members of minority clans. USAID will use DRG funds to launch a new local governance program in summer 2023 that will work with local governments and citizens to make governance processes more inclusive, effective, legitimate, and responsive to citizen needs. Additionally, USAID will support these local governments to expand or improve the delivery of basic services to marginalized communities.

Al-Shabaab uses real and perceived grievances among clans to gain support, playing on feelings of marginalization and inequitable access to power and resources. To mitigate this, USAID puts a heavy emphasis on community-level reconciliation. In Somalia, USAID is using DRG funds for stabilization programming and a new reconciliation activity that works to build trust between communities.

USAID is also using DRG funding to advocate for the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) to advance technical reforms, develop governance institutions, and advance national and state level reconciliation. The 2-year election impasse from 2020–22 highlighted the fundamental lack of trust between Federal Government and federal member states.

Finally, in response to the unprecedented community uprisings against al-Shabaab that began in June 2022, USAID has taken on a leadership role in supporting the FGS efforts to establish and maintain control of newly liberated communities, pivoting USAID's strategy to support this opportunity. To stabilize these newly liberated areas, USAID support helps establish initial governance structures, supports reconciliation, works to increase communication between the local government and community members in those villages most affected by current security operations, and rehabilitates damaged community infrastructure.

*Question.* Does the conduct of one-person-one-vote elections continue to be the focus of USAID's democracy and governance programs in Somalia? If yes, why. If no, what is the revised approach?

*Answer.* In 2022, USAID organized a series of workshops with the UN and donors to reflect on the 2020–2021 electoral process. The UN and donors agreed that road-

blocks to a more inclusive, transparent, and timely electoral process were political in nature. Looking forward to the 2026 electoral cycle, all agreed that securing political agreement from a more inclusive range of stakeholders on the electoral model must precede further direct donor investments. However, together with other donors, USAID is promoting political reconciliation between elites and seeking broad-based consensus on a realistic and feasible electoral model in line with prevailing security conditions.

These efforts have already re-established dialogue between the federal and state governments and begun to yield agreements on power sharing. These agreements will lay the foundation for finalizing the constitution and moving Somalia towards universal suffrage elections in the future. If the agreed-upon electoral model for 2026 falls short of universal suffrage, USAID is committed to advocating for a model that is maximally inclusive and representative and serves as the building block towards future one-person-one-vote elections. In coordination with State, USAID will continue to encourage regular and constructive dialogue between the Federal Government and member states on the 2026 electoral cycle and is standing by to support a maximally inclusive and representative process once agreement is reached. Somalia's President has made reconciliation one of his priorities and thus far has focused his administration on building political consensus on issues that have previously been unresolved such as elections, the constitution, and power and resource sharing between the Federal Government and federal member states.

*Question.* Given the Biden administration's focus on counter-terrorism efforts in Somalia, how is USAID supporting legitimate state institutions to provide services and project control over territory liberated from al-Shabaab?

Answer. Since August 2022, security operations against al-Shabaab have liberated more than 100 towns and villages. In response, USAID has taken a leadership role in supporting the Federal Government of Somalia's (FGS) efforts to establish and maintain control of newly liberated communities, pivoting USAID's strategy to support this opportunity. Pivoting Mission funds and utilizing an additional \$5 million from USAID's Complex Crisis Fund, USAID surged stabilization support into these areas and is currently supporting 54 interventions. These interventions have supported interim administrations to conduct outreach to liberated communities, partnered with local governments to repair community infrastructure damaged by al-Shabaab, and supported the government to reconcile long-held clan grievances.

Recognizing that the development of legitimate governance institutions that are capable of providing services requires a long-term approach, USAID is working to expand education, health, economic growth, local governance, and resilience programming to support these newly liberated areas.

As part of our ongoing efforts, USAID will continue to promote greater political, social, and economic integration between conflicting groups, including those from historically marginalized communities, by addressing unresolved grievances that drive communities towards al-Shabaab. We will also leverage our programs focused on strengthening Somalia's resilience to recurring shocks—whether climate, economic or political, by aimings to address real and perceived economic injustices that also contribute to violent extremism in the country.

*Question. Nigeria:* The FY24 request for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance funding for Nigeria (\$25.5 million) is a 56.4 percent increase over the FY23 request.

Does USAID regard support to elections in Nigeria as a cyclical or continuous need?

Answer. USAID regards support to elections in Nigeria as a continuous need. USAID's support is for the full spectrum of the elections process, at state and national levels, in support of Nigeria's democratic consolidation. USAID's elections assistance is designed to build systems and processes over the long term so that the outcome is viewed as free and fair; educate the public on their civic rights to vote; help all Nigerians—including women—see a future running for office; give voice to youth to feel seen and heard; and assist people with disabilities to assert their rights under the law. This work requires continuous engagement to achieve results, which is why USAID partners with Nigerian Government agencies and civil society on these issues to increase citizen political participation and promote electoral reforms.

*Question.* What is the rationale for such a significant increase in the Democracy, Human Rights and Governance budget for Nigeria, given that national elections (approaching elections are typically the rationale for an increased budget) were just held within the last 2 months?



Answer. USAID's Development Assistance request of \$24.5 million in DRG funding for FY 2024 reflects a broader request across USAID Missions in Africa for increased funding for a range of DRG programming. Election support is one component of a diverse DRG portfolio in Nigeria. DRG activities also enhance civic voice and accountability tools, increase accountability and effectiveness of public institutions, and help prevent conflict. Increasing citizen political participation and reforming electoral processes is an important, but not the sole, element of USAID/Nigeria's continuous, multi-faceted effort to strengthen accountable, inclusive, and responsive governance. Nigeria, Africa's most populous country and largest democracy, faces immense democratic governance and security challenges. Working on issues across 36 states encompassing approximately 90 million registered voters and characterized by a growing youth population requires a significant increase in funding to address critical needs such as anti-corruption efforts, drivers of insecurity, and countering ISIS-WA influence.

*Question. Cameroon:* On January 1, 2021, the Senate passed unanimously S.Res.684, regarding the conflict in Anglophone Cameroon, calling for U.S. Government departments and agencies to undertake several actions.

How has the Agency pressed the Government of Cameroon over the past 2 years to provide unfettered humanitarian access to vulnerable populations in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon?

Answer. Thank you for your concern. USAID remains deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation in Cameroon's Northwest and Southwest regions and we continue to work with international and local partners to provide life-saving assistance to vulnerable populations, despite the challenges posed by ongoing violence. We continue to collaborate closely with our Ambassador in Yaoundé and other State Department colleagues to press for progress in addressing access constraints and bureaucratic impediments to aid delivery with the Government of Cameroon, such as at the recent African Leaders Summit that President Biden hosted in December 2022. Furthermore, we have engaged with the UN, other donors, and appropriate local authorities on efforts that support principled humanitarian response and access by humanitarian actors, such as improving humanitarian civilian-military coordination. USAID staff is happy to brief you further on this.

*Question.* Since 2021, how has USAID supported credible efforts to address the root causes of the conflict and to achieve sustainable peace and reconciliation in the Northwest and Southwest regions?

Answer. USAID supports diplomatic efforts deployed by the Department of State and other international actors to reach a peaceful resolution between the Government of Cameroon and Anglophone separatists in the northwest and southwest regions of the country.

USAID is addressing immediate humanitarian needs in this region through assistance focused on emergency food, health, and other lifesaving support to vulnerable populations, such as internally displaced persons.

USAID's new PARC-Cameroun activity, awarded in March 2022, works in the far north of the country to strengthen the collective performance of CSOs to address the underlying causes of insecurity and conflict. PARC-Cameroun does this by advocating for citizen rights and service provision, addressing the marginalization of women and youth, and collectively responding to counter the restricted civic space for, and stigmatization of, northern communities.

*Question.* In the past 2 years, in what ways has the Agency supported humanitarian and development programming in Cameroon?

Answer. In the past 2 years, USAID has increased its work in Cameroon through a number of new activities that address the development challenges Cameroon faces, as well as responding to humanitarian needs.

Our new activities include PARC-Cameroun in the far north, which strengthens the collective performance of civil society organizations (CSOs) to advocate for citizen rights and service provision, address the marginalization of women and youth, and collectively respond to counter the restricted civic space for, and stigmatization of, northern communities.

USAID has supported Cameroon's development of its health sector as a Global Health Security Agenda Intensive Support country. Cameroon received funding to build its capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to emerging infectious disease threats, which has helped the country build systems to respond to the COVID 19 pandemic and prepare to respond to Marburg if the recent outbreak of Marburg in Equatorial Guinea spills over to Cameroon. Additionally, USAID continues to implement robust PMI and PEPFAR activities in Cameroon, reaching insecure areas throughout the country.

Cameroon is supported by the USAID/West Africa regional platform to build the next generation of Cameroonian leaders and boost business opportunities through the West Africa Trade Hub, Young African Leaders Initiative, and Power Africa Off-Grid programs. Over the last 2 years, USAID continued to provide humanitarian assistance to Cameroon as a result of conflict and insecurity in the Anglophone region, the impact of the Lake Chad Basin crisis in the Far North, and CAR refugees in eastern Cameroon. In FY 2022, BHA increased its funding in Cameroon from almost \$45 million to more than \$65 million, scaling up multi-sectoral emergency and livelihood support for internally-displaced and conflict-affected households, food and nutrition assistance to refugees, and bolstering humanitarian logistics, analysis, and coordination efforts across the country. Cameroon is also susceptible to the effects of flooding during the rainy season, which last year had devastating impacts in the Far North of Cameroon. In response, a Declaration of Humanitarian Need was issued, and USAID's partners provided food aid, shelter, and clean water and sanitation services for flood-affected communities.

*Question.* In your role as the head of USAID, what actions have you taken to ensure the crisis in the Anglophone regions is discussed in international fora?

Answer. USAID is engaged with international and local partners to alleviate the effect of the crisis on vulnerable populations by providing assistance to those who are internally displaced. Our staff in Cameroon regularly work with international partners including UN agencies, other bilateral missions, and NGOs to advocate for access to the areas to deliver both development and humanitarian assistance in the Northwest and Southwest Anglophone regions. These discussions are elevated with United Nations leadership in New York and Geneva as part of our regular exchanges through key leaders of the Agency, as well as the wider U.S. Government.

*Question.* How does the FY24 Budget request respond to the key U.S. Government actions the Senate outlined in S.Res.684?

Answer. The FY 2024 Budget request maintaining our development assistance levels and increasing our health programming in Cameroon. USAID's efforts to start new activities that respond to the underlying drivers of conflict in Cameroon are supported by a consistent budget request from FY 2021 through FY 2024. Increasing the Health budget request allows USAID's reach to expand, including areas affected by conflict across Cameroon, and providing more necessary basic health services to people experiencing conflict.

Additionally, USAID continues to provide humanitarian assistance to Cameroon as a result of conflict and insecurity in the Anglophone region, the impact of the Lake Chad Basin crisis in the Far North, and CAR refugees in eastern Cameroon. In FY 2022, BHA increased its funding in Cameroon from almost \$45 million to more than \$65 million, scaling up multi-sectoral emergency and livelihood support.

*Question. South Sudan:* On December 9, 2021, the Senate passed S.Res.380, reiterating U.S. support for the South Sudanese people and calling for a review of our policy toward South Sudan.

Since 2021, how have you ensured that U.S. assistance adheres to the principle of "Do No Harm" by pausing any funding, including humanitarian aid, found to enrich any party of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) or active spoilers to the agreement?

Answer. USAID takes seriously its role as a steward of the resources of the American people. USAID places the highest priority on ensuring our humanitarian assistance adheres to Do No Harm Principles and effectively reaches millions of people in need, including in South Sudan where approximately 7.8 million people (roughly 70 percent of the population) are on the brink of starvation.

Within our humanitarian assistance programs, we require our partners to have proper safeguards and risk mitigation systems in place to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches those who need it most. For example, we require partners to complete a comprehensive pre-award risk assessment and have their own robust safety and security measures in place, as well as to report any irregularities immediately. USAID conducts continuous monitoring of our programs through both direct monitoring and through use of a third-party monitor of our humanitarian assistance programming. Furthermore, we maintain consistent communication and oversight with our partners in an effort to ensure U.S.-funded humanitarian assistance reaches intended beneficiaries, and our programs remain flexible should we need to modify methods or activities.

*Question.* How have you applied your leadership of the Agency to ensure that all bureaus cooperate and work to support a comprehensive review of USAID-administered assistance to South Sudan?

Answer. We have worked with stakeholders across the interagency and within relevant bureaus at USAID—both in Washington and in South Sudan—to ensure that assistance is aligned with U.S. strategic interests and goals and that there is sound stewardship of taxpayer funds. USAID participated in an Embassy-wide policy and program review and conducted a mid-point review of its strategy for South Sudan. We are happy to brief the committee further.

Furthermore, USAID has enhanced its due diligence for new awards. In addition, USAID awards in South Sudan, as in other parts of the world, continue to include substantial compliance provisions, both required by law and enhanced through USAID-specific policies.

*Question.* What steps have you taken to complete the comprehensive review of United States assistance programs to South Sudan, started in 2018 to “ensure our assistance does not contribute to or prolong the conflict, or facilitate predatory or corrupt behavior,” and have its findings publicized?

Answer. As part of the National Security Council-led review of U.S. assistance programs in South Sudan, USAID undertook an analysis of U.S. Government assistance flows to the private sector in South Sudan at that time. As a result of this, USAID enhanced its due diligence for new awards. In addition, USAID awards in South Sudan, as in other parts of the world, continue to include substantial compliance provisions, both required by law and enhanced through USAID-specific policies, to ensure that the Agency is an effective steward of taxpayer funds. Similarly, awards are monitored by USAID staff to ensure compliance with award terms and conditions and to ensure the achievement of the intended results. USAID/South Sudan staff are appropriately trained for, and properly implement, robust award management and oversight duties. USAID will continue to monitor the impact of our assistance flows in South Sudan and will take corrective action when necessary.

We would be pleased to brief the Committee further.

*Question.* While a reduction in the budget request for South Sudan is appropriate given the general failure of the parties in South Sudan to make good on their commitments outlined in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), the dire humanitarian situation faced by the South Sudanese people, and the continuation of localized proxy conflicts, it is curious that the line items for Conflict Mitigation and Stabilization, and Democracy, Human Rights and Governance were reduced.

What is USAID, alongside the State Department, trying to achieve in South Sudan? How does this budget request reflect those goals?

Answer. USAID is committed to supporting the South Sudanese people’s demands for an inclusive transition and a peaceful, stable future and will work with Congress to best align appropriated funds. We continue to work to mitigate and prevent sub-national violence, protect human rights, better target U.S. assistance to communities in need, protect and defend civic space for civil society, independent media, and peaceful political voices, and hold the transitional government accountable to its commitments.

*Question. Sudan:* What is the plan for USAID’s American, third-country national, and Sudanese implementing partners, who were left behind following the recent evacuation of the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum?

Answer. We remain very concerned about our staff and partners who remain in Sudan. While many of USAID’s implementing partner staff have successfully been evacuated, we continue to monitor the situation with the Interagency, communicate pathways available to partners, and coordinate various avenues of evacuation including by providing information for air and overland routes. Some staff chose to remain in Sudan due to family, logistics challenges, or other personal circumstances. We continue to work with our partners to confirm the safety and accountability of partner staff, especially those that remain in Sudan and stand ready to support them in partnership with our colleagues at the Department of State.

*Question.* How will USAID continue to support a civilian transition?

Answer. USAID remains focused on building trust among Sudanese stakeholders and driving a process of direct, sustained engagement with a broad array of civilians—including marginalized groups and those from Sudan’s peripheries—to ensure that any future political process can lead to a civilian government. The Sudanese people have not given up, and neither have we. USAID continues to engage with a broad group of civilians including youth, activists, human rights defenders, women’s groups, communities, resistance committees, and professional associations who have heroically stepped-up amid the chaos to support their fellow citizens. It is im-

perative that Sudanese civilians regain control of their country, and they will have our full support to do so.

*Question. MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: Strategic Competition:* In the wake of the China-Saudi-Iran normalization agreement, China continues to make inroads in the Middle East in an effort to displace the United States as the partner of choice.

Do you agree that recent Chinese inroads in the Middle East run contrary to U.S. national security objectives?

Answer. Yes. The PRC's foreign assistance policy, including negative and inappropriate influence, actions and messaging, is one of the biggest challenges USAID faces. USAID's approach is to put forward a positive, affirmative vision for global development that is fundamentally different from efforts to advance the centralized, authoritarian model of development that Beijing advocates. That model is at odds with our values, which are grounded in the interests of our partners, and guided by the conviction that democratic principles form the strongest foundation upon which to build open, transparent, accountable, sustainable, prosperous, and sovereign societies.

We defer to the Department of State for additional policy context.

*Question.* Please describe in detail USAID's role and contributions to strategic competition in the Middle East.

Answer. When it comes to economic ties that promote growth and job creation, the United States is the better, more capable, and reliable partner in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, despite the People's Republic of China's (PRC) status as the region's largest trading partner in recent years resulting from the drop in U.S. dependence on Middle Eastern oil. We invest more, employ more, donate more, train more, and educate more.

Across the Middle East, we are advancing these objectives. For example, as the PRC invests billions in energy, transport, water and 5G technology in Jordan, USAID's approach has been to prioritize technical assistance to support Jordan's ability to assess foreign investment risk and avoid bad deals, thereby mitigating PRC influence on water infrastructure and financing decisions. These efforts strengthen transparency and governance to avoid opaque foreign involvement and/or investments.

We would be pleased to brief the Committee in further detail.

*Question.* While countries like Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates do not receive assistance from USAID, how does USAID engage with our Gulf partners to ensure the United States remains the partner of choice in the Middle East?

Answer. We engage in a broad range of bilateral, regional, and multilateral fora to enhance our partnership and cooperation with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and other Gulf countries. Senior USAID officials attend events hosted by Gulf partners throughout the region, meet with counterparts during their U.S. visits, and maintain relationships with Gulf Ambassadors in the U.S. to discuss assistance priorities and potential areas of collaboration.

In addition, USAID has conducted outreach to Gulf donors on humanitarian and development issues over decades, through sustained staff-level engagements and high-level USG official meetings. As part of the Fifth Strategic Dialogue in March 2023, the United States and Qatar discussed the need for greater support for women and children in vulnerable environments, rising global food insecurity levels, and the importance of rapid responses to emerging humanitarian crises. Similarly, the United States and the UAE continue to engage on women's economic empowerment, food and water security, global health security, and health cooperation—topics expected to be discussed during the next Economic Policy Dialogue between both countries later this year.

