

**REVIEW OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2023
USAID BUDGET REQUEST**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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MAY 11, 2022
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REVIEW OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 USAID BUDGET REQUEST

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2022

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:34 p.m., in room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Booker, Schatz, Van Hollen, Risch, Barasso, 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 appearing today. I am pleased that you have been an engaged partner when it comes to the United States' humanitarian aid and international development initiatives, and while I may not agree with every element of the request, it is refreshing to see a USAID budget proposal that demonstrates seriousness and thoughtfulness.

With the House just passing the Ukraine supplemental package, which provides nearly \$4.4 billion for USAID, I am pleased and hope that we are going to move it quickly in the Senate, maybe as early as tomorrow.

Obviously, this is a lot of money and we need to make sure that the executive branch engages in meaningful ongoing consultation as the money is being spent and that we are conducting appropriate oversight.

Under the Trump administration, the value of economic development and foreign assistance in advancing U.S. foreign policy was met with skepticism. They hobbled USAID from fulfilling its mission, demoralizing the workforce and risking decades of U.S. investment into some of the most vulnerable parts of the world.

The transactional approach the Trump administration took through USAID towards providing assistance to countries at the start of the pandemic was appalling.

When it comes to responding to natural or manmade disaster, our foreign aid programs should help save the lives of those in dire need around the world not on the basis of politics, but out of moral obligation.

This is the standard that has been used for decades and I trust you are committed to fulfilling that vision at USAID and to elevating the work of USAID's development and assistance professionals.

Obviously, our immediate attention is on the fallout of Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Russian forces have bombed maternity wards and kindergartens. They have used sexual violence as a weapon of war. They have executed civilians, hands tied behind their backs.

In addition to these war crimes, Putin's invasion has precipitated a refugee crisis and exacerbated a major global food security crisis across Africa and the Middle East.

As we deliver humanitarian relief in Europe and beyond, the United States must elevate the needs of women, girls, and other at-risk populations, and supporting neighboring countries hosting a huge influx of Ukrainian refugees.

While addressing this crisis and its fallout, we cannot afford to overlook the rest of the world. When commodity prices soar, that affects everyone, and I am extremely concerned about the risk of famine in the Horn of Africa.

Additionally, the retreat of democracy in Africa is threatening gains made in the Sahel and dashing the aspirations for participatory politics of millions across the continent.

Whether it is conflict in Ethiopia or kleptocracy in the Democratic Republic of Congo or a coup in Sudan, USAID is America's first responder, supporting democracy, good governance, and providing life-saving assistance to those in need.

Health systems across the globe have been strained from the last 2 years of the pandemic. COVID hospitalizations or deaths are down, but the threat remains. New COVID sub-variants continue to emerge and I am not convinced that we are prepared.

From vaccine distribution to strengthening our preparedness, this is an issue that affects the safety of everyone on the planet and remains a national security threat here in the United States.

USAID is a critical part of the United States effort to prevent, detect, and respond to future pandemic threats. Along with Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean were hard hit by COVID-19. At the same time, the region is struggling against the resurgence of authoritarianism from Cuba to Venezuela, and now the consolidation of the region's third dictatorship in Nicaragua.

Violent criminals from El Salvador to Mexico are undermining civilian security, exacerbating the forced migration and refugee crisis across the region. Our neighbors in the hemisphere need our assistance. We need to expand inclusive economic opportunity and strengthen democratic institutions.

At a time of such great upheaval and distress, I am reassured that we have a USAID administrator who bore witness to the siege of Sarajevo and Putin's aggression in Chechnya.

To successfully provide emergency aid, support democratic governance, empower women and vulnerable populations, USAID must be a place where all Americans can serve.

I look forward to hearing your plans for modernizing the workforce to meet today's challenges, in particular, how you will integrate the chief diversity officer into these efforts, and I hope that

by partnering with small businesses here at home, our aid programs can have positive impacts both in the U.S. and abroad.

In closing, let me reinforce just how critical all of these efforts are. When we do not address economic challenges, it leads to destabilization. When we do not promote prosperity, it leads to human suffering.

When we do not show up, it gives the bad guys a chance to get a foothold.

Administrator Power, I know you strongly believe in these principles and I look forward to your testimony.

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

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome, Administrator Power. Glad to have you here. Certainly, you are at the center of one of the most important undertakings that we do as America internationally.

Before we get started, I want to try to reset a little bit about what our understandings are here. During your confirmation hearing on March 23, 2021, you pledged “to work tirelessly with members on both sides of the aisle,” and to “be transparent and accessible.”

So you can well imagine I was disappointed by the 9-month delay in getting responses to the questions for the record. Nine months is way, way, way too long. These were submitted at your first budget hearing on July 14, 2021. One member of the majority has just received a response this week, and we are going to have to do better than that—do a lot better than that if we are going to do what we are required to do and that is our oversight obligation.

I have spent all my adult life in either the executive branch or the legislative branch, and I know the legislative branch is always an irritant to the executive branch. It was set up that way because of our important oversight role.

Turning to the budget, I am concerned by the Administration’s continued misalignment of priorities in resources. For example, even with historic levels of hunger and displacement, the President proposes to reduce humanitarian assistance by 34 percent while prioritizing massive increases for vague climate commitments.

I suspect—I think, undoubtedly, the President is counting on Congress to make the humanitarian accounts whole while he focuses on securing funding for the favored projects. This is an unlikely outcome.

If the Administration is going to propose such reductions they should at least get serious about spreading humanitarian aid dollars farther, including by eliminating the cargo preference requirements that have outlived their statutory purpose, unnecessarily increased costs, and delayed deliveries of life-saving food by months. I am eager to work with you to finally put more food into our food aid.

As you probably know, and I think almost everybody on this committee has experienced, virtually everyone we meet with from the

international community is concerned about the coming food scarcity.

It is going to be a real issue with what is going on in Ukraine, what is going on with the drought in the areas that are particularly affected by that. Everybody is going to have to step up and we are going to have to redouble our efforts.

I also have concerns about the President's prioritization of multi-lateral commitments for global health over funding for proven bi-lateral programs.

This includes an unprecedented request for \$6.5 billion dollars in mandatory spending for an international financing mechanism and a health workers initiative that is nowhere fully baked yet and not ready.

It is clear—indeed, I believe, more than clear—that carefully planned strategically targeted foreign assistance can advance the national security, the economic, and humanitarian interests of the United States.

It is also clear that poorly planned and executed programs can have the opposite effect. We need to get it right.

I am pleased by the emphasis on promoting democracy, rights, and good governance. In too many places democracy is in retreat, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. I am eager to hear how this budget specifically will help promote good governance, combat corruption, and empower democratic voices.

Which brings me to Ukraine. The United States has been very, very generous in its efforts to get let life-saving assistance to the people made vulnerable by Putin's unprovoked, brutal, and murderous war in Ukraine.

As the United States begins to reopen its embassy in Kyiv, I hope USAID will also return and resume its in-person efforts to ensure aid is actually getting to local networks and that are committed to getting the last mile.

In Africa, I remain concerned about how USAID is approaching assistance to Sudan and South Sudan. Both countries continue to face complex crises and it is clear, quite clear, the United States response is not moving the needle.

I understand the complexity. I understand the difficulties, but the needle is not moving. Things have to be done differently. These situations are unsustainable, require a review by the agency.

Meanwhile, in Kenya, accountability for the mismanagement and theft of U.S. assistance, particularly global health assistance, remains elusive. I have requested USAID's office, OIG, make more frequent inspections of troubled USAID missions such as in Kenya so the agency can better uphold its commitment to zero tolerance, which we all know you have, for waste, fraud, and abuse.

Turning to the Indo-Pacific, I want to understand in greater detail exactly how USAID will use the Countering PRC Malign Influence Fund, especially when it comes to building economic resilience among partners.

Regarding the Pacific Islands, we have stepped up our diplomatic and development engagement with the Pacific Islands in recent years. There is more to do, including alongside Australia and New Zealand. I want to understand what USAID is doing in this critical part of the world.

Regarding the Middle East, I have been very vocal about my concerns with this Administration's Syria policy. Caesar sanctions have been too few and we are failing to curb Arab outreach to the Assad regime.

International and economic isolation remain the best tools to seek accountability for Assad's crimes. We can never return to business as usual and Assad has got to be held accountable.

In the West Bank and Gaza, as we continue discussions on assistance to the Palestinians, we must push harder for Palestinian reforms. Specifically, we must achieve complete elimination of the "pay to slay" program and use any and all leverage to do so.

On Afghanistan, I am concerned about the Administration's plan to issue a national interest waiver that would allow direct financial benefit to the Taliban. Instead of opening the door to financial assistance, we should be conditioning it upon Taliban first—meeting human rights and counterterrorism benchmarks.

The Taliban's recent edict ejecting women and girls from school and the reimposition of guardianship laws are exceptionally troubling. We should focus on creating real leverage if we ever want to see changes in the Taliban conduct.

I look forward to working with you to address these challenges, and they are heavy challenges, including by carefully aligning priorities and resources. We look forward to your testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

We will start with the administrator's testimony. Again, welcome. I know how much you love being here with us today and so we would ask you to summarize your statement in around 5 minutes or so, so that we can have a conversation with you.

Please go ahead. You are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF HON. SAMANTHA POWER, ADMINISTRATOR,
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WASHINGTON, DC**

Ms. POWER. Thank you so much.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the committee, Senator Johnson, Senator Cardin, Senator Kaine, and others who will join us.

I do look forward to having the chance to respond to some of what you, Mr. Chairman, and you, Ranking Member Risch, have said in your opening statements.

Let me use mine, if I could, just to frame the discussion that I hope we can have over the next couple of hours.

I would like to start just by saying it is no overstatement to say that we are gathering, really, at a profound juncture in history. For 16 straight years, we have seen the number of people living under democratic rule decline.

The world is now less free and less peaceful than at any point since the end of the Cold War, and for several years, as we have seen vividly, graphically, and horrifically in recent days in Ukraine, autocracies have grown increasingly brazen on the world stage, claiming that they can get things done for their people with a speed and effectiveness that they say democracies cannot match.

Today, we see just how empty that rhetoric is and just how dark the road to autocracy can be, from Vladimir Putin's brutal war on a peaceful neighbor in Ukraine to the People's Republic of China's campaign of genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang.

Now, with autocracies on their back heel, now is the moment for the world's democracies to unite and take a big step forward after so many years of losing ground. If the world's free nations with the United States in the lead are able to unite the efforts of our allies, the private sector, and our multilateral institutions and marshal the resources necessary to help partner nations, we have a chance to extend the reach of peace, prosperity, and human dignity to billions more people.

This has been USAID's mission since its inception six decades ago and I am truly grateful to you for your continued bipartisan support of our efforts to save lives, strengthen economies, prevent fragility and conflict, promote resilience, and bolster freedom around the world.

USAID's work is a testament to the fact that America cares about the plight of others, that we can competently accomplish mammoth goals that no other country can, and that the work we do abroad also 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 and creates a better future for generations to come.

Thanks to your past support, the United States has helped get more than half a billion COVID-19 vaccines to people in 115 countries.

We have led life-saving humanitarian and disaster responses in 68 countries including Haiti, Ethiopia, and Ukraine; helped enhance pathways for legal migration to the United States while working to strengthen worker protections; and we have assisted the relocation and resettlement of Afghan colleagues and refugees under the most dire of circumstances while pivoting our programming in Afghanistan to address ongoing food insecurity and public health needs and continuing to push to keep women and girls in school.

We are also making strides to become much more nimble as an agency at a time of immense demands, shoring up a depleted workforce by welcoming new recruits and operating with greater flexibility.

The Biden-Harris administration's FY 2023 discretionary request of \$29.4 billion will build on these steps forward, giving us the ability to invest in the people and systems to meet the world's most significant challenges so the United States can seize this moment in history.

Last night, with bipartisan support, the House took a major step in that direction by passing a nearly \$40 billion package for Ukraine, and we are hopeful for its speedy passage in the Senate.

Yet, the challenges we face are significant. Putin's war has displaced more than 13 million people, including two-thirds of Ukraine's children. It has led to serious disruptions to global food, fuel, and fertilizer supplies around the world, further taxing the already overwhelmed international humanitarian system.

Two difficult years of the COVID–19 pandemic have set back development gains, and despite the United States’ leadership in vaccinating the world, that job remains unfinished.

Multibillion-dollar climate shocks appear each year with more frequency, and continued humanitarian crises remain in Ethiopia and elsewhere. Yet, as grave as the challenges are, I sincerely believe the opportunity before us is even larger.

By providing the resources necessary to seize this moment, the United States can galvanize commitments from our allies and our private sector partners and demonstrate to the world that democracies can deliver in a way that autocracies cannot.

These actions are key to reversing years of democratic decline and creating a more stable, peaceful, prosperous future for people at home and abroad.

With your support, USAID will move aggressively to grasp this opportunity to build that brighter future for all.

Thank you so much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Power follows:]

Prepared Statement of Ms. Samantha Power

Thank you Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 President’s Budget Request for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

It is no overstatement to say we gather at a profound juncture in history.

For 16 straight years, we’ve seen the number of people living under democratic rule decline—the world is now less free and less peaceful than at any point since the Cold War. And for several years, autocracies have grown increasingly brazen on the world stage, claiming that they can get things done for the people with a speed and effectiveness that democracies cannot match.

Today, we see just how empty that rhetoric is, and just how dark the road to autocracy can be. Vladimir Putin’s brutal war on a peaceful neighbor in Ukraine has shown a callous disregard for human life, global stability, and the very idea of truth itself. The courage of the people of Ukraine and the stalwart support of the United States and our allies and partners has unified and inspired people around the world striving for peace, democracy, human rights and freedom. Meanwhile, the People’s Republic of China continues its campaign of genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, forcibly detaining more than one million Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups.

If the world’s free nations, with the United States in the lead, are able to unite the efforts of our allies, the private sector, and our multilateral institutions, and marshal the resources necessary to help partner nations stand up to autocracies, manage the aftershocks of Putin’s war against Ukraine, end the pandemic, fight climate change, prevent conflict and promote stability, and safeguard democratic reforms, we have a chance extend the reach of peace, prosperity, and human dignity to billions.

This has been USAID’s mission since its inception six decades ago, and I am immensely grateful to you for your continued bipartisan support of our efforts to save lives, strengthen economies, prevent fragility, promote resilience, and bolster freedom around the world. USAID’s work is a demonstration to the world that America cares about the plight of others, and that we can competently accomplish mammoth goals that no other country can. But the work we do abroad also matters to Americans here at home—it makes us safer, more prosperous, engenders goodwill that strengthens alliances and global cooperation, and creates a better future for the generations to come.

The Biden-Harris administration’s FY 2023 Request of \$29.4 billion fully funding foreign assistance this is partially implemented by USAID is a reflection of the critical importance of development and humanitarian assistance in advancing U.S. interests around the world. The FY 2023 request also includes vital assistance to respond to the growing number of development priorities and global humanitarian crises. The Request additionally includes \$6.5 billion in mandatory funding for the State Department and USAID to make transformative investments in pandemic and other biological threat preparedness globally, including financing for the new pan-

demic preparedness and global health security fund being established this summer, with leadership by the Indonesian G20 presidency and other partners around the world.

We know, though, that the mammoth needs around the world—from the COVID-19 pandemic's continued effects to multi-billion dollar climate shocks to a spike in global food, energy, and fertilizer prices due to the Russian Federation's belligerence—are far larger than any single nation's ability to meet them. The request will allow the United States to lead, and in leading, allow us to mobilize allies, organizations, and private sector partners to contribute more to the causes critical to our nation's interests.

Thanks to your past support, the United States has helped get more than half a billion COVID-19 vaccines to people in 115 countries; led life-saving humanitarian and disaster responses in 68 countries, including Haiti, Ethiopia, and Ukraine; helped enhance pathways for legal migration to the U.S. while working to strengthen worker protections; and assisted the relocation and resettlement of Afghan colleagues and refugees under the most dire of circumstances, while pivoting our programming in Afghanistan to address ongoing food insecurity and public health needs, and continuing to push to keep women and girls in school.

We are also making strides to become a much more nimble Agency at a time of immense demands, shoring up a depleted Agency by welcoming new recruits, and operating with greater flexibility. The FY 2023 Request will build on these steps forward, giving us the ability to invest in the people and systems to meet the world's most significant challenges so the United States can seize this moment in history.

SUPPORTING THE PEOPLE OF UKRAINE AND MANAGING THE GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS
STEMMING FROM THE KREMLIN'S WAR OF AGGRESSION

As we enter the third month of the Russian Federation's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, the humanitarian situation has grown dire, especially in the country's east, even as Ukraine continues to put up stiff resistance on the battlefield. We are actively programming resources passed in the March 15 Ukraine Supplemental Act and seeking additional supplemental resources to continue supporting the people of Ukraine and address rising global food insecurity as they continue to defend their sovereignty and their country. These resources are critical to making sure that Russia's war against Ukraine is a strategic failure for the Kremlin, while easing the global suffering their actions have caused.

Since the war began, more than 13 million people have been displaced—over a quarter of Ukraine's population including two-thirds of the country's children. That includes 5.7 million refugees, 90 percent of whom are women and children. An estimated 7.7 million more people are internally displaced inside Ukraine. An estimated 15.7 million people inside Ukraine will need humanitarian assistance over the next 4 months.

These supplemental resources that Congress provided have been instrumental in surging critically-needed assistance to those in need in the country, and to mobilizing the humanitarian systems required to coordinate a significant response. To date, our implementing partner, the World Food Program—which was not present on the ground in Ukraine when the conflict broke out—has scaled up its presence, and has now provided nearly 3.5 million people with rapid response rations, bread distributions, and cash-based transfers, with plans to increase distribution to reach 6 million people by June. With support from the United States and other donors, UNICEF and its local partners have provided critical health supplies to support access to primary health care for over 1.5 million children and women and ensured access to safe water for nearly 1.3 million people in affected areas as of May 3. While much has been accomplished, we recognize that more must be done, particularly in securing humanitarian access to reach those in active conflict zones with the assistance they urgently need.

To support the Ukrainian Government's ability to administer services and manage its budgetary needs, USAID has contributed \$500 million to the World Bank's Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Ukraine (MDTF), and as President Biden announced recently, we plan to transfer an additional \$500 million from the FY 2022 Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act, for a total of \$1 billion. The supplemental funding will also enable us to provide assistance to Ukraine and neighboring frontline states like Moldova. This plan focuses on economic stabilization, countering disinformation, and promoting energy independence.

Of course, Putin's war has effects beyond Ukraine's borders. The Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine has led to serious disruptions to global food, fuel, and fertilizer supplies, while also denting crop production and household incomes, and causing already high food prices to rise further, thereby taxing the international humanitarian

system. USAID is coordinating with other U.S. Departments and Agencies to respond to immediate, medium-, and long-term impacts on global food security and nutrition. Estimates suggest that up to 40 million additional people could be pushed into poverty and food insecurity over the coming year—in addition to the over 800 million people around the world who already face hunger. These populations are mostly focused in the Middle East, and West and East Africa, where higher fertilizer prices today threaten crop yields and harvests tomorrow. With the main planting season about to begin, countries like Ethiopia and South Sudan face the possibility of significant reductions to projected crop yields, food accessibility, and household incomes.

Putin's attack and its devastating effects on global food security comes on top of 2 years of record food insecurity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. In FY 2022, nearly two-thirds of our Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance's programming was to address food insecurity and prevent famine through emergency food assistance and related programming. This year, a similar proportion of funding will go to address growing food insecurity, however, due to the skyrocketing costs of food and fuel, the same amount of funding will reach 10 million fewer people.

In light of the food crisis, USAID, together with our partners at USDA, have made the exceptional decision to draw down the full balance of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust—\$282 million—which will be used to procure U.S. food commodities to bolster existing emergency food operations in six countries facing severe food insecurity: Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Yemen. We are immensely grateful to USDA, which will provide \$388 million in additional funding through the Commodity Credit Corporation to cover transportation and other associated costs so that food can get to places around the globe where it is needed most.

Yet even as we meet short-term food assistance needs, we must continue to invest in long-term food security and build resilient food systems so that countries have the ability to feed themselves, lower their dependence on Russian wheat and agriculture, and manage future food shocks.

The United States Government has long been a global leader in addressing global food insecurity. In the first 7 years since the launch of the U.S. Feed the Future Initiative, the program is estimated to have lifted 23.4 million people out of poverty, 5.2 million households out of hunger, and 3.4 million children from risk of stunting. That's in addition to the program's measurable benefits for farmers and agribusinesses here in the U.S. and around the world, due to increased agricultural productivity, trade, jobs and income, and U.S. exports.

And yet, new disruptions to food security around the world indicate that our need for funding will continue to be significant. That's why the FY 2023 Request includes over \$1 billion in State and USAID economic and development funding for global food security. This money will go towards bolstering Feed the Future initiatives around the world, strengthening food systems, supporting farmers, and building community resilience.

CONTROLLING COVID-19 AND STRENGTHENING GLOBAL HEALTH LEADERSHIP

Much has changed from the haunting early days in March 2020. Thanks to funding from the American Rescue Plan Act and additional supplemental appropriations, the United States has been the clear leader in the international response to COVID-19, already investing over 95 percent of the funding Congress has generously provided to us, and we expect to obligate virtually all of the remaining funds by July.

We have expanded testing, treatment, and surveillance in countries around the world. In hotspots in Africa, South Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, we have provided rapid responses for urgent healthcare needs, critical commodities, and technical assistance. And we have helped support developing countries in mitigating the transmission and morbidity of COVID-19, while also helping those countries prevent and mitigate food insecurity, gender-based violence, and other secondary effects of COVID-19.

Our Agency has also helped lead the effort to vaccinate the world. In partnership with the Department of Defense, we have procured 1 billion Pfizer vaccine doses for up to 100 countries around the world, free of charge and with no strings attached. We are addressing the most urgent vaccine delivery and country readiness needs in more than 100 countries, including surge support to 11 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, under the U.S. Government's Global VAX initiative. We are leading Global VAX as a whole-of-government effort in close partnership with the Centers for Disease Control—and we are already seeing significant vaccination progress in these countries such as Uganda, where vaccination coverage increased fivefold between

January and May, and Nigeria, where vaccination rates increased nearly threefold during that same time period.

And yet, our job remains unfinished. Many countries are still off track to hit their vaccination coverage targets this year. Global testing, treatment, and health services still lag. Without additional resources, many of our programs will begin wrapping up activities and closing down this fall. And we risk a significant loss of progress in our other global health programs if we cannot secure needed emergency funds. That's why President Biden requested \$22.5 billion in supplemental funding to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, \$5 billion of which would be dedicated to global efforts.

Additional supplemental funding would enable a significant expansion of our international vaccination drive, provide surge support to an additional 20-to-25 undervaccinated countries in significant need, countries like Liberia, where 24 percent of the population is vaccinated, and Haiti, where less than 2 percent of the population is fully vaccinated. It would also support other international COVID-19 response priorities like providing boosters and pediatric vaccinations, testing, treatments—including the newest, high-impact antivirals—as well as additional health services that would reach an additional 100 million people.

Such funding is essential if we are ever to turn COVID-19 from a damaging global pandemic into a manageable respiratory disease.

Barring additional funding, the United States will have to turn its back on the countries that need urgent help to boost their vaccination rates and access lifesaving treatments. Failing to help these countries get shots into arms and reduce severe disease means we will leave their populations unprotected and allow the virus to continue mutating into new, potentially more dangerous variants. Scientific research has established that new variants are more likely to emerge from a long-term infection in immuno-compromised individuals who lack access to vaccination or treatment. These variants will inevitably make their way onto American soil, close down American cities, and infect and cost American lives.

This week, the United States, Belize, Germany, and Senegal will co-host the second Global COVID-19 Summit. The Summit will redouble our collective efforts to end the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for future health threats. And we have called on our global partners—governments, civil society, philanthropies, and businesses—to bring commitments to the table.

As we race to end the pandemic, USAID continues to push ahead on our broader global health efforts. The FY 2023 Request for USAID includes \$3.96 billion to advance American leadership in Global Health and Global Health Security. These funds will help to prevent child and maternal deaths, bolster nutrition, control the HIV/AIDS epidemic, expand the global health workforce, and combat infectious diseases. Funding in USAID-managed assistance will respond to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on global health programs including tuberculosis and malaria, as well as strengthening health systems and global health security to better prevent, detect, and respond to future infectious disease outbreaks.

In addition, the FY 2023 Request includes \$6.5 billion in mandatory funding for the Department of State and USAID for critical pandemic preparedness activities. These funds will make transformative investments in pandemic and other biological threat preparedness globally by strengthening the global health workforce, advancing pandemic vaccine development, replenishing emergency response capacity, and providing health security financing to prevent, detect, and respond to future infectious disease outbreaks.

BOLSTERING DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE AND FIGHTING CORRUPTION

As the pandemic stretched into a second year, pro-democracy movements in many countries faltered, while governments, under guise of ending the pandemic, enacted new restrictions on human rights and fundamental freedoms. Disinformation ran rampant and sowed division within and between free nations. And the Chinese and Russian governments have worsened these trends by supporting authoritarian actors all over the world.

At the same time, corruption has increased in scale and scope. Today's corrupt actors are highly networked, agile, and resourced—and for the most part, they outmatch those who stand against them. USAID's Anti-Corruption Task Force found that USAID Missions have extremely limited—and in some cases, no—resources to defend against corruption. While this is incredibly concerning, it's also a historic window of opportunity for reform.

This opportunity, combined with the increased threats of corruption and democratic backsliding, is why the FY 2023 Request includes over \$2.94 billion to revi-

talize global democracy. These funds will empower local partners, provide transparency in political systems, and address authoritarianism and disinformation. Of this foreign assistance request for democracy, roughly \$2.6 billion is in accounts that USAID will fully or partially manage. The request will advance the Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal introduced at the Summit for Democracy, a landmark set of policy and foreign assistance initiatives that support free and independent media, empower historically marginalized groups and democratic reformers, and help develop open, secure, and inclusive digital ecosystems.

Traditionally, our democracy assistance has emphasized media training, election monitoring, and human rights advocacy. But as we've seen, countries in the midst of a civilian transition or with a newly elected leader who rose to power on the back of a campaign to fight corruption or expand the rule of law, need not only traditional democracy assistance and investments in civil society to hold governments accountable, but resources that can immediately deliver a democratic dividend that demonstrate the value of good governance and strong institutions and services for citizens. That might include support to acquire vaccines, establish a social safety net, or invest in a power utility to keep the lights on. This funding will give us the flexibility to support countries in the event of a democratic opening—so-called democratic “bright spots”—with the resources they need to demonstrate that democracies can deliver for their people. This amount also includes \$100 million to fight transnational corruption by empowering anti-corruption champions, strengthening partner countries' ability to detect and prevent corruption, and exposing and disrupting the flow of illicit money, goods, and natural resources.

The President's FY 2023 request includes \$2.6 billion for USAID and the Department of State to promote gender equality and the political, economic, and social empowerment of women and girls; prevent and respond to gender-based violence; expand access to child, elder, and home care services and address gender discrimination and systemic inequities blocking the full participation of women and girls, men and boys, and individuals of other gender identities—all by integrating gender equality across a range of development, humanitarian and security assistance. This historic request would more than double our commitment to women's empowerment and gender equality.

Advancing gender equality reduces poverty, promotes economic growth, increases access to education, improves health outcomes, advances political stability, and fosters democracy. The full participation of all people is essential to economic well-being, health, and security.

RESTORING U.S. CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

Recently, USAID launched a new Climate Strategy that will guide our efforts to tackle the existential threat of climate change over this decade in a way that is truly transformational.

Our Climate Strategy lays out six ambitious targets to be achieved between 2022–2030, which together would represent a dramatic increase in our Agency's efforts to stem the climate crisis. These targets include preventing 6 billion metric tons of global greenhouse gas emissions—the equivalent of taking 100 million cars off the road for a decade—and conserving 100 million hectares of critical landscapes, an area more than twice the size of California. We would also support 500 million people to better prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change that are already wreaking havoc on marginalized communities.

The President's FY 2023 Request includes \$2.3 billion in international climate financing, and given the substantial gap in climate financing globally, USAID's Climate Strategy places a special emphasis on catalyzing substantial new private investment for climate mitigation and adaptation; our goal is to kickstart \$150 billion in new public and private climate finance by 2030. We are also focused on the conservation, restoration and management of 100 million hectares of carbon critical landscapes by 2039—land that captures and stores carbon while preserving biodiversity and helping to prevent zoonotic transfer of diseases driven by habitat destruction.

We also continue to work closely with the Government of India through the support of their global climate initiative, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. The United States is a founding member of the coalition, and we have invested in supporting its technical leadership and formalization, with a goal of creating a global body that will advocate for the creation of infrastructure that can withstand climate and disaster risks and disseminate best practices. Since its founding in 2019, the Coalition now has 35 global members and over 400 companies, all working to share expertise and strengthen resilient infrastructure development across the globe.

ADDRESSING IRREGULAR MIGRATION FROM CENTRAL AMERICA

In the past 6 months alone, USAID programming in Central America has created more than 40,000 jobs, provided life-saving humanitarian assistance to 1.8 million people, supported distribution of more than 10 million COVID-19 vaccine doses, and helped mobilize \$1.2 billion in private investment. Because one of the most effective ways to counter irregular migration is to provide legal means for securing seasonal or temporary migration, we have helped expand labor migration pathways from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras through the H-2B seasonal visa program. And we have used policy, development, and diplomatic tools to pressure leaders in the region to govern democratically and transparently.

But as demonstrated by the continued arrival of migrants at American borders, much more work is needed. Individual migration decisions are complex, but they are rarely made on a whim, and we use data from multiple sources to understand their root causes and target our programs accordingly. As documented by the Government Accountability Office, the decision to suspend most assistance to Northern Central America in 2019 adversely impacted over 80 percent of USAID projects, and we continue to work aggressively to restart, optimize and scale our programs. For FY 2023, USAID and the Department of State are requesting \$986.8 million to support the second year of implementation of the U.S. Strategy to Address the Root Causes of Migration in Central America.