In 2020, USAID signed separate Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with Qatar, UAE, and Kuwait to advance bilateral humanitarian and development assistance cooperation. These agreements catalyzed deeper bilateral engagement, including the signing of a funding agreement between USAID and Qatar's foreign development assistance agency to support Syrian Civil Defence ("White Helmets") core operations in Northwest Syria following the 2023 earthquake.

In 2022, the United States joined Israel, Egypt, UAE, Bahrain, and Morocco in establishing the Negev Forum to enhance regional prosperity and stability. USAID serves as the U.S. Government lead for two of the six Negev Forum Working Groups (Food Security and Water Technology and Tourism), and also provides expertise to the Health, Clean Energy, and Education and Coexistence Working Groups.

*Question. West Bank and Gaza:* Will you seek to prioritize violence reduction and de-radicalization programs in the West Bank and Gaza to ensure programs for accessibility, combatting gender-based violence, and others are not undermined?

Answer. USAID funding supports U.S. foreign policy goals for equal measures of security, prosperity, and freedom for both Israelis and Palestinians and builds the foundation for a future Palestinian state. In a time of increased insecurity, USAID programming targets some of the daily inequities that lead to rising frustration and outbreaks of violence while also addressing the drivers of violence directly.

USAID has a strong track record of delivering assistance even in contexts of violence and instability, and we will leverage that experience to ensure that vulnerable communities continue to benefit from our programming even as we direct resources specifically to the challenge of reducing violence and instability.

To address the current, acute increase of violence in the West Bank, USAID launched a pilot rapid response program in 2023 to target conflict-prone areas in the West Bank, such as Jenin and Nablus. USAID is already working closely with the U.S. Security Coordinator to identify opportunities to strategically mitigate the drivers of violence. Pending Congressional approval, USAID would launch a larger rapid response activity with FY22 funds.

Some of our work may have an indirect impact on violence levels. For example, research shows that violence among youth is strongly correlated with violence in the home. This makes programming to provide psycho-social support and to prevent gender-based violence (GBV) an important contributor to the overarching goal of broad-based violence reduction within the region. USAID will therefore heighten its focus on GBV programming as part of its overall approach to violence reduction.

*Question.* While I understand that funding levels to the West Bank and Gaza are driven by appropriations law, assistance to the West Bank and Gaza increased dramatically from \$75 million in fiscal years 2020 and 2021 to \$225 million in fiscal year 2022.

What steps is USAID taking to address absorption challenges with the \$219 million appropriated for the West Bank and Gaza?

Answer. The USAID/WBG Mission is fully confident it can absorb the FY22 level.

During the pause in assistance in January of 2019, USAID slowed Foreign Service Officer (FSO) assignments to the WBG Mission and assigned many of its local staff to serve with other Missions and offices within the USG on Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). Since the relaunch of assistance in January of 2021, USAID has returned all of the local staff to work full time on the WBG portfolio, bringing the total to 76. USAID is also increasing the number of FSOs, and the mission will be fully staffed with 13 by summer's end. In addition, there are a variety of trusted international and local partners who are qualified and prepared to implement USAID programs.

Given rising instability in the West Bank and Gaza (WBG) and pressing development needs, the increased level of funding for fiscal year 2022 will allow the USAID/WBG to support economic and development assistance programs that improve the lives of millions of Palestinians by providing immediate relief and advancing progress across sectors such as health, economic growth, civil society, climate, and water. To address the increased insecurity, especially in the West Bank, USAID programming targets some of the daily inequities that lead to rising frustration and outbreaks of violence while also addressing the drivers of violence directly.

*Question.* Despite 2 years of Palestinian assistance under the Biden administration, Israeli-Palestinian violence is at record levels, there is no political horizon, and we have not seen substantial movement on "pay-for-slay" reforms.

How are you linking Palestinian assistance to strategic outcomes in the West Bank and Gaza?

What are USAID's strategic outcomes linked to Palestinian assistance?

What efforts is USAID undertaking, in conjunction with State, to ensure that Palestinian assistance is synchronized with USCC security operations, MEPPA, and State engagement on "pay-for-slay" reforms?

Answer. USAID is deeply integrated into the interagency process to establish the Integrated Country Strategy, and USAID funding supports the goals of the ICS to (1) advance peace and a two-state solution, (2) strengthen non-PA Palestinian institutions at the local level, (3) build a prosperous Palestinian economy, and (4) ensure regional integration.

USAID programming supports each of these goals and advances the overarching U.S. foreign policy goal of ensuring equal measures of security, prosperity, and freedom for both Israelis and Palestinians.

USAID makes progress toward these strategic goals through a wide range of programming that targets the most vulnerable in Palestinian society, builds bridges of trust and peace with Israelis, and focuses its assistance in order to prevent radicalization and extremism in communities prone to violence.

USAID works closely with interagency partners, including the State Department, the U.S. Security Coordinator (USSC), and the Development Finance Corporation, to deliver the most responsible development programs in service of these objectives.

USAID meets regularly with these interagency partners to discuss shared strategic objectives; to outline planned interventions; and to ensure that our messaging and programming, including USAID's bilateral and MEPPA funds, are mutually reinforcing and fully in compliance with all relevant legislation and regulations, including the Taylor Force Act.

To address spiraling violence in the West Bank, USAID is deepening its partnership with USSC to work on a pilot program targeting conflict-prone areas such as Jenin and Nablus. Pending Congressional approval, it would launch a broader rapid response program with FY22 funds to build on this collaboration.

USAID has been very clear on our position that the prisoner payment system is abhorrent. USAID, in concert with other U.S. officials, has repeatedly raised the issue directly with Palestinian leadership to urge them to end it. The State Department is leading efforts to pressure the PA into reform of the program, and we defer questions on that progress to the State Department. In the meantime, USAID is fully committed to maintaining compliance with the Taylor Force Act in all our programming.

*Question. Syria: The Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act* prohibits “reconstruction” in Syria.

How does USAID distinguish between early recovery, earthquake relief, and reconstruction?

Answer. USAID humanitarian assistance support in the aftermath of an earthquake focuses on rescuing victims and providing immediate relief to survivors, and could include search and rescue, evacuation, the distribution of tents/tarpaulins, ready-to-consume foods, water bladders/jerrycans, kitchen sets, blankets and other items needed for short-term survival until medium-term support from governments and other actors can commence. This aid usually builds on what surviving communities have already started doing themselves after an earthquake. In response to the February 6 earthquakes in Syria, USAID partners were able to draw on the existing major humanitarian infrastructure to quickly mobilize to provide life-saving support including rubble removal, shelter rehabilitation, emergency shelter kits, food assistance, provision of water, distribution of hygiene kits, distribution of non-food items, and mobile medical units.

Early recovery is a type of humanitarian assistance designed to make vulnerable people more resilient and reduce the need for humanitarian assistance. USAID-funded early recovery programs in Syria are very limited in scale and conducted by independent and impartial humanitarian agencies. Like all other humanitarian assistance, these programs are channeled through UN and NGO partners, not governments. An example of early recovery would be a humanitarian organization rehabilitating a conflict-damaged water network to ensure continued access to clean water.

USAID does not do reconstruction activities there. In other contexts, reconstruction focuses on essential services delivered by the state through its own capacity. Given the current operational context and constraints, USAID does not do reconstruction in Syria.

*Question.* Please provide definitions, expenditure thresholds, or other data that USAID relies on to ensure it is not in violation of the Caesar Act.

Answer. USAID stabilization programs do not operate in Regime-held parts of Syria. USAID stabilization awards elsewhere in Syria—like all USAID stabilization awards—include explicit requirements to adhere to all applicable laws, including the Caesar Civilian Protection Act. During the kick-off post-award orientation with each partner for every new award, USAID informs partners of the OFAC licenses and their responsibilities to adhere to them. USAID also shares OFAC guidance during each award's kickoff, including the U.S. Treasury Department communique that includes Sanctions Compliance Guidance. Contracts include the FAR clause 52.225-13 Restrictions on Certain Foreign Purchases. Assistance awards include an applicable standard provision entitled, “Preventing Transactions With, or the Provision of Resources or Support to, Sanctioned Groups and Individuals.”

*Question. Tunisia:* President Kais Saied has taken dramatic steps that have dismantled Tunisia's democratic institutions, upset checks on the power of the executive, and have failed to address the root causes of Tunisia's economic woes.

What actions is USAID, in conjunction with the State Department, taking to prevent democratic backsliding and restore the integrity of Tunisia's democratic institutions?

*Answer.* The United States remains committed to the long-standing partnership with the Tunisian people, and we have been clear about the reversal of many of the Tunisian people's hard-won democratic gains over the past 21 months. Since July 2021, the Secretary of State and other senior U.S. officials have conveyed our deep concern over Tunisia's negative democratic trajectory and urged President Saied to take concrete steps to restore confidence in Tunisian democracy. The United States has coordinated closely with our European and international partners to deliver a united message, when possible.

We continue to support the Tunisian people's aspirations for a democratic and accountable government that respects human rights and fundamental freedoms. This includes using U.S. assistance strategically and targeting our programs to support civil society and economic growth while maintaining core security interests.

USAID's work focuses on building democratic resilience in Tunisia through support to civil society, countering mis- and disinformation, supporting credible elections and advancing inclusion of all Tunisians into political processes. We also recognize that to counter democratic backsliding and build Tunisian resilience to political shocks, we must concurrently work to address the country's fragile economic state. Our investment in the Tunisian private sector is also vital to mitigate the severe impact of rising unemployment, inflation, and commodity shortages, and prevent thousands of Tunisian businesses from failing.

*Question.* What challenges does USAID face when transitioning from programming through a foreign government to programming through civil society organizations?

*Answer.* USAID has partnered with civil society organizations in Tunisia since 2011, and given our longstanding partnerships with civil society, we did not experience major challenges in pivoting assistance. The recalibration of U.S. assistance from the Government of Tunisia to the Tunisian people enabled us to augment support to existing partnerships with civil society and created opportunities to invest in new organizations. Our existing programs work with civil society groups across the country to promote the integrity of elections and other democratic processes, empower youth, and combat mis- and disinformation across all forms of media. Our long-term investment in civil society allowed us to pivot in the face of growing threats to freedom of expression and association, helping to advance information integrity and support calls for inclusive reform.

*Question.* Why haven't USAID and State conditioned assistance to Tunisia based on clearly articulated democratic benchmarks? Is there a benefit or risk to this approach?

*Answer.* The United States continues to engage with the Tunisian people, partner with civil society, and work with international partners to communicate our concerns at the highest levels about the negative trajectory for democracy and human rights in Tunisia.

Despite our concerns over the Government of Tunisia's anti-democratic trends, we feel it is important to maintain direct support to the Tunisian people as they grapple with the twin economic and democratic crises. U.S. assistance empowers Tunisian civil society pressing for government accountability, combats dis- and misinformation, informs citizens about their rights and political processes, and supports citizen oversight of political processes, including elections. U.S. assistance also supports Tunisians as they grapple with the declining economic conditions and food insecurity exacerbated by Russia's aggression in Ukraine amidst domestic political turmoil and closing civic space.

At this stage, we assess that messaging against the recent actions of the Tunisian Government can be calibrated with our assistance which is aimed at sustaining our long-term relationship with the Tunisian people. As we continue to plan for the future of development assistance in Tunisia, we will keep pushing for a return to a democratic path while balancing our broader national security interests.

*Question.* What balance should the U.S. strike between forcing democratic reforms and strategic competition with China?

*Answer.* USAID's democracy assistance in Tunisia is an extension of our strategic competition with the People's Republic of China and other competitors who prefer to advance or advocate for a centralized, authoritarian model of development. USAID programming works to counter the authoritarian narrative in Tunisia by promoting economic opportunity and inclusive, democratic values and by building

resilience to autocracy with a particular focus on civil society and marginalized communities.

*Question. SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA:* SIGAR John Sopko recently testified that U.S. assistance to Afghanistan is subject to widespread diversion and abuse by the Taliban.

Does USAID maintain a policy of “no direct benefit” to the Taliban?

Answer. USAID assistance is not provided to the Taliban and does not directly benefit the Taliban. All USAID humanitarian and development assistance supports the work of UN agencies and experienced, carefully chosen international NGOs with extensive experience working in challenging environments. These partners have robust risk mitigation procedures in place to ensure that our funded assistance reaches its intended recipients.

*Question.* What specific mechanisms has USAID developed to prevent direct benefit to the Taliban, to include associated mission orders?

Answer. USAID takes its duty as a steward of U.S. taxpayer funding seriously and holds implementing partners to the highest standards to ensure that taxpayer funds are used wisely, effectively, and for their intended purposes. USAID assistance is not provided to the Taliban and does not directly benefit the Taliban.

USAID implementers have extensive experience operating in high-risk environments around the world. USAID requires them to have proper safeguards and risk-mitigation systems in place to help ensure that principled development and humanitarian aid reaches those who need it most.

*RAMPs:* USAID employs risk analytic processes that include an examination of the risks associated with the diversion of assistance to the Taliban and Haqqani Network in Afghanistan. USAID requires that partners submit Risk Assessment and Management Plans (RAMPs) as part of their applications for funding. USAID utilizes these RAMPs, along with our robust internal analysis, to examine how applicants for funding will mitigate the risk of our assistance benefiting sanctioned entities, among other risks.

*OIG:* Per USAID standard provisions in awards, partners are required to report to USAID’s Office of the Inspector General (OIG) all incidents of fraud, waste and abuse, including diversion. USAID staff continually coordinate with our partners to ensure both that our assistance is reaching those for which it is intended and that our partners have effective mitigation measures in place to help safeguard against similar incidents occurring. USAID requires all cases of fraud, waste, and abuse to be reported. These instances are all documented, tracked, and reported to USAID’s OIG.

*PROGRAM REPORTING:* USAID staff regularly meet with partners, as well as review programmatic and financial reports corresponding with their respective awards, to assess the progress of award implementation and obtain key contextual and programmatic updates, including access to beneficiary populations, safety and security, and attempted Taliban interference. Partners are required to provide regular program updates on the progress of their activities and report any diversions, seizures, or losses. We monitor these reports to verify not only that our assistance reaches those for whom it is intended, but also that our partners have effective mitigation measures in place to help safeguard against incidents occurring.

*THIRD PARTY MONITORING:* USAID programming is dynamic and adjusted to meet the requirements of monitoring and evaluating our programs from outside Afghanistan. USAID and our implementing partners monitor programs through numerous methods, including by remote monitoring, post-distribution monitoring, and third-party monitoring. USAID utilizes a third-party monitoring (TPM) contractor to provide in-person oversight of awards and promptly follows up with partners on reported findings, including diversion or other program irregularities. USAID’s Afghanistan Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Activity TPM helps ensure that USAID’s development and humanitarian programs in Afghanistan achieve their intended results. This is done through strong evaluation of technical support services, learning and adaptive management services, and program support services.

*SANCTIONS RISK ANALYSIS:* All USAID partners are required to comply with USG legal authorizations restricting transactions with the Taliban, including annual appropriations restrictions. However, USAID and our partners also have authorization via various OFAC licenses to engage in incidental transactions necessary to facilitate the provision of assistance (i.e., fuel, electricity, etc.). This is not unique to Afghanistan. USAID, and our partners, have authorization via various OFAC licenses to engage in incidental transactions to facilitate the provision of assistance across OFAC sanctions programs (including, e.g., Yemen, Venezuela, and Horn of Africa countries) in non-permissive environments. While USAID has legal authoriza-



tions in place to safeguard against sanctions violations, we still require our implementing partners to report any instances of diversion, fraud, waste, and abuse, including incidents involving the Taliban and Haqqani Network, and will suspend funding if necessary.

**TERRORIST FINANCING RISK ASSESSMENT:** USAID has a track record of ensuring that our assistance does not benefit terrorists or other blocked persons. In 2009, the Mission implemented a Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment, a document that requires USAID staff to adhere to policies that ensure USAID-financed projects and activities are insulated against their benefits being provided, even inadvertently, to terrorists.

**VETTING:** USAID's partner vetting policies are outlined in ADS Chapter 319 (<https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-300/319>), which includes requirements for pre-award vetting and an option for post-award vetting for urgently needed humanitarian assistance (see ADS 319.3.6.3). Special standard operating processes are further described in the country specific partner vetting orders.

**MISSION ORDER:** USAID/Afghanistan's vetting Mission Order 201.06 outlines the vetting process in detail. Generally, USAID vets proposed non-U.S. prime or sub-awardees when the proposed award amount exceeds \$25,000. Vetting is done by award, and is redone annually for multi-year awards. U.S. citizens generally are not vetted; per M.O. 201.06; however, USAID reserves the right to vet any entity, or any person, at any time when there is a noted concern of being involved with a prohibited party. The Mission Order (and other information on the vetting process) is provided to implementing partners (IPs) as part of the pre-award process and at other times, as requested. The Vetting Support Unit provides virtual one-on-one briefings, instructions, and vetting customer service support to all IPs and potential IPs prior to and throughout the vetting process.

*Question.* The State Department transmitted to Congress on May 3, 2018, that assistance to the West Bank and Gaza is considered "directly benefitting" the Palestinian Authority according to the following conditions: The intended primary beneficiary or end user of the assistance; Whether the Palestinian Authority is the direct recipient of the assistance; Whether the assistance involves the payment of Palestinian Authority creditors; The extent of ownership or control the Palestinian Authority exerts over an entity or individual that is the primary beneficiary or end user of the assistance; Whether the assistance or services provided directly replace assistance or services provided by the Palestinian Authority.

What legal definition of "direct benefit" is USAID using to govern assistance in Afghanistan?

Answer. Section 7044(a)(1) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act (SFOAA), 2022 imposes a restriction on the use of any FY 2022 or prior year assistance funds, including Economic Support Funds, "for direct assistance to the Taliban." The provision applies to any new obligations and new sub-obligations under a bilateral agreement of FY 2022 or prior year assistance funds made available to the Department of State and USAID.

"Direct assistance" is not defined in the SFOAA and the term is not otherwise a term of art, therefore USAID evaluates the scope of the restriction on a case-by-case basis. Because the United States has not yet made a decision as to whether to recognize any entity, including the Taliban, as the Government of Afghanistan, the provision raises difficult questions regarding its potential application to Afghan Government entities, such as ministries, etc., which continue to exist and operate regardless of any U.S. recognition decision. The Department of State and USAID expect that the restriction would apply to any assistance provided directly to the Taliban as a group and could also apply to entities controlled by the Taliban, depending on the circumstances. Because the term "direct assistance" is not defined, USAID analyzes on a case-by-case basis whether particular programs or activities are subject to this restriction.

*Question. WESTERN HEMISPHERE: Colombia:* The FY24 Budget request would direct additional resources to "address root causes of illegal migration." However, in the last 2 years, the Administration has only been able to report lower illegal immigration numbers as a result of the legally dubious parole programs it began implementing late in 2022.

Please provide evidence that USAID programs in Central America are directly related to lower illegal immigration numbers.

Answer. The budget request expands economic prosperity while supporting human rights and citizen security—both clear drivers of migration. Programs will respond to irregular hemispheric migration in the region by addressing the root causes of migration from Central America, while also providing legal pathways for migration,

and promoting the socio-economic integration of migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Administration is committed to long-term development solutions that address the root causes of migration and collaboratively manage migration in the Western Hemisphere. We know that making progress requires sustained political commitment and cooperation across a broad range of stakeholders, combined with both private sector and foreign assistance investments.

We fully understand the headwinds in the region, particularly democratic backsliding in El Salvador and Guatemala, an uncertain trajectory in Honduras. However, there are clear signs of progress amid a challenging strategic environment. The Root Causes Strategy has yielded some clear results.

Intentions to go to live or work in another country, as measured by Latin America Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) surveys conducted in 2022, fell by double digits in Guatemala and Honduras (with almost no change in El Salvador), compared to 2021 survey results. Rates of GDP growth per capita rebounded after steep drop-offs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and national homicide rates in all three countries continued their multi-year decline.

*Question.* The FY24 budget request asks for \$43.3 million to support implementation of the 2016 Peace Accord in Colombia. According to Colombia's Attorney General, about 412 accused murderers of demobilized FARC members, human rights defenders, and relatives of FARC demobilized members remain at large because they are protected under the cease fire decrees issued by President Petro in December 2022.

Please describe how the cease fire decrees may impact the implementation of USAID programs related to the 2016 Peace Accord.

*Answer.* Thus far, Petro administration talks with armed groups have not impacted USAID's programs related to the 2016 Peace Accord. The Accord remains Colombia's best tool to consolidate peace, expand the state's presence to violent rural areas, and promote the well-being of Colombia's most vulnerable populations. USAID has been a steadfast ally of Colombia for many years before, during, and after the signing of the Accord. We are closely monitoring the Petro administration's talks with armed groups and will continue to assess changes in the context. Should the situation merit program adjustments we will do so in consultation with Congress.

*Question.* USAID plays a significant role in Colombia's efforts to substitute illicit coca crops. A 2020 review by the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement found that social leaders were more-than-twice likely to have been killed in areas where there was no forced eradication and with levels of coca cultivation.

Please explain USAID's current understanding of how many assassinations and attacks on human rights defenders and social leaders take place in areas where eradication takes place?

*Answer.* Advancing human rights is a U.S. Government priority in Colombia; one defender killed is one too many. In Colombia, USAID focuses on prevention, protection, and response measures to address human rights challenges. Despite steady advances in Colombia's human rights over the past decade, attacks against human rights and environmental defenders remain far too frequent, particularly along lucrative narco-trafficking and illegal mining routes and in environmentally protected areas.

The vacuum left in some areas of Colombia by inadequate state presence is quickly filled by illegal armed groups. In those areas coca cultivation can flourish, and with it levels of violence increase significantly, including the killing of social leaders. U.S. assistance supports the Colombian Government's efforts to not only reduce levels of coca cultivation but also to increase state presence and by extension, decrease violence. The United Nations' Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) Colombia's team collects and disseminates data on the incidence and impact of violence (See, for example: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/reporta-Informe-Violencia-Territorial-en-Colombia-Recomendaciones-para-el-Nuevo-Gobierno-Oficina-ONU-Derechos-Humanos.pdf>). We partner with UNOHCHR and support their work (more details below).

USAID's strategy focuses on protecting leaders, preventing violent attacks against them, and reducing impunity for these crimes.

USAID quadrupled its funding in the past 2 years to the United Nations' Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR)—from about \$1 million annually to \$4.6 million—to monitor Colombia's human rights situation, assist the Colombian Government in protecting human rights, and help the Colombian Attor-

ney General's Office secure nearly 70 convictions in human rights defender homicide cases.

USAID also directly supports the Attorney General's Office to dismantle complex criminal structures and target those responsible for human rights defender crimes.

USAID partners with the Inspector General's Office (IGO) to facilitate dialogue between social leaders and key government authorities. USAID also elevates human rights defenders through the *Lidera la Vida* campaign that seeks to raise public awareness, and spur action around the need to protect social leaders and human rights defenders. In addition, USAID supports IGO efforts to advance disciplinary actions for public officials who fail to protect leaders and implement Ombudsman Early Warning Alerts as required by law.

USAID has trained thousands of leaders and civil society organizations in self-protection measures. Not one leader trained has been killed. USAID has partnered with the National Protection Unit, police, and other Government of Colombia institutions to scale these efforts and focus on particularly threatened leaders, such as crop substitution leaders.

*Question.* Please explain how failure to eradicate illicit coca crops will impact the success of USAID efforts to support implementation of the 2016 Peace Accord.

*Answer.* Despite continuing challenges of violence and coca production, the Peace Accord has provided the most important forcing mechanism to push the Colombian state to areas where coca is grown, increasing public investments and state presence. Colombians living in these regions detest living under the control of violent drug gangs and are looking for a better life. A lack of sufficient eradication may result in increased illicit cultivation which will impede both USAID and Colombian Government efforts to implement programs and expand services and licit economic opportunities in these regions.

At the March 2023 High Level Dialogue meetings in Washington, both the U.S. and Colombia re-committed to a holistic approach to counternarcotics and strengthening peace. USAID collaborates closely with the Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (State/INL), Department of Defense, and Colombian stakeholders on this holistic approach, supporting peace through reducing illicit coca crops and helping communities to transition to licit livelihoods. This approach also includes a strong focus on environmental protection and combating environmental crimes as well as broader metrics of success.

In terms of crop substitution, USAID supports various modalities, including those focused on entering into agreements with communities to transition out of coca and, in return, receive improved public goods and services, land titles, economic opportunities, and payments for environmental services. Our efforts support the entire community.

In the many places where USAID has built stronger licit options, people's lives have been transformed through the production and sale of licit crops like cacao, coffee, dairy, and rubber. Coca replanting rates in communities where USAID is present are generally significantly lower than in communities where USAID is not working.

*Question. Honduras:* In January, Taiwan joined a USAID-led effort to provide education to about 300,000 children in Honduras. Has the Castro Government's recognition of the People's Republic of China in March had any impact on U.S. support for this program?

*Answer.* The Government of Honduras's diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China led the Government of Taiwan to pull all development support out of Honduras, including the \$2 million Taiwan had pledged in support of a USAID-led education alliance.

However, the alliance has been able to continue with U.S. Government funding as well as private sector and community support. The alliance continues to build and improve school infrastructure, promote student enrollment and retention, develop alternative education options for out-of-school youth, and work to prevent school-based violence.

*Question. Haiti:* Please explain whether and how the absence of a U.S. Ambassador in Haiti has impacted the work of USAID in that country.

*Answer.* As you have noted eloquently in the past, the U.S. is best able to promote its national security interests abroad with a Senate-confirmed ambassador at post. Accordingly, USAID supports the confirmation of a U.S. Ambassador to Haiti.

In the meantime, USAID has full access to our government counterparts and continues to provide development and life-saving humanitarian assistance. USAID has a close working relationship with the Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Ambassador Eric Stromayer. USAID regularly briefs the Charge on hu-

manitarian response issues and the U.S. Government's humanitarian and development assistance. Ambassador Stromayer regularly and effectively engages with the Government of Haiti, UN and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners, and other external stakeholders on humanitarian priorities. He also represents the Mission at various external events in support of Haiti and the Haitian people, including the upcoming 2023 National Nutrition Survey (l'Enquête Nutritionnelle Nationale) hosted by H.E. Prime Minister Dr. Ariel Henry, with the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP), and in collaboration with UNICEF.

USAID's development programs continue implementation to build a stable and economically viable Haiti, focusing on improving health and education outcomes, advancing economic and food security, and improving the independence and accountability of government institutions. Our development assistance provides economic opportunity through inclusive, environmentally sustainable agriculture development and micro-, small-, and medium-sized business development, and improves the economic and environmental resilience of communities. USAID health programs work to fight infectious disease and improve primary healthcare services and increase access to water and sanitation services.

*Question. EUROPE & EURASIA: War in Ukraine:* Russia continues to make clear its unhappiness with the Black Sea Grain Deal and seems increasingly likely to withdraw from it when the Deal comes up for renewal again.

If Russia does indeed abrogate its participation in the Black Sea Grain Deal, what contingency plans does USAID have to help transport Ukrainian grain to those nations that need it most?

*Answer.* Continuing to support the efforts of the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI) is a priority for USAID. Ukraine's ability to export grain is particularly critical in light of the uncertainty surrounding the BSGI renewal. Based on Russia's prior behavior in talks with UN Secretary-General (SG) Guterres and active efforts to undermine the Black Sea Grain deal, we have modest expectations of any extension of the deal. Any interruption would be detrimental to food-insecure populations worldwide, global food prices, and Ukraine's economy.

USAID will continue to utilize the generous support provided by Congress to support Ukraine's agriculture needs. USAID's Agriculture Resilience Initiative—Ukraine (AGRI) funding, which has increased from \$100 million to \$350 million, will be key to support Ukraine's agriculture sector at this critical time. Additionally, USAID is advocating with other donors and the private sector to leverage additional external funding to add to the \$150 million USAID has helped to raise since the launch of AGRI. Since the beginning of the war, USAID has provided over 13,700 farmers with seeds, fertilizer, storage, and other services to help them continue to produce despite the high uncertainties. To support the spring sowing campaign in 2023, USAID's initiatives are distributing fertilizer and seeds to farmers in 15 oblasts most affected by the war, and offering more opportunities to farmers to access needed finance. Should Ukraine face a deficit in storage due to shrinking export capacity, USAID will look to find ways to support farmers with storage solutions and services, using the network of local storage service providers that the Agency established in 2022, which provided 1.5 million metric tons of storage capacity last year. Additionally, USAID is co-investing with private sector partners (Kernel, Grain Alliance, and Nibulon) to expand grain export capacity and operations of alternative export routes, namely through two Danube ports (Reni and Izmail) and Cierna nad Tisou in Slovakia. Those combined \$44 million investments are projected to increase Ukraine's grain shipping capacity by more than 3.35 million tons annually, bolstering Ukraine's economy and bringing much-needed grain to the global market.

USAID is also considering different sources and modalities of food assistance—including U.S. in-kind food commodities—to ensure that there are no interruptions in lifesaving food assistance in the nations where USAID is currently sending Ukrainian grain. These include grain procurement in other countries such as Australia and India, where production was very good this year. USAID partner the World Food Program also plans to revert to shipping grain and oilseeds out via the Danube and rail networks though this option would only meet about 40 percent of monthly export requirements.

*Question.* Does the U.S. Government believe that it may be necessary to acquiesce to Russia's demands to open the ammonia pipeline across Ukraine and permit more exports of Russian and Belarusian fertilizer in order to keep grain flowing from Ukraine? If yes, please explain your reasoning.

*Answer.* Russia's consistent actions to undermine the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI)—by imposing unilateral deadlines, threatening to withdraw, and obstructing

ship movements—are further evidence that Russia is weaponizing food in its war against Ukraine, at the expense of the world’s hungry people. Russia’s obstruction of the BSGI is a violation of the commitments it made to the United Nations last summer. The data we have suggests that Russia is exporting grain and fertilizer at the same levels—if not higher—than it was before its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Whether to reopen the Togliatti-Pivdenny pipeline for ammonia export is a matter for discussion between the parties. Regardless, Ukraine’s grain should flow unimpeded.

*Question.* Despite the growing and acute humanitarian needs in Ukraine, your FY24 budget request maintains funding level for Ukraine that are very similar to pre-war requests.

Does USAID believe that its funding needs in Ukraine will shortly return to pre-war levels?

*Answer.* The FY24 budget request allocated for Ukraine reflects the world’s new multifaceted and intertwined challenges resulting from Russia’s unprovoked, full-scale invasion in February 2022.

The FY24 budget request accounts for an increase in resource requirements from the renewed base budget to meet substantial needs, taking into account that Ukraine received no base funding in FY23 because all funding that year was included in supplemental appropriations. This budget request reflects USAID’s efforts to appropriately respond to one of the greatest threats to democratic freedom and sovereignty of our generation. Specifically, the FY24 request for USAID- and State-managed Assistance to Eastern Europe and Central Asia (AEECA) funding is almost 80 percent higher than the level requested in FY22 and appropriated in FY21, and there is a 100 percent increase to the Global Health Programs-USAID (GHP-USAID) funds. This increase reflects our effort to right-size and normalize funding levels to appropriately and adequately respond to the monumental challenges facing our work in Ukraine. Given the enormity of the challenges from continued and elevated Russian aggression against Ukraine, and the daunting task of reconstruction and rehabilitation that lies ahead, we do not anticipate that funding needs will shortly return to pre-war levels.

*Question.* Does the Administration expect to continue to rely on supplemental requests to fund U.S. assistance to Ukraine?

*Answer.* We stand with Ukraine and greatly appreciate the supplemental appropriations Congress has passed, which have been indispensable in providing necessary support to the citizens and Government of Ukraine while advancing U.S. Government (USG) objectives. We will be forward-leaning in utilizing our available funding to address the highest needs and in working with other donors to leverage additional support to help meet Ukraine’s budget gaps and assistance needs.

Despite this historic support, Ukraine continues to face monumental challenges in meeting the needs of its people and, ultimately, recovering. Given the fluidity of the situation on the ground, we will continue to assess requirements and available resources and request funding from Congress, as needed. We are in close coordination with our colleagues at the State Department, NSC and OMB about the ongoing challenges and our ability to meet USG objectives in Ukraine.

*Question.* Compared to last year’s budget request, \$5 million less has been requested for State Department OIG, while \$5 million more has been requested for USAID OIG.

Is this adjustment in funding correlated? If so, what is the reasoning behind the \$5 million shift to USAID OIG?

How will USAID prioritize funding for OIG oversight over assistance to Ukraine?

How will USAID OIG coordinate with the State Department and Defense Department OIGs on funding for joint oversight projects?

*Answer.* As Offices of Inspector General are independent of the Agencies they oversee, USAID has no functional role in prioritizing funding for USAID’s Office of Inspector General. The increase in USAID OIG funding is unrelated to the decrease in State Department OIG funding. We would refer you directly to the USAID OIG for further information.

*Question. Central Europe:* In 2022, USAID started a program in Central Europe “with the goal of strengthening democratic institutions, civil society, and independent media.”

Although little time has elapsed since this program began, please describe what you see as the successes of this program thus far.

*Answer.* In fiscal year 2021, USAID received an allocation of \$8 million out of the \$20 million in congressionally directed funding to strengthen democracy and civil so-

ciety in Central Europe. There is an additional \$7.5 million in FY 2022 appropriations allocated for USAID. We anticipate our work in Central Europe to continue for 5 years. We have formally launched the Central Europe program and briefed leadership and staff from the Embassies of Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Poland about the nature and scope of the program. The program focuses on building the skills and ability of local media, organizations, and actors to reach beyond the bubble of large cities to encourage greater civic participation in the regions.

USAID has promoted collaboration and networking among leading local European human rights organizations in a 2-year capacity- and alliance-building program that helps human rights defenders and civic space advocates from across the EU meet, learn, and strategize together. Between October 2022 and May 2023, the Recharging Advocacy for Rights in Europe Network had four convening events that promoted networking, exchanging ideas, and learning. The participants also practiced new skills in how to communicate effectively and deliver effective messages, speak confidently, and write persuasive policy briefs.

In December 2022, the German Marshall Fund partnered with five local organizations in Hungary, Poland, and Bulgaria to bolster the capacity of civil society and watchdog organizations to increase their management, financial sustainability, constituency-building, and communication skills through training, mentoring, networking, and microgranting. The Power of Humanity Foundation in Hungary received 130 applications from local organizations (formal and informal) expressing their interest in participating.

In January 2023, the Central Europe Media Program that aims to strengthen the competitiveness, financial independence, and sustainability of the independent media sector in Central Europe, finalized the selection of 10 media outlets from Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia. Following needs assessment, digital audit and organizational capacity assessment, each individual media outlet will receive a tailored package of support.

On May 2, as part of UNESCO's World Press Freedom Day events, USAID, the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), and the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice announced the launch of Reporters Shield. Reporters Shield is a membership program that defends investigative reporting around the world from legal threats, including libel, defamation, and strategic lawsuits against public participation (or SLAPP suits), meant to silence critical voices. The program is for media outlets and non-government organizations that report in the public interest. Private donor contributions fund the program to support U.S. media. Reporters Shield is accepting applications worldwide and is reviewing applications in a phased approach starting with Phase I, which includes organizations based in most countries in South America, North America, Europe, and Central Asia. USAID allocated \$1 million in FY 2021 funds for Central Europe to OCCRP for this effort.

*Question. Georgia:* The last two elections in Georgia were grudgingly deemed free by international observers, but they highlighted the role that state resources played in meaning that in many cases, elections were not necessarily fair.

As the October 2024 elections approach, how is USAID working to help ensure that these elections will be truly free and fair? Please be specific.

*Answer.* USAID has a robust elections and political processes portfolio that supports independent oversight of electoral processes to ensure that elections are free and fair. Through awards with the Consortium for Election and Political Processes (CEPPS) and local civil society organizations, USAID will support the following activities to safeguard the integrity of Georgia's 2024 parliamentary elections.

*Pre-Election Assessment Missions:* Through CEPPS, USAID will support international non-profit organizations to conduct at least two high-level pre-election missions, one in the year leading up to the elections and at least one approximately 2–3 months before the elections, emphasizing the international community's expectations to all stakeholders about the responsibility to comply with international standards for democratic elections.

*Long-Term Observation:* Through CEPPS, USAID will support leading international non-profit organizations to deploy long-term observers and analysts in the 6 months prior to Election Day, enabling both wide geographic and in-depth thematic coverage of key electoral developments. Long-term observers will provide geographic coverage of all 10 Georgian regions and the broader Tbilisi metropolitan area, as well as analyze key electoral themes. Key observers will remain in Georgia following Election Day to monitor post-election events.

*Short-Term Observation:* Through CEPPS, USAID will support leading international non-profit organizations to organize delegations of observers on Election Day. In the week leading up to the polls, CEPPS will deploy teams of international

delegates and staff to assess preparations for Election Day and the conduct of elections. CEPPS will recruit high-profile delegates from the U.S. and Europe, including former diplomats, elected officials, civil society leaders, academics, and regional experts from its global network of election experts.