Using this money, we will continue working with partners in civil society, government, and the private sector to address the drivers of migration from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras—drivers like lack of economic opportunity, corruption, violence, human rights abuses, absence of quality public services, and declining trust in government. We will continue building and implementing a robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan designed to track progress under the Strategy. And we will defend democracy, human rights, and civic space throughout Central America so that citizens believe they have a voice and a future in their countries of origin. Nicaragua is a case in point. The Ortega regime's gravely concerning wide-scale crackdown on civil society and rejection of democratic norms and processes in Nicaragua has coincided with a major rise in out migration of Nicaraguans fleeing political repression and economic stagnation under Ortega.

RESPONDING TO HUMANITARIAN CRISES IN PLACES LIKE ETHIOPIA AND AFGHANISTAN

Stopping the threat of famine and addressing atrocities in Ethiopia is a top priority for the Biden administration and for USAID. Fighting has left as many as 9 million people in northern Ethiopia in desperate need of food and forced more than 2 million people to flee their homes. Food insecurity projections from February 2022 to May 2022 show that up to a million people will face famine-like conditions in northern Ethiopia by June—700,000 of those in the Tigray Region. In the Tigray Region alone, more than 90 percent of people depend on assistance.

At the same time, there have been multiple, credible reports of gross violations of human rights related to the conflict in northern Ethiopia. Since last appearing before this committee, I visited the Um Rakuba refugee camp in Sudan, where I met with victims of the conflict in Tigray and heard their heartbreaking stories of abuse and violence.

Recently, the Government of Ethiopia and Tigray regional authorities reached a truce in their fighting—the source of so much of this human misery. And since the truce on March 24, over 200 trucks have arrived in Tigray in April alone, with the number of trucks slowly increasing. But to meet the immense humanitarian needs in Tigray, more than 500 trucks carrying tons of food and life-saving supplies need to arrive each week. The current flow is woefully insufficient.

We will continue to push for significant, sustained, unconditional, and unhindered delivery of much-needed aid to all those in need. We will also continue working with interagency partners to address and mitigate ongoing human rights violations and credible reports of atrocities by countering hate speech and mis- and disinformation, strengthening protection of freedom of expression and peaceful protest, supporting independent media outlets and watchdog organizations, strengthening local conflict mitigation, supporting the rule of law, building an enabling environment for national dialogue, and monitoring and documenting human rights abuses.

In Afghanistan, an estimated 22.8 million Afghans face food insecurity following the Taliban's seized power in August 2021. Currently, the United Nations estimates that 95 percent of the Afghan population is in need of assistance. And to truly end the humanitarian crisis, we must also address the roots of Afghanistan's economic and development crises as well as advocate for the promotion of human rights for all Afghans. On March 23, the Taliban abruptly reversed its decision to allow girls to attend school past the sixth grade. On May 7, the Taliban imposed additional re-

restrictions on Afghan women and girls freedom of movement, employment, and access to society, all of which jeopardize the human rights and agency of Afghan women. The Taliban have also threatened civil society organizations through media crackdowns, intimidation, unjust detentions, and assaults of journalists.

While we continue to work through diplomatic channels and likeminded donors to press the Taliban to reverse course and allow all girls to go to school, women to work and participate in the economy and protect the rights of minorities and civil society; we remain committed to supporting the people of Afghanistan. The United States has been the single largest donor of humanitarian assistance since the fall of Kabul in August 2021. Since then, the U.S. Government has contributed \$719 million. Alongside us, the humanitarian community provided another \$1.82 billion towards the humanitarian response in 2021. And we are working with our partners to support basic needs like health, livelihoods, agriculture, and education.

We will continue programs to enable the direct delivery of humanitarian assistance. Our aid helps support rural livelihoods, improve food security and develop resilience in food systems in Afghanistan, enable women and girls to access quality healthcare, education, support for gender-based violence, civil society organizations, and training and livelihood programs. And we support journalists and media organizations, while also working to counter human trafficking.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT

Across all our efforts, it is crucial that we engage more frequently and more intensely and sustainably with a broader range of partners. That's especially true of the community-led organizations and companies based in the countries in which we work. When we partner with these local NGOs and businesses, we have an opportunity to double our impact—to not just manage a project and deliver results, but to grow the local capacity of that business or organization so its impact will be sustained long after its relationship with USAID ends.

Our current approach to community-led development draws upon more than a decade of the Agency's prior experience. It aims to devolve more power and leadership to local actors, elevate diversity and equity in our partnerships, and address some of the systemic and operational constraints at USAID. We have to approach localization as a shift in not just with whom we work, but also in how we work: creating intentional shifts in the way we design and implement our programs so that we are putting local communities and stakeholders in the lead. This is about deeper, more systemic change.

Our efforts to advance community-led development have been warmly embraced by more than 1,000 local development organizations, as well as by many of our implementing partners and some of the largest international non-governmental organizations. Thanks to your support, the FY 2022 appropriations bill provided an initial \$100 million in the FY 2022 appropriations bill to support our Centroamérica Local initiative, along with the authority, flexibility, and staff resources to prioritize working with local organizations in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

With more support from Congress, we can deepen this approach across our Agency and our Missions. The FY 2023 Request includes \$47.6 million for the Centroamérica Local initiative—\$40 million for direct awards to local organizations and \$7.6 million to help staff this effort.

INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE AND BUILDING A STRONGER CULTURE

Of course, none of what we set out to achieve would be possible without USAID's dedicated team of development professionals serving our nation throughout the world. Many of our staff are still reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic, having lost loved ones even as they sought to protect others in their community from the virus.

With your support, we are also increasing the size and agility of the career workforce to better advance U.S. national security priorities. Since last year, we have hired approximately 500 career employees and are working to reach our target levels of 1,850 Foreign Service and 1,600 Civil Service employees this year.

The FY 2023 Request includes \$1.7 billion to continue these efforts to invest in our people and build our institutional capacity, increasing the number of U.S. direct-hire positions that advance our most critical and effective foreign assistance program. This funding covers salaries and benefits of our direct hire Foreign Service and Civil Service workforce, overseas and Washington operations, and central support, including human capital initiatives, security, and information technology. The FY 2023 Request also includes resources for the launch of the Global Development Partnership initiative, a workforce expansion program, that will focus on democracy and anti-corruption, global health security, national security, climate change, operational management, and a more permanent humanitarian assistance workforce.

But in reconstituting our workforce, we want to recruit and retain talent differently than we have before, with an emphasis on hiring and nurturing a workforce that truly represents America. Thanks to the sustained leadership of our staff, we've taken several steps toward these aims. Their work and advocacy over many years enabled one of my first acts as Administrator, which was signing the USAID Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Strategic Plan—a framework document to guide the Agency's efforts to integrate DEIA into every aspect of our work.

Since signing this document, we've taken concrete steps to advance our DEIA goals. We have conducted assessments that provided us with data and employee experiences to help us decide how to prioritize our efforts and resources. We onboarded five DEIA Advisors in Washington operating units and are actively recruiting more. And we have established the Office of the Chief DEIA Officer and welcomed our Agency's first-ever Chief Diversity Officer. We also launched our first recruitment conferences for students at both Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic-Serving Institutions, with another planned for Arab American students later this year.

Since appearing before you last year, I have had the chance to travel to three HBCUs—Delaware State, Tuskegee University, and Alcorn State—as well as Florida International University, the largest Hispanic-Serving Institution in the U.S., to sign new agreements that will help expand our recruitment and research partnerships.

Additionally, we are addressing current DEIA data gaps by making our data collection process more inclusive. We're expanding our talent recruitment pipelines and lowering barriers to entry for development partnership opportunities by collaborating with minority-serving institutions, increasing engagement and career development opportunities for underrepresented students, and establishing hiring goals to increase the number of employees who are persons with disabilities.

However, it is not enough just to recruit talent, we must nurture and develop it. We will expand access to professional development and learning opportunities and equip our managers with the tools to lead talented and diverse teams. We are also developing commitments to our locally-employed colleagues to codify entitlements, benefits, and career advancement and professional development opportunities for our Foreign Service Nationals, who constitute 70 percent of our overseas workforce.

CONCLUSION

The challenges we have encountered in the past year are grave and loom large, but I sincerely believe the opportunity before us is even larger. By providing the resources necessary to seize this moment, the United States can galvanize commitments from our allies and our private sector partners, support the people of Ukraine in their moment of need and help manage the impact the Kremlin's war is having on the world's food supply, control the COVID-19 pandemic while laying the groundwork to detect and prevent future pandemics, strengthening health systems, and quickly rollout future vaccines, help countries adapt to the worst effects of climate change while embracing new renewable technologies and green jobs, and demonstrate to the world that democracies can deliver in a way no autocracy can. These actions are the key to reversing years of democratic decline and creating a more stable, peaceful, prosperous and stable future for people at home and abroad.

With your support, USAID will move aggressively to grasp this opportunity to build a brighter future for us all. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Madam Administrator. We will start a series of 5-minute questioning. I will recognize myself.

Can you walk us through how this budget request, referring both to the request before us and the supplemental, paired with that Ukraine supplemental addresses humanitarian funding needs to stabilize conditions in key parts of the world during this extraordinary moment?

Ms. POWER. Thank you. To make sure I follow, Mr. Chairman, you mean the supplemental request pending before you—the second supplemental request, yes?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, the—well, the budget request has an additional 4 percent increase in humanitarian funding for FY23. Add to that the supplemental—

Ms. POWER. Correct.

The CHAIRMAN. —that we just talked about, and talk to me about how that neither meets or does not meet the challenge of addressing humanitarian funding to stabilize conditions across the globe.

Ms. POWER. Thank you. First, let me just step back as you did a little bit in your opening statement and discuss the colossal needs right now, the walloping effects of the combination of COVID intensification, of climate-related shocks, more conflict than at any time since the end of the Cold War, and then compounding all of that, the neutralization, at best, of the breadbasket of the world—Ukraine.

To give a couple examples of countries in which we work, 85 percent of Egypt's grains come from Ukraine, 81 percent of Lebanon's. Lebanon, as you know, was in no great economic shape before Putin's invasion.

World Food Programme prices—the price of doing business, the price of securing basic commodities and shipping them—have gone way up, 50 percent higher just to operate than it was last year and now, of course, a huge new displaced population inside Ukraine plus the nearly 6 million refugees who fled outside Ukraine.

We are seeing these cascading effects. I think what the supplemental passed last night by the House that will be coming to you does significantly is it gives us the ability to meet the needs of those brave Ukrainians who have remained inside their borders, again, everything from psychosocial, those who have suffered sexual violence, to being able to provide shelter.

We have all seen those large residential complexes that have been decimated by Putin's aggression. Then, of course, just food and cash needs. We want to get markets up and running. We do not want nor do the Ukrainians want to be dependent on humanitarian assistance for long.

This is an emergency phase. What is absolutely critical is that the Ukrainians themselves be able to feed themselves, which is what they have always been able to do.

Then when you extend, again, the ripple effects and the cascading effects to sub-Saharan Africa where one in every two or three pieces of bread is made with Ukrainian wheat, you can see why, again, the requests that came up here, both in our budget requests for 2023, but, more importantly now, this immediate request entails such a substantial increase in funding.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. In light of that explanation, as you pointed out, many countries, especially in the Middle East, heavily depend on the grain and food commodity imports, and the Russian invasion has threatened, as you suggested, the breadbasket of the world.

Syria and Yemen rely significantly on food aid provided by USAID and, of course, the challenges in Lebanon, Tunisia, and Egypt, which can spur widespread public anger and social unrest.

While this is a very significant request, is it fair to say this is not going to meet the totality of the challenge before us?

Ms. POWER. There are a number of contingencies that come into play here. I mean, we are also supplementing this surge in humanitarian assistance with interventions by our missions in more than 80 countries where these vulnerabilities exist, almost by definition, developing countries to try to ensure more precision use of fertilizer

since less fertilizer is now going to be available on the open market and the prices are going up, using—building on Feed the Future and other initiatives.

There is a lot that governments can do to mobilize their populations and we are hopeful that the World Bank and IMF, the fund—the Solidarity and Resilience Fund that they have created—will provide access to finance for some of those countries.

There are some contingencies there. In addition, and this is really important and I know some members are seized with this up here, Ukrainian farmers have been unbelievably brave.

They are out there sowing their harvest, wearing, in some cases, flak jackets with metal detectors next to them to be able to detect unexploded ordnances, and it is the Russian blockade on Odessa and other southern ports that has made it impossible for them to move their crops—their grains—from granaries out into the open market.

Again, if we were able to find a way through rail, through road, through potential other port access to get to the Baltic ports or if they were able to repel Russia's horrific blockade, which, again, is costing lives not only in Ukraine, but will cost lives all around the world, that would be something that could bring, again, more grains to the open market, bring the prices down.

The CHAIRMAN. My own perception is that this will not meet the challenge of global food insecurity, which has been exacerbated by the war in Ukraine and the resulting consequences of that war, and so—and then when you have food insecurity and people are going hungry, they are then driven to do things they might not otherwise do.

One is to move in search of food and then you have migration. Others is to fight for food and then you have conflict. So this is, in my mind, beyond being a good global neighbor. It is about do we want to see more migration, do we want to see more conflict, where, ultimately, U.S. national interests and securities are affected? I would say no.

So I hope we will get ready for what will be a bigger challenge than what you have here before your budget or what the supplemental provides, which is very Ukraine focused and with its neighboring countries, which I applaud, but this is not going to meet the challenge that we have. I have other questions about labor and diversity and other things that are not related to food insecurity or Ukraine. For now, I will yield and turn to the ranking member for his questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Picking up where the chairman left off, I think his assessment is absolutely right and that is that there is real doubt whether or not the world's food supply is going to be enough for the world's population, and the outline of the consequences of that that the chairman just iterated, I think, are very real.

Obviously, you cannot—as USAID, you do not put your arms around all of that stuff, but your job is to get as much food out there as you possibly can.

What is our assessment—dire assessment—of the coming situation? Is that what you are hearing also from the people you deal with worldwide?

Ms. POWER. First, if I may just go meta on the exchange that you have had. I mean, this is exactly the bipartisanship that has been reflected in your collective efforts to bring more food online and to give us the resources we need to meet humanitarian needs. Let me just, first, say thank you for the spirit of the—of both sets of comments.

Yes, Senator, this is what we are hearing. I met with the Ethiopian Minister of Finance now going on 2 and a half weeks ago, 3 weeks ago, and he described already the riots and the protests that were occurring in Ethiopia well and apart from Tigray and the crisis that we know already exists there in Afar and Amhara because of the increase in the price of fertilizer and farmers just saying, we cannot afford this—where are the subsidies—and then the Ethiopian Government saying, we do not have the fiscal space here to provide those subsidies—what are we going to do.

So that is just, again, those kinds of protests. I think we see it in the data. Even up to this point on COVID-related food insecurity over the last 2 and a half years, if you look at some of the intention to migrate surveys of people who are crossing borders and—or who are attempting to cross even into the United States, you can see a major spike in food insecurity as grounds for migration.

I think an already unstable world that is already experiencing more conflict, more political protests in the last several years than there have been in any comparable 3-year period in the last hundred years, you are going to see those effects, those destabilizing effects, getting massively exacerbated by what is happening right now.

Remember, we were in a food crisis before one man decided to try to lop off part of another country. We were in was the most severe food crisis that any of us had seen and now that is being compounded by this horrific aggression.

Senator RISCH. I appreciate that, and I think all of this is frightening, to say the least. It is coming and I guess we all need to think about it and how we are going to get through this.

Your reference to the Horn—every day I am constantly frustrated by what is happening there and the lack of a solution or the apparent solution. What is your view there?

Are we going to just continue to prop up what is going on there with food to keep people from starving and it just goes on? What is your view of what happens there? What is the end game here, if any?

Ms. POWER. Of course, we want to meet the needs, as always, of people facing desperate food insecurity. As you noted, with food shortages around the world or access to food so limited, prices going up, there is going to be evermore demands, as we have been discussing, on, for example, USAID's humanitarian aid budget.

The fact that in Ethiopia there are warehouses upon warehouses filled with food where the only thing standing in the way of feeding starving people and malnourished children is a denial of access by government forces. That cannot stand. It could not stand before and it cannot stand now.

I do not think we are propping up. I think we are pressing the government. There has been the most modest of progress with 200

trucks getting in, as you probably know since you have been tracking it so closely, since the humanitarian truce was declared.

We need 500 trucks a week to get into Tigray and Amhara and Afar, and we are looking at, potentially, a million people facing famine conditions by next month if that flow does not start to move.

I do think the Ethiopian authorities are feeling the pressure. There is a truce. There is a different kind of vibe, for lack of a better word, in our engagements. Again, more is getting through, but it is a trickle and it has to be a flood to make up for lost time.

Senator RISCH. I appreciate your views on that. My time is up. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin.

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

Madam Ambassador, thank you very much for your extraordinary service to our country for over so many years.

The challenges today are extreme. You have already pointed out some, but what I find the most alarming is the trend of decline of democratic states, as you pointed out during your testimony.

We see every time there is a survey done, more countries are less free. We need in our foreign assistance to balance the needs that are out there. We have to be engaged in regards to health issues, nutrition issues, education issues, gender issues, housing issues, economic opportunity. All those are critically important and all could use more funding.

There is a fundamental need to support democratic institutions, and the amount of resources that we allocate for support of democratic institutions is very limited and the needs are very great.

I am going to just give you one suggestion of where some funds could be diverted. As I understand it, the funds that was set up after the fall of the Soviet Union for supporting democratic institutions and market economies, they are set up in the individual countries.

One was set up in Russia and, obviously, it is my understanding it is about \$153 million in that account that has been frozen because there is no opportunity right now to use those funds for that purpose.

It seems to me those funds could be diverted, and as I was questioning the other day the nominee to be Ambassador to Ukraine, yes, we have a lot of work to do in Ukraine, but one of the issues we have to do is work on strengthening their democratic institutions.

We know before Russia's incursions there was challenges in Ukraine. I guess my question to you, would that be a creative use to transfer those funds for Ukraine or to use them, considering the limited amount of funds you have, in regards to democracy being frozen in a country where we cannot use it?

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator.

Let me first just say since I am up here, to talk at least in part about the FY 2023 request, that we really have attempted to do a soup to nuts review of our democracy and anti-corruption programming in order to try to right-size it for this moment in history, rather than, I think, what you had seen as the kind of relative

global complacency that had come to pass, certainly, after the fall of the wall and the talk of the end of history and all the rest.

You saw, as you know, over time democracy funding just going down, down, down, down, and not being compensated for, for example, with additional resources in the anti-corruption space and we are trying to remedy that in the 2023 request, really, to try to scale the support that we give frontline human rights defenders, independent journalists, social movements, whether that is labor movements or workers or students or young people of the kind who helped bring down the Bashir regime in Sudan before that progress was offset over the course of the last 6 months.

I want you to know that when you look at the numbers, you will see us really actually trying to resource something we all claim we care about, but have not resourced commensurate with our national interest in funding democratic institutions and those who will bravely stand up for democratic principles around the world.

With regard to the Enterprise Fund, all I can say here, I think, is just to assure you that no stone would go unturned if there are resources available to be funding anti-corruption and democracy work.

I think there is a range of views that we are trying to sort through on whether those resources are accessible. Happy to talk to you or have our team talk to your staff about what might be available.

Senator CARDIN. I appreciate that. I just think the optics of taking money from Russia's account, which is not going to be used, and using it for Ukraine is the right optics these days as well. I would just point that out to you.

Let me ask one additional question, if I might. The Administration is requesting \$400 million for countering People's Republic of China—PRC's—Malign Influence Fund. Sounds great to me, but explain to me what is that—how are you going to use that \$400 million?

Ms. POWER. Thank you. What we could do is get you a mapping of what we have done with those resources up to this point. Suffice it to say that it is one of the loan—maybe loan is too strong, but one of the rare funds at USAID that comes unearmarked and actually gives us the ability to react quickly to a moment of opportunity.

Whether that is, for example, a group of civil society actors who might be exposing some kind of corruption associated with some kind of large infrastructure project or whether that might be an investment in an alternative source of energy, it has, basically, been used to give us flexible funding to try to draw on USAID's comparative advantages over the Chinese investment that we know is blanketing not only the world, but the hemisphere.

Again, this is only a modest plus-up from a fund that was created before my time as administrator. I can tell you it is—when there is a democratic opening and it is in a place where China has sought to swoop in—and, again, there is virtually no place now where that is not the case—this ability to fund democratic actors on the ground or to fund an economic growth program that will draw people towards a free market approach to fund an open and

inclusive—support for an open and inclusive digital ecosystem as distinct from heavy-handed surveillance internet infrastructure.

Those are the kinds of projects and, again, we can give you a rundown on how that—those resources have been spent.

Senator Cardin, I do not want to eat up your time, but I have to just say one thing.

Senator CARDIN. My time is—

Ms. POWER. Is your time up?

The CHAIRMAN. You have accomplished that already.

Ms. POWER. Then I am eating someone else's time. I am sorry.

Senator Risch made a point about questions for the record because here I am promising these things, and he made a point earlier that we had been very slow and I just want to say I am—I take personal responsibility for that and whatever the process dysfunction that caused such a long lag between you all posing questions of this nature and us getting back to you, I apologize for that.

We are fixing the process and that will not happen again. So I just did not want to leave that unaddressed as I make more promises.

Senator CARDIN. I will look forward to following up on those points that you did. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. POWER. Okay. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Hagerty.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Chairman Menendez. Ambassador Power, good to see you here.

Chairman Menendez, I would like to start out by submitting for the record a letter that I sent to President Biden in March of this year raising my concern about high fertilizer prices and potential shortages there, if I might. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

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

Senator HAGERTY. Administrator Power, I would like to turn to you. I grew up in a rural area. I was president of my high school Future Farmers of America organization. I remember studying then the theory of Dr. Thomas Malthus, who predicted that the world was going to run out of food if the population continued to grow.

Well, Dr. Malthus was wrong. He is one of the original doomsday prognosticators and he turned out to be wrong because he forgot about something very important. That is American ingenuity, particularly, when it comes to the agribusiness arena.

Thanks to innovation in agribusiness, America has been able to dramatically increase yields. We have been able to feed the world and that is because modern farming techniques have been at the forefront. There are many countries that would like to take our modern farming techniques, that would like to take that intellectual property.

Our agricultural innovation, particularly, in nitrogen fertilizer, has made a huge difference in terms of our nation's ability to support feeding the world's population.

I would like to turn to some comments you made on ABC News recently, and I am just going to read what I understand that was said. Talking about fertilizer shortages causing the loss of production—caused by the loss of production in Russia and Ukraine—did you say that it would hasten the transition to natural solutions like manure and compost that “would have been in the interest of farmers to have made eventually anyway”?

Ms. POWER. Those comments are accurate. Can I offer some clarification?

Senator HAGERTY. I would like to just also ask you this. Did you also say in that same interview that you should never let a crisis go to waste?

Ms. POWER. So in the interview—and I would definitely rephrase my response to the question that was posed if I could do it again—but rest assured that chemical fertilizer has been a critical part of the agriculture gains that our partners have made globally, and there is just no question whether through Feed the Future, we have talked previously, I think, in this setting about farmer initiatives and the insight and innovation the farmers here bring.

All I was meaning to say—and it was coming out of the meeting that I referenced earlier with the Ethiopian Minister of Finance, who was saying in this moment of desperation where Ethiopian farmers, for example, have been unable to secure fertilizer on the open market because the prices have gone up so much with Russia’s invasion, given that Russia is such a large exporter of fertilizer, that they are now scrambling and finding these alternative means of trying to fertilize, and—but in no way did I mean to suggest that there is—that we are en route to moving away from programming with our partners using fertilizer that has been so effective in increasing gains.

Senator HAGERTY. You serve in a very critical leadership role, Ambassador. I appreciate that role and the world appreciates the role that you serve and you need to be, I think, very cognizant of our strengths and, I think, be very careful about what is being said.

I have heard members of this Administration talk about high gas prices being good because it forces a transition to alternative fuel vehicles, saying that high prices in fertilizer are good to force a transition that should happen anyway.

When you are forcing us back into manure or compost and that type of thing that is going to precipitate a catastrophe. That will precipitate disasters that will be felt on a global—

Ms. POWER. That was not the intention, sir. It really is this emergency phase. It is not a question of, for many of these farmers, synthetic fertilizer, yes or no, or chemical fertilizer, yes or no.

They are just not able to access it now because the price is out of reach. So the combination of the humanitarian assistance, the additional funding that we are able to do through our agricultural programs, that we want to be in a position where they are able to access fertilizer in the way that they have been able to do in the past.

Senator HAGERTY. I, certainly, want us to be in a position to support—with American innovation and innovations like modern agri-

culture to support continuing the increase in yields that we have seen and we will need to see.

I am very concerned that we are going to see food shortages come up here on a global basis and I think we need to be very careful, A, as we speak about this, and then, B, what we decide to do to support it and move it in the proper direction, and moving back in time and moving back in history is not the right direction.

I would also like, Mr. Chairman, to submit for the record an article here from—an article here from Foreign Affairs magazine. It is about what happened in Sri Lanka when they mandated going to organic farming and away from modern farming.

Madam Ambassador, if you have not read this, I would commend you read it, but I think it tells a very dire tale of what can happen when a move like what was described on ABC News is actually taken seriously and delivered a disaster in Sri Lanka.

So thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Madam Ambassador.

Ms. POWER. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the article will be included.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Ambassador, nice to see you again. I had a couple of questions.

We met with the Ukrainian ambassador to the United States yesterday—a number of senators did—with regard to humanitarian assistance. In terms of the humanitarian crisis created by Russia, Congress understands the importance of taking immediate action to quickly get food to those who desperately need it.

In March of 2022, Congress provided about \$100 million for the Title 2 Food for Peace program for Ukraine. It has been 2 months. The food aid has still not been delivered to Ukraine.

In fact, none of the money has even been spent, and since we have already committed to this 2 months ago, why has not the USAID been able to get the food assistance to the people of Ukraine?

Ms. POWER. Senator, I am not sure if that was the ambassador's characterization, generally, of food assistance. That would surprise me. I can run you through the food assistance that had—

Senator BARRASSO. I will clarify. We met with the ambassador and a number of senators have raised this issue. This was not the ambassador's position.

Ms. POWER. Okay.

Senator BARRASSO. We are asking a number of questions: are you getting everything, has it gotten there, where are we now.

Ms. POWER. Got it. Okay. We are, as you know, the largest funder, and I want to distinguish international organizations from our Ukrainian partners. So maybe if you just give me a second to come back to that.

We are the largest funder of WFP, which, it is true, did take some time to establish their warehouses and to scale up. They were

not present in Ukraine anymore when the war broke out, despite our warnings ahead of time that this war was coming or this invasion was coming.

They are now reaching 7 million people inside Ukraine. It is not enough. They would be the first to—excuse me, they are reaching 3.5 million people in Ukraine with a goal of getting to 7 million by the end of June.

We have provided—we, USAID, have provided, thanks to you, \$205 million in emergency food assistance. We are also providing something that is less visible, Senator, and that is cash assistance—more than \$109 million of cash assistance, again, through partners like World Food Programme and others, and that is to try to get markets up and running because, again, we want to move away from food assistance as soon as possible, given that Ukraine is fully capable of feeding itself.

There is an issue, I think, with our sort of—or not an issue so much as a question about whether we have the right balance between support for international organizations and support for Ukrainian partners.

I think one of the really important dimensions of the recent—of the supp that passed the House last night is that it promises, potentially, if it passes the Senate \$7.5 billion in direct budget support for the Ukrainian Government.

They have a social service ministry—I talked to the social service minister yesterday—that itself provides cash assistance to internally-displaced people, to elderly people, provides pensions, provides other forms of resources. If that can be scaled up, you could imagine a world in which international organizations would just be procuring things that Ukrainian actors on the ground would themselves not be able to procure.

With regard to actual food commodities from the United States itself, I think that is something that usually does cost more and take a longer period of time. I will have to get back to you on where those commodities are and, to the degree that your understanding is accurate, why it would be that those would not yet have landed in Ukraine.

Senator BARRASSO. Those are the sort of questions I specifically have. I know in March we passed the Ukraine supplemental, \$2.65 billion for international disaster assistance. Again, that funding is just sitting idle is my understanding on that. USAID has only donated \$50 million to the World Food Programme.

Ms. POWER. No. That is not accurate, sir.

Senator BARRASSO. Oh, good.

Ms. POWER. Yes.

Senator BARRASSO. All right. Another issue facing this quick delivery of critical food to those in need is shipping. U.S. law requires at least half of the vessels carrying government authorized food aid on U.S. vessels. There are, I understand, only four U.S. flag ships the U.S. Government can use to ship the food aid. Not one of the four ships is available right now.

It has been estimated it could take an entire year to get the food to the people of Ukraine. In the case of an emergency like this, I know the President may waive that requirement. Since the Food

for Peace program is run by USAID, have you requested a presidential waiver in order to address this issue?

Ms. POWER. On this score—on this—if you are asking specifically a waiver to get food into Ukraine, the answer is no because the food that we provide to Ukraine is provided in a different manner. Again, it is not food commodities from here, just for reasons of cost and efficiency.

We have used that waiver, for example, to get food into Yemen where U.S. carriers will not travel, and we are grateful for some of the initiatives that are occurring up here, as I understand it, in a bipartisan way to try to show congressional support for greater flexibility, given the urgent needs of the moment.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN [presiding]. Thank you. Senator Menendez has passed the gavel to me and I get to ask a question.

Welcome, Administrator Power. We are delighted to have you here and really appreciate the effort that you and everyone at USAID is making on a daily basis to try and improve the lives of people around the world.

I would like to begin with the global gag rule and the impact that that has had over the years, also known as the Mexico City Policy, which has prohibited foreign nongovernment organizations from receiving U.S. global health assistance if they provide legal abortion services or advocacy for abortion law reform, even though that is done with their own funds.

I am particularly concerned about this because what we know is that this policy has resulted in an increase, not a decrease, in the number of unsafe abortions. The policy causes more unintended pregnancies, higher rates of maternal mortality, and it leaves countless women at risk.