*Reporting:* In the months leading up to Election Day, USAID will support, through CEPPS, leading international non-profit organizations to conduct a series of Georgia Watcher updates, which serve as situation reports and interactive conference calls for relevant U.S. Government and European Union stakeholders to engage in Q&A and analysis, followed by post-election reports.

*Grants to Local Elections Monitoring Organizations:* USAID supports the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy, the Georgian Young Lawyers Association, Transparency International Georgia, and Public Movement Multinational Georgia, to conduct parallel vote tabulation and monitor campaign finance, use of state resources, and electoral dispute resolution processes.

In addition, we will be coordinating with our colleagues at the Department of State, Embassy Tbilisi, and the National Security Council, and others to ensure that the United States has a fully comprehensive set of interventions to try to ensure that the electoral process is free, fair, and credible, and meets international and European standards for elections.

*Question. INDO-PACIFIC:* What is USAID's anticipated role in the mandatory spending packages to "out-compete China," specifically the infrastructure request (\$2 billion over 5 years) and the Indo-Pacific request (\$2 billion over 5 years)? Please ensure your answer is forward-looking, rather than only prior examples of USAID's work.

*Answer.* A mandatory funding stream will empower USAID to fill strategic investment and programming gaps in sustainable infrastructure investments, private sector-led financing, and long-term planning that lays the foundations for thriving, open, transparent and just societies. It will also send a clear message that the United States is fully committed to joining with our allies, friends, and partners in building a free and open Indo-Pacific for years to come.

This funding will support new and innovative ways—and scale existing efforts—to support our allies and partners around the world by providing a viable alternative to the PRC Government's predatory and coercive practices and expansion and offer alternatives at a scale that discretionary spending simply cannot meet.

To fortify host government systems against the "People's Republic of China (PRC) Government's corrupting influence, new, integrated anti-corruption programming will focus on strategic corruption in key sectors, specifically critical minerals, energy, technology, telecommunications, and transportation infrastructure. USAID will bring to scale the partnerships necessary to improve the transparency of infrastructure, transportation, and trade initiatives that risk harming people, the environment, and creating vulnerabilities to coercion.

USAID's tailored efforts will support partner priorities to deploy renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies, transform and modernize utilities, drive regional cooperation, and stimulate private-sector participation and investments. Together, these efforts will help diversify energy systems away from the PRC and Russia while also reducing costs and fighting climate change. For example, in support of the U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda Partnership and India's national target of deploying 500 gigawatts of renewable energy by 2030, additional mandatory funding will accelerate large-scale renewable energy deployment, promote grid flexibility to integrate renewables, advance energy efficiency, and support the large-scale rollout of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure throughout South Asia. USAID will mitigate the PRC's regulatory tactics and supply chain monopolization of essential medical products, utilizing additional mandatory funding to build local capacities of partner countries' competitive manufacturing, procurement, regulatory systems, technology development and investment, financing, and workforce development. These efforts will increase supply chain diversification and reduce dependence on products supplied by PRC in local, regional, global, and U.S. pharmaceutical markets.

As the PRC seeks to shape digital development through its Digital Silk Road initiative, Pacific Island countries require national and regional digital transformation and cybersecurity strategies that are aligned with international best practices. Mandatory funding will scale USAID's successful partnership with the Taiwan International Cooperation and Development Fund (TaiwanICDF) to build partners' capacity to detect and mitigate cybersecurity risks and provide proper incident response while showcasing the benefits to countries of partnering with Taiwan.

Reliable access to Asia's critical water assets is more challenging due to climate change and the PRC's leveraging of water to exploit transnational tensions over

shared waters. New USAID efforts will directly illuminate the ill effects of PRC infrastructure projects on water assets, empowering partners to pursue self-reliant growth, and rebuff external pressures. The \$2 billion mandatory infrastructure request will be managed by the State Department through a global infrastructure fund. USAID will endeavor to utilize the fund for programs in the Pacific Islands, which require more concentrated grant financing to meet their unique infrastructure needs, due to their geographic remoteness, small economies, and dispersed populations. With mandatory funding, USAID will blend grant funding with conventional technical assistance models, allowing for more comprehensive, strategic, and sustainable infrastructure investment in the Pacific. More flexible financing will mobilize private finance and leverage investment from Australia, Japan, and New Zealand. Bringing these critical resources to bear will strengthen U.S. leadership on key Pacific priorities, improve U.S. competitiveness against the PRC's approach of visible infrastructure projects, and ensure regional initiatives such as the Partners in the Blue Pacific and the Quad deliver on commitments.

*Question.* What kind of programming is USAID doing in agriculture in the Philippines?

*Answer.* USAID is the largest grant donor to the Philippines' Department of Agriculture and is working with the Department to help harmonize regulatory requirements for food and agricultural commodities. USAID is also supporting the improvement of crop varieties, including the development of Golden Rice, a more nutrient-dense rice variety, and the Feed the Future Insect-Resistant Eggplant Partnership project, which advances the development of eggplant varieties that are highly resistant to pests.

In partnership with the Philippine Department of Trade and Industry and the private sector, USAID supported the development of warehouse receipt systems and the adoption and scaling of cold storage technology.

USAID is also connecting farmers with buyers through the use of digital platforms to support livelihoods. As of last year, USAID's DELIVER-E initiative has already moved 422 tons of fresh farm produce valued at \$700,000, enabling about 600 farmers to double incomes, and small and medium enterprises to increase their profit margins by six-fold.

At the local level, USAID is working with more than 10,000 cooperative members and small and medium agribusinesses across 80 cooperatives. Our assistance includes strengthening governance and financial management and facilitating access to finance and participating in domestic and global value chains. As a next step, USAID intends to partner with public-private networks, such as the Philippine Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture, to explore expanding cooperative development support to the fisheries sector to support a request from the Cooperative Development Authority.

Recognizing that fisheries are a major protein and food staple in the Philippines, USAID helped protect 2.58 million hectares of oceans in the country to support its long-term sustainability. This includes efforts around rebuilding stocks of smaller fish species critical to the food chain, particularly the use of the Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing Index and Threat Assessment Tool in municipal waters and in the fisheries management areas. This tool assesses the status of IUU fishing in a given area, identifies other longer-lasting and targeted solutions to reducing IUU fishing, and tracks the progress towards preventing, deterring, and eliminating IUU fishing in Philippine waters across various levels of governance, from municipal to fisheries management areas to the entire country. By using this tool, USAID is improving the productivity of wild fisheries to achieve food security by securing community tenure rights of fisheries resources and promoting market-based approaches. Additionally, USAID developed Fish Tiangge, a Facebook marketplace that enables buyers to purchase fish directly from fishers during the COVID-19 pandemic to support livelihoods and nutrition and connected 6,000 fishers with more than 300,000 households. Through various post-harvest, fish processing and financial management training with fishing communities and fisherfolk organizations, USAID also ensures that fisherfolk have the capacity to properly handle, consolidate and process fish, thus enabling them to meet market requirements for responsibly sourced seafood and reduce waste.

In addition, USAID's disaster risk reduction and preparedness programs support the resilience of the most vulnerable farming households. Examples of this support include supporting at-risk farming communities to integrate preparedness frameworks and resilience strategies, such as promoting climate smart agriculture practices, establishing Climate Resilient Farmer Field Schools, and assessing and supporting the development of preparedness and response plans for farming house-



holds. These efforts help the most vulnerable populations prepare for and recover from disasters by helping to mitigate the impacts of disasters at the household level.

USAID, in partnership with Buktamaco, the economic arm of the Bukidnon Tagoloanon tribe, is implementing the 2-year Mindanao Bamboo Value Chain Development Project. Working with a diverse team of indigenous population nurseries, planters and private sector actors from Mindanao and the United States, the Project aims to stimulate a bamboo value chain that will allow Mindanao planters to participate in the multi-billion-dollar global bamboo economy. Additionally, bamboo absorbs greenhouse gasses, and because of its rapid growth, is very useful as a tool for carbon sequestration. Bamboo also helps avoid fossil fuel use, and reduce deforestation, by offering an alternative, highly renewable source of biomass energy.

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RESPONSES OF MS. SAMANTHA POWER TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

*Question. Ukraine:* Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Congress has enacted four supplemental appropriations laws, providing a total of \$113 billion in emergency funding for FY 2022 and FY 2023. This includes approximately \$88 billion for foreign assistance, including to Ukraine and to other countries impacted by the war.

How have the four Ukraine supplemental aid packages enacted since the February 2022 invasion enabled USAID to meet its goals to promote humanitarian and development aid in Ukraine?

Answer. We stand with Ukraine and greatly appreciate the supplemental aid packages Congress has provided to date, which have been indispensable in providing the necessary support to the citizens and Government of Ukraine while also advancing U.S. Government objectives. As a complement to the security assistance, the direct budget support provided through bipartisan congressional appropriations has enabled the Government of Ukraine to continue to keep the government functioning and to preserve key services for its citizens like healthcare and education. This is an economic war as well as a military war, and our support is essential to Ukraine on both fronts.

These aid packages have enabled indispensable development programming on priorities ranging from supporting energy workers to keep heat and power flowing to supporting critical energy infrastructure repairs during winter; supporting human rights activists to document and report on war crimes and human rights abuses; and assisting farmers with critical inputs such as seeds and fertilizers and finance support of more than \$49 million in grants and loans. They have also enabled more than \$500 million in assistance across sectors including local and national governance; anti-corruption initiatives to ensure accountability of foreign assistance funding flowing into the country; and funding to help advance reforms, civil society and media support, trade and finance, and health sector programming among others. In addition, these assistance packages have allowed USAID to appropriately respond to the humanitarian impact of the Ukraine crisis by providing life-saving humanitarian assistance in Ukraine as well as to 44 countries around the world whose populations are increasingly food insecure because of the impacts of Putin's war. Congress' supplemental funding allowed USAID to provide the most vulnerable Ukrainians with thermal blankets, medical supplies, emergency health kits, safe drinking water, shelter materials, protection services, and other lifesaving support.

*Question.* How would USAID operations in Ukraine be impacted if Congress does not enact further supplemental aid packages in the next fiscal year?

Answer. Despite the historic support Ukraine has received from the United States and other countries, Ukraine continues to face monumental challenges in funding its requirements to meet the needs of its people, and ultimately, recovering from the conflict's devastation. International Disaster Assistance funding appropriated through the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 *Additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act* allowed USAID to maintain robust levels of humanitarian assistance in Ukraine this fiscal year. USAID is working to tighten the focus of humanitarian assistance in Ukraine in FY24, and strengthen the coordination between humanitarian and development assistance, as well as increasingly engage the Government of Ukraine in responding to needs. Further, USAID is monitoring the global effects of the war in Ukraine on prices and availability of agricultural commodities and inputs, particularly for vulnerable countries who relied on the Black Sea food exports and who have large populations facing increased food prices and insecurity. However, absent additional supplemental appropriations, USAID projects a significant decrease to humanitarian assistance inside Ukraine as well as to other major crises worldwide.

*Question. Georgia:* The FY 2024 request indicates that Georgia would continue to be the second-highest aid recipient in Europe and Eurasia after Ukraine. Georgia would receive \$88 million in the budget, compared to \$107 million in FY 2022 funding. At the same time, Georgia has seen dramatic democratic backsliding in recent years. Billionaire businessman and former Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili holds an oligarchic-like grip on Georgia's government from behind the scenes. Transparency International has reported on the rapidly deteriorating state of anti-corruption enforcement and declining media and civil society freedoms, which have jeopardized its European Union accession hopes. Additionally, various high-ranking officials of the ruling Georgian Dream Party also launched verbal attacks on U.S. Ambassador Kelly Dignan last year after she spoke up for independent voices and institutions.

Please explain why the Administration proposes to maintain a relatively high level of assistance for Georgia in light of recent concerns about the pace of Georgia's European integration efforts and declining democratic trends more broadly?

*Answer.* USAID's work in Georgia is critically important to protect Georgia's democracy, Euro-Atlantic integration, and sovereignty, especially in light of Georgia's significant democratic backsliding, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and Russia's ongoing occupation of 20 percent of Georgia's territory.

USAID programming in Georgia is designed to slow democratic backsliding; provide critical support to civil society and independent media partners actively working to counter anti-Western disinformation; and ensure that the Georgian Government remains accountable to citizens, the majority of which support Georgia joining the EU and NATO, especially in the lead up to Georgia's critical 2024 and 2025 elections. Programs also build resilience in vulnerable communities, including those along the Administrative Boundary Lines of Georgian territories occupied by Russia; support Georgia's economic and energy independence away from Russia; and promote greater regional cooperation, stability, and peace in the South Caucasus.

Reducing assistance would only lessen the U.S. Government's ability to push Georgia in the right direction; undermine our relationship with Georgia's citizens, the vast majority of which aspire for Western integration; and benefit malign actors that seek to keep Georgia from the West, threatening U.S. Government interests in Georgia and the Caucasus. This funding, which supports actors and initiatives who are working to move Georgia in the right direction—towards Europe—is more important than ever.

*Question. Global Health Systems:* In December 2022, USAID launched Primary Impact (formerly known as Accelerating Primary Health Care Collaborative (APHC-C)) to work with five partner countries in Africa to develop comprehensive strategies to improve primary health care and bridge silos to foster resilient health systems. At the same time, we know that the health workforce is integral to support a country's health system. I appreciate USAID's growing focus on frontline health workers, including through the Global Health Worker Initiative.

Reducing the estimated 10 million global health worker shortage is essential to delivering primary health care, responding to emerging threats, and reducing inequities in health and survival. Health workers depend on all of the building blocks of a health system working together. For example, health workers are less likely to succeed and remain on the job if they are not fairly compensated and paid in a timely manner, do not have access to adequate resources such as medications and equipment, or if they do not have access to reliable patient data.

As USAID looks to develop more comprehensive approaches to support health systems, how are you leveraging programs, such as the Global Health Worker Initiative or the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative, that focus on a specific area, to strengthen health systems more broadly?

*Answer.* USAID funds both program area-specific and cross-cutting health systems strengthening (HSS) programming. Foundational, cross-cutting investments in HSS complement and amplify the effect of program area-specific programs, prevent duplication and inefficiency, and are critical to achieving lasting and sustainable progress in all USAID's health program areas and investments. USAID's cross-cutting approach to HSS activities—such as sustainable financing interventions, support for better delivery and management of commodities, and improved use of human resources data systems—positively benefit all health areas. These comprehensive and cross-cutting HSS approaches are closely aligned with and supportive of key initiatives including USAID's Primary Impact and the USG's Global Health Worker Initiative (GHWI).

Program area-specific investments also play an essential role in strengthening health systems. For example, the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) delivers malaria services in an integrated manner and invests in platforms for providing pre-

vention and treatment services that strengthen the underlying health system. In many countries, community health workers trained by PMI test and care for children with malaria, as well as other deadly diseases, such as diarrhea and pneumonia, and provide nutrition and maternal health services. Investments in laboratories and platforms for malaria campaigns also strengthen countries' diagnostic capacity and delivery of vaccines for other diseases. Further leveraging these investments across global health program areas will advance efforts to leave our partner country primary health systems stronger.

*Question. Democracy Support—Concentration in EPP Funding:* A vital component of USAID's broad range of assistance efforts worldwide is to support those people in other countries who are seeking to strengthen democracy and rights-respecting governance in the face of authoritarian resurgence, and the Committee is strongly supportive of the Agency's initiatives in this regard. Yet, as Administrator Power said in her speech on a Global Revolution of Dignity on June 7, 2022, "USAID and other development agencies have supported elections for decades, but we have not always kept up with these pernicious methods [of repressive government]." The Committee is also strongly supportive of the core objective of USAID's recently released Acquisition and Assistance Strategy's goal to achieve "a more diverse set of partners engaged to implement locally led development solutions." As the Strategy states, "the A&A workforce should proactively seek diverse prospective partners, consider the benefits of making awards to new and local partners, and work to lower barriers through flexible A&A approaches." (A&A Strategy p.14)

"We understand that there are more than 20 well-regarded nongovernmental organizations in the U.S.—and many scores more around the world—that have developed capacity and skills and networks to do good work in the field Elections and Political Processes (EPP). Yet since 1995, USAID has awarded more than \$2 billion in funding for Elections and Political Processes programs to a single recipient, the Consortium for Elections and Political Processes Strengthening (CEPPS). Moreover, the proportion of funding going to CEPPS has been trending up. In FY 2021 alone CEPPS received 66 percent of USAID EPP funding (labeled Political Competition and Consensus Building), according to data from USAID's *foreignassistance.gov* website (using a similar approach to USAID's own localization indicators—i.e., excluding funding to foreign governments, interagency agreements, personal services contracts, and agreements with multilateral organizations). This seems like a curiously high concentration of large amounts of resources in very few hands.

"CEPPS has been the recipient, over a period now spanning more than 25 years, of five successive global, single-award EPP programs. This would appear to be inconsistent with the spirit of the A&A strategy cited above, and its goal of making awards to new and local partners.

"The most recent—the Democratic Elections and Political Process (DEPP) Leader With Associates (LWA) agreement awarded in 2021, with a ceiling of \$835 million—seems to have been the largest mechanism in Democracy, Rights, and Governance ever made by USAID.

*Agency Risk in Political Party Programming:* The USAID Office of Inspector General concluded in November 2019 that, 'USAID's reliance on a single consortium to implement the majority of political party assistance in Europe, Eurasia, and the Middle East exposes the Agency to risks that can diminish its ability to achieve political strengthening and democracy goals and damage the Agency's reputation.'

*Directive for CEPPS in FY2021 Joint Explanatory Statement:* In directing spending by USAID on Elections and Political Processes support around the world, the Joint Explanatory Statement of the FY 2021 *Omnibus Appropriations Act* expressly named one organization, the Consortium on Elections and Political Processes Strengthening (CEPPS). Specifically, the Joint Explanatory Statement stated:

'Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS)—The agreement includes funds at not less than the prior fiscal year level for CEPPS. The USAID Administrator is directed to ensure that the follow-on solicitation encourages consortia applicants and that the award is made to an organization or consortium that meets the following criteria: (1) history of quality past performance; (2) demonstrated institutional capabilities and expertise in democracy, elections, and quick response to political crises; and (3) worldwide geographic reach including in non-permissive environments.'

Has USAID felt constrained by the language in the Joint Explanatory Statement quoted above, specifically referencing the dominant implementer in this field, from widening the circle of the Agency's partners?

Answer. The solicitation USAID issued for its global Democratic Elections and Political Processes (DEPP) Leader with Associate (LWA) award followed the guidance and criteria of this Congressional language referenced above and resulted in only one qualified application. The successful applicant, CEPPS, however, is a consortium that includes more than one implementer. In addition to the three prime holders—the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the National Democratic Institute (NDI)—it includes four senior technical partner organizations: the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI), the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), Democracy Arch (D-Arch), and Internews, all of which have an equal opportunity to bid on associate awards and shape the technical approach of work being carried out through the DEPP LWA.

*Question.* What could be done to enhance competition in this area—such as encouraging individual missions worldwide to openly compete for awards for Elections and Political Processes programs?

Answer. The Agency's preference is for competition, and USAID Missions are already encouraged to openly compete elections and political processes programs. Missions have numerous options for supporting qualified international, United States-based, regional, and local partners to carry out electoral assistance activities. While some Missions have relied on the pre-competed global mechanism for elections and political processes programming, others have used full and open competition or restricted competition to local and regional organizations, in line with Agency localization efforts. In a number of cases, Missions have chosen to award one or more election and political processes activities to a variety of partners to best meet their needs.

*Question.* Would you consider in future solicitations for worldwide EPP mechanisms doing what the Agency did in 2021 for the Civil Society and Media—Strengthened Together and Advancing in New Directions (CSM-STAND) LWA, when two parallel awards were made? While those awards were divided by regions, one could also envision two (or more) parallel global awards—which could provide Missions with more opportunities to diversify their partners.

Answer. Yes.

*Question.* Given USAID's emphasis on diversifying and localizing its partner base, what is the Agency doing specifically in Elections and Political Processes programs to ensure there are more opportunities for new, local, and nontraditional partners to partner with USAID?

Answer. USAID is committed to channeling a larger portion of funds directly to credible local partners through its localization agenda. USAID has set an ambitious agency-wide goal for increasing funding directly to local partners. Washington and Mission operating units are being actively encouraged to consider funding for local partners where appropriate, including in the elections and political processes sub-sector. In addition, the Agency's procurement policies in ADS 303 were updated in 2023 to allow for restricted competition for local and underutilized partners, thereby giving more flexibility to missions and Washington operating units in their selection process, including for elections and political processes programs. Agency staff are encouraged to consider the full range of procurement options. Some examples include:

- Kenya: Through a locally-competed annual program statement (APS), USAID dedicated \$14 million to three Kenyan-led consortiums to provide support to government bodies with election-related responsibilities, conduct civic and voter education and carry out peacebuilding and conflict mitigation activities around Kenya's 2022 election process.
- Paraguay: In 2022 USAID awarded, through a competitive APS process limited to local organizations, a grant to a local civil society organization to conduct surveys to assess the general public's awareness of organized crime and corruption in politics, and use the results to inform actions taken by civil society to mitigate this problem.
- Tanzania: USAID currently has a Strengthening Inclusive, Democratic, Participatory, and Accountable Governance (SIDPAG) Annual Program Statement for local organizations—up to \$15,000,000—that covers electoral assistance and support for civic and political leadership of women and girls.

- Uganda: USAID localized a significant portion of its elections and political processes work by awarding a large, multi-year activity—Supporting Citizen Engagement in Elections (SCENE)—to a local implementing partner. As the CEPPS award came to a close in 2022, USAID issued a 5-year extension to the local SCENE activity, which has taken on much of the scope of the now-ended CEPPS award.
- Southern Africa: USAID issued a solicitation limited to local groups for the Southern Africa Political Parties and Dialogue Program (SAPPD) which works to strengthen the democratic structures and institutions of political parties in several countries in Southern Africa to better respond to and represent the needs of their constituents, particularly in the areas of water and energy resource management. The implementer is a South African organization, Democracy Works Foundation.
- Regional Leader with Associate Awards: USAID issued a solicitation limited to local and regional partners, which resulted in two Regional Elections and Political Transitions Leader with Associates awards, one covering Africa and awarded to South African organization Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) and one covering Asia and the Pacific and awarded to Indonesian organization Perludem. USAID missions in Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar and Liberia have procured associate awards through the Africa Regional LWA.

*Question.* How has the Agency responded to, or acted upon, the observation quoted above from the November 2019 OIG report?

Answer. USAID fully responded to OIG Audit 8–000–20–001–P; found on the OIG webpage: <https://oig.usaid.gov/node/3616>.

USAID agreed with all six recommendations of the OIG Audit to improve USAID's policies and processes to further minimize the risk of bias in the Agency's DRG programs.

As part of this response, USAID identified the follow-on to the Global Elections and Political Transitions (GEPT) award as the best opportunity to explore ways to work with a broader range of implementers providing political party assistance. USAID committed that it would use the design processes for the new follow on award to explore opportunities to use innovative methods for co-creation to increase the diversity of partnerships for the new award.

The DRG Center worked with USAID's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA) to issue a Request For Information (RFI) in December of 2019. USAID received 15 submissions on January 30, 2020, from a variety of interested parties. The DRG Center conducted a consultation with USAID procurement reform team and M/OAA, an internal analysis of the RFIs and a gap analysis of other potentially interested companies. Based on that analysis, USAID invited 27 organizations to a half-day facilitated pre-solicitation conference on February 26, 2020. USAID conducted another internal review of all the feedback from the RFIs and the pre-solicitation conference notes in early April. The Agency used that as the basis of a Program Description for the solicitation and incorporated directive language contained in the FY 2021 Appropriation Law.

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RESPONSES OF MS. SAMANTHA POWER TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

*Question.* USAID regularly awards contracts and grants to United Nations agencies, such as the World Food Program, UNAIDS, and UNDP. This past March, UNAIDS supported the launch of a report by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) titled, "The 8 March Principles for a Human Rights-Based Approach to Criminal Law Proscribing Conduct Associated with Sex, Reproduction, Drug Use, HIV, Homelessness and Poverty." That report included a recommendation that national laws regarding the minimum age of consent be re-evaluated because it asserted that "sexual conduct involving persons below the domestically prescribed minimum age of consent to sex may be consensual in fact, if not in law."

This recommendation gives credence to claims made by sexual predators that justify their crimes by claiming their underage victims can provide consent and undermines efforts by the United States to protect children from sexual exploitation. Do you agree with the recommendations of the ICJ report?

Answer. No. USAID does not support and does not suggest that children can consent to sexual conduct consensually with older adults, especially in contradiction of criminal laws in foreign countries where we work. USAID has always worked to protect and promote human rights and will continue to engage UNAIDS and other donors to advance our shared goals.

USAID requires that all cost-type agreements with the United Nations, its specialized agencies, and related organizations contain a provision which states that, the parties have a zero-tolerance-for-inaction approach to tackling sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH). Under this provision, when UNAIDS is the recipient of a public international organization grant, it and its implementing partners, will take all reasonable and adequate steps to prevent SEA and SH of any person linked to the delivery of the agreement by both its employees and any implementing partner and respond appropriately when reports of SEA and SH arise. The provision further requires the recipient to apply the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Six Core Principles relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse when implementing USAID funded agreements. IASC core principle no. 2 specifically prohibits sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally.

USAID's website has a publicly available toolkit on child safeguarding standards, including our specific award requirements, frequently asked questions, and best practices, along with policy and implementation guidance to assist our implementing partners and staff. These materials communicate our expectations and requirements to our partners and reinforce that an individual under the age of 18 is a child regardless of the legal age of majority or consent, that a child cannot give informed consent to sexual activity, that any sexual activity with a child is prohibited, that allegations of such behaviors must be reported to USAID and the Office of Inspector General, and that we will take action to address such allegations and hold perpetrators accountable.

*Question.* What is the Administration's position on this ICJ report?

Answer. USAID does not support and does not suggest that children can consent to sexual conduct consensually with older adults, especially in contradiction of criminal laws in foreign countries where we work. USAID has always worked to protect and promote human rights and will continue to engage UNAIDS and other donors to advance our shared goals.

*Question.* Did USAID award any funding to UNAIDS during the 5-year period between 2018 and 2022 when UNAIDS worked with ICJ on compiling the report?

Answer. The U.S. Government has partnered with and provided funding to UNAIDS since its inception in 1994, and USAID continued to award funding to UNAIDS during the period of 2018 to 2022. USAID followed standard processes prior to awarding such funds, including Congressional notification of the use of funds that included monies for the U.S. Government's annual contributions, technical assistance to support countries in achieving their national HIV targets, and PEPFAR field support activities, such as for community-led monitoring.

*Question.* Can you commit to ensuring that USAID will not award any future funding to UNAIDS until it retracts its endorsement of the ICJ report?

Answer. USAID does not support and does not suggest that children can consent to sexual conduct consensually with older adults, especially in contradiction of criminal laws in foreign countries where we work. USAID has always worked to protect and promote human rights and will continue to engage UNAIDS and other donors to advance our shared goals.

*Question.* The Biden administration has rightly recognized that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is the only international adversary with "both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do it." Historically, the CCP has avoided investing many resources overseas, but this has changed under Xi Jinping and his newly announced Global Development Initiative and Global Security Initiative. Since 2021, Congress has appropriated millions of dollars for a "Countering People's Republic of China Malign Influence Fund." While this sounds good on paper, I am not sure this is leading to an actual increase in assistance that counters the PRC's rising influence across the developing world. Many recipients of U.S. assistance complain that "working with China means we get an airport, while working with the United States means we get a lecture." Can you detail what types of programming USAID defines as "countering PRC Malign Influence"?

Answer. We are grateful for Congress appropriating resources for the Countering PRC Influence Fund (CPIF), which allows the Agency to strategically invest in key sectors to counter PRC influence.

USAID development practices elevate inclusion, transparency, independence, partnership, sustainability, and respect for human rights and democratic norms—and builds on our decades-long history of supporting partners to achieve their own priorities and self-determination.

This approach, starting with our values, allows us to address the unique and broad impact of the PRC's detrimental development model, not by forcing countries to choose but by offering a better, more sustainable, and affirmative approach that advances accountable governance, the rule of law, and human rights protections and strengthens the foundations of open, just, transparent, prosperous, and sovereign societies.

USAID has identified four lines of efforts where development expertise, investments, and tools can be especially critical in supporting sustainable development. These include:

- Supporting partner countries to transparently conserve and manage natural resources, address and adapt to the climate crisis, and better protect the environment.
  - For example, the FY 2024 budget proposal will support the countries of the Mekong to jointly and transparently address transboundary challenges on water security, smart hydropower, infrastructure planning, and sustainable development.
  - Our Green and Prosperous: Responsible Mining for our Future project is a FY 2021 CCIF-funded activity jointly managed by DDI and ACTF in the green energy minerals sector designed to advance transparent and accountable management of critical minerals as well as supply chain security.
- Empowering partner countries to develop open and secure digital ecosystems—including robust cybersecurity—and policies and regulations consistent with international standards.
  - For example, through the South Asia Regional Digital Initiative, USAID propels digital connectivity and economic development in South Asia by strengthening the digital capacity of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), raising awareness around critical cybersecurity issues, and fostering opportunities for MSMEs and governments to engage on digital and ICT policy issues.
  - USAID is leading in the International Open RAN Initiative, which is focused on increasing open radio access network market opportunities and demonstrating the development impact of opening up hardware and software markets. The activity is the main U.S.-backed alternative to PRC-based telecom companies and is part of a broader set of programming designed to address PRC efforts to re-shape the internet and telecommunications industry by demonstrating the value of an open, inclusive, and secure internet that respects human rights and reflects democratic values. Implementers for these Open RAN projects include: DAI/INVEST (research and planning), Indo-Pacific Opportunities (the Asia ORAN Academy), USAID/Peru CR3CE Alliance, and the Africa Trade and Investment contract.
- Helping partner countries demonstrate that democratic institutions, respect for human rights, and adherence to the rule of law will deliver tangible results for societies and individuals.
  - For example, in Timor-Leste, the FY 2024 budget proposal will strengthen civil society and support the Timorese Government's accountability and integrity public administration reform program, which seeks better management of state public resources and improved service delivery.
  - At the global level, USAID is working through its Greater Internet Freedom (GIF) project. GIF has two objectives: (1) increase the digital security capacity of civil society organizations, independent media, and human rights defenders, and (2) increase civil society engagement in digital rights policy advocacy in support of a free, open, secure, and interoperable internet. The project advances a model of internet freedom and digital rights that contrasts with authoritarian and sovereign models of the internet. GIF works with a network of international, regional, and local actors in 38 countries throughout the world.
- Ensuring that partner countries can enhance their own resilience and independence so that they can more effectively make their own sovereign decisions.
  - For example, in the Philippines, USAID will diversify trade and supply chain linkages related to critical minerals, boost domestic processing capacity, and improve minimum governance standards in the mining sector, thus

increasing fair and transparent extraction and weaning the Philippines off its export dependence.

- Another example is from Africa, where USAID is supporting the African Legal Support Facility (ALSF). ALSF is a public international organization housed at the African Development Bank providing legal and technical assistance to African governments on structuring complex transactions related to natural resources, energy, infrastructure, etc. The organization also provides assistance on avoiding unsustainable debt.

These lines of efforts are also represented in the FY22 State and USAID guidance for applying for DA and ESF-CPIF resources, which required that all proposals from Posts and Operating Units offer programming solutions to address specific problematic PRC influence efforts.

*Question.* Last April, Solomon Islands signed a security agreement with the People's Republic of China, which potentially gives the People's Liberation Army a naval presence in the Pacific that threatens our allies. The week before that agreement was signed, the State Department released a report criticizing the Solomon Islands' stance on LGBT rights. What initiatives was USAID supporting in the Solomon Islands when that agreement was signed?

*Answer.* USAID is committed to supporting Solomon Islands' development goals. We have expanded our work in Solomon Islands from climate and disaster assistance to additional programming in economic development, sustainable fisheries, democracy and governance, health, and the environment. Additionally, the recent re-opening of the U.S. Embassy in Honiara is an important milestone in strengthening our long-term partnership.

USAID's largest bilateral initiative in Solomon Islands is the Strengthening Competitiveness, Agriculture, Livelihoods and Environment (SCALE) Program. Working closely with the Solomon Islands Government, the project focuses on economic growth and trade, with specific emphasis on the development of the agribusiness sector and improved transparent management of the forestry sector. Through SCALE, more than 20 community groups and organizations have formally registered and received funds to pursue locally identified activities that will expand reforestation, livelihoods, and environmental protection efforts. SCALE also launched a \$1 million partnership agreement with the largest cocoa exporter in Solomon Islands to enable local farmers to extend their network into previously unserved areas and increase cocoa processing for domestic consumption and export to New Zealand. SCALE further partnered with public, private, and civil society organizations to identify 11 agribusiness small scale infrastructure projects that USAID will support.

USAID also has ongoing recovery, disaster risk reduction, and resilience bilateral programming in Solomon Islands, with a current total estimated investment of \$2.3 million. Our activities focus on building community-level capacity to understand natural hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities, manage and mitigate disaster risks, and improve knowledge on early warning systems.

*Question.* Similarly, Hungary is likely the most pro-CCP government in Europe. Nowhere else in Europe is the need most dire for assistance to counter the CCP's influence there. However, this January, you traveled to Hungary to meet with leaders of their LGBT community and to critique Hungarian Prime Minister Orban's stance on LGBT issues. How does that counter CCP influence in Europe?

*Answer.* In October 2022, USAID relaunched work in several Central European countries including Hungary, with a focus on strengthening civil society, democratic institutions, and independent media. With USAID undertaking this new programming, I subsequently traveled to Hungary in February 2023 to underscore for the Hungarian people, government, and our partners on the ground the strong commitment of the U.S. on issues such as fighting corruption, promoting the rule of law, and expanding civic engagement—priorities for USAID that also counter the governance model advanced by the People's Republic of China. During the trip, I engaged with various groups, including youth, governance and transparency advocates, and members of Hungary's LGBTQI+ community. In meeting with this community, I had the opportunity to hear about the very difficult experiences of many LGBTQI+ people in Hungary, who often face marginalization, discrimination, and fears about their safety and livelihoods. I emphasized that the United States stands with LGBTQI+ people, and supports their right to live lives free of interference and persecution. I believe that support for core tenets of democracy, including equality, dignity and human rights, is a distinguishing feature of U.S. foreign policy when compared to that of the People's Republic of China. More broadly, U.S. investments in the people of Hungary—like those launched by USAID—demonstrate the importance of our long friendship and contribute to countering PRC influence in the re-



gion. The trip also offered an opportunity to engage in candid conversation with Hungarian leaders, including the Ministers of Justice, Defense, and Chair of the Hungarian Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, where I discussed key concerns and encouraged a constructive approach to bolster our relationship at this critical juncture.

*Question.* According to USAID's website, USAID still provides development assistance to the People's Republic of China. While this does not go to the Government of the PRC or to the CCP, some of this funding goes to "addressing key cross-border challenges of global consequence" including "reducing greenhouse gas emissions," "preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS," and "combating wildlife trafficking." Can you confirm whether any of this development assistance benefits the CCP or the government of the PRC, including local level government bodies?

Does this assistance benefit Chinese companies, or non-government organizations affiliated with the Chinese Communist Party?

*Answer.* USAID does not provide assistance to or through the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC), nor does USAID assistance directly benefit companies or non-governmental organizations affiliated with the Chinese Communist Party. Besides activities supporting ethnic Tibetans within the PRC, USAID's only activities in the PRC are focused on countering wildlife trafficking, a transnational crime with global economic and security impacts as well as public health risks. These activities help reduce the availability of and demand for illegal wildlife products in China. We are working on updating USAID's website to reflect this.

*Question.* Is China a developing country?

*Answer.* No. The PRC should not receive preferential treatment or assistance as a result of having the status of a developing country, as defined by the World Bank given its per capita income.

*Question.* Does China lack the resources, financial or otherwise, or the capability to handle these "cross border challenges of global consequence" itself?

*Answer.* While the People's Republic of China has the resources and capacity to handle "cross border challenges of global consequences" itself, it does not have the will or the inclination to be a cooperative global partner on many issues that are of concern to the region and the rest of the world. COVID-19 proved that there are many areas where international cooperation or pressure are still vital to solve transnational challenges that directly harm U.S. citizens like pandemics, climate resilience, and the flow of illicit drugs and wildlife.

*Question.* How does development assistance provided to entities in the PRC help combat the CCP's malign influence?

*Answer.* USAID assistance does not directly benefit the PRC Government or CCP entities. USAID's TRAPS Wildlife Trafficking activity helps reduce the trade in illegal and/or high-risk wildlife and related products in the PRC. This trade harms wildlife populations in Africa and other regions outside of China, increases the risk of zoonotic disease spillover, while also benefiting criminal networks and corrupt individuals.