Can you speak to the ramifications for USAID and our global health policies when that global gag rule is in effect, and what we are doing now to help rebuild those partnerships with the organizations that are so critical to providing support for women and families around the world?

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator.

I think that while there are, of course, divisive issues as it relates to reproductive health or as it relates to family planning, I think we have endeavored over the life of this Administration to restart programs that were suspended, given the prior Administration's policy.

I think we do still hear reports of very conservative application of this Administration's policy as sort of a hangover from the prior Administration. I think it is extremely important.

You will see in the 2023 budget request a request for a historic \$2.6 billion for women's and gender empowerment and rights, broadly defined. I think that will have ramifications, we hope, in this area of programming.

It is just extremely important that women's rights are protected and that women get to enjoy the right to voluntary family planning, which has not always been the case, as you note.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much for that. Another area that is really important as we think about how do we empower

women around the world is promoting the ability of girls to stay in school, particularly secondary school where there is persistent gender disparity and, again, how can USAID better provide holistic support to ensure that adolescent girls can stay enrolled and complete secondary school?

Ms. POWER. I think it is—and, again, I just mentioned the gender funding—gender-related funding that is requested here in the 2023 request.

Part of what is key is that all our areas of programming filter the programming through the recognition of the unlocking potential that the education of women and girls, the rights of women and girls, have for the rest of society.

Our budget request, for example, requests \$693 million in basic education, \$238 million in higher education. There is a real emphasis in that programming on the education of girls, specifically.

Of the million people, for example, reached with vocational training, half are girls and women. We, again, emphasize that this should be the filter through which our programming in a whole range of areas, whether it is microfinance in the agricultural space or education through which we filter our programming.

I do not know that I can say that that has happened yet, but we are having now a gender advisory in every USAID mission around the world, so I am hopeful that will accelerate that process.

Senator SHAHEEN. Can you, again, speak to why that is so important? Because I think people looking at it without having an understanding of what a difference it makes when girls and women are educated to not just their families, their communities, but their countries, do not appreciate why this is so important in our foreign policy.

Ms. POWER. We have spent a lot of time talking about grave humanitarian crises—the grave humanitarian crisis that is underway right now.

What you see is when girls—for every additional year of education that girls have that affects their family planning choices, that affects the number of mouths that their families will be feeding, that affects GDP. You see an incremental increase in a country's GDP for every extra year, on average, that girls are able to obtain in education.

I mean, it is just as simple as do you want to unlock your country's full potential or do you want to leave half of its potential off the field?

One thing I would draw your attention to, Senator, you are probably already tracking, but I find it really quite thrilling that President Biden's new infrastructure initiative, sort of the—which the Build Back Better World initiative as it was launched at the G-7 includes in it a pillar on gender as conceived of as infrastructure and the piece of it that is so important, I think, is investments in the care economy.

So we are looking at USAID and across our government about what we can do to catalyze investments there and that has not been a significant area of focus in the policy space, the regulatory space, or the funding space, the program space.

So it is very exciting to imagine what it would mean also for women well and apart—even once they have obtained their edu-

cation, once they begin having children, they feel the need to drop out of the workforce in order to raise those children in part because they do not have care possibilities that they can draw upon.

We have seen it in our country. You can imagine how much more severe the effects are even in developing countries. That is something that is a really ambitious new initiative. The Gates Foundation and others are squarely behind it and I think we could bring a lot of resources to this agenda, which would have additional catalytic effects.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. It is very exciting.

I am out of time, but I cannot finish my questioning without pointing out how really horrified I have been—and I know that this is shared by the women in the Senate as well as all of our male colleagues—with the Taliban’s reversal of their commitment to allow girls into school in Afghanistan.

I would just urge that we are looking at doing anything possible to try and support women and girls in Afghanistan, and I know you share that commitment.

Thank you. Senator Risch, Senator Menendez gave me the gavel, but I assume you have already—okay.

Senator BOOKER. I appreciate the battlefield promotion, sir. I will try not to abuse my power.

Senator SHAHEEN. Senator Booker.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much. Chairman Booker, excuse me.

[Laughter.]

Senator RISCH. Chairman Booker.

[Laughter.]

Senator BOOKER. Acting Chairman Booker.

Senator RISCH. This is not going to go well.

[Laughter.]

Senator BOOKER. Ambassador Power, it is good to see you.

Ms. POWER. Good to see you.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you so much. I want to jump right in and then get to my colleagues.

I know that food insecurity has already been talked about and I am happy to see Congress moving to include over \$4 billion of emergency funding into the international disaster assistance program.

A report just came out, though, that in Afghanistan about 10 million children right now—it is a staggering number—that they are alone. They are unable to meet their daily food needs, which is really incredible, and then you add into that the crises in Ethiopia, Yemen, South Sudan.

I guess if we are able to get this funding approved, which I hope we do, as soon as next week, will USAID be able to do everything really possible to quickly move this life-funding assistance—life-saving assistance out the door to programs like the World Food Programme and others? If you can give me a—kind of a sign of hope.

Ms. POWER. First, thanks for the question. I mean, again, it is important to bear in mind what we talked about a little bit earlier, but just as the—we were facing an unprecedented food crisis before Putin went and did this, and it just adds a whole new layer of reck-

lessness and callousness to what we know is already horrific in Afghanistan.

The appeal that was issued for Afghanistan—now it feels like a year ago, but it was probably only 4 or 5 months ago—was the largest ever humanitarian appeal for any country in the U.N.'s history, right, and that is a long—a relatively long history at this point.

I think the infrastructure is in place, Senator. The fall of Afghanistan has been devastating to women's rights, girls' rights, the economy, the humanitarian welfare of the citizens of the country.

There is more access. The only thing positive one can say is there—the aid organizations are able to move around more easily because the front lines are not there that had been there before. Yes, we will be able to move money to Afghanistan.

We are the largest donor. We have provided very, very substantial—I think, half a billion dollars worth of humanitarian assistance just since the fall of Kabul at the end of August. We need other donors to do more. We need Gulf donors and others who have not yet really been enlisted in this cause to step up.

Above all, we need to see a functional Afghan economy. Senator Risch raised this indirectly, I think, in his opening statement. We can continue to sort of put fingers in the dike here, but the real problem is gross mismanagement of the Afghan economy, and so there needs to be an independent solvent central bank in Afghanistan. Right now, the Taliban is not cooperating with the U.N. initiative to create a kind of financial humanitarian exchange facility—

Senator BOOKER. Ambassador, I know those dynamics.

Ms. POWER. Yes.

Senator BOOKER. I really appreciate the thoroughness of your answer.

Ms. POWER. Sorry.

Senator BOOKER. I am going to try to use my—

Ms. POWER. Please.

Senator BOOKER.—remaining time as judiciously as possible. To the extent that any of us, because we, obviously, talk to a lot of our peers and nations—our partner nations—if there are specific folks that are not stepping up or could be stepping up—

Ms. POWER. Right. I will follow up. Absolutely. Thank you.

Senator BOOKER. Yes, I really would appreciate that. I am sort of asking this in terms of a question, but I know that the Global Food Security Act is going to be reauthorized next year and I guess I just would like to make sure—and I know this is a focus of yours so I really do not have too much encouraging to do—but that we see some language in there that really adds support for women, smallholder farmers, focusing—programs focusing on women and girls when it comes to that program. I would love to be able to work with you on trying to make sure that the language reflects some of those priorities.

I want to just jump in and give you a chance to help—talk about some of the good work that you all are doing in terms of modernizing the work you are doing, and I just know we need to make sure that money is getting out the door to organizations that are best positioned to do the work and I know—I think Devex is the

name of the group—reported on Monday that USAID funding to low and middle income-based organizations actually decreased last year and overly complex contracting is a barrier that is often cited that really keeps local innovative organizations from working with USAID.

Last year, USAID structured just 1.3 percent of its grants as straightforward fixed amount awards, which are even—which are easier for smaller, local, and more innovative organizations to apply for and manage, and they are among the best ways, I think, to incentivize real results and have a higher level of accountability.

I know this is a focus of yours. I just hope that there is a plan to increase resources being distributed in that way.

Ms. POWER. It is, and there is a lag between when a new administrator comes in and launches a big agenda as we have on localization. The goal, Senator, is 25 percent of foreign assistance going to local organizations and 50 percent being co-designed, co-evaluated, with local organizations.

We are going to have to find a way to get there. There is a disparate impact of the complexity of USAID rules and regulations on local organizations, whether it is linguistic challenges or just the fact you do not have a world-class accounting firm or general counsel in-house.

So one of the reasons we are grateful for the plus-up in operating expenses is so that we have the staff that we need to sit down with local organizations to help them jump through those hoops.

We also need to simplify and actually reduce the administrative and other reporting burdens while doing so in a manner, of course, that is sensitive to the imperative of avoiding fraud, waste, and abuse.

This is the needle we are seeking to thread. I think the new partners initiative that—and local works initiative that were written into law up here have been helpful, and I have launched a \$300 million initiative called Central American Local, which is a dedicated pool that would only go to local organizations. I think we are getting there, but it is going to be time, unfortunately, before you start to see the return on this agency's commitment in this regard.

Senator BOOKER. Great. I will just bookmark this, not as a question, just in my closing to say I really hope to talk to you a little bit more about that, but also examine how we can get double bottom lines for a lot of our investments with a lot of sort of innovative strategies, say, for example of climate change, more investments in scaling climate-resistant crop varieties in places like India. These could help us with climate change as well as dealing with a bit of their food crisis.

Senator Menendez has returned. I have lost my very brief moment as acting chairman. I felt the power drain away. I am going to yield to him. I know Senator Van Hollen is here to go up next.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Thank you, Chairman Booker.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Van Hollen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Deputy Chairman Booker.

Administrator, it is great to see you. Just on Afghanistan, as you know what desperate situation that is, I appreciate the support

AID is providing through nongovernment organizations and making sure we do not do anything to support the Taliban. I agree with what Senator Shaheen said.

I would say, at the same time, that the Afghan reconstruction fund under the supervision of the World Bank, it seems to me, has developed mechanisms to deliver additional funding to help hungry people without helping the Taliban, and I just urge you to continue to support that effort.

I am sure that you have all talked about the good news of the \$40 billion emergency supplemental that passed the House, which, importantly, does include \$5 billion for food assistance and dealing with food insecurity.

I think we all recognize that, given the needs, it is still not enough, but it is a lot better than where we were just a short time ago. In terms of the scope of the problem and the different causes, we know there are many. We know it ranges from COVID supply chain issues to climate change impact on agriculture, especially in places like the Horn of Africa.

The dominant one right now is Putin's war against Ukraine, and I just came from a hearing in the SFOPS Appropriations Subcommittee with David Beasley of the World Food Programme and I asked him about this, and it was pretty clear that the 25 million tons of grains that are stuck in Ukraine are having a direct impact on food insecurity, rising hunger around the world, both in terms of supply and increased prices. So that while Putin is killing innocent people in Ukraine he is also making people around the world go more hungry and leading them to the verge of starvation.

Can you quantify this problem? Because if we do not get this grain out of the port of Odessa, millions of people are going to go hungry because of what Putin is doing, and I will just close this part of the question by saying that people have talked about getting the grain out through land routes.

Everybody I have talked to says that there is no way to get a significant amount of grain out as quickly as we need to through land routes, that the port—opening the ports is the key. Could you elaborate on the impact around the world of what is happening there?

Ms. POWER. I can. I mean, let me just say that the Ukrainian outflow of grain in steady state pre-invasion was 5 million tons of grain a month. So that is what we are talking about losing—and David Beasley will be more expert on this than I—but just taking that off the field globally we are seeing it in food shortages, but we are also seeing it in skyrocketing food prices.

So I think you were not there yet, Senator, when I shared, I think, an anecdote that really brought this home for me or a fact that brings this home for me, which is that one out of every two or three pieces of bread in sub-Saharan Africa is made with Ukrainian wheat and we have all seen the numbers of 85 percent of Egyptian grains come from Ukraine, et cetera.

You asked specifically about the range of solutions, and I think the European Union, actually, just before I came here today just put out a plan—the European Commission, I should say—but it leaves open a lot of the same questions because we are all grappling with how much throughput could you get through using tra-

ditional train routes, through using roads to get to other ports within Europe—is there a way to get up to the Baltic ports, which seemed like the closest, other ports that could take supplies at scale.

Right now, the biggest challenge and can this—we are working with our Ukrainian farmer partners because we have big—USAID has big agricultural programs—has long had big agriculture programs in Ukraine—what they are grappling with is how do you incentivize farmers to plant now or soon, because it is not quite that time, if they are not seeing a return on what they have harvested, if that is just sort of—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Madam Administrator, I just have a few seconds—

Ms. POWER. Yes.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. —but I appreciate your emphasizing that point. I think the Ukrainian farmers want to plant. They do have control of the country and—but they got to be able to get it out.

I just want to thank you for—and the Administration for your requests for both UNRWA as well as the support—ESS support in the West Bank and Gaza, and I will follow up with you on the AID Prosper Africa.

I want to thank your team for briefing the Africa Subcommittee staff recently, and it sounds like we are making good progress on Prosper Africa.

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good to see you even from a distance, administrator.

I want to talk to you about the topic of energy independence and the way in which this Administration thinks about the utility of using grant dollars or financing to help countries break their dependency on neighbors and, of course, I am thinking, first and foremost, about Russia's periphery.

This has always seemed to me to be a bit of a blind spot for the U.S. Government. We provide a lot of technical assistance on how countries can connect to other energy systems, but we have always been, I think, far too reluctant to put hard dollars on the table in Russia's neighborhood.

We leave a lot of that to the Europeans, but the bureaucracy in Brussels is sometimes just absolutely unovercomeable for many countries that are seeking relatively low-cost projects to break away from Russia.

Right now, there is a crisis in Bulgaria. As you know, Russia has cut off energy supplies. There is a whole host of ideas on the table to find other avenues for energy import, including U.S. LNG, but there is not a lot of creativity in the U.S. system beyond advice as to how to help these countries find their next energy source.

So just love a minute or two from you on whether there is more to be done at USAID, whether you need additional authorizations in order to better use and leverage dollars for these kind of projects.

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator. I am back not that long ago from Moldova, which is probably the country that most personifies

the challenge, I mean, with the amount of energy blackmail going on across Europe.

There is nothing like visiting a country that is partially occupied by Russian forces and vulnerable in the natural gas, fuel, and electricity domains to that blackmail to, I think, underscore the importance of securing that independence.

I guess what I would say is it really depends. I would love to just have a more detailed discussion, perhaps, with our energy envoy, Amos Hochstein, maybe at the table as well to hear more about what you have in mind.

I mean, we were absolutely instrumental—we, USAID, our energy team—as part of our USAID mission in Ukraine, for example, in Ukraine’s decision to and capacity to free itself to do the tests that you saw in the electricity sphere to connect itself to Europe, which happened just in the early—it was either several days before the war or just as the war started, and that was years in the making and lots of programming.

It is not hard to infrastructure in the way that you are describing and I think where my mind goes is to an entity that I have been spending an awful lot of time working with and through and that is the Development Finance Corporation, because that—and they are looking, for example, in Moldova to see what kinds of investments they can make.

It is not a place they have done large things in the past. I mean, it had to transition from OPEC to being a Development Finance Corporation. Again, the energy sector, actually, I think, is a place that you have made an exception for them to work. I think there are real opportunities throughout Eastern Europe, in particular.

The devil is in the details of what you have specifically in mind. I would want to make sure that USAID is the best bricks and mortar agent for those kinds of investments. Right now, what we do is we embed technical advisors and contract out those energy independence experts who help guide a country toward building the organic capacity.

Senator MURPHY. Right. Let me—and I appreciate that. To me, this is—the greatest need that exists to stabilize economies right now in Eastern Europe is assistance on the future of energy and, thus far, the United States has decided to provide that advice and expertise, but not hard dollars.

I mean, the sort of food distribution economy is a mix of private sector and public sector participation. We have made the decision in energy to, essentially, leave it all in the hands of the private sector and to use the public sector as a means of providing advice.

I just think that is a mistake. I think it is time for the United States to put some hard dollars on the table. I think that would be a wise expenditure of our dollars, given how much we are spending on other projects to secure Europe.

I look forward to that conversation with you and others in the Administration. I appreciate the time, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Schatz.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you, Chairman.

Administrator, thank you for being here. I want to cover three topics.

First, internet freedom. Freedom House reports that internet freedom has declined for the 11th year in a row. State Department ought to be taking the lead here, but USAID and the U.S. Agency for Global Media play critical roles. I know USAID just put out a new digital strategy, which makes some reference to internet freedom.

I am wondering if you can talk about what you are doing in this space and how it fits into the other agencies that have some responsibility.

Ms. POWER. Thank you. I think that you see out of the President's Democracy Summit more attention, of course, to this ever so critical issue.

Our dedicated programmatic money in this space is quite modest, as you will see reflected in the President's budget request, far more modest than the importance of the tool of an open and inclusive digital ecosystem.

I think our slice of it against the interagency backdrop that you described is very much on the regulatory side, again, sort of similar to my exchange with Senator Murphy, having advisors embedded to make sure that the inner—and working with the State Department to apply diplomatic pressure to ensure that governments are not going the way of the Chinese approach even as they are drawing increasingly on Huawei or other tools in developing countries. The diplomacy to reverse that or to change that for those countries that have not yet made those decisions is underway as well.

Senator SCHATZ. Just two final things for follow-up later. I would like to get some additional fidelity on how the interagency works, and if it has not been fully fleshed out that is understandable, but I would like to get some clarity there. Then, secondly, what would a more robustly funded personnel model look like for this.

I want to move on to deforestation. Last fall, I introduced the FOREST Act, which creates a framework for the Federal Government to stop commodity-driven deforestation around the planet, which is the main cause of deforestation.

In Glasgow at the COP, President Biden committed to the Declaration on Forest and Land Use that sets the goal of no global deforestation by 2030. The Lacey Act is a great tool, but, as you know, it deals with forest products, not commodity-driven deforestation.

Can you tell me how Biden's commitment is changing and shaping USAID's work on the ground to reduce deforestation? Specifically, I am interested in commodity-driven deforestation.

Ms. POWER. Again, not—continually encouraging follow up with our experts on this, but I do think given the energy we are now—no pun intended—putting into the deforestation or the reduction of deforestation effort it would be worth someone on your staff touching base with our climate coordinator.

Our request in the budget that has gone up recently includes \$335 million in sustainable landscapes funding, and that is a 135 percent increase over the 2021 enacted levels. I think that you did see the nature-based solutions emphasis at COP to an unprecedented extent and so additional ideas you have as to what that should look like.

Senator SCHATZ. I think it is just—so I can get to my last question—

Ms. POWER. Please.

Senator SCHATZ. —I think it is three things. First, let us follow up and work with your staff. Second, let us figure out what the kind of staffing needs are.

I also just want to put a fine point on there is a tendency to think when we talk about deforestation about Lacey Act implementation and enforcement. That is absolutely important. I have supported that since I got to the Senate.

That is not what I am talking about here. I am talking about TA and financial assistance to help people to move off of the commodities that are actually driving the deforestation trend around the planet.

Then a final question for you. I was pleased to see that USAID released a vision statement for digital health in late 2020. Telehealth works.

Telehealth is particularly exciting in a lot of the countries in which USAID works. Can you tell me how far along you are in operationalizing the vision that was released and what you need in order to scale telehealth across the planet?

Ms. POWER. Just let me say one last word about your prior question on reforestation or reducing deforestation just to say I think one of the things that we are trying to do organizationally is bring about just much more day-to-day synergy between our bureau on food security and resilience and our climate environment team.

I mean, those synergies can exist in any agency, but to really create that kind of integration, which I think is—will end up creating structures that are more responsive to the way you formulated the question previously.

With regard to telework—

Senator SCHATZ. Telehealth.

Ms. POWER. I have got return to work underlined.

Senator SCHATZ. I got it. It has been a long day.

Ms. POWER. Everybody is coming back to the office in a week or two.

On telehealth, President Biden actually just today, I think you might have seen, launched a new health worker training initiative. I think this is going to be—this question of how to integrate telehealth training into healthcare worker training is going to be one of the foundational questions.

I think Atul Gawande, our relatively recently confirmed Assistant Administrator for Global Health, is very seized with bringing these digital tools to bear. What that means practically, again, I would want to dig into the details.

As an agency, we are, as you may know, very weighted in our funding toward HIV/AIDS and PEPFAR, malaria, TB—very specific disease burdens. We are trying to orient the agency around something quite basic, which is this year—this past year saw the first reduction in global life expectancy in more than a century. It is really, really, really bad news.

We are trying to think about what does it mean to structure USAID around actually reversing that and showing increases in global life expectancy, and I actually think telehealth as getting

health care to more people is going to be a critical part of the answer.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Markey.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much, and thank you for the great job which you are doing in these troubling times that we are in.

Can we talk a little bit about climate change and the Indo-Pacific area I have been able to include in the COMPETES Act—we hope at some moment this year we will have the COMPETES Act actually become law—but a requirement that the United States Government lead a robust interagency climate resiliency and adaptation strategy for the Indo-Pacific?

Can you talk a little bit about what you might be seeing in that region and what impacts climate change is having in terms of destabilizing impacts?

Ms. POWER. Senator, I—it is like talking to Michael Jordan about basketball here. You know the impacts far better than I do. I even saw in my days as U.N. ambassador permanent representatives of countries, that they feared would not be member states of the United Nations even 20 years into the future because of the actual outright disappearance of the country into the sea.

So adaptation is with us. It is here upon us. You will see in the 2023 budget request both, as you well know, very substantial requests for increases in climate financing and very substantial requests—everything is relative—for development assistance in the Pacific Islands—I think nearly a doubling of assistance requested there.

On adaptation, as you know, President Biden at COP launched the PREPARE Initiative. I think another way to put it for us is that there is not one aspect of USAID's programming that is not now touched by climate change—touched, by and large, negatively by climate change—and everything we do across all of our program areas has to be, again, filtered through helping countries adapt to what is upon them and, again, it is particularly acute for small island developing states like those in the Pacific.

Senator MARKEY. Yes. A hundred years ago when my grandmother and grandfather were getting off the boat from Ireland, half of that CO₂ is up there and will stay up there for another thousand years so it is all cumulative.

So much of the CO₂ is red, white, and blue. We were earliest into the Industrial Revolution, and Representative Velazquez over in the House and I introduced a bill to create a resettlement pathway for climate-displaced persons, and the 2021 White House climate migration report recommended that the executive branch work with Congress to create such a legal pathway.

Can you talk about that threat that we have? It is not just prospective, but it is real right now in terms of climate refugees and our need to respond.

Ms. POWER. Yes. I mean, the chairman, actually, in some of his opening comments was talking—or opening exchange talked about the climate shocks, the food shocks, and the incredible potential for

the escalation of the already really worrying migration trends that we are seeing.

I mean, we see it even at our own southern border and just seeing the changing demographics of who is there. We are seeing people en masse from countries where we were not seeing anywhere near those numbers in the past as well as, of course, the traditional outward migration.

What we do is try to work with countries to build more resilient infrastructure to ensure that they are using drought resistant or heat resistant seeds, that we are bringing the latest innovation and technology from universities here and all around the world to bear and to have as small—as compressed a feedback loop in terms of what we learn and then what we plant and support as possible.

There is no coincidence that you see the hottest years on record correlating with historic migration and historic conflicts. I mean, it is linear.

Senator MARKEY. Can I also ask you, we are on the front line now helping Ukraine to beat back authoritarian incursion into their country and to Europe, but we are not still not on the front line in terms of providing aid for the vaccination of people around the world with the goal of 70 percent of the world vaccinated by October of this year.

Can you talk a little bit about how important that is and why Congress should act to provide that funding?

Ms. POWER. It is so important. It is so important. It is important for the health and safety of Americans that we drastically reduced the risk of new variants and we have done an amazing job, we, not USAID, but we, the countries on the frontlines of this pandemic who started with very little of the infrastructure that we are blessed to have here in this country.

When President Biden held his first COVID summit back in September, lower and lower middle income countries were at 12 percent vaccination rate, Senator. Now they are at 52 percent. Sub-Saharan Africa still lags behind.

In the countries where we last launched Global VAX, which is a get shots in arms initiative that we launched in December to put those billion doses that we purchased from Pfizer—get those shots in arms—we are seeing landmark improvements.

I mean, a country like Uganda going from 21 percent of eligible adults with one shot to 71 percent just in a matter of months. We can do this, and it is an investment in our own health and safety here in the United States and to not do it—we have we have expended now 90 percent of the American Rescue Plan emergency funds that were given to us.

We are incredibly grateful for it. So are the countries on the frontlines of this pandemic who have not reached the thresholds we have reached here in this country.

We are exhausting those funds. This effort to vaccinate the world will grind to a halt if we do not get new resources and we will regret it.

Senator MARKEY. I agree with you. We have to do Ukraine, but we have to do vaccines as well, and I will also say to you at this particularly perilous time whatever you can do to help—give some

additional help to the Red Sox bullpen would be greatly appreciated.

Ms. POWER. I think they need you. That is the only solution that would be an upgrade.

[Laughter.]

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. Thank you for all your great work.

The CHAIRMAN. It would be an upgrade for the Red Sox. It would be a downgrade for the Senate.

Senator Coons.

Ms. POWER. True.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Menendez. Thank you, Administrator Power. It is great to be with you.

I just finished chairing a hearing of the SFOPS Subcommittee at which Dr. Atul Gawande testified, as well as Dr. Frieden and Dr. Ryan from—former CDC director and from the World Health Organization.

Dr. Gawande testified in response to a number of our questions about how soon global COVID funding will run out both for USAID and globally and the consequences, but I think some of this bears repeating or further exploration.

All three testified that it is very difficult to predict when a more lethal and transmissive variant may emerge. In fact, our ability to detect new variants globally is dropping rapidly as the number of tests being performed and the monitoring infrastructure in other countries is dropping off.

I would be interested in hearing from you as our nation's development leader how significant has been the loss of development gains as a result of the global COVID pandemic.

My impression is that we have invested billions in PEPFAR, in the President's Malaria Initiative, in the work against TB and other infectious and transmissible diseases and billions in improving access to water and to health and to education, and the COVID-19 global pandemic has been a sledgehammer to that progress. What is your impression?

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator.

I would just repeat something that I have to believe that came up if Assistant Administrator Atul Gawande was testifying, which I think is just worth pausing over, and that is that we are experiencing globally our first decline in life expectancy in more than 100 years.

I mean, if that does not sort of sum up the shattering setbacks that have occurred in development and, again, this was—when it comes to education, seeing tens of millions of children drop out of school and not come back, but also just the learning losses that those of us who are parents may have experienced firsthand with all of the luxuries of having broadband access and being able to try to supervise that.

The circumstances in which learners are dropping out of school globally, there is no way to compensate for those lost years other than, again, to make these investments to get them back in school, and seeing the health setbacks on TB, on malaria, in areas where otherwise we were on a solid trajectory, in part, because of the generosity of the American people and you all in making these investments.

We have to halt the slide and then set really big and audacious goals that we used to take for granted, which is that life expectancy needs to increase and we need to generate resources and make investments against that goal.

Senator COONS. We have donated hundreds of millions of doses of vaccine to dozens and dozens of countries. My impression is that without additional funding to help fragile public health systems in underdeveloped countries, actually deliver them all the way out into the most remote places and to overcome vaccine hesitancy, we are at risk of wasting or losing that resource in a lot of countries.

Do you have any rough sense of the scale of that potential lost investment?

Ms. POWER. Let me address the question in two ways. I mean, first of all, we, the United States, with very strong support—bipartisan support up here—have purchased a billion Pfizer vaccines and we have gotten about 400 million of those vaccines into arms and about—more than 500 million vaccines, generally, out the door to developing countries where they are so desperately needed and where, again, in some sub-Saharan African countries you are seeing under 10 percent vaccination rates, including among immunocompromised people, which is where the greatest risks are of the most dangerous kinds of variants potentially developing over time.

We need to get those shots in arms. We have purchased those vaccines. The vaccines are there after more than a year in which supply was a major gating issue. We have gotten past that.

Vaccines just do not dance from the tarmac all the way into rural areas. They do not overcome vaccine hesitancy or misinformation of the kind that has been propagated, including by some of our adversaries globally.

We need to support that and, again, Senator, we have the results. We launched Global VAX in December. The number of people in December 2021 that were vaccinated, fully vaccinated, in Ghana was 12.4 percent. Now, of those eligible, 25.4 percent.

When we make the investment in cold chain storage, in pop-up vaccine facilities, in data systems strengthening, in meeting people where they are, bringing the vaccine to them, we are seeing uptake and that is an investment in our health security.

Senator COONS. Last question, briefly. Because our vaccines, which are better and stronger and more effective, were not available, millions of people in dozens of countries were forced to take Russian or Chinese vaccines that have proven ineffective against Omicron.

How significant is this moment? We face three different reasons, I think, for us to engage in the next round of funding: simple humanitarian concern for the health and welfare of others, demonstrating the United States is a reliable public health partner, but also there is an element of showing the world that we have not just invented and delivered for our own people the most effective vaccines, but that we are now delivering them into the arms of millions in the developing world.

Is that a significant factor?

Ms. POWER. It certainly is a significant effect. I think on—given that we are all stewards of taxpayer resources, I think the fact that

this is an investment in our health security should be reason enough.

I am seeing it, Senator, in every country I visit the desire to have mRNA vaccines, the belief that these are the gold standard, the knowledge even in remote communities about which vaccines are deemed the most effective, the most enduring with their effects, and we are—most of the developing world has not been boosted.

So even those who received vaccines that have not proven effective against recent variants are very, very interested in getting an mRNA boost, which can actually shore up the effectiveness even on the prior vaccine.

This is a major strategic advantage, and maybe just the last thing I would say is I spent some time when I was out of government looking at the effects of PEPFAR beyond the public health effects, but looking, for example, at the standing of George W. Bush and the standing of the United States.