Separately, under an annual \$10 million congressional directive, USAID implements six awards in regions that have significant Tibetan populations in the PRC. In the face of PRC pressure to assimilate, our assistance helps ethnic Tibetan communities become more self-reliant and resilient, as well as helping to preserve their cultural heritage. USAID does not provide assistance to or through the government of the PRC. There are currently six activities, the first four of which run through 2024, while the last two run through 2027. For activities that will end in 2024, new activities are in the design process. These activities will build on current programs that aim to engage local Tibetan communities in cultural preservation, develop market linkages for established Tibetan businesses, identify community-led restoration plans and best management practices of soil, grassland, forest, and water resources with a focus on traditional Tibetan livelihoods, and increase the availability of basic health services for Tibetans.

*Question.* If we're going to more effectively compete with China, we have to start investing in trade and infrastructure and move away from antiquated models of aid. In 2018, Congress established the International Development Finance Corporation to directly compete with the CCP's Belt and Road Initiative, but the DFC still remains fairly isolated from other U.S. efforts to compete with China and often does not focus on projects that would actually advance U.S. interests. How does USAID plan to work more closely with the DFC to actually invest in infrastructure to help countries build markets rather than perpetuate dependence on foreign aid?

Answer. In establishing the DFC, Congress put forth a number of institutional linkages between USAID and DFC, which we have been working in close partnership to implement since the DFC launched. USAID's transactional partnership with DFC is centered on mobilizing much needed investment in the countries where we work. These investments are crucial in supporting USAID's work to catalyze private sector-led economic development in our partner countries and help build markets while offering alternative financing to that of PRC.

Since DFC launched, it has completed 66 transactions and invested more than \$900 million towards USAID development objectives. These are deals that USAID missions helped originate and support because of the impact on local markets, including investing in micro, small and medium and enterprises (MSMEs) that are vital parts of economic development in our partner countries. One example, which was supported by funds made available from the Countering China Influence Fund (CCIF), was a partnership with DFC and the African Union Development Agency to bolster financial inclusion and drive economic opportunity in low- and lower-middle income countries and increase food security and bolster food systems across sub-Saharan Africa.

DFC is best positioned to speak to its work to align with U.S. efforts to compete with PRC and advance U.S. interests. However, as a Board member of DFC, USAID has seen the advancement of a number of geopolitically important projects over the past 2 years which the USAID Administrator has voted to approve when presented to the Board. For example, the Board recently voted to approve an equity investment to TechMet, an investment platform focused on mine assets that produce minerals and metal, to support a downstream investment to Brazilian Nickel for operations and the expansion of its open pit nickel and cobalt mine in Brazil. These types of investments help counter and diversify away from PRC dominated supply chains.

*Question.* To what extent is USAID working with DFC to address complex issues, like diversifying the supply chains of developing countries away from China?

Answer. USAID and DFC work very closely to address complex development issues globally. Over the past 2 years our teams have partnered to advance 66 DFC investments and more than \$900 million of commitments towards USAID development objectives, including a host of complex issues—whether supporting businesses through economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, combating food insecurity and global shocks in agriculture supply chains, supporting Venezuelan migrant communities in Colombia to help them grow their businesses and drive economic growth, or ensuring that Ukrainian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have capital for much needed operational expenses.

USAID's Supply Chain Integrity and Freedom program is working with DFC to identify opportunities where DFC might be able to support investments in private companies to advance vital supply chains for American prosperity & security of newly emerging supply chains to include critical minerals, vital construction materials, agricultural inputs, pharmaceutical precursors, and microchip manufacturing equipment.

As a Board member, the USAID Administrator continues to support DFC's ability to mobilize capital to advance U.S. development and foreign policy interests.

- In December 2021, the Board voted to approve a \$500 million loan to First Solar, an American solar manufacturing company, to construct a solar PV module manufacturing facility in Tamil Nadu, India—a critically important project to advance alternative supply chains within the energy sector.
- In September 2022, the Board voted to approve an equity investment to TechMet, an investment platform focused on mine assets that produce minerals and metal, to support a downstream investment to Brazilian Nickel for operations and the expansion of its open pit nickel and cobalt mine in Brazil. The Board approved potential follow-on investments from TechMet in other eligible markets. These types of investments help counter and diversify away from PRC dominated supply chains.

We look forward to continuing to partner with and support DFC in combating complex global development challenges.

*Question.* According to USAID's Scaling Up Renewable Energy (SURE) website, the program aims to meet international climate commitments, strengthen energy security via private investment and procurement of clean electricity. However, many of the clean energy aid programs, such as solar-powered aid projects and wind turbine projects, source these products or components made in China. Besides USAID subsidizing China's industry by using solar panels and wind turbines parts for aid

projects, the production of these items in China is anything but “clean” and simply provides the veneer that these USAID projects somehow reduce Co2 emission. Further, there is ample concern that components used in these projects are likely connected to forced labor in China. How does USAID ensure that solar panels, wind turbines, or other “clean” energy products/components are not made in China by slave labor?

Answer. The vast majority of USAID energy sector assistance is unrelated to the procurement of renewable energy generation technology, such as solar panels, either directly or through its implementing partners. Nonetheless, all USG contract and assistance awards include an unambiguous prohibition on the use of forced labor in the performance of the award. In addition, for certain awards (as prescribed in the Federal Acquisition Regulation), USAID requires certification from both contractors and recipients that they have a compliance plan in place to prevent this prohibited activity (See ADS 303mav (<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/303mav.pdf>), paragraph 5 and FAR 52.222-56 (<https://www.acquisition.gov/far/52.222-56>)). USAID further advises all of its implementing partners, as well as USAID staff overseeing awards, to make use of a number of U.S. Government-provided resources that identify entities who have been determined to engage in forced labor practices (such as DHS’s UFLPA Entities List (<https://www.dhs.gov/uflpa-entity-list>)). This prohibition is enforced by USAID through its contract and grant management processes, and violations may result in termination of the award and referral to USAID’s Suspending and Debaring Official. However, in the rare instances in which items such as solar panels are directly procured, they are deemed “commercial products” under government-wide procurement regulations, and as such USAID is obligated to rely on contractors’ existing quality assurance systems as a substitute for government inspection. This reliance does not alleviate contractors of their legal obligation to refrain from using forced labor in the performance of federal awards.

*Question.* Are implementing or third-party partners for these “clean” energy aid projects required to source from non-China suppliers?

Answer. Consistent with statutory and regulatory requirements, all commodities and services procured under a USAID contract or assistance award generally must be sourced from the United States, the recipient country, or a developing country. Notably, in this context, USAID regulations define “sourced” to mean, in relevant part, “the country from which a commodity is shipped to the cooperating/recipient country . . . irrespective of the place of manufacture or production.” China is not considered a developing country for this purpose, so implementing partners cannot source from China unless a waiver has been issued, in accordance with USAID’s regulations and policies.

*Question.* Do current or future “clean” energy aid products, funded by USAID, contain Chinese produced solar panels or wind turbines?

Answer. USAID does not maintain a centralized database of the point of origin for all equipment purchased by USAID through our programs to be able to answer this question definitively. However, only a small percentage of USAID Clean Energy funding is used for direct purchases of equipment, and USAID does not purchase energy equipment directly from China. However, given the prevalence of products across all supply chains that were initially manufactured in the PRC and then integrated into commodities sourced from the U.S. or developing countries, our experts assess that some components produced in the PRC are likely to be contained within globally sourced energy equipment at this time until competitive alternative supply chains are available. USAID fully embraces the need for alternative supply chains and supports development of manufacturing capabilities in partner countries where practical, such as facilitating domestic smart meter production in Pakistan.

*Question.* With rising prices for gas, food, schools and housing, working families across America remain rightly concerned that their taxpayer dollars must be fairly and effectively spent. We owe it to American taxpayers to provide them with information and certainty that their money is not going to fund some Ukrainian oligarch’s personal slush fund. Repeated reports from USAID’s Office of Inspector General have found no evidence that assistance funds have been misused. While this looks like good news, this seems too good to be true. I would find it hard to believe that even a federal program in the United States would mean absolutely zero incidents of misuse. Do you stand by the findings of these OIG reports?

Answer. USAID’s Office of Inspector General (OIG) has declared that providing independent oversight of USAID’s support of Ukraine and its people is its top priority. Information concerning their efforts can be found on OIG’s website specifically

dedicated to Ukraine oversight: <https://oig.usaid.gov/our-work/ukraine-oversight>. We have no reason or basis to question the findings of OIG's reports. While we defer to OIG to answer specific questions about its work, we note the following statement from USAID Acting Deputy (performing the duties of the Inspector General) Nicole Angarella before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on March 29, 2023:

"Our investigators have provided more than 20 fraud awareness briefings to nearly 1,000 individuals employed by at least 9 organizations receiving USAID funds for programming in Ukraine. In these briefings, our special agents train aid workers and contractors to identify fraud indicators, potential misconduct, and other program vulnerabilities at an early stage, and report allegations directly to OIG. Our special agents and legal counsel also explain the whistleblower protections available under U.S. law to individuals from any country who elect to come forward. Specifically, our work relies on the ability of complainants to report information affecting USAID awards without fear of reprisal, and we aggressively investigate allegations of whistleblower retaliation. We also worked closely with our colleagues at the State Department and DoD OIGs to produce joint hotline materials in English and Ukrainian. Since broadcasting our joint message to report fraud to the OIGs, my office has received a substantial influx of reports. Specifically, since the issuance of our hotline materials, USAID OIG's hotline has received 178 reports related to Ukraine. This represents a 556 percent increase in reports from the previous 11-month period. To date, we have no serious criminal findings associated with USAID assistance to Ukraine. However, this increase in reporting shows that our outreach is working, and individuals know how to report potential misuse of USAID funds."

USAID is confident in OIG, its oversight work in Ukraine, and its current reporting. USAID is in regular communication with OIG regarding direct budget support to Ukraine, and has provided OIG with relevant information to help ensure they can effectively perform their independent oversight role. OIG has alter-ego authority to access the same documents or records that USAID has access to, in order to carry out OIG's independent oversight responsibilities. As Acting Deputy IG Angarella noted in her House Foreign Affairs Committee testimony:

"[OIG] recently issued three products related to USAID's Direct Budget Support (DBS) to the Government of Ukraine. The first report was an Information Brief that described the three different World Bank trust funds that USAID's money has gone through, and the oversight mechanisms associated with each fund. The second and third DBS products detailed and assessed the monitoring and safeguards in place to prevent corruption and ensure accountability within USAID's DBS programming. In these reports, we found that the oversight mechanisms aligned with the U.S. Government Accountability Office's standards for internal control. In a future report, we plan to assess the effectiveness of these established mechanisms."

*Question.* According to these reports, USAID primarily relies on Deloitte's Ukraine branch to audit Ukrainian Government spending of U.S. assistance funds and that all of these employees are Ukrainian nationals. Do U.S. auditors play any part in verifying Ukrainian Government spending of U.S. taxpayer dollars?

*Answer.* Under USAID's State-Owned Enterprise Reform Activity (SOERA), Deloitte provides technical assistance to the Ministry of Finance and other Ukrainian Government institutions on existing processes and procedures to oversee and report on direct budget support funding provided by USAID. This includes reporting on the use of funds, results achieved, and metrics used to measure results. The USAID Mission in Kyiv is working to procure an independent, third-party auditor to audit DBS funding, which will not include Deloitte given its role in providing technical assistance to the Government of Ukraine under SOERA. Deloitte has 12 Ukrainian nationals and 21 Americans engaged in DBS verification.

*Question.* How many direct hire USAID employees are physically working in Ukraine?

*Answer.* As of April 26, 2023, USAID's Mission in Ukraine is staffed with 110 people, of which 47 (40 Foreign Service Nationals and 7 U.S. Direct Hires) are working inside Ukraine. Under an Embassy cap of 106 U.S. Direct Hire positions operating in Kyiv, 7 of those belong to USAID (6 Mission U.S. Direct Hire and one Disaster Assistance Response Team lead). USAID's Mission in Ukraine follows the U.S. Embassy security guidelines and maintains a limited staffing footprint in Ukraine.

*Question.* Has USAID used implementing partners or USAID direct hire employees to verify oversight of USAID aid and programs in Ukraine?

Answer. USAID uses both direct hire employees and implementing partners to verify oversight of USAID aid and programs in Ukraine. All 42 USAID programs in Ukraine continue to operate through the work of nearly 1,400 implementing partner staff.

There are currently direct hire employees working for USAID's Ukraine Mission in Ukraine and remotely who provide monitoring and oversight of U.S. Government (USG) funding and programs. Mission staff hold in-person or virtual meetings with implementing partners and program beneficiaries and review reports, deliverables, photos, videos, and work plans to ensure activities are on track. Despite the ongoing war, USAID continues to implement oversight, monitoring, and accountability procedures in line with Agency directives. Requirements for monitoring, accountability, and oversight of USG funds and USG-funded equipment are included in all contracts and grants. Our implementing partner staff are also vital to these efforts—of nearly 1,400 implementing partner staff from USAID Ukraine Mission programs, over 1,000 remain in Ukraine—in addition to 47 Ukraine Mission staff still in-country (of 102 total). Activity-specific accountability includes the role of the Contracting/Agreement Officer's Representative to ensure compliance with monitoring and evaluation procedures and policy. This is supplemented by the Mission's overarching monitoring and evaluation team. Every activity has a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan with specific indicators and quantifiable targets. Work plans, regular reporting, and Risk Assessment and Management Plans are all required. USAID engagement with Ukrainian Government counterparts and civil society organizations increases visibility on assistance delivery and impact. Almost all Mission activities undergo a third-party evaluation.

In order to implement humanitarian assistance, the USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team team, currently composed of humanitarian experts based in Rzeszow, Poland, and in Kyiv, is augmented by a Response Management Team in Washington and supported by additional Monitoring and Evaluation and Risk Management specialists. USAID utilizes direct monitoring, third-party monitoring, and implementing partners' own monitoring and reporting, and continuously assesses and mitigates risks related to the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Ukraine. Despite a limited footprint in Kyiv, USAID conducts direct oversight of humanitarian assistance award activities with the approval of the U.S. Embassy's Ukraine Regional Security Officer. USAID also uses third-party monitoring to mitigate access limitations and independently monitor our humanitarian assistance partners' activities. In addition, every partner is required to abide by an approved Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, which is reviewed by USAID prior to implementation. Direct monitoring and third-party monitoring complement the monitoring by implementing partners to provide greater oversight, accountability, and visibility into the efficacy of USAID programming.

USAID currently delivers Direct Budget Support (DBS) to Ukraine through the World Bank Public Expenditures for Administrative Capacity Endurance (PEACE) mechanism, which reimburses the Government of Ukraine (GOU) for expenses incurred in pre-approved expenditure categories. Funding is only disbursed to the GOU following verification of expenses by the Ministry of Finance and World Bank, which minimizes risk of diversion. USAID contracted an independent third-party monitor, Deloitte, to review financial controls and procedures utilized by the GOU to track and oversee U.S. funds being used for DBS. Deloitte's experts are reviewing the Ukrainian Ministry of Finance's existing monitoring, transparency, verification and reporting systems and procedures, identifying and strengthening responses to gaps, and supporting reporting on DBS tranches. Deloitte is conducting three tiers of spot checks to trace payments from the U.S. Government through the World Bank to the GOU's Single Treasury Account (Tier 1), then to recipient governmental organizations and institutions (Tier 2), and ultimately down to individual beneficiaries (Tier 3).

*Question.* Since the start of the invasion in February 2022, the U.S. has provided billions of dollars in "direct budgetary support" to the Ukrainian Government to offset its shortfalls in tax collection. This support is going to pay the salaries and pensions of Ukrainian public officials, to ensure continuation of Ukrainian public services. While this may have made sense at the beginning of the invasion when there was an urgent need to help Ukraine handle a dramatic shock to its public finances, Ukraine has now had the time to adjust. What assistance is USAID providing to ensure Ukraine regains its ability to be self-reliant in paying public sector salaries?

Answer. The U.S. Government, and USAID in particular, continues to focus on helping Ukraine win the war and set the right conditions for a speedy recovery, reconstruction, and ultimately self-reliance. USAID is working to help Ukraine's economy—critical to help Ukraine regain its fiscal strength—through activities such

as implementing critical infrastructure for export, investing in digitization, supporting Ukrainian businesses, advancing economic reforms, and facilitating private and foreign direct investment. We are helping Ukraine expand trade throughout the country and build import and export relationships with the European Union and the United States, with the goal of restarting and expanding the production of goods and services in Ukraine, increasing access to markets for Ukrainian products, creating jobs, and restoring government tax revenues. We are also focused on helping specific vulnerable groups, such as veterans, persons with disabilities, female-headed households, and internally displaced persons and returnees. This will enable Ukraine to more fully utilize its labor potential and generate revenue needed for recovery.

*Question.* Has USAID approached the Ukrainian Government on the need to consider other possibilities to remain solvent, such as reducing the salaries of government workers, or re-examining the steep tax cuts Ukraine announced at the start of the war?

*Answer.* USAID assesses that it is unlikely that the Government of Ukraine (GOU) will be able to increase revenue while Russia continues to wage its illegal war through its indiscriminate and destructive bombing campaign. While USAID has not approached the GOU about further reducing salaries for government employees or re-evaluating previous tax cuts in order for the GOU to raise revenues, we note, however, that the GOU has already instituted austerity measures, which includes downsizing their government. All national ministries are downsizing by 30 percent, even as the country looks to cut unemployment and get at least 1 million people back to work. The goal is to combine redundant parts of ministries, streamline actions, and redefine what the government should be doing. The result of these efforts has reduced their fiscal budgetary needs from \$5 billion per month to \$3.5 billion per month. USAID is also working with the GOU on reforms in critical sectors of the economy and infrastructure, so that Ukraine has the ability to raise revenues in the future through increased market activity.

*Question.* How much are our European counterparts contributing to ensuring that the Ukrainian Government remains solvent?

*Answer.* Since the start of Russia's war of aggression, the European Union (EU), Member States, and the European Financial Institutions—in a Team Europe approach—are making available up to €37.8 billion in financial, humanitarian, and budget support to Ukraine as of April 2023. To ensure the Ukrainian Government remains solvent, the EU is providing up to €25.2 billion in direct budget support through highly concessional loans through 2023 in addition to €2.3 billion in EU guarantees. Of the €18 billion allocated for 2023, the EU disbursed the first €3 billion in January 2023 and has been distributing €1.5 billion a month since March with a third installment of €1.5 billion made on April 25. This package will support paying wages and pensions and maintaining essential public services, such as hospitals, schools, and housing for relocated people. It will also ensure macroeconomic stability and help restore critical infrastructure that has been destroyed.

The EU has provided approximately 4 million people from Ukraine with temporary protection status since February 2022, granting displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine certain rights in the EU, including a residence permit, access to the labor market and suitable accommodation or housing, medical care, and access to education for children. The EU has made up to €17 billion available to member states to assist with refugees in the EU. Unofficially, the European Commission estimates total EU member state spending on refugees at €20 billion in 2022, and €30 billion per year in 2023 and 2024.

Other donors are also stepping up. Norway, Canada, and Japan have committed more than the United States when calculating funding as a percentage of gross domestic product. On February 16, 2023, Norway announced a \$7.3 billion, 5-year support package to Ukraine—the breakdown for all years has not been announced, but will likely include approximately \$3.7 billion in civilian assistance. On March 15, Denmark announced the creation of a new \$1 billion Ukraine Fund to include military, civil, and commercial support. The fund will provide \$770 million for military assistance; \$170 million for civilian support, including humanitarian efforts and long-term reconstruction; and \$60 million for business subsidies to assist Danish businesses contributing to the rebuilding of Ukraine.

The scope and scale of Putin's brutality requires a sustained, shared response. The United States has rallied our partners to respond swiftly and as a unified force. USAID continues to use every opportunity to raise the importance of sustained financial support to Ukraine with European and other like-minded donor counterparts.

*Question.* Next year, Venezuela is scheduled to hold general elections. The democratic opposition faces an uphill battle to win these elections, to say the least. As long as the Maduro regime controls the central election commission, it is absolutely certain the results will be rigged in their favor.

What assistance is USAID providing to the Venezuelan democracy movement to give them the best chance possible to compete in next year's elections?

*Answer.* The Maduro regime has yet to demonstrate willingness to allow necessary conditions for free and fair elections in 2024. However, the Venezuelan opposition has won important elected positions under unfavorable conditions in the past. The October 22 primaries are an opportunity for the opposition to regain momentum and expand their appeal in Venezuela, while the Maduro regime itself is nearing an all time low in popularity.

USAID is supporting the Venezuelan pro-democracy movement through technical assistance, focusing on activities that promote the democratic opposition's consensus and collective action, including a primary. USAID supports activities to monitor and improve electoral conditions, report irregularities, and ensure that news of irregularities is shared widely. USAID supports independent stakeholders and civil society to mobilize Venezuelans in the defense of their political rights and advocate for a more competitive, inclusive, and transparent electoral process. USAID does not support specific candidates or political parties.

*Question.* Is USAID considering providing any other assistance to help the opposition respond to the possibility that elections will end up handing the Maduro regime a rigged victory?

*Answer.* USAID supports democratic civil society and independent media organizations in holding the regime accountable for its actions. Our assistance includes activities to monitor and improve electoral conditions, report irregularities, and ensure news of irregularities is shared widely.

USAID will continue our long-standing support for outreach and communication efforts that describe standards and procedures for electoral participation to the Venezuelan public. USAID will also provide assistance to facilitate and mobilize Venezuelans to register or update their voter registration and mobilize citizens to defend free and fair elections should the regime subvert a competitive democratic process in the run up to, the day of, and after election.

In the event that rigged elections hand the Maduro regime a tainted victory, USAID will continue to support independent stakeholders and civil society to mobilize Venezuelans in the defense of their political rights and a more competitive, inclusive, and transparent electoral process.

*Question.* Late last year, the Unitary Platform and the Maduro regime agreed to establish a humanitarian fund, under the auspices of the United Nations, to provide assistance to Venezuela. Given USAID's long experience of providing humanitarian experience in Venezuela, what is USAID's main role in this process?

Has USAID briefed Congress on the distribution of these funds? If not, when is Congress expected to be briefed?

What are the chances that a UN administered fund will result in money being directed towards the Maduro regime?

What participation, if any, is USAID considering providing in this proposed humanitarian fund?

*Answer.* USAID is tracking closely that the Unitary Platform and Maduro regime officials signed the Mesa Social humanitarian agreement on November 26, 2022, committing both parties to pursue joint initiatives to benefit the Venezuelan people and address humanitarian needs using frozen Government of Venezuela funds for assistance in Venezuela. USAID's role is strictly advisory, providing information on the humanitarian response in Venezuela to the interagency and to the UN as discussions proceed regarding the possibility of establishing a trust fund. Thus far, USAID has shared experiences working with various UN agencies and has reiterated the importance of maintaining humanitarian principles.

USAID has not briefed Congress on the establishment of a trust fund or distribution of funds. To the best of our knowledge, no funds have been distributed to date, but we defer to our colleagues at the Department of State and Department of Treasury, who are in the lead on this initiative.

USAID is not currently planning to put any funding into the proposed UN-managed trust fund, nor would USAID have a management role to play.

*Question.* The Biden administration has spent far too much time alienating allies and far too little time strengthening partnerships with key countries, especially in our hemisphere. For example, the Dominican Republic has been overwhelmed by the collapse of Haiti—yet instead of working together to assist them, the Biden adminis-

tration accuses the Dominican Government of discrimination. How is USAID assisting the Dominican Republic deal with the negative consequences caused by the instability in Haiti?

Answer. USAID's budget in the Dominican Republic has risen significantly, from \$37.6 million in Fiscal Year 2019 to \$64.4 million in Fiscal Year 2022, helping us to more effectively address development challenges in the Dominican Republic, including as a result of instability in Haiti. Our efforts support the Government of the Dominican Republic's priorities in areas such as: Citizen Security and Anti-Corruption; Education; Climate Resilience; Energy; Biodiversity; Food Security; Health; and Vulnerable Populations and Human Rights.

Our transboundary approach allows us to address conflict mitigation and management, health disparities for those living with HIV, and economic and environmental threats along the Dominican-Haitian border and throughout the Dominican Republic. For instance, our health programs provide migrants and people of Haitian descent with tailored services, given their increased risks of HIV/AIDS infection and low treatment coverage. USAID-supported community justice houses increase access to justice for vulnerable populations, including migrants and people of Haitian descent. Under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, USAID addresses transnational crime threats by supporting youth at risk of becoming involved in crime or violence and helping key security institutions, including the Dominican National Police, to more effectively and transparently address crime.

We have designated the Dominican Republic both under the Democracy Delivers and Partnership for Democratic Development initiatives. As such, we are directing additional resources to support the Government of the Dominican Republic's commitment to democracy, including by mitigating the effects of instability in Haiti. One way USAID is doing this is by advancing economic development to support trade, investment, and employment in the Dominican Republic's northwest region, which borders Haiti.

*Question.* The political, economic, and humanitarian situation in Haiti has deteriorated significantly in recent years. The situation is so severe that more than 75 percent of Port-au-Prince and 60 percent of the country are controlled by violent gangs that disrupt people's access to food, fuel, education, and a normal life. The gangs have made providing humanitarian aid to some parts of the country all but impossible. How is USAID working across humanitarian, development, and stabilization programs to address the extraordinary level of need in Haiti?

Answer. USAID has been actively working to address the significant challenges faced by Haiti, including political, economic, and humanitarian issues. In response to the deteriorating situation, USAID has implemented a comprehensive approach that encompasses humanitarian, development, and stabilization programs in Haiti.

*Humanitarian Assistance:* Despite the highly insecure operating environment that challenges humanitarian access, humanitarian organizations, including USAID partners, continue to reach people in need in Haiti. The United States is the single largest donor of humanitarian assistance to Haiti. This funding is helping partners meet the urgent humanitarian needs of people across Haiti. USAID's partners provide emergency food and nutrition assistance; deliver protection services, including gender-based violence prevention and response; distribute medical supplies and medicines; and improve access to safe water, including to respond to the ongoing cholera epidemic.

USAID remains deeply concerned by the adverse impacts of ongoing violence and insecurity on civilians. To ensure the protection of civilians in Haiti, we are working with our humanitarian partners to overcome access constraints and effectively deliver needs-based assistance to the most vulnerable while mitigating harm. USAID continues to advocate for unhindered humanitarian access with relevant parties to reach people in need with critical aid. Free and open roads and access for aid workers are essential for the successful delivery of life-saving assistance.

Since USAID deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team to Haiti in mid-October 2022, we have transported a total of more than 450 MT of critical supplies including health, logistics, and water, sanitation, and hygiene commodities to partners responding to needs from the complex humanitarian emergency and cholera epidemic. In addition, the UN announced a system-wide scale-up of humanitarian response activities in Haiti on April 17, 2023. The scale-up will be in place for an initial 3 months, from April through July 14, 2023. Along with the scale-up, the humanitarian community is activating a number of humanitarian clusters in order to address the high level of need in Haiti. The UN also released the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Haiti on April 21, requesting \$719.9 million—the largest appeal since Haiti's 2010 earthquake to target 3.2 million people of the esti-



mated 5.2 million people in need across the country. The HRP prioritizes food and nutrition; health, protection; and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance.

*Development Programs:* USAID works to build a stable and economically viable Haiti, focusing on improving health and education outcomes, advancing economic and food security, and improving the independence and accountability of government institutions. Our development assistance provides economic opportunity through inclusive, environmentally sustainable agriculture development and micro-, small-, and medium-sized business development, and improves the economic and environmental resilience of communities. USAID health programs work to fight infectious disease and improve primary healthcare services, and increase access to water and sanitation services. USAID also seeks to strengthen the organizational capacity to respond to natural and manmade emergencies, and to advance citizen-responsive government institutions.

*Stabilization Efforts:* Given the security challenges posed by violent gangs, USAID incorporates stabilization efforts into its programs. USAID aims to create a secure environment that allows for the provision of essential services and the reestablishment of normalcy in affected areas. This includes community engagement, and violence prevention initiatives. For example, USAID will soon launch a 5-year citizen security program to reduce the level of violence in targeted neighborhoods. This activity uses a three-pronged approach that connects police and other Haitian Government entities, the communities they serve, and social services providers in targeted neighborhoods of greater Port-au-Prince.

*Question.* How is Haiti prioritized in the FY24 budget? Please list specific proposals.

*Answer.* The Request prioritized \$146.2 million in development and global health assistance for Haiti will help build a more stable and economically viable Haiti, focused on improving health and education outcomes, advancing economic and food security, and improving the independence and accountability of government institutions. Increased resources will support violence prevention and reception and reintegration activities for returned migrants. Specifically, USAID programs will:

- Promote citizen security, good governance, and capacity-building for elections; increase multi-sector resilience; and expand locally driven development and civil society. USAID will help administer elections while strengthening the capacity of the provisional electoral commission to administer credible elections.
- Strengthen the justice sector, including reducing pretrial detention and providing justice for violence-affected communities. Funds will strengthen Haiti's supreme audit institution to oversee public spending and conduct performance audits.
- Support better planning, financing, and implementation to mitigate threats to water security, improve water resource management, strengthen the excreta management value chain, and increase access to safe water and sanitation.
- Strengthen decentralized water utilities, community service providers, and relevant local authorities in Haiti. USAID will provide technical assistance to ensure efficient and financially-sound operation of water utilities.
- Provide bilingual, phonics-based literacy instruction and materials, and socio-emotional learning support for marginalized and vulnerable children in elementary schools. USAID will provide entrepreneurial and life skills training, and psychosocial support to develop skills that lead to successful participation in the workplace.
- Support investment facilitation particularly for high-growth small and medium enterprises to support job creation and retention.
- Expand income generating activities in at-risk communities. Activities will strengthen the capacity of people in vulnerable communities to access economic opportunities, jobs, and to reduce economic instability and violence in select areas through skills development and entrepreneurship, particularly for at-risk youth and women.
- Support smallholder farmers to increase yields, sales, and investment in key crops and commodities, including livestock.
- Conserve and restore key watersheds through agriculture, reforestation, land management, and livelihood opportunities for vulnerable households. Funds will mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts, environmental degradation, and natural disasters. USAID will support clean energy initiatives for electric and solar grids and microgrids to increase economic opportunities and private sector growth.

- Confront challenges posed by irregular migration out of Haiti and support reception services for returning migrants by providing cash, medical and social services, and other tools upon arrival in Haiti.

Given the continuing high levels of urgent humanitarian need, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance anticipates continuing to provide significant funding to Haiti in FY24. In FY23, the United States has been the single largest donor of humanitarian assistance to Haiti. Our funding is helping partners meet urgent humanitarian needs of people across Haiti by providing emergency food and nutrition assistance; delivering protection services, including gender-based violence prevention and response; distributing medical supplies and medicines and improving access to safe water, including responding to the ongoing cholera epidemic.

*Question.* What assistance is USAID providing to the newly announced transition council intended to provide the framework for holding new elections in Haiti by the end of this year?

*Answer.* In May, USAID started a new elections program that will support the High Council of the Transition (HCT) to provide the framework for holding elections in Haiti by the end of this year. The program will provide assistance to the Provisional Electoral Commission (CEP) to help it implement its institutional mandate, exercise oversight functions, and foster greater responsiveness to citizens' needs. Technical assistance will be provided to formulate a realistic electoral framework and timeline in the current political environment.

The program will also assist with electoral and constitutional reform as requested in areas that include synchronization of national and subnational elections, rebalancing power between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, and reform of electoral law. USAID will facilitate dialogue and participation by a broad spectrum of citizens, civil society, and political actors to ensure citizen input.

To educate citizens on the transition process, we will also provide strategic communications support to the CEP and HCT.

*Question.* As we know all too well in Florida, hurricanes and natural disasters frequently impact the Caribbean. USAID has been a critical provider of disaster relief for these countries. In 2021 alone, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance provided \$8 billion in humanitarian aid. While this spending is important to ensure that natural disasters do not drive illegal immigration, this is a significant amount of money. As even FEMA is projecting to fall short on the Disaster Relief Fund, as soon as this summer, we need to find more efficient ways to use foreign aid dollars. In many cases, a modest investment in disaster resilience before a hurricane strikes can mean much less spending after the fact. We saw this in 1998 with Hurricane Mitch in Central America and in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. Stronger infrastructures in LAC region countries can be more cost-effective and contribute to U.S. national security by helping stabilize disaster-stricken countries, facilitating faster recovery and reconstruction, and reducing pressures for affected populations to emigrate. What is USAID doing to support pre-disaster efforts in the Caribbean?

*Answer.* Populations in the Caribbean are vulnerable to a range of natural disasters, including drought, earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, landslides, and wildfires. These hazards compound existing vulnerabilities faced by many communities in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). In FY 2022, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) provided approximately \$110 million to partner organizations conducting early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience (ER4) activities in 16 countries across LAC. BHA partners with local, regional, and national disaster management agencies, non-government organizations, civil society, the UN and others to advance countries and populations' capacity for disaster preparedness, risk reduction, and timely frontline disaster response.

In the Caribbean, USAID contributed to the establishment of what is now known as the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), a regional intergovernmental body for disaster coordination and management in the Caribbean, and we've continued that enduring partnership since 1991. BHA currently funds the UN World Food Program (WFP) to strengthen the operational capacity of CDEMA. In FY22, with USAID's support, WFP activities enhanced the capacities of CDEMA and its 19 member states and territories to strengthen social protection systems, emergency telecommunications, and end-to-end humanitarian supply chain management.

USAID utilizes agreements with the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Geological Service to provide technical support to countries to enhance their disaster preparedness in the face of wildfires and volcanic eruptions. BHA also funds early warning sys-

tems such as the Volcanic Disaster Assistance Program that monitors volcanic activity in the region, enabling early evacuations and preparedness.

In addition, BHA is prepared to respond to the 2023 hurricane season in the Atlantic basin with an experienced team of disaster management professionals strategically located throughout LAC, pre-positioned emergency relief supplies and communications equipment, and agreements with partners and service providers to support the delivery of humanitarian assistance. BHA has prepositioned USAID-branded relief commodities in Miami and Barbados for quick distributions to the most vulnerable after a disaster. BHA also maintains agreements with other U.S. federal agencies regarding specialized assistance for disaster response and ER4 activities, including the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Forest Service; the U.S. Coast Guard; the U.S. Department of Agriculture; and the Department of Defense (DoD). BHA maintains two humanitarian assistance advisors to the military at SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM, a Regional Civil Military Affairs Coordinator, and two BHA staff in Washington, DC, who assist in coordinating USAID and DoD humanitarian assistance in LAC.

*Question.* Is there an opportunity to pilot a solid partnership between universities in the United States and governments willing to learn from some of America's most successful disaster mitigation researchers in Florida?

*Answer.* USAID works in partnership with host country and U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs) to ensure higher education institutions in our partner countries have the capacity to be central actors in disaster risk reduction and development. Faculty and students contribute to strengthening all sectors of the economy, including agriculture, energy, business services, technology, health, engineering, disaster risk reduction and more.

As part of USAID's partnerships, programs leverage university research expertise to solve global development challenges and establish global networks of universities to strengthen the capacity of individuals and institutions to identify knowledge gaps, discover new information, and translate that knowledge into actionable solutions.

HEIs can play an important role in supporting disaster mitigation. *USAID is currently partnering with Florida International University (FIU) on the Disaster Resilience and Climate in the Americas Program.* The project works to advance disaster risk reduction (DRR) in Latin America and the Caribbean by institutionalizing risk management through higher education organizations and encouraging broader participation by the academic and scientific communities in disaster preparedness, risk reduction, response, recovery, and resilience-building actions. The program also works to address the drivers of existing risks and their consequences, as well as helping avoid the creation and accumulation of new risk, and developing capabilities and mechanisms for building resilience. The DRR project is located within the Extreme Events Research department at FIU. The Department utilizes FIU's research and applications leadership at the global level in extreme events, reflecting an institutional interest in development and multi-hazard disaster resilience, including disaster risk management, risk reduction, preparedness, emergency response, resilience, and "smart" recovery.

*Additional Examples of Partnerships with Universities in Florida:* USAID has strong partnerships with HEIs in Florida and welcomes all organizations interested in working with USAID to explore publicly listed partnership opportunities. Information on partnership opportunities is provided on USAID's website (<https://www.usaid.gov/partner-with-us>). Examples of current partnerships with HEIs in Florida include:

- *Florida International University (FIU)* signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with USAID as part of USAID's Minority-Serving Institution Partnership Initiative in March 2022 to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workforce for the international development field. The MOU builds on USAID and FIU's long-time collaboration on international development initiatives, such as disaster risk resilience, and marks the first MOU the agency has signed with a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) of higher education. USAID's Innovation, Technology, and Research (ITR) Hub plans to meet with leadership and faculty from FIU's Jack D. Gordon School of Public Policy, on Tuesday May 16, to discuss potential opportunities for engagement.
- *University of Florida* hosts the U.S. Government's Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Livestock Systems, which uses research to support international agriculture and development in low- and middle-income countries. The goal of the Lab is to sustainably improve livestock production in order to improve the nutrition, health, incomes and livelihoods in partner countries. Through research

projects, capacity building, and education, the Lab seeks to reduce poverty, improve food security, enhance nutrition and build resilience. Projects integrate health, food systems, and environment-friendly approaches to ensure sustainability.