While in the wake of the invasion of Iraq it was not terribly favorable in many parts of the world, but in sub-Saharan Africa where these programs popped up, where they endured, where they saved millions and millions of lives and gave people hope where they had lacked it, the standing of the United States, the standing of that Administration and all who have followed it in providing that support soared.

I think you see that this is America putting a man on the moon again and people are experiencing American science, American innovation, and American generosity firsthand, and it makes a difference in how they see the United States.

At a time when we are in a battle for the soul of the world as well as a battle between democracy and authoritarianism, this matters. This respect for the United States for a model of governance that produces vaccines and then gives them away and does not sell them, it matters.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Administrator. Thank you for your forbearance, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Madam Administrator, just a final couple of questions. The Administration is working to address the drivers of migration from Central America. The resources that USAID has committed are significant, but are, nonetheless, insufficient to address the challenges we face.

If we really want to address the root causes of migration we must recognize the main drivers. Miguel Diaz-Canel, Nicolas Maduro, Daniel Ortega—combined, these three despots have forcibly displaced several million people from their homelands.

Worse still, they use migration in the same way that they use food and access to basic services, as a political tool to manipulate the population and to gain leverage with the international community.

We also have to recognize that the vast majority of the displaced people in this hemisphere have not fled, notwithstanding public perception, to the U.S. Southwest border. They have actually fled to neighboring countries like Costa Rica, Colombia, Peru, to places where they have family or friends, where they speak the same language and share a culture.

We have not invested the resources necessary to assist with the long-term integration of refugees and migrants in a systemic way nor have we helped countries gain the full economic benefits of migration at the same time they are facing the challenges of migration—more children in schools, more demand on social services, the consequences of providing employment. I could go on and on.

So is USAID looking at this question of how we assist the integration of those fleeing their countries in the region? Because at some point, if we do not do that they will certainly then make their way to the southern border.

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is an incredibly important question. I think it is one that the entire Administration is grappling with, and I mentioned that that is often the case, of course, in many of the challenges we have described, but it is particularly the case here because a number of the countries in which these migrants are settling are not countries where USAID still even has a mission because of the development progress that those countries have made often in the past with USAID support.

So I think we are thinking a lot about the incentives and support those countries would need. We are doing so also with the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, the IMF, and others, thinking through what role the multilateral development banks can have there in terms of ensuring that those countries have the resources to—

The CHAIRMAN. What I would like to get you to commit to me is to work with the State Department to think about—

Ms. POWER. Of course.

The CHAIRMAN. —how we, ultimately, find a process which we can incentivize to, ultimately, seek this integration, because if not it will come to our southern border.

Ms. POWER. I think you are aware, Mr. Chairman, that discussions about regional migration agreement, much more comprehensive approach than has been taken—this kind of more piecemeal approach that has been taken in the past, those discussions are very much underway and I am hopeful that at the Summit of the Americas—

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate it. I do not mean interrupt you. Here is the point, that, in fact, the reality is that, yes, they are having discussions. Basically, the discussion is how are you going to keep people away from our border. I get it. I understand it.

Let us be frank here. The question is, if we work to integrate these people into the countries in which they first come to and can be a catalyst and incentivizer of that, then we will have less demand and we will have a better society in these countries.

Otherwise, they will have all of demand, none of the up side, and eventually we will have the challenge. So it is not about dealing with the question of how do we keep them away from our border alone.

It is how do we find a way to integrate those who have had to flee for freedom, just as we are doing for the Ukrainians. Maybe the Venezuelans do not look like Ukrainians. Maybe the Cubans do not look like Ukrainians. Maybe the Nicaraguans do not look like Ukrainians. They are fleeing, nonetheless.

I have had enough about listening about migration and the efforts by those who just are myopic and think that we should just put up a wall, put the hands across the border in terms of military, and think that that is going to solve the problem.

It is not. By the same token, I have had enough from the Administration about all their engagements is with countries how do we stop people from coming. There has to be a better thought than that. So and if there is not an agency—if AID is not an agency that can help lead the way on that, I do not know who can.

Let me just ask you two other final questions. I am pleased to see that one of your first acts as administrator was to appoint USAID's first chief diversity officer and to create a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Office to achieve those goals.

Can you give me a sense of how that office is going to play this role in USAID? More precisely, how do you plan to institutionalize AID's DEIA's efforts to ensure that they are lasting?

Ms. POWER. Thank you, Senator. I do not know how much time I have to—

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Since I had to sit through everybody's questions, you have unlimited time so—

[Laughter.]

Ms. POWER. Okay. I would just say that the individual and her team—our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accommodation coordinator sits within the front office.

The portfolio involves not only looking at recruitment and doing things like doubling the number of paying fellowships, going to minority-serving institutions like Tuskegee, Delaware State, Florida International University, Morehouse, and others, several of which I have visited personally to make this recruitment pitch, but also the individual is looking at retention and we have done a lot of examination of what the barriers for retaining underrepresented communities have been at USAID. Now it comes time to thinking about, okay, well, how do we apply lessons from that.

So that is one aspect of what the individual is doing, working really closely with our Foreign Service, our Human Capital and Talent Management Office, which looks at the direct hires, but also really thinking about these questions for personal service contractors and people who are hired at USAID in other ways.

We are also bringing this DEIA agenda to the bulk of our workforce internationally, which is nationals of the countries in which we work. While it is true we do not have a mission still in Costa Rica, we have missions in 80 countries and the majority—70 percent of our staff in those countries are nationals of the countries in which we work.

Yet, often we are recruiting from the same kind of talent pools there as we have for many, many years and that means, again, slighting sometimes ethnic or religious minorities or people, again, who might come from more rural areas.

We want to bring that diversity, equity, and inclusion agenda there. Also in our contracting and our procurement we have tried to make it easier now to lower the barriers of entry for small businesses—for small businesses and other contractors who are led by women or led by minorities.

That is a work in progress. Even getting the data on that has proven more challenging than I would have expected. We want to see real changes as well in the diversity of the partnerships that we do because we are expending significant resources, and to just do so in the same old places in the same old ways, I think, would be falling short.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate all that, and I would just say that—as I say to different leaders in the business roundtable who come to see me, diversity starts at the top in terms of who leads your company or in this case who leads the agency, and it starts at the top by making it a priority and having those who work underneath you understand that part of the judgment as to their performance will be how they perform in this regard, and then we get true change, at the end of the day.

So I think you are headed in the right direction. I just will urge you when you are having your senior staff levels that this is a clear message to them about what you expect throughout.

Lastly, I am concerned that USAID has not prioritized the critical work of supporting trade unions and nongovernmental organizations devoted to workers' rights. It seems to me that U.S. foreign aid and development policies and programs have to also prioritize worker rights and freedom of association protections in order that we can achieve the equitable economic development and strengthen democratic practices abroad.

So could you describe to me what you have done to build USAID's labor capacity and expertise internally to the organization and how will you ensure that USAID programs are effectively strengthening and promoting labor rights and workers' voices internationally?

Ms. POWER. Thank you. I will just touch upon something you and I had the chance to talk about by phone so I will not belabor.

As we seek to expand lawful pathways for migration in Northern and Central America, we are very excited about that effort. We think it provides a wonderful opportunity for American businesses and for people seeking economic opportunity in the Northern Triangle countries for that matchmaking to occur and it can be a win-win situation, but it will not be a win-win unless we also are incredibly vigilant on the labor rights side of things.

So we are looking—working with the governments of the three countries to think about how to strengthen knowledge and awareness of people who come into the United States about where they can find protection, where they can find resources.

Mexico has consulates sprinkled throughout the country. The three Northern Triangle countries, of course, do not have quite the same presence, but still have resources to draw upon, and we are working, particularly, as it relates to the H-2A program to make sure, again, that the rights of farm workers, in particular, are protected when they come north of the border.

So just to say sometimes it does not show up as a direct line item in a budget, but it is about the integration of attention to labor rights in the programming that we do.

I would also note that the President's 2023 budget request, as we have already discussed in this hearing, includes a substantial increase for democracy rights in governance programming.

I think central to that is the question of how we enhance our support for worker rights, whether in a country like Bangladesh where you have done so much work, or globally, because one line item in the funding is to try to support social movements and it is more often than not workers who are at the forefront of democratic movements who try to bring about more accountable governance of the kind that has been around.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate that and we will see how it unfolds, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that.

I should have said this at the beginning of the hearing, but we welcome as well your Assistant Administrator for Legislative Affairs, Jody Herman, who was the staff director of the Foreign Relations Committee. A good choice by you, at the end of the day, respected on both sides of the aisle.

There are no other members seeking questions. So this record will remain open to the close of business Friday, May the 13th, and I urge members who have a question if they have not gotten to ask that it is submitted by that time.

With the thanks of the committee for your participation, Madam Administrator, and your service, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:42 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

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

Question. Ukraine: The Pentagon has said that it expects the funding in the Ukraine Supplemental will last 5 months.

With regard to the humanitarian, economic, and development assistance, do you anticipate a similar timeline?

When might we reasonably expect an additional supplemental? (Recognizing this may be a difficult question to answer, to the best extent USAID can provide an estimate is critical for Congress in terms of planning.)

Answer. USAID's development programming operates along simultaneous and complementary timelines that are immediate, medium, and long-term, ultimately aimed at supporting Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction, and securing its long-term trajectory toward a democratic, independent, and prosperous future. USAID is in the process of notifying and obligating funds from both Ukraine supplementals to address priority issues, including Direct Budget Support.

USAID is quickly programming the humanitarian assistance and food security funding provided in the Ukraine supplemental, both to scale up its response to the crisis in Ukraine and to support other vulnerable populations globally. USAID expects to spend the humanitarian funds from the first supplemental on a similar timeline as DoD, with the majority programmed in the coming months.

Question. Frontline states: I am glad that the U.S. has supported international organizations operating in frontline states like Poland, which has taken in over 3 million refugees. However, I am concerned that the strength of the international response in supporting other frontline states, such as Moldova and Romania, has not been as robust despite these countries taking in hundreds of thousands of refugees from Ukraine.

How does this budget in partnership with the Ukraine supplemental make sure that all frontline states are supported in doing the important work of hosting Ukrainian refugees?

Answer. USAID coordinates closely with the State Department's Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration, which leads the U.S. Government Ukrainian refugee response.

State/PRM has provided funding to support humanitarian assistance for refugees who have fled Ukraine for Romania. This funding is supporting five UN agencies to deliver food, health, livelihoods, protection, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene assistance, as well as multipurpose cash assistance, to refugees. While USAID

does not provide direct assistance to Romania, we have been in close contact with Romanian Government officials to convey U.S. Government support and to facilitate close cooperation among the United States and other frontline states. I also saw first hand the refugee situation in Poland and Slovakia during my most recent visits and had extensive discussions with both the partner-government and civil society organizations which assist refugees. In addition, I have regular meetings with our counterparts in the European Union to synchronize our assistance efforts and ensure that frontline member states are likewise receiving appropriate support as they generously welcome and absorb an unprecedented number of refugees.

On April 6, I announced \$50 million of additional economic and development assistance to bolster Moldova's resilience to the long-term economic consequences of Putin's brutal war in Ukraine, and have already provided \$30 million in humanitarian assistance. These resources will support Moldova to welcome refugees with the dignity and compassion they have shown for months. The FY23 request will also support Moldova's economic recovery and mitigate effects of loss of trade due to the conflict, while also advancing long-term goals of improving the transparency, efficiency and competitiveness of key sectors of Moldova's economy and strengthening market linkages with Europe and Western partners.

Question. Energy crisis: Russia's ruthless invasion of Ukraine has revealed the energy insecurities not only of Ukraine, but also of the European continent. Promoting EU-Ukrainian-Moldovan grid synchronization is central to promoting European energy security and USAID has been invaluable in moving this effort along.

Please provide an update on the status of EU-Ukrainian-Moldovan grid synchronization and what USAID has done since February 24 to advance this effort.

It is my understanding that USAID has led United States' engagements in providing technical assistance to the Ukrainian Government on its efforts to integrate into the EU energy grid. The first Ukraine supplemental provided \$30 million to the Department of Energy for these purposes. Is USAID able to access the \$30 million in supplemental appropriations allocated to the Department of Energy to assist with grid synchronization?

Or at the very least, is DOE consulting and coordinating with USAID's experts with the experience in this effort?

Would it be helpful for Congress to make a technical correction to this portion of the first Ukraine supplemental to ensure USAID can appropriately access these resources?

Answer. Since 2004, USAID has been supporting the development and westward integration of Ukrenergo and Moldelectrica—the electric transmission system operators (TSOs) of Ukraine and Moldova. USAID support to both TSOs has prepared Ukraine and Moldova for integration into Europe by incorporating European procedures and standards into corporate operations and building organizational capacity to maintain power system operations through crisis scenarios, such as unexpected outages in winter 2014 and during the current Russian invasion.

On February 24, Ukraine and Moldova initiated a planned temporary disconnection from all neighboring power systems for an "island mode" test, required as part of the interconnection process to prove that Ukraine's and Moldova's power systems could maintain stability under extreme conditions. They were expected to conduct several internal system stability tests for 3 days and then reconnect with the Russian power system on February 27. Instead, the Russian invasion started on the 24, requiring Ukraine and Moldova to complete the internal test in 12 hours. USAID provided support throughout these tests, with technical advisors "virtually embedded" in Ukrenergo's dispatch center, monitoring power system stability and providing advisory services.

Ukraine and Moldova elected to forgo a reconnection with the Russian system, leaving their electric power systems operating in island mode. USAID continued to provide advisory support over the subsequent weeks until ENTSO-E members agreed to an emergency synchronization with the Ukraine/Moldova power system on March 16. This emergency connection is intended to provide frequency support to Ukraine and Moldova, helping to ensure the continued stability of the power system; it is not intended to support large-scale commercial power trade.

USAID is now assisting Ukrenergo and Moldelectrica to meet ENTSO-E's technical requirements required for "permanent" synchronization. For example, USAID is providing technical expertise to Ukrenergo to calibrate automatic generation controls (AGCs) within certain Ukrainian power plants and to assess battery technologies that Ukrenergo could install to further improve grid stability. In Moldova, USAID is assisting Moldelectrica to adopt ENTSO-E's operational, planning, and security requirements. For example, USAID provided Moldelectrica with U.S. equip-

ment to ensure Moldova can send encrypted communications and sensitive network data with ENTSO-E.

USAID is also providing support in both countries to enable commercial trade and/or sale of power from Ukraine and Moldova to Central Europe. A limited amount of electricity trade from Ukrainian producers to European markets would provide much needed revenue to address an estimated monthly shortfall of \$200 million in the Ukrainian electricity sector due to lack of demand, bill collections, etc. resulting from the invasion. USAID is supporting the Ukrainian energy regulator and other relevant institutions in establishing the appropriate European practices, such as updating cross-border transmission capacity allocation and rules, defining a market-based trading system to allow Ukrainian generators to engage with European counterparts on cross-border trades, etc. In Moldova, USAID is assisting state-run electricity supplier, Energocom, to be able to trade on the Ukrainian and more advanced European electricity markets and supporting the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development and the national regulator (ANRE) to adopt and implement European market rules.

Interagency Coordination and First Supplemental: USAID continues to support Ukraine and Moldova in integrating their electric power system and energy markets into central Europe. We provide regular briefings to and coordinate with the inter-agency, including the National Security Council, State Department, and Department of Energy. USAID does not have access to the \$30 million in supplemental funding, and we have proactively advised the Department of Energy on areas where longer-term assistance from the National Laboratories might be able to supplement our programming. USAID remains poised to collaborate with the Department of Energy and other agencies, given USAID's engagement in this sector, our longstanding relationships with key stakeholders, and substantive on-the-ground presence of USAID staff and implementing partners.

Question. Ukraine Short Term vs. Long Term Needs: I understand that the Office of Transition Initiatives is looking both to meet the urgent needs of the Ukrainian people, and think about addressing the needs of society after the war is over.

How is this budget broken down between the immediate concerns of Ukrainians, including access to fuel, generators, and food—and the long term needs of Ukrainians, including building a lasting peace?

Answer. Approximately half of USAID/OTI's programming is focused on supporting the Ukrainian Government's and civil society's emergency response to meet the immediate needs of Ukrainians impacted by the war. The remaining program activities support longer-term issues, such as advancing positive, truthful narratives about the war and Ukraine, strengthening social cohesion in key areas, and contributing to national healing by documenting atrocities and providing mental health support. Over the next 6 months, USAID/OTI expects the proportion of activities focused on immediate/emergency response needs will continue to decrease to 25–30 percent of programmatic activities. USAID/OTI's activities and programmatic direction are closely coordinated with the USAID/Ukraine Mission, the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, other U.S. Government agencies and other donors active in Ukraine to ensure that any initial contributions for reconstruction work complement longer-term efforts. Due to USAID/OTI's ability to pivot programming in response to emerging field driven needs and dynamics, USAID anticipates that the ratio of short-term to long-term needs could fluctuate in direct response to the intensity of the crisis.

Question. Food Security: As many countries, especially those in the MENA region, heavily depend on Black Sea grain and other food commodity imports, Russia's continued illegal invasion of Ukraine threatens to have serious short and long-term ripple effects in the region. In countries such as Syria and Yemen, who rely on food aid from the U.N. and USAID programs, the surging prices and shortage of essential food supplies risks further exacerbating food insecurity, while in other countries such as Lebanon, Tunisia and Egypt, increasing prices have led to widespread public anger and social unrest.

Are there mechanisms at USAID that can be used to address this gap?

Answer. USAID is exploring social safety net programs in the region that would allow us to quickly ramp up support to mitigate the effects of rising food prices on the most vulnerable households who already spend the largest portion of their income on food and are acutely affected. Mechanisms that bolster resilient farming and agricultural production in places like Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen can support livelihoods and domestic food sources at a time of rising prices and inflation. USAID has several existing programs that form initial efforts to mitigate the acute

and disproportionate regional impact of Russia's invasion, and could be scaled up should additional funds be appropriated by Congress for this purpose.

In response to rising global food insecurity, the USG announced plans in late April to draw down the full balance—\$282 million—of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust (BEHT) to support emergency food assistance activities in six countries that are experiencing food insecurity, including Yemen. BEHT funds will bolster existing emergency food operations supported by USAID/BHA, providing procurements of wheat, vegetable oil, and Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition. USAID plans to direct the majority of BEHT funding for Yemen toward the procurement of wheat from the U.S. with BEHT-procured wheat projected to reach Yemen by fall of 2022.

In Tunisia, USAID is working with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to mitigate the impact of agriculture supply chain disruptions and exploring additional support for social safety net programming.

In Lebanon, since January 2022, USAID has provided nearly \$104 million to the UN World Food Program (WFP), supporting more than 740,000 people, both refugees and vulnerable Lebanese, affected by the country's ongoing economic crisis, whose needs have been exacerbated by the impacts of the war in Ukraine. USAID provides technical assistance and in-kind grants to Lebanese agribusinesses and farmers to increase yields, link growers to markets, and promote export opportunities. USAID is also providing non-perishable food parcels to the families of public-school students in grades 1 to 6—approximately 145,000 students through USAID's basic education project.

In April 2022, USAID/Egypt asked its ongoing Egypt Rural Agribusiness Strengthening (ERAS) activity to begin supporting our beneficiary farmers during the wheat growing season. This year's wheat harvest has already begun, so for this season, ERAS is helping 5,000 farmers with post-harvest handling and improving temporary on-farm storage.

In the West Bank and Gaza (WBG), in FY22, USAID provided \$4 million in emergency multi-purpose cash assistance to support the most vulnerable Palestinian households to purchase food and other critical goods available in local markets.

Prior to the Ukraine conflict, USAID/WBG also pivoted \$20.2 million in FY20 Economic Support Funds to support WFP's e-voucher food program, benefitting 180,000 Palestinians. The programmatic change to WFP was a result of close consultation with Congress and the intent to serve a specific population and address key development challenges at the time.

With additional resources, USAID stabilization programming, including our Supporting Livelihoods in Syria (SLS), Economic Management For Stabilization (EMS), and Building Resilient and Inclusive Communities in Conflict (BRICC) mechanisms can rehabilitate agriculture, related sectors impacted by agriculture, value chains, and requisite infrastructure in non-regime held areas of northeast Syria. These programs can provide technical training, market connections, and inputs (such as seeds and fertilizers); improve water and irrigation (with climate-smart technologies); restore infrastructure (such as bakeries, mills, and seed sorting facilities) and market systems; improve financing and credit; and strengthen local authorities' and civil society's ability to meet their communities' needs. USAID could make a contribution to the multi-donor Syria Recovery Trust Fund (SRTF) to benefit farm families with inputs, allow for the cultivation of more hectares of wheat, and leverage additional funds from other donors to expand assistance to more farm families.

Question. COVID-19 Global Recovery: The U.S. is gradually gaining control of COVID-19, but the disease continues to surge worldwide. Many people on the planet are still waiting for vaccinations.

How are you adapting your COVID-19 programs, including the Global VAX program, given the lapse in funding?

Answer. Without additional funding, USAID will have to scale back efforts to build country readiness and absorptive capacity for COVID-19 vaccination, which could lead to the expiration of doses provided, cause unnecessary death and suffering worldwide, and risk the emergence and spread of dangerous variants.

By early fall, many of USAID's COVID-19 programs will be winding down even as the job remains unfinished. Failing to help these countries get shots into arms means we will leave their populations unprotected with continued risk that the virus will continue to mutate into new, potentially more dangerous variants.

Similarly, this year, USAID is supporting the building of dependable, sustainable medical liquid oxygen capacity in dozens of hospitals in about 13 countries and is launching plans for implementation of "test and treat" efforts with new oral antiviral drugs against COVID-19 in several countries. Without additional resources, USAID will be unable to support oxygen capacity in facilities in more coun-

tries so they are prepared for pandemic surges, with potential benefits for increasing life-saving oxygen for maternal-neonatal care, child pneumonia and adult pneumonia generally as well; the Agency will also be unable to promote expansion of the “test and treat” efforts beyond the limited implementation this year, potentially leading to more missed positive cases and increased rates of morbidity and mortality.

Question. Global Health Security: The FY23 budget includes an unprecedented \$6.5 billion in Global Health Programs *mandatory* funding.

Please explain why the Administration is proposing some Global Health Programs funding as mandatory, rather than discretionary.

Answer. The U.S. Government and our partners have benefited enormously from the global health security investments Congress has funded over the past decade, which have paid off substantially in building capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to COVID-19, recent outbreaks of Ebola, and dozens of other infectious disease threats.

The Administration’s request is intended to make transformative investments to better prevent, detect, and respond to pandemics, and to build a world safe and secure from biological threats. It is a strong step to build global momentum, secure buy-in and pledges from other donors, and to work towards a sustainable future. Requesting these funds on the mandatory side provides a longer period of availability and ensures funds are programmed for this critical global need without the fluctuations and competing pressures on the annual budget cycle. President Biden has been clear that the world needs additive investments in global health security and pandemic preparedness. This request is not meant to replace or displace discretionary funds and programs.

The return-on-investment of preparedness investments is astounding: a recent World Bank and World Health Organization (WHO) paper cited a 1:1100 ROI on pandemic preparedness financing, compared to 1:14 for traditional global health investments. These investments can make ourselves and the world safer and save trillions in future losses due to pandemics.

Question. Armenia: 90,000 people fled Nagorno Karabakh for Armenia as a result of the war in 2020. This population continues to have significant humanitarian needs, including maternal and child health and access to clean drinking water.

How does this budget support the needs of this population?

Answer. Since September 2020, USAID has provided more than \$4.5 million in total assistance to respond to the complex humanitarian crisis resulting from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and associated COVID-19 resurgence. USAID provided food, shelter, emergency health assistance, and social services to communities displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh in Armenia. This includes \$2.5 million in emergency humanitarian assistance, to provide cash assistance to food-insecure displaced persons and in-kind assistance to host-family households, addressing health, shelter and WASH sectors to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 for displaced individuals and collective shelters. The agency also continues to seek opportunities to help build constructive cross-border interaction and cooperation as the basis for peace and stability across the South Caucasus.

Today, only a fraction of the 90,000 originally displaced remain in Armenia. Looking to FY23, USAID will implement five separate activities that span across sectors of society to support displaced persons. Focus areas will include strengthening the delivery of social services for vulnerable populations; expanding equal access to water; bolstering community preparedness and resilience to disasters; increasing opportunities for greater citizen participation in education, labor market, and local decision-making; and strengthening local governance.

Question. U.S. Direct Hires: I recognize the importance of U.S. direct hires to USAID’s work. However, USAID could not function without the support and input of personal services contractors and foreign service nationals.

What other funding are you requesting to meet USAID’s workforce goals and support those already serving USAID, including personal services contractors (or PSCs) and foreign service nationals (FSNs)?

Answer. The FY 2023 Operating Expense (OE) request supports various components of the Agency’s workforce. The FY 2023 request includes \$111.5 million in OE which will fund an additional 200 USDH positions, 100 FS and 100 CS, in the first year of the Global Development Partnership Initiative. The Global Development Partnership Initiative (GDPI) is USAID’s multi-year effort to address staffing needs by revitalizing the USDH workforce in line with the Administration’s priorities and National Security Memorandum 3. Through GDPI, USAID will build a responsive and resilient workforce by increasing the size and diversity of the permanent career

workforce and providing flexibility to hire non-career direct hire staff. Workforce expansion will focus on climate change, democracy and anti-corruption expertise, global health security, national security, operational management (procurement, human resources, financial management, and information technology), and a more permanent humanitarian assistance workforce. The request for the Global Development Partnership Initiative also includes \$3 million to expand our FSN workforce by 33 additional positions to support the U.S. direct-hire workforce. The request also includes funding to support an FSN pay increase of approximately \$5.6 million.

The DEIA funding request in FY 2023 is \$20 million, an increase from the \$9.5 million FY 2022 enacted level. The additional funds would expand participation in Civil Service hiring programs and the Payne Fellowship Program, increase paid internships, and enhance strategic outreach to groups currently underrepresented at the Agency. Funding will also increase professional development opportunities to staff from underrepresented communities across hiring mechanisms.

Further, the Agency is committed to prioritizing equity in benefits among its workforce. To that end, USAID is implementing paid parental leave and relocation expense benefits for our U.S. Personal Services Contractors (USPSCs). The paid parental leave benefit will be provided to USPSCs at the Agency's policy discretion, in a manner based on the provisions of the Federal Employee Paid Leave Act. USPSCs may be granted up to 12 weeks of paid parental leave in connection with the birth or placement (for adoption or foster care) of a child.

The new relocation expense benefit will provide eligible USPSCs a miscellaneous expense amount and a pre-departure subsistence reimbursement to offset relocation transfer costs. The miscellaneous expense is a flat amount, calculated based on family size, while the per diem pre-departure subsistence reimbursement will be based on the U.S. locality from which our staff depart, or normally reside, for transfers from the United States to a post abroad.

Question. What efforts are being made to convert Personal Service Contractors to direct hires (particularly those PSCs who have served on multiple contracts and are interested in being direct hire employees of USAID)?

Answer. ISC and PSCs are valued members of USAID's workforce who make significant contributions to the Agency's mission. Currently, no legal authority enables PSCs to convert to direct hires; they must apply to open job announcements on USAJobs. However, the Agency is supportive of staff from non-direct hiring mechanisms who are interested in direct-hire positions, and provides opportunities to learn about the Federal application process if that is the career path staff would like to pursue. Because many PSCs have multiple years of experience working with USAID, they tend to be competitive candidates for open positions. The agency is committed to utilizing a variety of non-competitive eligibilities to support PSCs who want to transition to civil service direct hire positions such as Schedule A and Disabled Veteran authorities, which allow for appointments non-competitively.

Question. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): The President's budget request includes funding for an additional 100 Civil Service (CS) and 100 Foreign Service (FS) positions to revitalize the workforce.

How will diversity recruitment and hiring goals be applied to sourcing for these direct hire positions, including increasing racial and ethnic diversity, and implementing the 2022–26 Joint State-USAID Strategic Plan goal for USAID to increase the number of employees with disabilities from 2 percent to 12 percent by September 30, 2023?

Answer. USAID is committed to increasing diversity, ensuring equity, improving inclusion, and expanding accessibility (DEIA) across our workplace and operations, in line with major commitments from the Biden-Harris administration. USAID's DEIA Strategic Plan includes two objectives related to workforce equity, both of which emphasize promoting equitable policies and practices across the employment lifecycle (e.g., recruitment, hiring, promotions, compensation, and professional development) in order to contribute to a more equitable workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

As reflected in the request for additional Civil Service (CS) and Foreign Service (FS) positions, USAID's Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM) is currently leading a multi-year effort to revitalize USAID's workforce by increasing the size of its career workforce and, in line with USAID's DEIA and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) objectives, investing in building a more diverse and inclusive USAID staff worldwide that is properly trained to tackle the complex global challenges of our time. HCTM is working closely with the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer and Office of Civil Rights (OCR), as well as with other Bureaus, Independent Offices, and Missions, to conduct comprehensive strategic workforce plan-

ning that will be informed by DEIA and EEO principles, and by innovative tools for data analytics and workforce planning.

These data-driven efforts are being complemented by additional initiatives to recruit and retain talented staff from historically underserved and/or under-represented communities. In 2021, we created two new divisions within OCR, specifically the Affirmative Employment and Disability Employment divisions, to help advance our recruitment and hiring goals. USAID continues to engage the Department of Labor's Workforce Recruitment Program as a resource for providing candidates with disabilities for employment consideration and has also prioritized the use of Schedule A and Disabled Veteran non-competitive hiring mechanisms. In the last year, we expanded our support for the Donald M. Payne International Development Fellowship Program, which recruits highly competitive candidates from underrepresented backgrounds to join USAID's Foreign Service. We have developed and continue to develop groundbreaking memorandums of understanding with Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions, as part of a broader push to both recruit from and more closely partner with these important institutions, and will be holding several MSI conferences later this year to promote our recruitment and partnership efforts. We have also launched initiatives to build greater awareness of hiring practices that lead to more inclusive and equitable outcomes, including requiring Unconscious Bias training for all individuals participating in Foreign Service Promotion, Tenure, and Assignment Boards.

Taken together, we believe these actions will help us achieve our ambitious hiring and diversity goals to help USAID better achieve its global, lifesaving mission around the world.

Question. Women and Girls: On International Women's Day this year, the President announced a historic request for \$2.6 billion dollars to support and advance gender equality through foreign assistance in FY23, yet the United States remains well behind in its funding commitments to targeted gender equality programming and to mainstreaming gender into all its foreign assistance.

How will the Agency ensure that gender is at the heart of U.S. foreign aid and does not get siloed or diminished?

Answer. The advancement of gender equity and equality remains a priority for the Agency.

The integration of gender equality work is captured in the requirements of the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2018 and the USAID Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy and it is now reflected in the resources we have requested to accomplish our strategic priorities. USAID has well-established standards for what constitutes gender analysis and gender assistance, including for Gender Equality/Women's Empowerment-Primary (where the primary purpose is gender equality outcomes); and Gender Equality/Women's Empowerment-Secondary (where gender equality is integrated into programming as a secondary purpose); Gender-based Violence; and Women, Peace, and Security.

The Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub (GenDev) provides technical assistance, coordination, and training to support the integration of gender priorities into programming, in collaboration with our broader gender architecture of Gender Advisors and POCs throughout the Agency. GenDev aims to support missions and bureaus as they plan for increasing gender assistance within their portfolios, including through a series of workshops on the gender key issues and attributions, training, technical assistance, and other programming resources related to gender integration.

Question. Gender-Based Violence: Gender-based violence continues to devastate the lives of women and girls around the world and to threaten the peace and security of communities and nations. In particular, the needs of women and girls in conflict have been an afterthought for too long in the international response to conflict and humanitarian emergencies, despite the clear systematic use of rape and sexual violence as a weapon of war. I am concerned that USAID is not doing enough to adequately respond to gender-based violence, including in Ukraine where we know the U.S. and international response thus far has been wholly insufficient to protect the women and girls who remain at grave risk of rape, sexual assault, and trafficking.

How will the Agency uphold protections against gender-based violence as a core pillar of diplomatic efforts, programming, and operations?

Answer. I share your concern on gender based violence and the continued, systematic use of rape, sexual assault and violence against women in Ukraine and other setting such as Tigray. USAID is prioritizing the prevention of and response to gen-

der-based violence (GBV) in its Ukraine response, in accordance with the U.S. Government's *Safe from the Start* initiative, which commits the Agency to supporting GBV prevention and response from the outset of a crisis, as well as throughout the crisis. Recognizing the need to lead advocacy and fill response capacity gaps, the USAID Ukraine Crisis Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) activated a Protection Advisor immediately following the invasion and deployed the Advisor to guide the scale-up of USAID's protection portfolio in Ukraine.

USAID is currently supporting eight protection partners in Ukraine and quickly processing awards for several others. This programming includes bolstering social work services (per request from national authorities); establishing professionally staffed women and girls' safe spaces in areas with high concentrations of displaced populations; integrating GBV services alongside sexual and reproductive health partners; rolling out in-person, digital, and hotline-based information campaigns to mitigate risks of trafficking; and deploying mobile response units that provide emergency case management and psychosocial support.

Jointly with U.S. Department of State colleagues, USAID advocates with fellow funders and humanitarian response leadership to demonstrate sustained commitment among all key stakeholders to proactively address GBV in emergencies and support survivors. The USAID DART met with the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and continues to liaise with the Gender-Based Violence Sub-Cluster (the main humanitarian coordinating body for gender-based violence response) to identify and fill priority gaps.

As you are aware, USAID, with State, is revising the *U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally* per President Biden's Executive Order 14020. This revision also highlights the interagency need to address women, girls, and other marginalized groups impacted by crisis and conflict to remain at forefront of any response. The emphasis is not only to highlight the particularities of violence during conflict, but tie it to other efforts the USG is doing in the area, including the *Global Fragility Act*, *Safe from the Start*, and the *U.S. Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Central America*.

Question. We know how important it is to set up preventive measures at the onset of conflict and that we need to integrate services into other programs. The Safe from the Start program ensures that this work happens, and I'm proud to co-lead the effort to codify it into law.

Will you commit to working with Congress to fund and strengthen this program?

Answer. Yes. USAID appreciates the strong support of the Chairman and co-drafters for programming to address gender-based violence in emergencies (GBViE). USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) has long been a champion for GBViE, demonstrated by the launch of the Safe from Start initiative in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) in 2013. Safe from the Start has increased the quality and quantity of the U.S. Government's (USG) humanitarian GBV prevention and response activities. For instance, BHA's GBV funding has continued to increase by \$10 million or more each year since, reaching \$103 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021. The initiative is leveraged in advocacy with fellow donors; global and national coordination bodies; and response agencies to scale up GBV activities.

Safe from the Start propelled the USG and the humanitarian community forward, reinforcing humanitarian GBV programming as truly life-saving and urgent. Sadly, GBV needs continue to outpace current programming. In early 2021, BHA and PRM undertook an ambitious rewrite of Safe from the Start, informed by 10 multi-stakeholder consultations in three languages. The new Safe from the Start ReVisioned will outline new, more ambitious goals to realize a systematic shift in humanitarian response that centers on women and girls. It focuses on improving and expanding GBV programming, increasing expertise, shifting power to disaster-affected women, and recognizing them as experts, providers, and leaders.

USAID welcomes continued Congressional attention and looks forward to collaborating with Congress to drive progress on preventing and responding to GBV in emergencies.

Question. Countering Authoritarianism: Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine has shown in stark terms what is at stake in the battle between autocracies and democracies. In order to be successful in this fight, I believe the Administration must redouble its efforts to counter authoritarianism and bolster democracies.

How will this proposed budget strengthen USAID's ability to combat authoritarianism and support democracies?

Following the Summit for Democracy, the Administration announced a series of programs through the Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal, many which

will be administered through USAID. How will these programs advance the efforts to combat authoritarianism on a global scale?

Answer. Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine represents a fundamental challenge to the security and prosperity of democracies worldwide, but Russia's descent into authoritarianism is not an aberration. Today, for the first time in decades, more people live under authoritarian rule than democratic rule, and backsliding is occurring in even the most established democracies. Authoritarian leaders are reaching across borders to undermine democracies—from targeting journalists and human rights defenders to meddling in elections. The first Summit for Democracy, convened by President Biden in December 2021, kicked off a bold agenda that brings together governments, civil society, and private sector actors to foster democratic resilience and to resist and ultimately reverse the global spread of authoritarianism.

During the first Summit for Democracy, the U.S. launched the Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal (PIDR), a series of policy and foreign assistance programs that rally governments, activists, non-governmental organizations, companies, and others to combat authoritarianism and address core threats to democracy. The PIDR seeks to expand and modernize U.S. efforts to bolster democracy and defend human rights abroad. PIDR efforts center on five areas of work crucial to countering authoritarianism and democratic backsliding, and in which we perceive our democracy assistance efforts to need an update to meet the present moment: supporting free and independent media, fighting corruption, bolstering democratic reformers, advancing technology for democracy, and defending free and fair elections and political processes.

USAID's democracy and anti-corruption deliverables under PIDR include a number of innovative programs and initiatives, including:

- The Powered by the People initiative, which will use new methods to empower and improve the efficacy of citizen movements to counter authoritarian threats.
- Support for the International Fund for Public Interest Media (IFPIM), which will increase media sustainability—especially in resource-poor and fragile settings—and shed light on the actions of authoritarian actors.
- The Defamation Defense Fund (recently renamed “Reporters Mutual”), an insurance fund to shield investigative journalists from defamation lawsuits and allow them to continue their critical work.
- The Combating Transnational Corruption Grand Challenge, which will allow USAID to work with global partners to develop innovative tools and technologies and launch joint initiatives to reduce transnational corruption.
- The Defending Democratic Elections Fund, which will help countries and electoral community actors to proactively address the wide range of contemporary threats to elections and political processes posed by authoritarian and other malign actors.
- The Advancing Digital Democracy initiative, which will work with governments, technologists, and civil society to push back against digital authoritarianism across the full digital ecosystem.
- The Partnerships for Democracy initiative, which will surge support to countries experiencing democratic openings, bringing government and non-governmental stakeholders together to pursue inclusive reforms, improve service delivery, and demonstrate that democracy delivers in ways that alternative models cannot.

USAID's FY 2023 Request includes a combined total of \$270 million across democracy and anti-corruption to expand and sustain the PIDR programs and initiatives we announced at the time of the first Summit.

Question. Tunisia: Economic support funds (ESF) are dedicated to programs that strengthen independent judiciaries, protect human rights and freedom of the press, combat corruption, and increase public accountability and access to justice. The \$45 million dollar ESF request for Tunisia is nearly a 50 percent decrease from the requested FY22 amount.

While I am concerned with Tunisia's current democratic trajectory, given that Tunisia may be holding elections in December and is currently facing increasing economic problems, can you elaborate on the reasoning for the proposed cuts to Tunisia's economic support funding, which could be used to support rule of law and improved governance?

Answer. The FY 2023 Budget Request for Tunisia reflects the Administration's deep concerns regarding the trajectory of Tunisia's democracy. President Saied's consolidation of power coincides with serious economic problems affecting Tunisians.

The Administration has been clear with the Government of Tunisia (GoT) that more progress is needed and we continue to urge a swift return to democratic governance. The proposed cuts will further limit engagement with the GoT given our concerns with the state of Tunisian democracy. While we remain concerned, we recognize the need to maintain programming that helps Tunisians remain resilient through challenges facing their economy and democracy.

USAID programming in Tunisia continues to directly support the Tunisian people through private sector and civil society interventions. With the upcoming anticipated elections, we are working with local partners to ensure democratic reforms can take place and are credible. This includes preparing for civic and voter education campaigns, combatting disinformation, promoting civil society advocacy, and deploying trained domestic election observers.

Question. Russian Malign Influence in Africa: As a November 2019 article in the *New York Times* detailed, Russia is reviving efforts to assert influence in Africa. Over the past several years there has been a notable expansion of Russian activity including, as the aforementioned article mentions, interfering in the elections in Madagascar. The Wagner Group, long understood to have ties to the Kremlin, has been active for several years in Central African Republic, Mali and is reportedly expanding activities in Sudan in the wake of General Hemeti's trip to Moscow on the eve of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. I firmly believe that our investments in Africa should be because we wish to pursue strong relations for their own sake. However, I also believe that we must help our friends and partners on the continent counter malign influence.

What efforts is USAID currently making to counter Russian malign influence in Africa, and how do you plan to build on these efforts through the budget request?

Answer. The Kremlin is attempting to exert malign influence in many countries in Africa, but environments characterized by weak, sometimes illegitimate government, a shaky media environment, and a lack of transparency over natural resources are especially vulnerable. USAID currently includes programs such as those supporting democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) that address a number of the vulnerabilities that Russia can take advantage of in selected contexts.

In Africa, USAID rule of law and anti-corruption activities strengthen independent anti-corruption mechanisms at the national and regional levels; strengthen judiciaries; foster open, transparent, and competitive markets; encourage clear, stable, and fair enabling environments for economic growth; and strengthen investigative journalism and civil society oversight. Russian private military companies like Wagner often negotiate non-competitive contracts while simultaneously providing security to prop up African leaders. USAID's programs help to limit Russia's ability to execute non-transparent contract terms and pursue corrupt deals; thereby constraining their influence.

In addition, USAID promotes legal, responsible mineral supply chains in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), improves compliance with the Kimberley Process to reduce the risk that illicit trade fuels conflict and corruption in the Central African Republic (CAR), and supports transparency and accountability of mining royalties in the DRC and Zimbabwe.

USAID counters the use of digital authoritarianism, in which a repressive government controls the internet and uses censorship, surveillance, and data/media laws or regulations to restrict or repress freedom of expression, association, religion, and peaceful assembly at scale, through helping to improve the digital security of implementing partners, independent journalists, human rights defenders, and civil society activists. USAID also works to ensure that adequate legislation exists and is enforced to promote internet freedom that protects human rights on and offline. USAID builds African partner country capacity to counter disinformation and propaganda that weakens democratic institutions and social cohesion by building the capacity of local NGOs, media organizations, and technology companies to identify and neutralize disinformation before it is amplified. This includes capacity strengthening for media organizations to provide professional, trusted news and information, while also strengthening financial sustainability that ensures editorial independence. USAID also invests in targeted media and digital literacy programming.

An example is USAID's work with local media organizations in CAR to promote responsible journalism. The goal of these efforts is to increase peaceful democratic participation in a context where social and religious divisions, mistrust, and rumors have fueled years of conflict. Also in CAR, USAID developed a hate-speech lexicon and equipped community leaders with tools to monitor tensions and raised awareness about hate speech with national-level policy makers to help them promote tolerance and national reconciliation. USAID stabilization programming in CAR mitigates key drivers of conflict by strengthening community capacity to prevent and

respond to violence, expanding licit economic opportunities, and promoting social cohesion through tested tools such as interreligious dialogue, trauma healing, and support to local dispute-resolution mechanisms.

In DRC, USAID supports the media sector to promote a more open and vibrant media sector that contributes to more responsive and transparent institutions that develop capacity to provide alternative reporting to counter disinformation. USAID provides support to local partners in Sudan as they work to increase governmental accountability, as well as to civil society and the media.

In Sudan, in order to reduce the level of influence that Russia has gained as a major wheat supplier—which has bolstered its political power with Sudan’s authoritarian leaders—USAID is working to better empower the Sudanese to meet their own food security demands. It is critical to develop alternative economic power centers to those controlled by the Sudanese military. USAID investment in urban food security and rural livelihoods will address the country’s extreme economic disparities, while providing a bulwark against further authoritarian capture of livelihoods and private industry, and malign influencers including Russia. However, while the government is still controlled by the military, USAID’s initial activities will build upon humanitarian programs, thereby increasing resilience and generating demand for locally produced goods and services. These activities will establish the basis upon which the rural economy can be built. If a political transition moves forward and the security context improves, these activities will set the stage for greater economic expansion and connectivity to markets, directly improving food security and job creation throughout the country and less reliance on Russia.

USAID continues to prioritize DRG programming in Africa in out-year budgetary requests to continue working with host-country partners on the key anti-corruption and DRG goals discussed above. Focusing on enhancing the capabilities of journalists and civil society to promote transparency and good governance provides sustainability—it ensures that local actors will continue to pursue such goals well beyond the length of USAID programming.

Question. Global Energy Security Disruptions: U.S. energy security is impacted by global energy disruptions abroad—as demonstrated right now by the impact of the Ukraine crisis on domestic oil and gas prices. Bolstering energy infrastructure abroad to strengthen our allies’ energy security, in turn, supports U.S. energy security at home.

What happens to U.S. energy security and U.S. leadership when we underfund U.S. foreign assistance for energy and resilience programs?

Answer. Foreign assistance programming helps our partner countries achieve their energy sector development objectives through a wide number of activities, and a critical aspect of this is diversification of their energy mix. Diversification of fuels and electricity generation sources and liberalizing energy trade is important to reducing susceptibility to political and financial coercion by malign states and building resilience to supply shocks and sharp price increases. This diversification and liberalization will also soften rising inflation of most goods and services, all of which require energy to produce. Energy and resilience programs foreign assistance programs allow us to improve energy security and energy sector resilience before a crisis strikes, softening the impact of the crisis and reducing the likelihood that countries will seek fuel and fiscal relief from strategic adversaries of the U.S. We expect that greater energy security and resilience in global markets will also keep overall prices more stable for U.S. consumers and businesses.

Question. Climate Change: Climate change serves as a threat multiplier, which exacerbates pre-existing conflict and insecurities. Given a lack of resources and capacity building to adapt, people in developing and fragile countries often bear the worst impacts of climate change, especially marginalized groups and women and girls.

How do you see USAID advancing U.S. leadership on climate change in conflict-affected and fragile states like Ukraine where climate change is a threat multiplier?

Answer. USAID is working closely with the interagency, and specifically the Departments of Defense and State, to better prepare for and address the nexus of climate change and conflict in international settings. USAID’s new Climate Strategy includes a focus on embedding conflict-sensitivity across all of our climate efforts. USAID also supports working in conflict-vulnerable geographies with complex contexts to address conflict, insecurity, and structural governance challenges related to climate change. The new Climate Strategy includes a focus on utilizing principles of environmental peacebuilding and the inclusion of marginalized populations to advance equitable resource sharing and management that both mitigate conflict risk and increase climate resilience.

USAID is co-leading on two important whole-of-government efforts: the Global Fragility Act (GFA) and the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE). These initiatives are designed to bring together the diplomatic, development, and technical expertise of the United States to decrease fragility and support resilience by building capacity in developing countries to better prepare for and respond to the causes of food, water, and economic insecurity. The GFA will consider the secondary effects of climate change that include displacement, loss of livelihoods, weakened governments, and in some cases political instability and conflict. PREPARE focuses explicitly on helping developing countries adapt to the current and future impacts of climate change.

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) emergency and disaster risk reduction activities support the active engagement and leadership of women and girls, youth, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ and Indigenous Peoples to help communities recover from and build resilience to crises. USAID recognizes that engaging these groups is an essential part of the solution to the climate crisis and that these populations have valuable knowledge and skills that make them powerful change agents in designing and implementing climate solutions that benefit all people.

USAID's Bureau of Democracy, Development, and Innovation (DDI), Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub (GenDev) commissioned research on the nexus between gender inequality, state fragility, and climate vulnerability. The report demonstrates the positive correlation for these indicators and concludes that work to combat the climate-conflict nexus must adopt a gender transformative approach to ensure sustainable results.

DDI/GenDev is leveraging the GEEA Fund to support gender integration into activities in countries that rank high for the triple nexus of gender inequality, state fragility, and climate vulnerability. Importantly, this work recognizes a need for interventions at the systemic and interpersonal level in order to reduce gender inequality and gender-based violence, while also ensuring the meaningful participation of women and girls in peacebuilding and climate action.

Question. Yemen: Yemen has been described as one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. Seven years of conflict have displaced more than 4 million people and the U.N. World Food Program has assessed that 17.4 million people are facing food insecurity.

To what extent is U.S. or international aid able to reach those who need it? Given difficulties accessing many parts of the country, how does the USAID measure the impact of assistance?

Many have argued that the recent U.N.-led truce will present aid agencies with a significant opportunity to scale up life-saving humanitarian assistance. How was this truce impacted USAID's operations, what challenges remain to providing aid, and how can the U.S. Government use this window of peace to help support U.N.-led efforts to promote increased recovery and growth?

Answer. To date, the United States remains one of the single largest donors to the humanitarian response in Yemen jointly through USAID and State, providing over \$4.5 billion since the conflict began, and over \$584 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 alone. U.S. humanitarian assistance is channeled through non-governmental organizations (NGO) and United Nations (UN) partners who operate across both southern and northern Yemen, and has been ongoing since the start of the conflict in 2015. This assistance responds to urgent needs throughout the country, providing health, nutrition, water and sanitation, protection, shelter, humanitarian coordination, and emergency food assistance to Yemen's most vulnerable populations, 70 percent of whom require some form of humanitarian assistance, amidst ongoing conflict and the country's economic deterioration. Despite the many challenges faced in Yemen, USAID provides up to 8 million people per month with emergency food assistance and other basic services. Additionally, State/PRM-supported programming reached over 51,000 refugees and displaced persons with cash assistance to assist with basic household needs as of April 2022.

The direct provision of humanitarian assistance by USAID partners on the ground is assessed and measured through routine monitoring by an independent monitoring agency, contracted by USAID, who reviews the impact of USAID's assistance and ensures that assistance reaches its intended beneficiaries. Furthermore, USAID remotely monitors all programming in Yemen through monthly and quarterly programmatic and financial reporting, frequent meetings with partners, remote monitoring, and close coordination and consultation with other donors who are able to visit Yemen in-person. Additionally, in the south, USAID partners are able to provide effective monitoring and oversight of activities to ensure that U.S. taxpayer-funded aid reaches those in need for whom it is intended. In the north, all USAID

partners have secured the necessary agreements to enable them to implement without undue interference.

Recognizing the unique challenges that come with delivering humanitarian assistance in Yemen, USAID, along with our humanitarian partners and other donors, continues to advocate for the Houthis and the authorities in the south to enable unimpeded and sustained access to people in need across the entire country.

The 2-month truce that began on April 2 has had a positive impact on the humanitarian response in Yemen, including USAID's operations. Since the truce started, reduced fighting has started to improve access to people in need, and the increased flow of fuel and goods is supporting humanitarian operations, particularly in northern Yemen. USAID partners have reported a slight easing of bureaucratic restrictions on access, enabling one partner to conduct needs assessments in an area previously inaccessible due to conflict and identifying additional internally displaced persons (IDP) in need. Other impacts include increased food distributions in previously militarized areas and increased access by protection teams to areas previously inaccessible. USAID partner the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) reported that more fuel is being received in the Hudaydah ports, and while fuel shortages continue in the north, WFP is seeing shorter queues at petrol stations. While some positive outcomes have occurred, challenges remain with the ability of USAID partner organizations to access and provide services in IDP camps as well as in informal sites that house displaced persons, particularly in northern Yemen. USAID recognizes that this stage of the truce is fragile, and gains are easily reversible. While the humanitarian situation in Yemen remains dire, this reprieve makes clear that real, sustained change can only be achieved with a political solution to the crisis, including a permanent truce.

Question. Syria: Eleven years on, the conflict in Syria still has no clear end in sight. The U.N. estimates that 12 million people countrywide are experiencing acute food insecurity, while an additional 1.9 million people are at risk of becoming food insecure.

What are the priorities for the \$125 million request for Economic Support Funds for Syria?

Answer. U.S. stabilization activities are vital to preventing the resurgence of terrorist groups, expanding humanitarian access, keeping violence levels low, promoting accountability for the Assad regime's atrocities, and supporting an inclusive political solution to the conflict consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2254.

With these funds, USAID will contribute to the enduring defeat of ISIS by restoring essential services such as refurbishing electrical grids and addressing growing food insecurity through targeted agricultural interventions; reviving local economies by attracting private sector investment, creating an enabling environment for growth, and facilitating livelihoods; strengthening local governance so that local authorities can better respond to community needs, including those of returnees and internally displaced persons' (IDP) needs; and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and its secondary and tertiary effects on local communities.

Question. How has USAID programming changed to meet the increasingly acute food insecurity needs in Syria, particularly in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the resulting impact on global food security?

Answer. Even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, food insecurity in Syria was rising, and the effects of the Ukraine conflict have only worsened the situation given Syria's heavy reliance on food imports, including wheat from Russia and Ukraine and the impact Russia's war has had on global food markets and energy trade. USAID's humanitarian programming in Syria has been negatively affected by rising food and fuel prices.

The UN's World Food Program (WFP) commodity price monitoring in 75 markets across Syria's 14 governorates indicates that food prices in Syria have already increased as a result of the Ukraine conflict. In March, the national average price of WFP's standard reference food basket—the cost for a group of essential food commodities, including bread, lentils, rice, sugar, and oil—was 24 percent higher than in February and 59 percent higher than in March 2021, representing the highest prices since WFP began commodity monitoring in Syria in 2013.

USAID's humanitarian partners are working to diversify procurement source and origin countries for critical food commodities and wheat due to these impacts, particularly on regional markets such as Turkey, the primary regional humanitarian food procurement hub. Turkey's wheat market is dependent on imports from Russia and Ukraine, importing 78 percent of its wheat from these countries.

Due to the increasing food prices in Syria, USAID's NGO partners' cash and voucher assistance is covering a reduced percentage of monthly food needs. WFP, USAID's largest partner in Syria, has also reduced food rations across Syria as a result of funding constraints amid increasing global food prices and supply-chain disruptions resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Starting in May, the kilocalorie (kCal) content of WFP food rations is now only 1,177 kcal per person in northwest Syria and 995 kCal per person in other parts of the country, except in camps, where food rations will be maintained at the full 2,018 kCal per person. The kCal reduction is due in part to the removal of chickpeas and sugar from the ration amid limited supply and high prices of these commodities on the global market. WFP warns of potential beneficiary roll cuts and that an additional nearly 2 million Syrians may become food-insecure in coming months absent mitigation measures and additional funding; already, 12 million Syrians are acutely food-insecure.

Growing food insecurity in northeast Syria undermines gains made in the fight against ISIS, and is a security concern in addition to a humanitarian one. Through stabilization assistance, USAID supports agricultural production and other related sectors impacted by it in non-regime held areas of northeast Syria, including areas with vulnerable populations. USAID also works to improve essential services; to restore infrastructure and local markets, such as bakeries, mills, and seed sorting facilities; and strengthen local authorities' and civil society's ability to meet their communities' needs.

Question. Tigray/Ethiopia: As you know, the Ethiopian Government recently declared a unilateral ceasefire in Tigray region, but the government has also closed airspace, and bridges on two of the four main overland routes have been bombed. The government has set up bureaucratic obstacles to the use of the other routes; just last week, two UN convoys were prevented from entering Tigray. In effect, the unilateral ceasefire has reinforced conditions under which the government can effectively turn humanitarian access to Tigray on and off like a spigot.

What efforts are underway to prevent a humanitarian disaster in Tigray?

Answer. The crisis in northern Ethiopia remains one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. Across the Afar, Amhara, and Tigray regions, continued fighting and lack of humanitarian access has left as many as 9 million people facing severe food insecurity and has forced more than 2.4 million people to flee their homes. In Tigray alone, more than 90 percent of people need aid, while across all three northern regions as many as 1 million people are projected to face famine-like conditions by June.

The United States is the largest donor of humanitarian aid to the northern Ethiopia response efforts and remains committed to helping all people in need across Ethiopia. The United States has provided more than \$976 million in humanitarian assistance to northern Ethiopia since the crisis began in November 2020, including more than \$885 million through USAID.

Unhindered access to those in need of assistance is critical to addressing the crisis. USAID is engaging with leadership across the U.S. Government to press the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) for unhindered humanitarian access, including not just road access into Tigray, but also movement of cash, facilitation of flights, access into new displacement sites, restoration of basic services, and other critical issues across the response. Recently, USAID has worked on the ground in Afar to engage regional and local authorities and open road access into Tigray. We have seen incremental progress in humanitarian access, and the operation in northern Ethiopia as a whole since the March 24 humanitarian truce. Following nearly 4 months of road access blockages into Tigray, several humanitarian convoys—comprising more than 250 trucks and fuel tankers—had arrived in Tigray by road as of early May. Despite these improvements, the amount of assistance moving into Tigray is still not sufficient to meet humanitarian needs, and access must continue to improve.

Question. During the last week of June, three *Doctors Without Borders* aid workers were killed in Tigray and other NGOs on the ground report being deliberately targeted for harassment and violence.

What measures is USAID taking to protect its partners and personnel operating in Tigray?

Answer. The northern Ethiopia conflict is among the most dangerous in the world for humanitarian workers; 25 humanitarians have been killed since the start of the conflict in November 2020.

Humanitarians face attacks, vilification, harassment, and intimidation by various parties to the conflict, and yet they remain dedicated to helping others. In Tigray, some are doing this without receiving pay because of the cash shortages, and all

are working with dwindling resources that are needed for safe aid operations and their personal well-being and safety, including fuel, telecommunications, and banking services. USAID continues to advocate for the restoration of basic services and movement of cash and other essential supplies needed to enable humanitarian actors to operate effectively and safely.

The safety of aid workers is paramount. USAID and its partners have continued to reiterate the call to respect the neutrality and independence of aid workers and humanitarian operations in northern Ethiopia so that life-saving aid can be delivered to those in dire need.

USAID requires every NGO partner to submit a comprehensive safety and security plan with each proposal. These plans must demonstrate an in-depth analysis of the range of threats they may face, identify their organization's specific vulnerabilities, and outline a mitigation strategy and contingency plans that will keep their staff as safe as possible. In addition to the physical well-being of partner staff, USAID continues to stress the importance of ensuring the provision of psychosocial support services to first responders—recognizing that many have themselves been displaced or otherwise subject to attacks and other stressful conditions.

Question. Children with Disabilities: Millions of children with disabilities across the globe are placed in residential institutions, often due to prejudice, stigma, and lack of support for families with children with disabilities. In Ukraine, more than 100,000 children were living in institutions before the war. A recent report by Disability Rights International (DRI), shows that children with disabilities are now being left behind in crowded, unsafe conditions in residential institutions in Ukraine and are often not included in national or international humanitarian response plans.

How will this budget enable USAID to provide support children with disabilities around the world as well as their families? Specifically, how will USAID use this budget, in partnership with the Ukraine supplemental, to help ensure that children with disabilities in institutions are being identified, evacuated, and being fully included in relief efforts in Ukraine?

When the time comes to rebuild Ukraine, how will USAID work to strengthen families of children with disabilities and create opportunities for children to stay with their families rather than focusing on rebuilding Ukraine's extensive residential institution and orphanage system for children, whenever possible?

Answer. Since the start of the war in Ukraine, the U.S. Government has provided substantial humanitarian assistance, which has helped to identify and address the different needs of women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons, and provide them with suitable and accessible health services.

When the time comes to rebuild Ukraine, USAID's work will be guided by the U.S. Government Strategy, Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity (APCCA) (<https://www.childreninadversity.gov/>). The second of its three objectives is to "Put Family First" by enabling children with disabilities and all children to remain in or return to nurturing, loving, protective, and permanent family care. APCCA aims to support the most vulnerable children who are, or are at risk of, living outside of family care by promoting, funding, and supporting systems for prevention of family separation, family reintegration, support, and strengthening. APCCA calls for evidence-based action to develop national systems to enable all children to live in family care. For children with disabilities, this would require developing a range of support and rehabilitation services to enable them not only to live with their families, but to develop their full potential, to be in and part of their communities, and to attend mainstream schools.

In keeping with APCCA, USAID will focus on family strengthening measures to prevent children's separation from their families and support family reintegration or placement in other family based care. This may include developing services to support kinship care and foster care. Such a future is possible, but it would take firm and long-term commitment on the part of the Ukrainian Government and its development partners to reform its care system to support family care for all children.

Question. Overseas Equity Strategies: The 2022–26 Joint State-USAID Strategic Plan states: "The Department of State and USAID will further equity, inclusion, accessibility, support for human rights, and resilience of marginalized peoples, including individuals from marginalized racial, ethnic, indigenous, and religious communities, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ individuals, women, and older persons, by improving and adapting policy, public diplomacy, foreign assistance, and humanitarian aid."

What efforts and resources are being planned to implement and institutionalize this strategic objective? Should we be expecting additional staffing, multi-year funding, and other budget proposals to support these efforts?

How will USAID funding be coordinated and equitably distributed to ensure sufficient staffing and resources, and to prevent competition between different regions and marginalized populations in the implementation of equity work?

Answer. USAID has identified several staffing needs to address these priorities, including a need to fill important management roles and technical leadership on racial and ethnic equity. USAID continues to fill staffing gaps in areas where dedicated resources are available through institutional support contractors.

USAID budget proposals seek to expand support for programming that will elevate the rights and inclusion of marginalized people. USAID intends to launch two new “support mechanisms” for Missions and DC-based Operating Units to assess the needs of, engage with, and support the priorities of marginalized groups. The two mechanisms will: 1) provide technical assistance to Missions to improve programs to be more inclusive of and equitable toward marginalized groups, including racial, ethnic and religious minorities, and 2) provide direct support to civil society organizations that are run for and by marginalized groups. At least one mechanism will be awarded by the end of the current fiscal year.

USAID is working to increase the size and scope of inclusive development training to build capacity of its own staff, and to make relevant materials available to organizations implementing USAID programming. USAID has developed an expansive “inclusive development training suite” with both in-person and virtual options. Several trainings centered on specific marginalized groups (e.g., LGBTQI+ people, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, non-dominant racial and ethnic groups) are also either already available for staff or are in development.

USAID is working to update several of its policy documents to reflect administration priorities on inclusion and equity, often providing public comment periods and always doing consultations with Congress during their development. The 2022 Youth In Development policy was released in early May. Efforts are ongoing to update the Agency’s Disability Policy, the 2014 LGBT Vision for Action, and the 2020 Gender Equality And Women’s Empowerment Policy. Additionally, USAID is updating its guidance framework on engaging with marginalized and/or underrepresented groups in programs and activities, “Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations.”

Question. Inclusive Development Advisor: USAID has announced a goal of designating an inclusive development advisor in every overseas mission by 2023.

What resources are available or has USAID requested to fund this goal?

Answer. In the FY 2022 Operating Expense Appropriation, USAID received an additional \$128 million to fund the hiring of 130 new Foreign Service Officers and 120 Civil Service officers. These funds will be used to address a number of Agency priorities, but an especially critical use will be to deepen the pool of available human resources with the capacity to advance gender equality and inclusive development.

While, to date, USAID has not requested funds specifically dedicated to meet this goal, we have made several important strides using existing resources. USAID is currently exploring ways to expand Mission and Regional/Pillar Bureau staff levels of effort dedicated to advancing gender equality and inclusive development, including a possible sub-specialty in Foreign Service backstops. USAID is expanding competencies required for Foreign Service Officers and Foreign Service Nationals who serve as Program Officers to include specific gender and inclusive development skills and abilities, and widening the number of people in the Agency with gender and inclusive development expertise. Additionally, a pool of Foreign Service Nationals with extensive gender and inclusive development experience are already working in USAID Missions. USAID hopes to expand the number of Foreign Service Nationals and Foreign Service Officers that can serve as gender advisors, inclusive development advisors, or gender and inclusive development champions, depending on their level of expertise.

Question. Democracy Dividend in Africa: While democratic backsliding has become an alarming trend around the world—particularly in Africa, which has seen multiple coups in the past 2 years—several countries have made laudable progress towards strengthening democracy. Zambia and Niger are two notable examples of this, both having held successful elections that defied the trend toward authoritarianism seen elsewhere. However, both countries still face serious challenges. The United States should make every effort to reward and support countries that take meaningful steps toward democracy, in the form of a democracy dividend that surges assistance and engagement to new democracies.

Do you agree with the idea of a democracy dividend?

What has USAID done to surge support to countries like Zambia, Niger, Malawi, and the Gambia, and how does the budget propose continue such support in the coming fiscal year?

Answer. We do agree that democracy, on balance, brings outsized material and economic benefits to populations. Democracies are more likely to respect human rights, invest in public goods, and limit corruption (particularly when there is a freer press and as democracy deepens). Their economic growth rates are on par with those of dictatorships, but the growth they produce is of higher quality, with steadier patterns and with gains more likely to benefit citizens, as reflected in education, health, and life expectancy. The gains of democracy increase as levels of democracy increase. According to V-Dem, often considered the gold standard for democracy research:¹

- Transition to democracy increases life expectancy by 3 percent within 10 years of regime change.
- A high level of democracy leads to 94 percent lower infant mortality compared to dictatorships.
- Democracies with vibrant vertical accountability provide 23 percent more safe water access, 35 percent more immunization to young children, and up to 40 percent more electricity access, than autocracies.
- Democracies provides citizens 300 percent more internet connectivity, on average, than autocracies.
- Democracy with strong vertical accountability mechanisms diminishes corruption.

USAID works under the assumption that democracies do deliver better services, protect human rights, reduce corruption, and foster healthy political competition, and economic growth. Democracy underpins and supports USAID development objectives.

When presented with democratic openings it is important that the U.S. Government works quickly to marshal available resources to not only help consolidate democratic progress, but also support partner governments as they work to demonstrate to citizens that democracy delivers in concrete ways for their lives by providing security, accountability for past and ongoing wrongs, and improving livelihoods through development programming. In countries like Zambia, Niger, Malawi, The Gambia, and others, USAID works with governments on their priority reform agendas in areas such as anti-corruption, health, education, and economic growth in an effort to help demonstrate a democratic dividend that delivers in visible ways for citizens. USAID does likewise in other regions when democratic openings occur, as we have seen recently in countries like Moldova, Armenia, Ecuador, Nepal, and the Dominican Republic.

When such openings exist, USAID has mobilized both technical and financial support through flexible funds at both the regional and the central levels, including rapid response and centralized resources that can cover a wide range of development sectors. Crucially, USAID's single largest program announced at the Summit for Democracy focuses specifically on surging flexible support to countries experiencing democratic openings, in return for commitments by the relevant government to take forward key reforms inclusively and democratically. The program is called Partnerships for Democratic Development, and as it comes online, it will be a cornerstone of the Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal.

More generally, USAID continues to prioritize Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) programming in out-year budget requests, including FY 2023. Further, sustainability and the training of local partners is a key aspect of USAID DRG programming, ensuring that programmatic gains are maintained beyond the length of the program through skilled and well-trained, in-country organizations and individuals. Additionally, USAID actively coordinates with other donors in the DRG space, avoiding duplication and overlap and maximizing value of finite DRG funds.

Note

¹V-Dem: The Case for Democracy (<https://www.v-dem.net/casefordemocracy.html>)

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

Question. Presence and Risk Management: Effective diplomacy and development cannot be conducted from behind the walls of a compound. The agency needs to take a more forward leaning approach towards risk management and prioritize getting staff out from behind desks in home offices, returned to the field, fully engaged with local partners and beneficiaries, and 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?

What is the status of overseas staff in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Have all overseas staff returned to the office and to the field?

What is the status of headquarters staff? Has everyone returned to the office?

Answer. We agree that staff's ability to be in the field and engaged with partners and communities is optimal and support that objective whenever security and safety conditions permit. We also prioritize the safety of our staff first in all contexts and work with our Regional Security Officers and Diplomatic Security at post to facilitate engagement with development actors, host governments, local partners, and beneficiaries through regular meetings and site visits.

The status of overseas staff depends upon the security and health conditions in the countries where they are posted. Many posts report being fully back in the office. A smaller number of posts, where COVID-19 is currently surging, are on some amount of regular or full-time telework. USAID's Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) and other personnel have been reporting to their assigned posts ever since Global Authorized Departure (GAD) ended on September 9, 2020.

At USAID Headquarters in Washington, DC, pandemic-ordered telework ends on May 21, 2022. According to the Agency's Future of Work (FoW) Framework, there will be two workplace categories: telework and remote work. Telework-eligible positions include job duties that can be conducted outside of the worksite without affecting service quality, adding additional costs, or negatively affecting team productivity. Telework-eligible positions are also subdivided by the number of telework days that position can utilize per pay period based on its job duties. Remote work-eligible positions do not require frequent in-office presence, close supervision or training, consistent in-person customer service, and/or recurring access to special facilities or classified materials. Employees whose position is designated as telework-eligible will be expected to return to the office in accordance with their agreed upon work schedule beginning on May 23, 2022.

On May 13, 2022, the Agency issued an Executive Message on *New Telework and Remote Work Agreement and Updated Mandatory Telework Training Requirement for Domestic USDH Employees and Domestic USPSCs*, indicating that all domestic USDH employees must have a telework, remote work, or opt-out agreement approved by their supervisor prior to June 3, 2022, before authorized to telework or remote work for any reason.

Question. Anomalous Health Incidents (AHIs): After years of being the interagency laggard in providing care for victims of AHIs, the State Department has finally caught up to the other departments and agencies whose employees have been affected by AHIs. Unfortunately, USAID personnel also have suffered from AHIs, yet they do not have the access to care that their State Department colleagues have.

What is the Agency currently doing to provide care for AHI victims?

What more could the Agency do to provide care for AHI victims?

Has the State Department followed through on commitments to assist USAID personnel in getting access to care that they need and deserve?

Answer. The issue of Anomalous Health Incidents (AHI) continues to be a priority for our Agency, in particular, the efforts to protect and care for our personnel and uncover the cause of these incidents. I met with a group of USAID staff affected by AHI several months ago, and we continue to urge all staff potentially affected to report their experience and we assist them with care.

To ensure care for our staff, USAID designated the Deputy Administrator for Management and Resources to oversee efforts across USAID to support staff reporting AHIs and to coordinate requirements across the interagency. USAID established a process for staff to report potential AHI experiences, and provides AHI awareness training to all new staff.

USAID is providing support through our newly created position of the Chief Medical Officer as well as our outstanding Staff Care unit. We have enabled access to clinical evaluation of neurological symptoms of unknown origin for all who have re-

quested them, initially through the State Department agreements with local hospitals, and currently through the Department of Defense as mandated in the National Defense Authorization Act.

We continue to work with the State Department's Health Incident Response Task Force (HIRTF) to align our approaches for support and compensation where warranted by the HAVANA Act as well as Workers Compensation. In addition to assisting USAID with the care coordination for staff, USAID leverages State Department's voluntary baseline screening program available for all personnel and eligible family members 18 years of age or older who will be traveling for temporary duty (TDY) or posted at an overseas assignment.

Question. Staffing: As I stated last year, 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. The budget request includes an increase for USAID's operating expenses and proposes to increase the number of program-funded positions, including for global health and humanitarian assistance.

When will we see a comprehensive strategic staffing plan that aligns positions, skills, and resources across the agency, transparently and effectively streamlines hiring mechanisms, and reduces reliance upon costly institutional contracts and Participating Agency Service Agreements (PASAs)?

Will the proposed increase in direct-hire positions be paired with a decrease in contractors?

Answer. The Global Development Partnership Initiative (GDPI) is USAID's multi-year effort to address staffing needs by revitalizing the USDH workforce in line with the Administration's priorities and National Security Memorandum 3. Through GDPI, USAID will build a responsive and resilient workforce by increasing the size and diversity of the permanent career workforce and providing flexibility to hire non-career direct hire staff. Workforce expansion will focus on climate change, democracy and anti-corruption expertise, global health security, national security, operational management (procurement, human resources, financial management, and information technology), and a more permanent humanitarian assistance workforce.

Over the multi-year trajectory, USAID will create an additional 1,230 positions to reach a permanent workforce level of 4,750 USDHs. This represents increases of 620 Foreign Service (FS) and 610 Civil Service (CS) positions for permanent workforce levels of 2,500 FS and 2,250 CS.

At the end of FY 2021, USAID completed a successful hiring surge to reach prior appropriated staffing levels of 1,850 Foreign Service (FS) and 1,600 Civil Service (CS) positions. With FY 2022 Operating Expense funding, the Agency was able to jumpstart GDPI, with the goal of creating 100 new FS and 80 new CS positions in FY 2022. If Congress provides USAID with the Operating Expenses funding required to reach these staffing levels of 2,500 FS and 2,250 CS, use of other hiring mechanisms would decrease, but would not be eliminated.

USAID is currently evaluating its overseas workforce planning efforts that have been used as a starting point for decisions on the allocation of Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) overseas. The Agency has also developed models for CS and FS staffing in Washington and is about to begin the final round of consultations within the Agency to finalize these two models. While all three of the models allocate FS and CS, the overseas model also considers local staff capacity including Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs). When creating these models, the Agency analyzed how other hiring mechanisms could be considered in future iterations. USAID is also making improvements in its data analytics and tools for the entire Agency, which will help Bureaus, Independent Offices (B/IOs) and Missions improve their ability to undertake workforce planning.

USAID has already decreased the number of Participating Agency Service Agreements (PASAs) from over 300 to under 100 over a 2-year timeframe.

Some of the increase in direct-hire positions would be off-set by a decrease in contractors, particularly in bureaus such as the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) where the Agency has long had to rely on contracted positions to fulfill long-term institutional roles that should be carried out by Direct Hires. However, in other areas, USAID is not appropriately staffed to meet requirements, regardless of mechanism. In these cases additional direct-hire positions would come in addition to other staffing mechanisms currently performing the work.

Question. Partners: Through the New Partners Initiative, USAID aims to direct 25 percent of the foreign assistance it administers toward local organizations by 2025. Given the size, scope and complexity of USAID's largest programs, including

the NextGen Health Supply Chain program, hitting that target while maintaining appropriate transparency and accountability will prove difficult.

What is the status of the New Partners Initiative?

Are you on track to hit the 25 percent target by 2025?

When you set out your vision for “localization” in November 2021, you indicated that you might need new or amended authorities to achieve your goal. Is this still the case and, if so, what new or amended authorities have you requested?

Answer. The New Partnerships Initiative (NPI) was re-launched in 2019 and institutionalized under the Development, Democracy, and Innovation Bureau (DDI) in late 2020, where it has continued to provide technical assistance in support of the Agency’s efforts to partner with new, nontraditional, and local partners. NPI currently supports Missions in 30 countries. Missions have made NPI awards representing more than \$400 million to approximately 60 partners since 2019. NPI is part of USAID’s broader commitment to ensuring greater levels of locally-led development across all of its programming, but it is not wholly localization-focused (i.e. a new partner may be a US-based entity).

The 25 percent target is an Agency-wide goal. USAID envisions that each Mission or Operating Unit (OU) will assess their unique operating environment, recognizing that the approach to locally-directed funding may be different based on country context and a program’s sectoral focus (e.g., education, health, housing, etc.). Many Missions already direct more than 25 percent of their funding to local partners, but the majority of our Missions and OUs will need to increase funding to local entities for USAID to reach the global 25 percent level. Missions across the Agency are now taking steps to increase their portfolios of local partnerships. Added funding flexibility for Missions to invest in local capacity strengthening is key to accomplishing the 25 percent local funding goal.

Expanding USAID’s local partnerships will require Missions to issue and manage a larger number of lower dollar value awards, to local partners who often do not have previous experience working with the Agency. This will require a higher level of USAID staff time and support. USAID is working to increase staff capacity, in particular Acquisition and Assistance professionals, to manage the larger number of awards and anticipates significant progress toward achieving the 25 percent target.

USAID is exploring whether additional legal authorities are required to advance our localization goals.

Question. The Small Business Administration has set an annual target (for several departments and agencies) that 3 percent of all agency funds should go to service disabled veteran-owned small businesses (SDVOSBs). USAID has consistently missed that target by a very wide margin, averaging around 0.5 percent over the past several years.

Are you aware of this issue?

What is preventing USAID from reaching the 3 percent target?

How, if at all, does the 3 percent SDVOSB target relate to the New Partners Initiative, which seeks to diversify USAID’s partner base by lowering barriers to entry for “non-traditional” implementing partners, including local actors, small businesses, faith-based and civil society organizations, cooperatives, and diaspora groups?

Answer. USAID is aware that we have not met the SDVOSB goals in many years and the Agency continues to look for ways to improve. We have considerably increased our efforts to partner with SDVOSB in fiscal year 2022 and have expanded our reach to SDVOSB resource partners. The intended result is to turn this trend around and begin to see greater increases in our SDVOSB achievements. Despite missing our SDVOSB goal, we have increased our annual contract obligations in the last three fiscal years, increasing from \$21 million (FY 2019) to \$30 million (FY 2020) to \$33 million (FY 2021). USAID currently has 11 SDVOSB contract awards totaling \$147,242,195. We fully intend to continue on this upward trajectory and surpass our prior years’ results.

USAID is seeking to improve upon acquisition planning practices to ensure SDVOSB are both targeted and invited to compete for USAID contracting opportunities based on their capabilities. This includes identifying more work that aligns with SDVOSB predominant contracting capabilities.

Meeting the 3 percent SDVOSB target is part of a broader Agency effort to expand and improve our partnerships. One key component of this effort is the Agency’s New Partnerships Initiative (NPI), which seeks to diversify USAID’s partner base by lowering barriers to entry for new and nontraditional implementing partners, including local actors, U.S. small businesses, faith-based and civil society organizations, cooperatives, and diaspora groups. While USAID is committed to lowering barriers for all partner groups, we recognize that we must address the specific bar-

riers faced by U.S. small businesses, local partners, and private sector partners. These groups are underrepresented in USAID's partner base, despite efforts over the past several years to expand USAID's partnerships with new, local, and small business partners through initiatives such as NPI. Another way we are working to address the need to diversify the partner base is by refreshing the Agency's Acquisition and Assistance Strategy and implementation plan. Additionally, NPI supported the creation of the *WorkwithUSAID.org* resource hub, where current and prospective partners are encouraged to register their organizations in a Partner Directory, boost their visibility to the Agency, and enable them to identify potential partners to collaborate with who may be operating in related sectors or regions. Significantly, the Partner Directory can be filtered by type of organization, allowing visitors to the site (as well as USAID staff) to sort a list of all self-identified service disabled veteran-owned businesses that operate in a particular region. *WorkwithUSAID.org* also includes a Pre-Engagement Assessment for partners to understand their ability to pursue USAID funding, and received a customized report to learn what steps they can take to enhance their readiness.

The Agency's Industry Liaison serves as the front door for all organizations seeking partnership with the Agency. This team promotes *WorkwithUSAID.org* and other opportunities for current and prospective partners to engage with USAID through a variety of social media channels, including LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Additionally, the Agency hosts virtual events for partners to learn about USAID and ask questions. Finally, the Industry Liaison team coordinates the Agency's Business Forecast, which provides an advanced look at all USAID funding opportunities around the world. The Forecast is updated daily at [usaid.gov/business-forecast](https://www.usaid.gov/business-forecast), pulling from our internal planning systems. The Forecast helps to create a level playing field by actively communicating all of USAID's upcoming funding opportunities before any proposals or applications are due.

USAID seeks to increase its collaboration with new SDVOSB resource partners and extend our reach to the SDVOSB community. Presently, we are collaborating with Vet Force, a 5,000 members association of veteran-owned small businesses, the American Legion with 1.6 million members chartered and incorporated by the U.S. Congress, and the Veterans Institute of Procurement (VIP) to attempt to reach new partners. Each of these partners have a rigorous tiered membership program to assist veteran owned small businesses in preparing to do business with the Government.

USAID also participated in outreach events to increase our new partner base, including with the American Legion (May 2022), Veterans Institute of Procurement (June 2022), the Federal Business Council, Inc's sponsored annual Government Procurement Conference (June 2022), and the National 8(a) Association's Regional Conference (June 2022). Each of these events were targeted to reach SDBs which include SDVOSBs.

OSDBU is also sponsored roundtable discussions with current and prospective SDVOSBs and industry days in June and July aimed at increasing our SDB reach which includes SDVOSB. In May 2022 OSDBU launched a live virtual overseas training pilot program that extended and expanded our Agency's procurement knowledge on Government contracting assistance programs that assist SDVOSB. Also, OSDBU is both leading and participating in outreach activities such as additional regional and Washington based live virtual trainings, webinars, industry days and procurement conferences that will reach more veteran organizations and educate them on our business opportunities and how to do business with USAID. Through these efforts USAID will attract more veteran owned firms and increase its workforce knowledge on how to support America's veterans through federal procurement.

Question. Global Health: Global Health Security: This committee has approved bipartisan legislation—the International Pandemic Preparedness and COVID–19 Response Act—that would establish a structure for more effective leadership and coordination of U.S. Government efforts to advance the U.S. global health security overseas, built upon PEPFAR's proven model. The State Department, USAID, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) repeatedly were consulted on the bill, and relevant technical assistance has been incorporated.

Given your background as U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, you surely appreciate the importance of diplomacy. Do you therefore agree that the U.S. Department of State is best suited to lead diplomatic efforts to advance U.S. global health security overseas, including at the country-level?

Answer. USAID agrees on the need to institutionalize global health security (GHS) as a national security priority and on the importance of durable structures and coordination processes to advance GHS. The State Department has an impor-

tant role to play in the U.S. Government's GHS efforts, particularly leading diplomatic outreach and coordinating relationships with foreign and domestic nongovernmental stakeholders. But the vast majority of the U.S. Government's GHS efforts are managed principally by USAID and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

USAID continues to support the framework laid out in the November 4, 2016 Executive Order on Advancing the Global Health Security Agenda to Achieve a World Safe and Secure from Infectious Disease Threats. This framework relies on the National Security Council (NSC) for overall global health security coordination and delineates roles and responsibilities for departments and agencies, while recognizing that there is more that can be done to strengthen the framework and institutional capabilities of the implementing agencies. Additionally, the 2021 National Security Memorandum (NSM) 1, released by the Biden-Harris administration designated the Assistant to the President on National Security Affairs to (i) coordinate the Federal Government's efforts to prepare for, prevent, detect, respond to, and recover from biological events, and to advance global health security, international pandemic preparedness, and global health resilience; and (ii) coordinate the development of priorities for, and elevate United States leadership and assistance in support of, the Global Health Security Agenda. Both the 2016 Executive order and the 2021 NSM empower and recognize the unique role and responsibility of the NSC to provide policy guidance and strategic coordination to Departments and Agencies with GHS equities, without interfering in their ability to manage or coordinate their own budgets.

Question. The bill also provides a roadmap for establishing an accountable international financing mechanism for pandemic preparedness. Press reports indicate that planning is advancing quickly, despite a glaring lack of consultation with Congress. The President's budget request includes \$6.5 billion in mandatory spending, reportedly to enable a multi-year commitment to this yet-to-be-consulted-or-established financing mechanism. This is a major departure from past practice, and it certainly wasn't envisioned in the bill approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

What is the status of efforts to establish an international financing mechanism for international pandemic preparedness?

Answer. The Department of State is working with USAID to lead the effort for the U.S. Government to establish the pandemic prevention, preparedness and response financial intermediary fund (FIF). This is now moving ahead, with international momentum from allies and multilateral organizations behind it. On April 20, the G20 reached consensus on the establishment of a financing mechanism with Indonesia and committed to finalizing the FIF in June as a key deliverable of their G20 presidency. On June 30, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved the establishment of a financial intermediary fund (FIF) to strengthen pandemic preparedness. Critically, in addition to the U.S. pledge of \$450 million, additional donors including the European Commission, Indonesia, Germany, the United Kingdom, Singapore, the Wellcome Trust pledged funds to support the FIF, with more expected to be announced in the coming months.

Question. Why would the President request \$6.5 billion in mandatory spending, reportedly to support the establishment of an international financing mechanism for pandemic preparedness, before knowing how it will be governed, how and where resources will be targeted, how progress will be measured, and how implementers will be held accountable for results?

Answer. The governance structure, resource allocation, and reporting requirements are in the process of being developed and agreed upon, and we will be happy to brief you, along with our State Department and other Administration colleagues.

Question. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria: The budget request also includes \$2 billion (+\$440 million) to support the first year of an anticipated \$6 billion commitment to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (the Global Fund) while reducing funds available for bilateral tuberculosis programs (-\$21.5 million) and the bipartisan, Congressionally-authorized President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program (-\$20 million).

Is it your view that the Global Fund is more efficient and effective than PEPFAR, the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), and USAID's tuberculosis (TB) program, thereby justifying a major shift in funding, or is it the intent of the Administration that the Global Fund would take on greater responsibility for procuring related global health commodities, thereby enabling PEPFAR, PMI, and USAID's TB programs to focus their shrinking resources on service delivery?

Answer. The \$2 billion request is intended to support the Global Fund's seventh replenishment and will complement, rather than supplant, our bilateral HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria commitments. Increasing investments to combat the three diseases is particularly critical given the detrimental impacts that COVID has had on progress made against the three diseases. This investment will help spur other contributions needed to sustain the Global Fund's fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria and global health systems strengthening work. U.S. bilateral funding will continue to deliver impact through PEPFAR, PMI, and TB programs, leveraging Global Fund resources and accelerating progress towards our shared goals. USAID appreciates the increases Congress provided in FY 2022 funding for these three bilateral programs over the FY 2021 enacted levels.

Question. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI): What is the status of efforts to appoint a permanent Malaria Coordinator?

Answer. When the U.S. Global Malaria Coordinator position became vacant on February 7, 2022, the White House, in collaboration with USAID, initiated the process to identify candidates to be considered for the next Coordinator. The process is in the final stages, and we hope to select and announce a candidate as soon as is practical.

Question. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR): USAID is a leading implementer of U.S. foreign assistance to combat HIV/AIDS globally, including under the PEPFAR program. Unfortunately, several USAID missions have struggled to maintain focus on PEPFAR's core mission and have taken opportunities to divert PEPFAR resources toward other priority projects with little-to-no connection to combatting HIV/AIDS.

How are you holding USAID missions accountable for results under PEPFAR Country Operating Plans (COPs)?

From your perspective, how can the COP process be improved to ensure robust participation and adherence by USAID field missions?

How are you ensuring that USAID is appropriately leveraging, rather than duplicating or undercutting, PEPFAR platforms under the Global Vax Initiative in priority countries, including South Africa?

Answer. *Accountability for Results under PEPFAR Operational Plans:* USAID, both at the Washington headquarters and Mission level, rigorously measures and monitors progress toward Country and Regional Operational Plan targets. In addition to PEPFAR requirements for quarterly reporting of performance, quality and financial data, USAID requires more frequent reporting by implementing partners for priority indicators to ensure programming is on track to achieve anticipated results. USAID participates in interagency performance consultations for each PEPFAR operating unit on a quarterly basis, with USAID Mission staff preparing and presenting comprehensive analyses, identifying challenges, and developing action plans for areas in need of improvement. In Washington, USAID conducts continuous review of performance and financial data and holds routine discussions with USAID Missions to offer analyses, strategic planning and technical and operational support to improve performance where needed.

USAID HIV program performance remains strong. As of the end of the first quarter of FY22, USAID is on track to achieve care and treatment program targets globally, supporting nearly 7 million people with life-saving HIV treatment—94 percent of these beneficiaries who received a viral load test are virally suppressed, allowing people living with HIV to live longer, healthier lives, and reducing further transmission of the virus. These are key benchmarks in reaching HIV epidemic control. Additionally, USAID has drastically expanded provision of HIV prevention medication (PrEP) in recent years, with PrEP programs now implemented in 32 countries. This expansion allowed USAID to initiate over 500,000 clients on PrEP in FY21 and USAID is currently on track to meet or exceed this result in FY22. Finally, an estimated 248,000 HIV-related deaths and 950,000 HIV infections have been averted in countries since 2016 where USAID supports HIV commodity procurement, supply, and system strengthening through the USAID Global health Supply Chain Program-Procurement and Supply Management Project.

Improving the COP Process: USAID Missions are actively engaged in the annual PEPFAR Country/Regional Operational Plan (COP/ROP) development process. USAID is supportive of improvements to the COP/ROP process that would further support planning for program sustainability, improve collaboration with non-USG stakeholders, and maximize time for strategic dialogue and we look forward to working with Dr. John Nkengasong to improve the process. Suggested adjustments could include supporting multi-year operational plans, streamlining COP/ROP deliverables, and adjusting format of COP planning meetings.

Leveraging PEPFAR platforms for the Global VAX Initiative: USAID has maximized efficiencies by leveraging existing PEPFAR investments and resources for COVID-19 programming while preventing diversion of PEPFAR resources or focus. USAID partners who implement PEPFAR programming are already on the ground in communities and facilities, understand local contexts, and have established relationships with host country governments and local organizations. In many countries, USAID has also strengthened health system infrastructure, including human resources, laboratory capacity and the supply chain, to support PEPFAR implementation. USAID has leveraged these platforms for the COVID-19 response, but used supplemental funding, such as from the American Rescue Plan Act, to increase human resources in facilities and communities; procure personal protective equipment and COVID-19 testing, treatment and vaccine administration supplies; increase supply chain capacity for COVID-19 products; and adapt data systems for COVID-19 surveillance and vaccine tracking.

USAID implements a wide range of health programs in PEPFAR countries, including but not limited to those responding to COVID-19, malaria, tuberculosis, neglected tropical diseases, and pandemic threats, such as Ebola and Zika. USAID implements these programs while remaining fully dedicated to PEPFAR, the Agency's largest health program. USAID utilizes funding from multiple appropriations to support these activities, and the Agency has rigorous financial tracking systems in place and remains accountable to appropriations for each program area. As described above, USAID also routinely and comprehensively monitors HIV program performance; the Agency has no evidence that PEPFAR target achievement is negatively impacted by the USAID COVID-19 response.

In South Africa, for example, Global VAX acceleration plans have built on existing PEPFAR platforms to deliver integrated services. During a USAID-supported vaccination campaign from February to April 2022 in the coastal region of KwaZulu-Natal, 57 percent of individuals reached were first-time COVID-19 vaccine recipients, and 69 percent of individuals were high-priority populations. USAID partner BroadReach improved HIV screening by integrating COVID-19 vaccination community outreach and HIV screening, which identified nearly three times more HIV positive cases than routine community testing programs.

Question. Health Worker Initiative: The President's Budget Request proposes \$1 billion over the next 5 years to fund the international elements of a Health Worker Initiative.

Can you provide more details about the proposed Health Worker Initiative?

Answer. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the projected global 18 million health worker shortfall, which primarily impacts low- and middle-income countries and raises additional threats to the stability of health systems. Health worker shortages have impacted the ability of countries to maintain routine service provision—including maternal, child, and newborn health, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other essential primary health care services—while meeting demands for COVID-19 specific services. The health workforce is the backbone of countries' health systems and investment is imperative to build health system capacity to provide services to achieve collective global health goals and resiliency for the future and global health security (GHS).

The Global Health Worker Initiative (HWI) is meant to serve both an internal guide to better align and coordinate U.S. resources and an external call to action to coordinate significant, but disparate, investments in global health workforce deliverables. In addition to investments made across the U.S. Government, several countries, including G7 and G20 countries, and multilateral and regional organizations, have increased investments but with no mechanism to align these efforts against a common set of goals and metrics. The Health Worker Initiative serves as a strategic opportunity for the U.S. Government to demonstrate its technical leadership in strengthening the health workforce and mobilize coordinated attention and action around a set of coalesced priorities.

Funding will serve as catalytic investment to advance country health worker priorities aligned to the four pillar areas of HWI focus to expand a sufficiently trained, protected, well-equipped and supported workforce:

1. *Advance Health Worker Protection:* Ensure health workers are better protected and safeguarded from violence, harassment, and discrimination; that they can access prioritized vaccinations and adequate PPE; and that mental health services are available and accessible to address burnout.
2. *Expand the Health Workforce:* To help address the global health worker gap, the Initiative will advance efforts to create career pathways and expand paid employment opportunities in the public and private health sectors, helping

countries to plan and manage multidisciplinary health worker configurations well-equipped to meet provision of patient-centered services at the primary health care level.

3. *Advance Equity and Inclusion:* Advance efforts to build a more diverse cohort of health worker graduates and leaders that reflects inclusivity, address numerous barriers, including gender, ethnic/racial, and geography.
4. *Expand Technology and Innovation:* Work with partners in the region to further harness innovation and expand digital technologies that equip health workers with the ability to provide more efficient, quality-integrated service delivery, including telehealth services that can extend the reach of health services from facilities and into communities, including the most marginalized populations

USAID envisions the majority of funds be programmed through missions with a key focus to advance agency localization efforts shifting greater leadership and ownership for health workers to local institutions. The aim is that catalytic funding across a subset of countries will also motivate additive investments by other donors, including G7 and G20 countries, multilateral and regional organizations and the private sector, that would also be coordinated under the HWI framework. USAID is continuing to work with the NSC and other agencies and can provide more details as further plans are developed.

Question. In which countries or contexts would this program be most valuable?

Answer. USAID has coordinated with other agencies to lead the development of proposed criteria for country prioritization for the HWI that includes:

1. Overall need aligned to the four areas of HWI focus with prioritization for countries on the World Health Organization Health Worker Support and Safeguards List that have a service coverage index lower than 50 and density of doctors, nurses and midwives that is below the global median of 48.6 per 10,000. For reference, 46 out of the 47 countries on this list are also USAID-supported countries (all but Eritrea), which further demonstrates the significance of HWI;
2. Level of existing U.S. Government global health investments in countries that could be leveraged and built upon (e.g. PEPFAR, PMI, GHS) and as indication of where additional investment in the health workforce could further accelerate and support sustained achievement of global health goals; and
3. Enabling environment including current policies and political engagement for prioritization for increased investment and strengthening of the health workforce.

Question. Health Worker Initiative: How will this Health Worker Initiative support the U.S.'s global COVID response or in our other global health programs?

Answer. A critical priority is to reclaim lost ground on core global health strategic goals—including to reduce child and maternal deaths, combat infectious disease threats, and control HIV/AIDS. Reversing this damage requires addressing the core source of fragility in LMIC health systems—the lack of a robust health workforce that is consistently and adequately paid, trained, supported, and coordinated—particularly in primary health care. Health systems anchored in a strengthened primary health workforce are proven to deliver markedly lower maternal and child mortality, improved equity, and better cost efficiency. And, as COVID-19 has shown us, strong systems are integral to detecting and responding to emerging epidemic and pandemic threats.

HWI will aid the U.S. global COVID-19 response and other global health programs through expanding a comprehensive health worker pipeline, equipped and better managed to respond beyond singular health program needs. This would include collective services at the primary health care level, and into local employment so that fewer external resources are needed to support health workers in the future and that there is both stronger county and regional workforce capacity ready to efficiently respond to the next global health crisis.

USAID has been at the forefront of advancing health workforce priorities for global health for more than 20 years and is well equipped to support implementation of HWI. HWI investments will not work in a vacuum and will support existing mission health workforce activities as well as allow missions to expand into new areas of health workforce support that will help further advance U.S. health investments and progress towards global health goals. USAID will issue policy guidance that includes a set of indicators to ensure that funding from this Initiative that is allocated to missions will be leveraged and coordinated with other types of GH funding (e.g.

global health security), as well as other agency investments to amplify impact that is aligned to country health priorities. While USAID has been working across the interagency to inform development of HWI priorities it is envisioned that USAID will guide interagency coordination across countries to ensure alignment and leverage of interagency health worker investments.

Question. Humanitarian Assistance: The Putin regime’s unprovoked, brutal war against Ukraine has exacerbated the conditions driving food insecurity globally and has had a particularly damaging impact on fragile states in East Africa, North Africa, and the Middle East. Given how the 2007–2008 global food price crisis provoked riots and economic and political instability in countries from Africa to South America, it is clearly in the national security interests of the American people to respond. Remarkably, and despite claims that the Administration is seeking to “reinvigorate U.S. humanitarian leadership,” the FY 2023 budget request proposes to cut humanitarian assistance by nearly 18 percent, relative to FY 2022 enacted levels.

While in full agreement that other donors need to step up and do more, how can an 18 percent decrease in humanitarian assistance accounts be justified at a time when displacement and food insecurity levels are at all-time highs?

Answer. We are also concerned with the unprecedented and growing global humanitarian needs, which have been exacerbated by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. The FY 2023 request includes \$10.45 billion for humanitarian assistance worldwide in base IDA, FFP-Title II, MRA, and ERMA and \$1.8 billion—above the FY 2022 base enacted level of \$8.65 billion. We are grateful for the nearly \$5 billion in supplemental resources Congress provided in FY 2022 to address unanticipated circumstances in Afghanistan and Ukraine, as well as the global food crisis. We will continue to assess evolving humanitarian needs, and consultation with Congress is an important part of our effort to ensure we have sufficient resources to respond.

Question. The proposal to reduce food aid was accompanied by a vague reference to efforts to reform the Food for Peace program. While Food for Peace has served as America’s flagship food aid program since 1964, its success is hampered by arcane U.S. purchase and shipping requirements that unnecessarily drive up costs. These inefficiencies led Congress to authorize an alternative, the International Disaster Assistance—Emergency Food Security Program (IDA–EFSP), which enables USAID to utilize the right tool in the right place at the right time.

Specifically, what reforms do you intend to propose to make the Food for Peace program more efficient and effective?

Will you commit to working with your authoring committees, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, to socialize, negotiate, and enact urgently needed food aid reforms?

Should those reforms include a change to U.S. cargo preference requirements, which have outlived their usefulness purpose? If not, why not?

What is the cost differential between U.S. commodities shipped on foreign-flagged vessels and U.S.-flagged vessels?

What is the time differential between U.S. commodities shipped on foreign-flagged vessels and U.S.-flagged vessels?

On average, how many U.S. flag carriers bid on USAID food assistance procurements?

Answer. Yes, the Agency commits to working with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, to socialize, negotiate, and enact food aid reforms. At a minimum, specifically, USAID will pursue technical legislative fixes to the Food for Peace Act that will reduce administrative burden for new, small, or local partners; allow USAID to support emergency response operations and quality non-emergency program design with Title II funds; streamline the award-making process; and improve flexibility between humanitarian funding streams to ensure that the most appropriate funding tool is used for every crisis.

Given the extremely high levels of global humanitarian need, USAID is supportive of all efforts to increase the speed and reduce the cost of providing life-saving assistance. Cargo preference requirements increase the cost and reduce the timeliness of life-saving emergency food assistance. Russia’s war against Ukraine threatens to reduce global food, fuel, and fertilizer supplies and increase the cost of these commodities. Between Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) and FY22 (year-to-date), the average cost to purchase a representative basket of food and deliver it to the areas of the world where USAID works most has risen by approximately 23 percent. In FY21, USAID paid approximately 46 percent more per metric ton (MT) to ship commodities on U.S.-flag vessels than foreign-flag vessels: the average ocean rate per MT was \$162 for U.S.-flag vessels and \$111 for foreign-flag vessels. Additionally, in FY21, of the

1.7 million MTs of commodities for which USAID issued solicitations, approximately 42 percent (714,000 MT) did not receive any U.S.-flag offers/bids.

When USAID does not receive a U.S. flag bid on a solicitation (due to lack of availability or otherwise), USAID makes a determination of non-availability (DNA). Upon this determination, USAID notifies the Maritime Administration (MARAD) of the DNA and contracts with a foreign flag carrier based on the lowest landed cost offer received that complies with the terms and conditions of the solicitation (e.g. capacity and availability to meet the requirements as specified in the solicitation), and past performance of the service. If it was necessary to wait for a U.S. flag ship to become available in lieu of chartering a foreign flag ship, at this time, it would take approximately 2–3 additional months for emergency food commodities to reach their destination.

Question. Democracy, Rights, and Governance: Gender: The FY23 Budget request includes \$200 million for the Gender Equity & Equality Action Fund.

How will this money be spent compared to the previous fund, which was named Women’s Global Development and Prosperity Fund?

Answer. The GEEA Fund builds and expands upon the successes and lessons learned from the Women’s Global Development and Prosperity (W–GDP) Initiative and its corresponding “WGDP Fund,” by expanding upon the three W–GDP pillars (workforce development, entrepreneurship, and enabling environment), with a comprehensive set of priorities and principles. The priority areas, for instance, incorporate prevention and response to gender-based violence where it impacts women’s economic development, and address issues such as the gender pay gap and unpaid care responsibilities.

The GEEA Fund priorities include: promoting economic competitiveness through well-paying, quality jobs; expanding care infrastructure and value domestic work; securing women’s economic future through green jobs and building resilience to climate change; promoting entrepreneurship, and financial and digital inclusion, through trade and investment; and dismantling systemic gender barriers. The GEEA Fund key principles for programming include a focus on partnerships, localization, transformation of systemic and structural inequalities, an intersectional approach, utilization of gender analyses, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and consultations.

Question. Europe and Eurasia: Ukraine: Many local Ukrainian aid organizations and networks complain to us that large international aid groups are poorly organized for their work in Ukraine because they do not know how to work in a country that has both an ongoing war and a functioning government, working transport systems, and active public services.

How can USAID most effectively bridge the gap between large multilateral aid organizations and local partners so assistance can flow to the areas and people that need it most?

How much assistance does USAID assess is making it the last mile, making it to the people that need that are most in need?

How much aid does USAID is being held up in warehouses or being distributed to those people who are in less dire circumstances?

Answer. We acknowledge the critical role that local Ukrainian organizations play in this response, and are committed to building and scaling engagement with these groups. Many of USAID’s awardees are engaging local Ukrainian organizations as sub-grantees.

USAID is providing humanitarian assistance through the United Nations (UN) and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), which often partner with local organizations to deliver assistance. Currently, USAID is working with 44 local organizations in Ukraine as sub-awardees and anticipates an increase in that number. However, USAID recognizes that some local organizations have not previously worked with international donors, engaged in humanitarian work, or programmed the significant amount of money that is currently flowing into the Ukrainian humanitarian response. In some cases there is a need to set up, or further develop, their internal systems (e.g., compliance, human resources) and to provide training and capacity building. Engaging local organizations as sub-awardees via UN or INGO partners is one approach to mobilizing local humanitarian action while ensuring the necessary compliance, oversight, and systems are in place in line with our donor requirements.

In areas experiencing active conflict, insecurity remains the most significant access constraint near frontlines, making it difficult for even local organizations to deliver aid. Humanitarian actors continue to call for humanitarian pauses to the conflict to allow for safe passage without security guarantees. In addition, mine con-

tamination following the Government of the Russian Federation's tactical retreats; destroyed roads and bridges; and restrictions of the movement of humanitarian actors and people in need of assistance are other critical access issues that have impeded humanitarian aid delivery.

Question. Western Hemisphere: Venezuela: Please describe the attitude of the Maduro regime towards independent civil society in Venezuela, and the environment of state-led threats in which civil society operates in Venezuela.

Answer. The Maduro regime continues its hostility towards independent civil society in Venezuela, including legal and financial threats, extra judicial violence, forced migration, and other forms of harassment. Currently, the Illegitimate National Assembly is revisiting passage of a non-governmental organization (NGO) law that would make it mandatory for NGOs to join a national register to carry out activities in the country. All NGOs that operate in Venezuela would need to provide the authorities with information on their constitution, statutes, activities, providence, administration, and the final destination of their resources. Significantly, the law would require details on an NGOs source of financing.

In April 2022, the Maduro regime included the country's NGOs in a proposed anti-terrorism bill that would codify the regime's ability to restrict, harass, or criminalize specific institutions it finds threatening. In May 2022, 326 Venezuelan NGOs signed a petition demanding the revocation of the draft bill.

USAID recognizes the serious threat that our civil society partners work on a daily basis. Their safety and security is a top priority.

Question. What impact would easing sanctions on the Maduro regime have on its ability to repress internationally-recognized human rights in Venezuela?

Answer. USAID is encouraged by progress in the International Criminal Court's (ICC) investigation of the Maduro regime for crimes against humanity, and we also believe that the United Nations' Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Fact Finding Mission has produced valuable information on the regime's pervasive and systematic human rights abuses. Venezuela's USAID-supported human rights organizations have made important contributions to the work of the ICC and the UN.

The Maduro regime continues human rights abuses despite existing sanctions. Given the Maduro regime's history, USAID does not believe that the additional resources would be used for the benefit of the Venezuelan people. The regime continuously prioritizes its available funds for security institutions that violate human rights, to the detriment of Venezuelan's basic freedoms and their well-being. If the United States lifted sanctions in a way that allowed the regime to accrue revenue, resources available to the regime would be stolen and/or used to finance state security and other forms of social control, including greater control over humanitarian access.

Question. What impact would easing sanctions on the Maduro regime have on the morale of our partners within Venezuela's civil society?

Answer. Venezuelan civil society organizations have diverse perspectives on sanctions. On one end, some believe sectoral sanctions should be relieved because the increased revenues in the country, however poorly managed, will bring urgently needed humanitarian relief. On the other end, some believe the regime will never implement democratic or humanitarian concessions so sanctions must be continued, along with other measures, to weaken the regime. Others hold a position somewhere in between: that sanctions must be relieved only when democratic and humanitarian compromises are reached.

We do not have a formal survey of opinions at this time. A majority of the civil society organizations our partners work with believe that sanctions should be leveraged for concessions, and that the U.S. Government should uphold individual sanctions against regime officials, especially against those that have clearly demonstrated a disregard for human rights. However, there are also those that opine that such measures over the last few years have had little impact on democratic or humanitarian conditions in the country.

USAID will continue to work with allies to build multilateral pressure on the Maduro regime, hold regime members accountable for their criminal activities, identify those who undermine democracy or abuse human rights, and provide humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Venezuelan people.

Question. In your opinion, what are the minimum conditions that should exist in Venezuela to ensure that easing sanctions on the Maduro regime does not significantly enhance its capacity to repress Venezuelan civil society?

Answer. At this time, USAID does not consider that the Maduro regime has demonstrated any progress on democracy or human rights that would trigger any consideration of a major change in United States sanctions policy.

Question. What impact is the migration crisis caused by the Maduro regime having on the ability of Colombian authorities to meet their population's needs?

Answer. Over 6 million Venezuelans have fled the country with over 1.8 million migrants residing in Colombia. The majority of these migrants have no intention of returning to Venezuela. Through our regional USAID socio-economic integration programs, over the past 3 years, we have supported tens of thousands of migrants with job skill building, entrepreneur training, professional recertification, and access to the financial and banking system.

USAID is providing assistance to facilitate the socio-economic integration of Venezuelan migrants into countries throughout South America. The continuing significant influx of migrants across the region poses governance, economic, and social challenges. To mitigate these challenges in these countries, USAID is working to strengthen local institutions to provide basic services and effectively and equitably absorb the inflow of migrants.

Specifically in Colombia, USAID is supporting the Government of Colombia (GOC)'s implementation of the 10-year temporary protected status for Venezuelan migrants announced in February 2021, as well as helping the GOC manage its borders by enhancing its capability to document and track incoming Venezuelan migrants and Colombian returnees. USAID will also support the GOC in increasing the capacity of its education system to provide sustainable and inclusive quality education in communities impacted by Venezuelan migration; support Colombian institutions to raise awareness of migrant issues, prevent human rights violations, protect those under threat, and respond to and investigate abuses; work to protect basic human rights for migrants, improve access to livelihoods and jobs, and promote community building to counter bias and discrimination; and strengthen Colombia's health system to help communities respond to the strain of hosting Venezuelan migrants and Colombians returning from Venezuela.

Question. Central America: What is USAID's assessment of the impact of ending Title 42 removal authority on illegal migration flows through Central America?

Answer. While Title 42 remains in effect, the Administration remains focused on doing its due diligence to prepare for potential changes at the border. USAID provides support to returned migrants in their home country of origin.

USAID works closely within the interagency and with governments in the region to improve humane migration management and promote safe, humane, and legal migration pathways throughout Central America. We have alerted countries to the upcoming changes in processing at U.S. borders and requested flexibility in repatriating individuals without a legal basis to remain in the United States.

I would refer you to the Department of Homeland Security and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevent (CDC) for further information regarding border processing and the Title 42 Public Health Order.

Question. Please describe the specific reforms the Administration is seeking from each of the governments in Mexico and the countries of northern Central America to reduce illegal migration from the region, including the concrete and verifiable benchmarks by which USAID will measure the efficacy of its programs related to the "Root Causes Strategy for Central America."

Answer. *Mexico:* The United States and Mexico remain committed partners on security cooperation to protect our citizens and to make our nations safer and stronger. During the October 2021 High-Level Security Dialogue, the United States and Mexico adopted the Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities, which modernizes our security cooperation and establishes a comprehensive, long-term approach for binational actions to pursue the safety and security of our societies. The Framework builds on our cooperation under the Merida Initiative, incorporates lessons learned, and offers a more comprehensive approach to security cooperation. With the adoption of the Framework, our countries committed to transforming our cooperation to better protect the health and safety of our citizens and promote the development of the most vulnerable communities in both countries, prevent criminal organizations from harming our countries, and pursue and bring criminals to justice.

The Bicentennial Framework places a sharper focus on addressing the root causes of violence and insecurity in communities on both sides of the border. USAID continues to actively target individuals most likely to be victims or perpetrators of violent crime through focused reinsertion interventions for at-risk youth (secondary prevention) and social reinsertion programs for youth in conflict with the law (ter-

tiary prevention). In collaboration with local governments, justice system operators, policymakers, civil society service providers, and private sector stakeholders, USAID promotes the institutionalization and replication of proven violence prevention models and the expanded utilization of alternative sentencing for youth offenders. The Bicentennial Framework also allows the expansion and scaling up of programming informed by evidence with proven results at the local level. In collaboration with state and local partners, USAID has developed successful approaches to address community violence, divert at-risk youth from crime, and better respond to high-impact crimes. Support and buy-in from the Federal Government are critical to expanding these initiatives more broadly and ensuring long-term sustainability.

In support of our security cooperation objectives, USAID continues to develop robust Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plans—with clear output, outcome, and context indicators—for its own activities. Using these indicators, USAID sets baselines and targets, and works with partners to monitor progress and adapt as needed to achieve high-level outcomes. For example, in rule of law, USAID supports attorneys general offices and courts, among other institutions, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of criminal and civil justice systems. These programs include developing analytical ability, improving victims' access to justice, and building public support for criminal justice reforms. To measure progress, USAID tracks prosecution rates for high-impact crimes, aiming to increase from a baseline of 12.2 percent in 2018 to 15 percent by 2022. Also, the percent decrease in average time for all case resolutions in State Courts is expected to decrease by 10 percent in 2022. Compliance rate with precautionary measures is expected to increase to 90 percent in target states, from a baseline of 88 percent.

Under the Bicentennial Framework, the United States and Mexico committed to develop joint indicators to measure high-level outcomes from our work. The final indicators remain under negotiation but will focus on significant outcomes needed to assess progress in our priority areas.

SOUTHERN MEXICO AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION WITH THE GOM IN NORTHERN CENTRAL AMERICA

During Vice President Harris' June 2021 trip to Mexico, USAID opened up a new partnership with the Mexican Development Agency (AMEXCID) to work jointly to address the root causes of migration in Northern Central America. Under a joint framework called *Sembrando Oportunidades*, USAID and AMEXCID are working to coordinate our major economic growth and livelihoods project to give communities at risk of migration, the best potential outcomes possible by transferring beneficiaries from GOM programs to our own which offer them longer term support.

Sembrando Oportunidades includes support for economic development in southern Mexico, promotes clean energy, and deals with the root causes of migration in cooperation with AMEXCID. Our strategic alliance with Mexico addresses root causes in Northern Central America and southern Mexico, through an MOU that was witnessed last year by our Vice President. We also work to help AMEXCID improve their own systems as a young institution to achieve greater impact. We have found this partnership to be very productive, and it has helped the USG immeasurably in improving our own diplomatic and development relations.

NORTHERN CENTRAL AMERICA

In line with five pillars of the Root Causes Strategy, USAID prioritizes development programs that address the key drivers of irregular migration from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, with particular focus on immigration to the United States.

In practical terms, this entails aiming to focus programs geographically in areas with higher out-migration, and demographically on populations exhibiting higher propensity for irregular migration. It also means that collection and use of migration-related data is in addition to generating the evidence needed to track progress toward achievement of USAID's development objectives.

To measure development outcomes, USAID and the Department of State track a robust set of performance and country commitment (context) indicators. Examples include jobs and sales generated through support to firms, at-risk youth reached with crime and violence prevention services, as well as satisfaction with police, courts, and local government services.

For migration, USAID regularly analyzes migration data from multiple sources, including sensitive data from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), gauges attitudes and opinions of Central Americans related to migration through perception surveys, and commissions evaluations, assessments, and studies that provide deeper insight into outcomes and operational context.

Question. Middle East: Syria: Assistance in Regime-Held Areas: I was deeply concerned to learn that this Administration is supporting both State and USAID funding in Assad regime-held areas.

Given Assad's systematic manipulation of international aid, how can the U.S. ensure assistance does not benefit the Assad regime?

How does U.S. support for "early recovery" projects in Assad-held areas further core U.S. objectives?

Please provide USAID's definition of "reconstruction funds"? What is the distinction between reconstruction and early recovery?

What are the red lines in terms of U.S. assistance in regime controlled areas?

Answer. We employ a range of risk mitigation measures to prevent our assistance from benefitting the Assad regime or other sanctioned individuals or entities in Syria, including when such entities may control territory in Syria. Our humanitarian partners are required to have comprehensive risk mitigation plans that include, among other things: independent beneficiary selection and verification; post-distribution monitoring; warehouse security measures; financial and procurement controls; background checks for sub-partners, vendors, and staff; protocols for mitigation of and response to waste, fraud, and abuse; efforts the partner will undertake in collaboration with other organizations, such as the development of joint operating principles or information exchanges on risks in the operating environment; and measures to mitigate the risks that sanctioned groups or individuals could receive reputational benefit from the proposed activities, such as a sanctioned group or individual claiming credit for assistance or services provided. All partners are also required to fully cooperate with a USAID-contracted third-party monitoring service to monitor the implementation of all programs and provide immediate updates on any interference with aid, particularly with regard to sanctioned groups. All USAID partners are additionally required to employ their own third-party monitoring contractors to monitor the implementation of their programs on the ground. All USAID partners are also required to provide immediate incident reports on any interference or instance of fraud, waste, or abuse, even if only alleged, to the USAID Office of Inspector General, the award's Agreement Officer, and Agreement Officer's Representative.

USAID-funded early recovery programs in regime-controlled areas are very limited in scope—such as small scale repairs of water pumps and community based livelihood programs targeted at vulnerable women—and do not involve direct support to national Syrian Government institutions, nor (like all USAID humanitarian programs) are they directed by them. Early recovery in Syria does not mean reconstruction or support to the central government, normalizing relationships with the regime, or removing pressure on Assad to engage in the political process.

USAID distinguishes early recovery programming from reconstruction programming by design, intent, and scale. Humanitarian early recovery is a form of humanitarian assistance that aims to reduce immediate and protracted humanitarian needs by strengthening the self-reliance of affected populations through generally small-scale programs at the individual, household, and local community level; improving individual, household, and community welfare; and therefore reducing dependence on external assistance.

Like all other humanitarian programs, early recovery activities by humanitarian agencies are conducted based on community needs and with independent partners. The United States does not support reconstruction directed by the Syrian Government, which would be designed to benefit its own narrow interests. We believe irreversible political progress toward a political solution in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2254 is both a necessary and vital condition for reconstruction and we have not seen progress on this front.

Question. Renewal of UN Mandate for Cross-Border Humanitarian Assistance: In July, the UN-monitored Syria cross-border mechanism will expire and the UN, along with partners and allies, will have limited ability to partner with local entities to continue to deliver aid to millions in NW Syria. The risk of a catastrophic humanitarian event is astronomical.

Please describe the efforts that USAID is taking to encourage the UN and other partners to hand off necessary programs to local entities so that essential programs can continue in the event of non-renewal.

How can the DART team, based out of Gaziantep, Turkey, maintain its ability to partner with the UN and other entities to ensure humanitarian aid will flow to those in need in the event of non-renewal?

Should the Russians and/or the Chinese issue a veto, what would non-renewal look like for Syrians and the international community?

Do you believe that cross-line assistance is a substitute for cross-border assistance?

Please describe your engagements with humanitarian partners on the event of renewal or non-renewal.

Are humanitarian partners preparing to hand off essential programs in NW Syria should the mechanism not be renewed?

In the event of non-renewal, what posture would the DART team and USAID take on continued aid assistance to NW Syria?

Answer. USAID strongly shares your concerns regarding the potentially catastrophic humanitarian consequences of non-renewal of the United Nations' (UN) cross-border mandate for delivery of humanitarian assistance into northwest Syria. Preparations to date have confirmed USAID's assessment that any contingency operations in the event of a non-renewal would only cover a fraction of the UN's current caseload of assisting 2.4 million people per month through cross-border aid. We support using all modalities to deliver humanitarian assistance to Syrians in need, including both cross-line and cross-border mechanisms, but we have also been clear and consistent with Security Council members, allies, and partners, that given the numerous challenges of delivering cross-line aid, it cannot match the scale and scope of cross-border aid into northwest Syria.

Since the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 2585, there have been four UN cross-line missions to northwest Syria; with the most recent delivering food aid for 43,500 people. By contrast, in a typical month, UN cross-border aid through Bab al-Hawa delivers enough food for 1.4 million people. Frankly, there is no comparing the two. Cross-line assistance simply cannot substitute for cross-border.

Since the start of this Administration and consistently across all three administrations in office since the Syrian conflict began, USAID has regularly consulted with partners and allies on the best ways to maintain humanitarian access and deliver U.S. humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people, including in the northwest. USAID is in constant discussion with UN leadership and UN agencies about humanitarian needs in northwest Syria and the unique mandates and capabilities that each agency brings to this humanitarian response. USAID consistently stresses to UN agencies the importance of meeting needs in northwest Syria through all means available. USAID is also in constant discussion with UN agencies and our non-governmental organization (NGO) partners about the need to support local humanitarian partners in northwest Syria and across the whole of Syria. NGOs play an indispensable role in this response, and USAID has and will support efforts to enhance their capacities.

All of these channels will remain open up to and beyond the vote to reauthorize UN cross-border aid to Syria this July. We will continue to use all means available to advocate for continued humanitarian access and to deliver U.S. humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people, including in the northwest, in coordination with the UN, NGOs, other donors, and partner countries. In any emergency response, including in Syria, USAID expects humanitarian agencies to prepare for all reasonable scenarios so life-saving aid keeps flowing to those who need it.

USAID is available to provide further details in response to your questions in an appropriate setting.

Question. Palestinian Assistance: Turning to Palestinian Assistance, how are we trying to encourage the Palestinian Authority to abandon support for terrorism, including pay to slay?

Answer. We agree with you that the practice of prisoner and martyr payments or any support for terrorism is abhorrent, and the Biden-Harris administration is committed to continuing to work to end the practice of Palestinian prisoner and "martyr" payments. We continue to urge Palestinian Authority leaders and officials to end this practice in meetings at all levels. Most recently, in her meeting with Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh, Deputy Administrator Isobel Coleman emphasized the need to end the unacceptable practice, until which time USAID will strictly adhere to restrictions on assistance to the PA under U.S. law.

We believe it is critical for Israel and the PA to refrain from unilateral steps that exacerbate tensions and undercut efforts to advance a negotiated two-state solution, including incitement to violence and providing compensation for individuals imprisoned for acts of terrorism.

Question. Yemen: What steps can USAID take to improve oversight of operations in Yemen given our limited presence on the ground?

Answer. We place the highest priority on ensuring U.S. taxpayer funds are effectively supporting their intended purpose. USAID requires our partners to have proper safeguards and risk mitigation systems to support the provision of assistance to

those who need it most. USAID also utilizes various oversight mechanisms to ensure programs reach the intended beneficiaries, including third-party monitoring, partner vetting, geo-tagged photos, and videos of distributions. USAID/Yemen is also rolling out third-party, in-person site visits in limited areas deemed secure. We work closely with partners, the Republic of Yemen Government, other donors, and our Inspector General to identify risks and take steps to protect our assistance.

Question. How can USAID use U.S. assistance to further U.N.-led peace efforts?

Answer. The truce is an opportunity for a durable and inclusive resolution to the conflict and expands the space for much-needed relief that USAID and the international community are providing to millions of Yemenis. A key U.S. policy objective in Yemen is to support a United Nations (UN)-led inclusive, negotiated political settlement to the conflict. The United States supports the Republic of Yemen Government (ROYG) as the internationally recognized government and aligns assistance to enable the implementation of a resolution to the conflict consistent with U.S. national interests, through coordination with U.S. Special Envoy Timothy Lenderking's office.

At the beneficiary level, USAID identifies and supports local-level initiatives that mitigate conflict, strengthen social cohesion, and promote the peaceful resolution of differences. Our work utilizes a step-by-step framework for building the resilience of community members, civil society organizations, the private sector, traditional leaders, and local government officials to collaboratively identify and address local issues through conflict mitigation and service delivery projects.

USAID also trains formal and informal leaders, organizations, and networks to serve as neutral arbitrators and peace-builders to meet community and constituent needs. As of March 2022, 24 grants totaling nearly \$1 million have been awarded to community-based Yemeni nongovernmental organizations to engage youth in community and civic life; build unity and tolerance across historical or other divides; promote innovative tools to reconnect communities and reignite pride in commonalities; and amplify women's participation in community peace-building and/or service delivery. For instance, youth grantees have produced art, media, and community events that showcase messages of peace and reconciliation, build understanding across groups, and celebrate Yemen's shared cultural heritage.

USAID also facilitates increasing civil society and women's voices in ROYG decision-making on the peace process.

These investments, carefully coordinated with U.S. Special Envoy Timothy Lenderking's office, align our assistance to support a United Nations (UN)-led inclusive, negotiated political settlement to the conflict, a key U.S. policy objective in Yemen.

Question. How can USAID use U.S. assistance to improve the internationally-recognized government's ability to deliver services?

Answer. Economic growth programs in Yemen support the stabilization and creation of a productive macroeconomic environment by supporting capacity-building activities and reforms in the Central Bank of Yemen (CBY) and other Republic of Yemen Government (ROYG) institutions. With our support, Yemen successfully launched its first-ever foreign exchange auctions, improved port productivity and wait times in Aden, and unfroze nearly \$400 million worth of deposits at the CBY.

USAID/Yemen's trade facilitation activity focuses on improving port procedures at the Aden and Mukalla Ports in partnership with the port authorities and Yemen Customs Authority. USAID interventions aim to reduce trading costs and delays, counter corrupt practices, increase transparency (as per World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Act) by digitizing trading procedures and reducing trade-related bureaucracy. This collective set of interventions is designed to i) facilitate the flow of essential goods into Yemen, particularly humanitarian aid, food products, and critical medical supplies for combatting COVID-19; (ii) enhance the competitiveness of Yemeni producers, particularly small and medium enterprises; and (iii) promote Yemeni exports.

To enhance Yemen's access to international financial systems, USAID upgraded the CBY's access to SWIFT, a network for financial transfers that underpins transparency and accountability. These improvements are important for businesses that struggle to operate in a normal market environment by increasing citizen trust by enhancing the ROYG's responsiveness and ability to mitigate the impact of the crisis.

USAID also works closely with the Ministry of Education to support a stronger, resilient education system which provides quality formal education for Yemeni children. These actions include curriculum reform, teacher training and improving access to school, with a special focus on girls. In collaboration with the Ministry,

USAID has established non-formal education centers in communities to help the roughly 2 million internally displaced children continue their education.

Likewise, USAID is strengthening the Ministry of Health to deliver quality maternal, child and reproductive health care to over 220 clinics. Activities include systems strengthening to ensure there are no supply chain breaks in key medicines and materials as well as extensive training and capacity building for doctors, nurses, midwives and other healthcare professionals.

USAID collaborated closely with local authorities to assist more than 1.5 million vulnerable Yemenis with increased, sustainable access to clean water, improved sanitation services, and hygiene awareness sessions to prevent the spread of communicable diseases such as cholera and COVID-19.

Question. Afghanistan: The Administration seems to be surprised that the Taliban are behaving like the Taliban. We've seen them eject women and girls from school, re-instate guardianship laws, and it's clear that the Taliban maintains a relationship with al-Qaeda.

What is the wisdom in the Administration's plans to issue a national interest waiver to allow direct financial benefit to the Taliban?

How does the Administration find leverage to change Taliban conduct?

To what degree do you feel assistance is a point of leverage?

Answer. For questions regarding the national interest waiver, we refer you to the U.S. Department of State.

USAID works closely with the Department of State and other interagency partners to identify options for engaging with the Taliban to hold them accountable for their public commitments. We work closely with the Afghanistan Affairs Unit in Doha to raise concerns and issues through their channels. USAID programs operate to support humanitarian and basic needs of the Afghan people, while also seeking to promote economic stabilization within Afghanistan. With the recent news of the Taliban issuing a decree forcing Afghan women and girls to observe hijab and strongly encouraging them to stay home, USAID is actively working with interagency partners to identify measures to pressure the Taliban to reverse this decree, as well as other policies that contravene their public commitments. Unfortunately, the Taliban have shown that assistance does not sway their thinking or their actions; further, they have not demonstrated capacity to solve the ongoing humanitarian and economic crisis and alleviate the suffering of Afghans on their own.

Question. Summit for Democracy: In the "year of action" between the 2021 and 2022 Summits for Democracy, what deliverables does USAID expect to share with Congress?

Answer. At the 2021 Summit for Democracy, USAID announced 14 deliverables under the umbrella of the new Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal (PIDR). The PIDR centers on five areas of work crucial to the functioning of transparent, accountable governance, and in which we perceive our democracy assistance efforts need an update to meet the present moment: supporting free and independent media, fighting corruption, bolstering democratic reformers, advancing technology for democracy, and defending free and fair elections and political processes. USAID's deliverables include a number of innovative programs and initiatives, including:

- The Powered by the People initiative, which will use new methods to empower and improve the efficacy of citizen movements;
- The Defamation Defense Fund (recently renamed "Reporters Mutual") activity, which will provide liability coverage to shield investigative journalists from defamation lawsuits and allow them to continue their critical work.
- The Combating Transnational Corruption Grand Challenge, which will allow USAID to work with global partners to develop innovative tools and technologies and launch joint initiatives to reduce transnational corruption.
- The Defending Democratic Elections Fund, which will help countries and electoral community actors to proactively address the wide range of contemporary threats to elections and political processes.
- The Advancing Digital Democracy initiative, which will work with governments, technologists, and civil society to foster digital ecosystems in which technology is developed, used, and governed in ways that advance democracy and respect for human rights.
- The Partnerships for Democracy initiative (the name will likely change, to avoid confusion with the House Democracy Partnership), which will surge support to countries experiencing democratic openings, bringing government and non-gov-

ernmental stakeholders together to pursue inclusive reforms, improve service delivery, and demonstrate that democracy delivers.

USAID does not anticipate announcing major new USAID programs in connection with the second Summit for Democracy. USAID intends to use the platform provided by the second Summit to elevate and highlight progress made on the ambitious suite of programs announced at the first Summit. USAID will use the Summit to expand on these programs and build on the lessons learned over the last year.

To the extent USAID conceives any new deliverables during the Year of Action, we are committed to sharing them with Congress in advance of the second Summit.

Question. As we approach the mid-summer check-in point, do you believe countries are taking actionable steps to promote and defend democracy?

Answer. At the first Summit for Democracy (S4D) in December 2021, leaders from governments, civil society, and the private sector made a diverse series of commitments to strengthen democratic governance, protect human rights, and counter corruption and authoritarianism. Through the first Summit, the Year of Action (YoA), and future Summit convenings, the U.S. Government (USG) seeks to build on this momentum and spur collective action to bolster democracies and counter backsliding.

During the first Summit, 100 leaders made over 700 commitments on which their governments would make progress during the YoA. Country commitments focused particularly on: taking aggressive action to counter corruption; defending journalists and activists and protecting media freedom; protecting marginalized communities, particularly women; defending democratic elections; and expanding access to justice. The State Department has confirmed and published official written commitments from more than 50 countries.

While it is too early to evaluate the success of the Summit, the U.S. Government and its partners have taken important steps to ensure that countries follow through on their commitments to promote and defend democracy. The U.S. Government is raising country-level commitments in bilateral engagements, seeking participation on ours, and seeking to amplify the broader goals of the Summit in multilateral engagements.

In particular, since the first Summit, USAID, the Department of State, and other interagency partners have launched a series of consultative processes to support governments in making verifiable progress on their commitments. This includes launching a series of multi-stakeholder platforms, called Democracy Cohorts, that bring together non-governmental organizations, which bring specific expertise and/or resources, with governments that demonstrate political will to make progress on their Summit commitments.

Civil society stakeholders are also using their networks and reach to raise awareness about countries' Summit commitments and provide the information and analysis critical for holding governments accountable for the commitments they have made. For instance, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), an intergovernmental organization headquartered in Sweden, is tracking and providing analysis of country commitments and supporting broad engagement on the Summit objectives via a dedicated Summit for Democracy resources portal.

The State Department has also launched a government-to-government structure, the Focal Group, that provides an opportunity for Summit-participating governments to provide input on planning for the first Summit and encourage partners to share progress on Summit commitments. The first Focal Group meeting took place last month, and we expect future quarterly meetings to provide opportunities for countries to report on progress on commitments.

Question. Please describe the USAID Anti-Corruption Task Force's scope of work. What deliverables can the Anti-Corruption Task Force expect to produce?

Answer. USAID's Anti-Corruption Task Force (ACTF) was activated by Administrator Power on June 25, 2021 to coordinate USAID's anti-corruption activities and align Agency policy and programming with the Administration's new strategic directions and prioritization of anti-corruption. The ACTF has functioned as a central coordinating body and surge capacity, shaping the U.S. Government's and USAID's strategy, priorities, and programmatic responses in the fight against corruption.

The ACTF is led by an Executive Director and Senior Advisor, who reports directly to the Administrator, and is staffed by top experts drawing from within and outside USAID. It is currently housed within USAID's Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI).

In its first year, the Task Force led an aggressive push to revitalize and adapt anti-corruption efforts within USAID. Deliverables included:

- Shaping the first-ever *U.S. Strategy on Countering Corruption*;
- Designing and announcing a bold suite of anti-corruption programs—including the Empowering Anti-Corruption Change Agents Program, Defamation Defense Fund/Reporters Mutual Insurance Fund, Combating Transnational Corruption Grand Challenge, and Global Accountability Program—during the first Summit for Democracy (S4D);
- Expanding support to and collaboration with the Open Government Partnership and Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative to advance reforms in countries including Honduras, Malawi, Moldova, and Zambia;
- Launching the Anti-Corruption Response Fund and using it to support reforms in the Dominican Republic and Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Hosting the inaugural Anti-Corruption Evidence and Learning Week and initiating new research on social and behavioral approaches to anti-corruption, strategies for fighting corruption in low political will environments, and addressing COVID-enabled corruption; and
- Showing solidarity with anti-corruption activists and champions through dozens of public events, private meetings, briefings, speeches, podcasts, op-eds, and blogs.

The ACTF is working to help key countries and reformers—from the Northern Triangle to Eastern Europe—step up their efforts to fight corruption by providing technical assistance, establishing new programs, connecting reformers to other support structures and partners, and showing political support and solidarity.

As the ACTF enters its second year, the task force is shifting from *setting* this bold new direction to *delivering* on USAID’s anti-corruption vision. The focus going forward will be on 1) expanding and adapting anti-corruption programming and increasing USAID’s responsiveness to windows of opportunity, backsliding, and experimentation; 2) issuing concrete plans, processes, and frameworks to drive implementation of the U.S. Strategy and related policies/strategies; 3) commissioning and disseminating cutting-edge research, evidence, and data on corruption to inform USAID’s programmatic work and resource allocation; 4) activating risk-based, targeted, and proportional measures, tools, and practices to effectively safeguard U.S. assistance from corruption; and 5) building USAID’s long-term capacity to influence policy outcomes, demonstrate thought leadership, catalyze wide-ranging partnerships and coalitions, and fund cutting-edge programs in the anti-corruption space.

Question. With the wide range of commitments or declaration of intentions from participating countries, how can USAID appropriately and accurately measure progress on shared goals?

Answer. USAID does not plan to independently measure country commitments but is supporting the efforts of the Department of State (DoS), National Security Council and civil society stakeholders to develop appropriate and accurate approaches to measure progress on shared goals without duplication of efforts. For example, USAID is part of an informal group that gathers monthly to share information on commitments with civil society and other multilateral partners.

Internally, USAID plans on using existing annual reporting systems to collate relevant data and information regarding Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal (PIDR) activities to ensure that USAID is tracking the relevant indicators related to programming that relate to county commitments. USAID plans on developing an internal monitoring plan to efficiently and accurately track data related to its programming under the PIDR. USAID is also working with Missions to explore how they are best able to support the Year of Action and partner commitments.

Question. It was recently announced that as part of the Summit for Democracy, the USG would host “civil society consultations” on a wide range of topics.

What do you expect the outcome of these meetings to be?

Does the USG plan to incorporate civil society organizations in the second Summit for Democracy?

Answer. The U.S. Government will engage civil society in the Summit through two processes:

1. *Democracy Cohorts.* The U.S. Government has launched a multi-stakeholder platform, known as “Democracy Cohorts,” to galvanize collective action toward fulfilling commitments in areas of common interest. Democracy Cohorts will be co-led by civil society organizations and governments. Cohorts will be action-oriented, working together to further refine and demonstrate progress toward implementing Summit commitments, and potentially offering recommendations

for new commitments or other announcements for the second Summit. Governments are encouraged to participate in one or more of these thematic cohorts along with civil society organizations that have particular issue expertise.

2. *Civil society consultations.* These consultations are designed to be recurring, virtual convenings with a broad swath of nongovernmental organizations, philanthropies, and the private sector to discuss fulfillment of our first Summit commitments, as well as inform the agenda and priorities for the second Summit.

They also provide a forum for exploring ways that civil society and government can work together to accelerate progress on key thematic issues. To date, there have been thematic consultations on topics as wide-ranging as Civic Space, Rule of Law, Technology for Democracy, Government Transparency/Public Procurement, and Media. These engagements have focused on asking civil society partners what commitments they would like to see democracies make significant progress in ahead of the next summit and how can the USG and civil society work together to implement existing commitments.

USAID is working collaboratively with the State Department's Summit for Democracy Cell to convene these consultations, which respond directly to civil society demands for greater engagement and involvement in the follow up to the first Summit.

We are also encouraging all Summit-participating countries to engage with local civil society organizations as they follow through on their first Summit commitments and develop new commitments for the second Summit.

While second Summit planning is still in its early phases, the USG also seeks to create the space for gathering their ideas for the broader agenda and for their active participation in the second Summit for Democracy.

Question. Multilateral Aid Review: Do you support a review of all U.S. multilateral aid, especially given the recent news of ongoing corruption and fraud within the UN system? Why or why not?

Answer. The U.S. Government is deeply concerned about allegations of financial mismanagement and wrongdoing within the United Nations, including the most recent allegations at the United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS). USAID, working with the interagency, is committed to holding all implementing partners accountable for protecting U.S. taxpayer resources from the risks of waste, fraud, and abuse.

The U.S. Government supports rigorous performance and evaluation measures for multilateral entities to ensure U.S. taxpayer dollars are aligned to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives. The United States is committed to ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in international organizations to maximize their ability to deliver on their important mandates.

Pursuant to USAID operational policy, the Agency reviews the organizational capacity of individual multilateral organizations (identified as Public International Organizations or "PIOs" within Agency policy) to identify and help mitigate the risks of waste, fraud, and abuse of USAID resources, prior to entering into funding arrangements with such organizations. These reviews are informed by external evaluations and international assessments of particular multilateral organizations, including those conducted by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network, of which the U.S. Government is a member.

USAID coordinates closely with other U.S. departments and agencies to help inform and advance U.S. Government oversight and reform priorities for individual multilateral organizations, as well as for the wider multilateral system, to help improve performance; increase transparency and accountability; and advance the development, humanitarian, and foreign policy interests of the United States.

Question. Indo-Pacific: The Pacific Islands have many development needs, particularly in the energy and education sectors. What has USAID done with the Pacific Islands in these areas in the past 5 years?

Answer. USAID has not historically programmed education activities for the Pacific Islands. However, through existing activities we have held project management certification courses to support Pacific Island countries to access climate finance, and we have hosted joint trainings with the Taiwan International Cooperation and Development Fund (TaiwanICDF) on health and digital connectivity targeting key Pacific Island country government staff and technical officers. Going forward, we intend to increase our funding and investments in the region.

USAID's cooperation with Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Papua New Guinea has spurred joint initiatives such as the Papua New Guinea Electrification Partnership (PEP), which aims to increase electrification in Papua New Guinea from 13

percent of the population to 70 percent by 2030, and we have partnered with Australia and Japan to expand access to secure and reliable high speed digital connectivity in Palau.

To support the multi-country PEP initiative, USAID recently announced a 5-year, up to \$57 million program to strengthen the effectiveness and viability of PNG Power Limited, promote off-grid models, strengthen energy regulatory systems, catalyze private-sector investment, and conduct effective public outreach. The activity aims to facilitate energy access for 200,000 households, which will be supported through multiple strategies including the development of micro-grids in remote communities. USAID will partner with private sector companies to provide these energy solutions to communities.

USAID's Energy Regulatory Partnership Activity via the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners also supports USAID PEP by strengthening energy regulatory capacity, including creating the regulatory framework for off-grid electrification.

Through the Trilateral Infrastructure Partnership, USAID and the Department of the Interior are partnering with Japan, Australia, and the Government of Palau to cofund an undersea fiber-optic spur to Palau. The project will connect to a new U.S. International Development Finance Corporation-financed undersea cable, the world's longest, spanning from Singapore to the United States. While Palau is currently served by an undersea cable, this second cable would provide additional bandwidth, as well as critical and reliable redundancy that is not sufficiently provided by satellite internet service to improve economic growth and virtual education opportunities.

Question. What are our plans in the next 5 years to help the Pacific Islands access energy resources and build energy infrastructure?

Answer. The FY 2023 request will reinforce the U.S. Government partnership with the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) to advance strategic priorities in the region to address climate change, accelerate the economic recovery from COVID-19, and promote democratic resilience. FY 2023 resources will mobilize sustainable climate finance; increase access to climate resilient, high-quality investment and infrastructure; strengthen early warning systems and decision support tools; improve the enabling environment; and adopt climate-smart livelihoods.

We will continue deepening USAID's collaboration with Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Taiwan, and other like-minded partners. We will also leverage our strong partnerships with regional institutions, including the Pacific Islands Forum, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, and the longstanding Pacific Community.

U.S. assistance will support Papua New Guinea (PNG) to achieve its renewable energy targets, through the PNG Electrification Partnership, which will bolster the capacity of the country's energy utilities corporation. Resources will expand electricity connections and increase competition, promote new renewable energy models, including viable off-grid electrification, and catalyze greater private sector investment in Papua New Guinea's energy sector. Partnering with like-minded countries—Australia, Japan, and New Zealand—and the private sector, the USG will support PNG's goal of connecting 70 percent of its population to electricity by 2030, up from 13 percent today.

Question. The Chinese Government has been very active in pursuing development opportunities within the Pacific Islands. Does USAID have any major development projects planned for the Pacific Islands in the coming years? If so, what are they? If not, what are the regulatory, resource, or logistical obstacles to carrying out large development projects in this region?

Answer. USAID has been expanding our development work in the Pacific Islands as part of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy, while working within the parameters of regional and bilateral funding allocations, and is also leveraging partnerships with like minded donors in the region to increase our work in the Pacific Islands. In keeping with the objectives of the Asia Reassurance Act of 2018, USAID programs across Asia and the Pacific strengthen democratic systems, foster economic growth and private sector investment, and improve natural resource management.

In order for U.S. companies to compete in the Indo-Pacific region freely and fairly, they need citizen-responsive governance; respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democratic values. These conditions help increase stability in a region of the world that is home to the majority of humanity.

Among other achievements, USAID has successfully accelerated trade and investment through streamlined procedures; confronted illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing through partnerships with the private sector, governments, and civil

society; promoted open and inclusive digital ecosystems; and bolstered the global health security agenda in the Indo-Pacific.

We consider our Pacific neighbors to be essential partners in fostering a free and open Indo-Pacific region. Our work is designed to address the region's most pressing challenges, such as mitigating the effects of climate change, supporting transparent and high-standard infrastructure financing, driving digital connectivity, and fostering good governance and sustainable development—including support for coastal fishery management.

USAID is planning two new activities that will benefit the Pacific Islands to leverage resources from like-minded partners to offer sustainable alternatives for private sector-led financing and economic growth. The first, USAID's new Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Partnership (DCCP)-Pacific program that is expected to be awarded in Fall 2022 will engage with private technology firms, internet platforms and other service providers to advance access and connectivity in the Pacific.

Secondly, USAID is designing a new climate finance activity to support Pacific countries to access financing. It will draw on lessons learned from USAID's existing climate finance activity to identify new pathways to increase climate finance and investment for the Pacific Islands to fully implement nationally determined contributions, national adaptation plans, and similar expressions of national climate priorities.

Question. What are the priority countries for USAID in the Pacific Islands? How is USAID coordinating with State Dept. and DoD efforts on these priority countries?

Answer. USAID is implementing development programs in 12 Pacific Islands countries: Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. USAID has staff based in six of these countries—Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, FSM, Marshall Islands, and Palau. As an integral member of the embassy community in these Pacific countries, USAID works closely with the inter-agency to carry out development programming and to ensure that increased presence, programming, and messaging are used to strengthen the U.S. Government's position and influence in the region. For example, in Papua New Guinea, USAID is working closely with the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command for procurement and deployment of vaccines and other health commodities to support countries' COVID-19 response, and to support disaster risk reduction and the fisheries sector. And in Washington, USAID coordinates with the State Department directly as well as with other USG agencies working on the Pacific Islands (such as the Department of the Interior) through regular National Security Council coordination meetings.

Question. The Solomon Islands are an area of particular concern given reports of a potential Solomon Islands-China security assistance agreement. What has USAID done in the past 5 years with the Solomon Islands, and where are there opportunities to deepen U.S. engagement with the Solomon Islands in the short-term?

Answer. Working closely with the Solomon Islands government, USAID launched a 5-year, \$25 million Strengthening Competitiveness, Agriculture, Livelihoods and Environment (SCALE) Project in 2020. The project works with five implementing partners to focus on economic growth and trade in Solomon Islands, with specific emphasis on the development of the agribusiness sector and improved management of the forestry sector. Since the launch of SCALE in late 2020, USAID has been in regular consultation with the Solomon Islands Ministry of National Planning and Development Coordination and has collaboratively worked with relevant line ministries.

USAID also has been supporting the health systems strengthening and COVID-19 response in the Pacific including Solomon Islands since the start of the pandemic. USAID has provided \$52 million to prevent the spread and mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic across the Pacific Islands. USAID assistance contributes to testing capacity, provides technical assistance and communication support for vaccination campaigns, and addresses shortages in supplies. In Solomon Islands, USAID facilitated U.S. donations of 153,270 Pfizer doses through COVAX between November 2021 and April 2022.

In the area of disaster risk reduction, USAID works at the regional level as well as with national and provincial governments and local communities in the Solomon Islands to strengthen community resilience to the effects of climate change, natural disasters, and severe weather events. Since 2019, USAID has provided nearly \$8 million in regional Disaster Risk Reduction programming for the Pacific Islands region to support community and government disaster planning, preparation, and response, including a joint effort with the U.S. Geological Survey to provide seismic

monitoring equipment to improve the monitoring of volcanic risks. Over the same time period, USAID provided an additional \$2.6 million for Disaster Risk Reduction activities specifically in the Solomon Islands through the International Federation of the Red Cross and World Vision Solomon Islands, as well as \$100,000 to respond to Tropical Cyclone Harold.

USAID also supports collaborative approaches to managing biologically diverse marine and coastal resources in Solomon Islands as part of international and regional programs. The Pacific Coastal Fisheries Management and Compliance and Our Fish Our Future projects launched in 2021 will have dedicated coordination mechanisms within Solomon Islands to stimulate national engagement in regional efforts.

Through the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS), USAID's Strengthening Democratic Governance Pacific Islands (SDGPI) supports technical assistance to the Solomon Islands Election Commission (SIEC); third party election oversight and inclusive elections especially among marginalized groups; and youth participation leadership and citizen participation in local governance.

USAID, in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy in PNG, is excited to implement an activity to launch a dynamic advocacy-oriented American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) to facilitate trade and investment between the United States and Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

USAID is planning to award a Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Partnership (DCCP) Activity in Fall 2022. DCCP-Pacific is expected to be a new, 5-year, up to \$24 million regional activity, subject to the availability of funds, that will support the digital transformation of Pacific Island countries. This activity would be available to identify critical ICT support needs in Solomon Islands.

USAID is open to opportunities to strengthen marine security and introduce longer-term development programming to build the resilience of health systems in the Pacific to withstand routine shocks such as natural disasters and outbreaks/pandemics. We will continue to engage with our regional partners to identify needs in the Solomon Islands.

Question. How is USAID working with our allies and partners to reduce redundancy and coordinate on development financing in the Pacific Islands?

Answer. We will continue deepening USAID's collaboration with Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Taiwan, and other like-minded partners, working to identify areas of collaboration, overlap, gaps, and/or potential leverage of resources. We will also leverage our strong partnerships with regional institutions, including the Pacific Islands Forum, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, and the longstanding Pacific Community, as well as our partnerships with Pacific nations' governments, civil society, and private sector.

USAID will continue to engage like-minded donors directly, in-country, and through multilateral initiatives such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), U.S.-Taiwan Pacific Islands Dialogue, U.S.-Japan-Australia Trilateral Infrastructure Partnership, the Trilateral Pacific Security Dialogue, and others. In addition to the U.S. being part of the PNG Electrification Partnership (PEP) with PNG, Australia, Japan and New Zealand and the Palau undersea cable spur with Australia and Japan, USAID also will continue to pursue opportunities to establish relationships with multilateral financial institutions and other new development partners who share our values and objectives in the region.

Question. What is our engagement and coordination with the UK on development in the Pacific Islands?

Answer. USAID has not engaged with the United Kingdom (UK) on country-level coordination in the Pacific Islands. However, there is strong interest from London for USAID and the UK to do so, and USAID is in discussions with the UK following the release of its new strategy for international development on May 16, 2022. The strategy includes a focus on building resilient supply chains, humanitarian support, and meeting climate and biodiversity goals in the Indo-Pacific region.

Question. What is our engagement and coordination with France on development in the Pacific Islands?

Answer. USAID welcomes increased engagement and coordination with France that supports the long-term resiliency and protects the sovereignty of Pacific Island nations. The FRANZ Arrangement, a partnership between France, Australia and New Zealand, is activated during humanitarian responses in the Pacific region. It provides a one-stop shop for host governments to provide requests for assistance, allowing donors to coordinate who can cover which needs.

USAID has successfully coordinated with FRANZ to respond to the recent volcanic eruption and tsunami in Tonga. USAID has observer status in FRANZ, but welcomes opportunities to further expand our engagement in the Arrangement for humanitarian assistance in the Pacific Islands.

Question. What is our engagement and coordination with Japan on development in the Pacific Islands?

Answer. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has a long-standing relationship with Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Together, we actively coordinate development and humanitarian assistance globally, including in the Pacific Island Countries (PICs). USAID has a Senior Development Counselor in the U.S. Embassy Tokyo who is responsible for engaging with the Government of Japan to ensure Official Development Assistance policy and budgets are aligned and coordinated to the extent possible with the U.S. to achieve maximum results. USAID's Philippines, Pacific Islands and Mongolia field office, based in Manila, manages staff in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), collectively providing assistance to 12 Pacific Island nations. These teams collaborate with Japan's 11 embassies that cover 16 countries and JICA teams in 10 countries for project-level coordination.

USAID and Japan coordinate closely on transparent, high-quality infrastructure development in the PICs, including through the Blue Dot Network. Australia, Japan, and the U.S. have also committed to working with FSM, Kiribati, and Nauru to build a new East Micronesia Cable, which will provide improved quality and secure communications to approximately 100,000 people across the three countries. At present, USAID and Japan are in discussions on coordinating Disaster Risk Reduction and reconstruction in Tonga after the devastating January 15, 2022, volcanic eruption.

Question. What is our engagement and coordination with Taiwan on development in the Pacific Islands?

Answer. USAID is deeply engaged with Taiwan on development collaborations in the Pacific Islands. The Taiwan International Cooperation and Development Fund (TaiwanICDF) is providing up to \$600,000 to USAID's Pacific American Fund (the Fund), a 5-year grant facility that addresses critical development challenges across 12 Pacific Island Countries. The Fund aims to improve the quality of life in vulnerable communities and improve access to services in remote communities by awarding grants on an open and competitive basis to qualifying local, national, and internationally operating civil society organizations, including private small-and-medium enterprises, non-governmental organizations and institutions, universities, and faith-based organizations.

Additionally, in Papua New Guinea, USAID partnered with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) to donate wheelchairs to the Government's National Department of Health. USAID partnered with TECO to coordinate the distribution of wheelchairs to 11 health care clinics throughout the capital.

Question. What is our engagement and coordination with Australia on development in the Pacific Islands?

Answer. In July of 2020, USAID and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) signed a global memorandum of understanding (MOU) on development cooperation on the margins of the Australia-U.S. Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN). The 5-year MOU focuses on advancing an open, inclusive, prosperous, and secure Indo-Pacific region—and it fits within the Administration's broader efforts to, in partnership with allies and partners, advance an affirmative vision for the region and enhance American global engagement around the world. USAID's coordination and collaboration with Australia spans across several sectors, including in democracy and governance, digital connectivity, and energy.

We enjoy close coordination with Australia in the Pacific Islands as one of our strongest likeminded development partners