- *Florida State University's Learning Systems Institute* (LSI) is leading a \$15.6 million project sponsored by USAID to improve teacher training in Malawi: the Strengthening Teacher Education and Practice (STEP) project. LSI faculty are working with 16 teacher training colleges across the country to improve teacher education programs and develop new training materials related to literacy and numeracy education. The project will also provide support to the Ministry of Education to deliver continuous professional development courses to teachers who are already in classrooms. The STEP project is a landmark investment by USAID to support local institutions of higher education that provide pre-service teacher education.
- *University of South Florida* (USF) received a \$3.6 million grant from USAID to support the Research Initiative for Supporting Education in the Caribbean, also known as the RISE Caribbean Initiative, a project that launched a new interdisciplinary educational research center to support education policy development and timely decision-making on issues impacting schools in the sub-region. The initiative brings together researchers from both USF and The University of the West Indies (UWI) Cave Hill to collaborate on research and activities to help solve ongoing challenges facing the region's schools.

*Question.* The President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) purchases millions of dollars' worth of commodities, such as medicine, medical equipment, and bed nets, to drive malaria elimination in countries all around the world. In order to ensure the supply chain resiliency of these commodities, PMI has undertaken a market shaping effort to bring a diversity of manufacturers into the malaria commodity market. In a time where global supply chains can be disrupted by a war in Europe or a pandemic sprung from a lab leak in China, it is important that these lifesaving goods are sourced from reliable providers in the United States. Over the last 5 years, can you provide the volume that PMI has procured for malaria-related commodities that has been procured from U.S. companies and from non-U.S. companies?

*Answer.* The U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) works to promote a healthy market and operate a resilient supply chain that is able to continue to deliver life-saving malaria commodities during both global and local disruptions. A core component of this is developing a diversified supply base both in terms of the number of qualified suppliers from which PMI procures, and the geographic location of the manufacturing sites. For example, in 2022, PMI procured malaria pharmaceuticals from 12 suppliers with manufacturing sites in six countries. This approach helped ensure that malaria commodities continued to flow to PMI partner countries during the COVID-19 pandemic, even as the global supply chain experienced significant disruptions.

Currently, there is limited manufacturing of malaria commodities in the United States, including no manufacturing of insecticide-treated nets (ITN) or antimalarial pharmaceuticals, our largest spending categories. This is primarily because there is not a domestic market for malaria commodities given that there are less than 2,000 malaria cases in the United States annually. Historically, there was a U.S.-based supplier of malaria rapid diagnostic tests (mRDT) that were manufactured in New Jersey. However, the supplier received a notice of concern due to quality issues in 2020, and therefore, was not eligible for procurement until the issues were resolved. The supplier has since shifted to manufacturing COVID-19 tests. PMI does, however, procure laboratory supplies and personal protective equipment manufactured in the United States.

Over the last 5 years, the value of malaria commodities manufactured in the United States was \$16 million (laboratory supplies, mRDTs, PPE) and the value of malaria commodities manufactured outside of the United States was \$943 million (including ITNs, pharmaceuticals and mRDTs).

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RESPONSES OF MS. SAMANTHA POWER TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

*Question.* *On USAID support natural gas programing:* (In your testimony on April 26, 2023, you stated that "[USAID] support[s], for example, natural gas programing in instances where it can create energy access while not delaying plans [for?] clean energy.")

Please provide a list of all natural gas deals, including prime awardees and sub-awardees, that have received any funding from USAID beginning January 1, 2021, to the present day. The list should include the names of the prime awardees and sub-awardees receiving any U.S. funding, the date and duration of the funding provided, the total amount of funding that has been and will be provided, the instrumentality of the United States Government that is providing the funding, and the stated purpose of the funding.

Answer. USAID energy programs do not typically fund deals directly through either prime awardees or subawardees. The majority of our support focuses on the enabling environment for sound energy sector development and private sector investment in the sector for long term financial sustainability and provision of low cost, reliable energy services.

A list of our assistance to the gas sector that has been vetted through our internal vetting procedures is provided below.

Operating Unit	Activity Name	TEC (million)/ %CI	End Year	USAID Activity Description	Gas Component Description
<b>AFRICA</b>					
Power Africa	Project Preparation Grants (USTDA)	\$4.73	2022 follow-on to Dec. 2023 expected	Piloting of innovative U.S. technologies in the African marketplace. Proposed projects will support a variety of generation and energy access projects, ranging from gas-fired power, small hydropower, wind, solar, energy storage, transmission, and distribution.	N/A
Power Africa	DFC Power Africa Deal Teams	\$2.00	2023	Finance services to support the sourcing, review, execution and monitoring of DFC financing and insurance transactions, specifically, the creation of deal teams composed of finance, legal, environmental policy, and project monitoring experts.	DFC's planned \$217 million loan to finance an 87 megawatt combined cycle (LNG/LPG) thermal power plant and associated fuel and transmission infrastructure in Freetown, Sierra Leone will reach financial close in Q3 FY 2022.
Power Africa	West Africa Energy	\$73.85	2023	Expand the supply of and access to affordable and reliable	WAEP is helping partners convert their existing diesel, heavy

	Program (WAEP)			grid-connected electricity services in West Africa. Provide technical assistance, capacity building to power utilities and generation entities, and transaction support to achieve Power Africa's objectives in the West Africa region.	fuel oil and coal plants to run on natural gas in the short term as they work to introduce more renewables into their generation mix in the medium term. The program will continue to fund these activities into the future with non-RE earmarked funds. Power Africa provided technical assistance for the Tobene 115 MW Gas-to-Power Project. Support included analysis that provided a comprehensive overview of the sector and identified the factors that could impact the Tobene project, which include timing of gas supply, pricing, sourcing, and potential demand from other plants.
Power Africa	Southern Africa Energy Program (SAEP)	\$70.00	2023	Increase investment in electricity supply and access in Southern Africa by strengthening the regional enabling environment and facilitating transactions. This includes prior year technical assistance towards a regional strategy for natural gas, support to individual gas transactions, and coal-based methane projects in Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique and South Africa. SAEP is supporting South	From 2017 to 2021 Power Africa provided a transaction advisor to bring the Central de Termica Temane (CTT) Project, a 450 megawatt (MW) gas fired combined cycle power plant located next to the Temane & Inhassoro gas field in Mozambique, to financial close.  SAEP will be engaged in transitioning South Africa's energy sector from coal to clean energy and fuels under the JETP initiative. While

				<p>Africa's transition from heavy coal reliance to renewable energy under the Just Energy Transition Partnership, a multinational effort announced at COP 26.</p>	<p>negotiations over assistance specifics are on-going, it is expected that SAEF will be called upon to help develop and/or implement strategies for repurposing existing coal plants and supply chains towards more sustainable and climate friendly uses. There is the possibility that a minority of such support may be considered a gas engagement.</p>
Power Africa	Nigeria Power Sector Program (NPSP)	\$109.26	2023	<p>Increase private and public investment in the energy sector, including on and off-grid, including off-grid business and consumer electricity connections primarily through the off-grid solar market. Improve the enabling environment for private sector participation in the power sector; and improved liquidity. Under this activity, the Nigeria Gas Flare Commercialization Program seeks to mitigate gas flaring from the petroleum industry, and utilize the captured gas for gas-to-power and industrial uses. Increased grid-based electricity will reduce usage of diesel generators.</p>	<p>NPSP is engaged in transitioning gas and hydroelectric generation assets to the private sector to provide for efficiency gains, which will help reduce GHG (CO2 and CH4) emissions per unit of generated output vs. current operations by government owned- entity. USG engagement in Nigeria's gas sector supports our development missions and allows us to address environmental and corruption concerns vs other bilateral donors. This assistance will continue to the extent feasible given the availability of future funding.</p>

Power Africa	East Africa Energy Program (EAEP)	\$65.00	2023	EAEP works to optimize power supply, increase grid-based power connections, strengthen utilities and other power sector entities, and increase regional power trade. The program covers nine countries in the Eastern Africa region and provides technical assistance, transactions advisory services, capacity building and investment promotion to utilities and power generators.	The program is providing ongoing support to governments and IPPs to develop frameworks and strategies for fuel substitution of existing diesel and heavy-fuel-oil based generation facilities to natural gas in order to reduce GHG emissions.
Central Africa Regional	Pay Go Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) Program in the Congo	\$0.51	2023	The goal of this activity is to reduce deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions by replacing charcoal used for cooking with liquid petroleum gas (LPG).	This program will continue to seek reductions in black carbon, deforestation, and unhealthy cooking practices by substituting natural gas for charcoal. This program uses Sustainable Landscapes funding. USAID will assess the effectiveness of LPG in forestry programs in the future.
Zambia	Alternatives to Charcoal	\$25.00	2026	The USAID Alternatives to Charcoal (A2C) Activity works to reduce dependence on charcoal for household energy in Zambia and catalyze the increased use of low emission alternative technologies and fuels (ATFs) through innovation and increased private sector	This program will continue to seek reductions in black carbon, deforestation, and unhealthy cooking practices by looking at alternatives to charcoal, including LPG. This program uses Sustainable Landscapes funding. USAID will assess the effectiveness



				engagement (PSE) to reduce charcoal production-driven deforestation and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.	of LPG in forestry programs in the future.
<b>ASIA</b>					
Central Asia	Power the Future	\$28.00	2022	Accelerating Central Asian countries' transition to clean and renewable energy, diversifying energy sources, and getting clean power to USAID supported competitive regional power markets.	Conducted energy audits at combined heat and power facilities and recommended energy efficiency improvements.
Central Asia	Power Central Asia	\$39.00	2025	Strengthen the capacity of energy sector regulatory authorities to liberalize national energy markets, develop clean and renewable energy, and establish a regional power market.	Anticipated to support modeling of gas supply infrastructure to facilitate gas ramping and flexibility auctions. Ensuring grid flexibility is critical to the renewables integration focus of the activity and less than \$250,000.
Vietnam	V-LEEP II	\$36.00	2025	Will help Vietnam continue its transition to a clean, secure and market-based energy sector by increasing the deployment of advanced energy systems, improving energy sector performance, and expanding competition in the energy sector.	Strengthen the legal framework and increase the market competition for LNG trading, including setting up the standards for LNG terminals, building capacity for the policy makers and market regulators (including methane management requirements and safety specifications). V-LEEP II

					also supports increased system flexibility through LNG-to-power to maximize renewable integration and reduce coal in the power mix. V-LEEP II is currently working on a plan to wrap-up its support for gas in such a way that will maintain a positive relationship with GOV counterparts. VLEEP II will steeply curtail carbon-intensive programming by the end of 2022 and totally phase-out by the end of 2024.
The Philippines	Energy Secure Philippines	\$33.90	2025	Improve performance of energy utilities, deploy advanced energy systems, and enhance competition in the energy sector.	Gas-specific work advancing retail competition concluded in 2022.
Regional Dev. Mission Asia	U.S.-Asia Gas Partnership	\$1.50	2022	A public-private partnership involving government and industry representatives from the U.S. and Indo-Pacific countries to stimulate gas demand growth by optimizing gas network infrastructure development and developing domestic gas markets in Asia.	N/A
Indonesia	Sustainable Energy for Indonesia's	\$38.77	2026	Focus on: 1) Deployment of advanced energy, 2)	SINAR's small gas-to-power component using

	Advancing Resilience (SINAR)			Performance of energy utilities, 3) Best practices in procurement, and 4) Institutional framework and capacity for energy sector transformation.	FY 2018 funding phased-out in 2022.
<b>EUROPE AND EURASIA</b>					
Bosnia and Herzegovina	USAID Energy Policy Activity	\$7.50	2024	Improve coordination, management, and transparency at all levels of BiH's regulatory framework, simplify the energy policy environment, and provide targeted technical assistance.	Improving the efficiency of gas sector oversight operations. Overall project goal of EU integration and energy security will support coal phase-out and RE uptake.
Georgia	Securing Georgia's Energy Future	\$15.70	2026	Enhance Georgia's energy security by increasing domestic power production, developing a modern, competitive electricity market to incentivize private investment, improving local energy system planning capacity, improving critical infrastructure cybersecurity, and advancing regional energy trade.	Assisting Georgia in establishing market rules that encourage alternate natural gas supply. This work complements renewables programming and is directly tied to efforts to increase renewable penetration.
Moldova	Moldova Energy Transition Activity	\$1.75	2026	Address core vulnerabilities of Moldova's energy sector (1) physical and market integration, aligned with the EU's Third Energy Package; (2) increased domestic power generation; and	Support EU market integration and diversification away from Gazprom.

				(3) improved natural gas supply diversification.	
Ukraine	Energy Security Project	\$244.00	2023	Establishing competitive energy markets in electricity, gas, and district heating; 2) improving Ukraine's energy policy and strategy; and 3) diversifying Ukraine's energy supply. ESP will improve the legal and regulatory frameworks to comply with European Union (EU) energy legislation. Since the beginning of Russian aggression most new funding has been for power sector equipment.	The activity supports adoption of EU gas market rules and support to diversify the region's gas supply away from Gazprom.
E&E Regional	U.S.-Europe Energy Bridge	\$94.00	2026	(1) building partner country capacity to participate in competitive energy markets and trade with central European markets; (2) facilitating investment to diversify regional energy supplies and upgrade critical infrastructure to improve reliability and security; and (3) empowering utilities, governments, telecommunications providers, regulators, and other critical infrastructure operators to prepare for and respond to threats, such as natural	The activity supports adoption of EU gas market rules and support to diversify the region's gas supply away from Gazprom.

				disasters and cyberattacks.	
<b>LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN</b>					
Haiti	USAID Reforestation Project	\$39.30	2022	Address environmental degradation and loss of tree cover in the north and northeast regions of Haiti by supporting community resilience and providing environmental services.	Technical assistance will be provided to convert the energy use of 15,000 street food vendors from charcoal/woodfuel to LPG.
<b>MIDDLE EAST</b>					
Jordan	Energy Sector Support Activity (ESSA)	\$37.10	2026	ESSA is designed to improve the financial and environmental sustainability of the energy sector in support of USAID's strategic objectives related to economic growth and economic competitiveness. ESSA has four sub-objectives: improved grid management and resiliency; strengthened regulations; improved energy services; and increased sector opportunities.	Over the course of the activity feasibility analysis for oil to gas conversions for industrial heat applications is expected, as well as market design/development and regulatory oversight of natural gas and downstream petroleum markets.

WSJ ARTICLE, "SOLAR AND WIND FORCE POVERTY ON AFRICA,"  
DATED OCTOBER 24, 2021, BY PRESIDENT MUSEVENI

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## *Solar and Wind Force Poverty on Africa*

Letting us use reliable energy doesn't mean a climate disaster.

By Yoweri K. Museveni

Oct. 24, 2021 2:13 pm ET

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Wind turbines operate at a wind farm near Vredenburg, South Africa, Oct. 6. PHOTO: DWAYNE SENIOR/BLOOMBERG NEWS

Africa can't sacrifice its future prosperity for Western climate goals. The continent should balance its energy mix, not rush straight toward renewables—even though that will likely frustrate some of those gathering at next week's global climate conference in Glasgow.

My continent's energy choices will dictate much of the climate's future. Conservative estimates project that Africa's population of 1.3 billion will double by 2050. Africans' energy consumption will likely surpass that of the European Union around the same time.

Knowing this, many developed nations are pushing an accelerated transition to renewables on Africa. The Western aid-industrial complex, composed of nongovernmental organizations and state development agencies, has poured money into wind and solar projects across the continent. This earns them praise in the U.S. and Europe but leaves many Africans with unreliable and expensive electricity that depends on diesel generators or batteries on overcast or still days. Generators and the mining of lithium for batteries are both highly polluting.

This stands to forestall Africa's attempts to rise out of poverty, which require reliable energy. African manufacturing will struggle to attract investment and therefore to create jobs without consistent energy sources. Agriculture will suffer if the continent can't use natural gas to create synthetic fertilizer or to power efficient freight transportation.

A better solution is for Africa to move slowly toward a variety of reliable green energy sources. Wildlife-friendly minihydro technologies should be a part of the continent's energy mix. They allow for 24-hour-a-day energy production and can be installed along minor rivers without the need for backup energy. Coal-fired power stations can be converted to burning biomass, and carbon capture can help in the meantime. Nuclear power is also already being put to good use in South Africa, while Algeria, Ghana and Nigeria operate research reactors with the intent of building full-scale nuclear facilities.

All this will take time, meaning Africa will have to use fossil fuels as it makes the transition. Natural gas is a greener option that will help the continent reduce emissions even as it grows, as developed nations have done themselves.

Saying any of this meets with backlash from developed nations. Instead of reliable renewables or greener fossil fuels, aid money and development investments go to pushing solar and wind, with all their accompanying drawbacks. And many Western nations have put a blanket ban on public funding for a range of fossil-fuel projects abroad, making it difficult for Africa to make the transition to cleaner nonrenewables.

In the coming decades my continent will have a strong influence on global warming. But it doesn't now. Were sub-Saharan Africa (minus South Africa) to triple its electricity consumption overnight, powering the new usage entirely by gas, it would add only 0.6% to global carbon emissions.

Africans have a right to use reliable, cheap energy, and doing so doesn't prevent the development of the continent's renewables. Forcing Africa down one route will hinder our fight against poverty.

*Mr. Museveni is president of Uganda.*

*Appeared in the October 25, 2021, print edition as 'Solar and Wind Force Poverty on Africa'.*

LETTER FROM USAID PROVIDING TWO CORRECTIONS FOR THE RECORD FOR  
MS. SAMANTHA POWER, DATED APRIL 28, 2023



April 28, 2023

Mr. John Dutton  
Clerk  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Dirksen Senate Office building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Dutton:

I am writing to provide two corrections for the hearing record for the Wednesday, April 26 hearing: Review of the FY2023 United States Agency for International Development Budget. I would appreciate your inclusion of these corrections in the hearing record.

Pursuant to a question from Senator Ted Cruz:

The January 24, 2022 memo, "Request for concurrence to modify USAID programming following revocation of the terrorist and narcotics-related designations of the FARC," was internal to U.S. Embassy Bogota and the statement that USAID Administrator Samantha Power signed the memo was incorrect.

Pursuant to questions from Senators Rand Paul and Tim Kaine:

USAID provided the bipartisan leadership of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with documents responsive to a request related to the PREDICT program on August 3, September 23, October 21, November 4 and December 29, 2022. Additionally, between December 16, 2021 and December 22, 2022, USAID provided multiple tranches of responsive documents related to the PREDICT program to the bipartisan leadership of the Subcommittee on Investigations of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at [jherman@usaid.gov](mailto:jherman@usaid.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jodi B. Herman".

Jodi B. Herman  
Assistant Administrator  
Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs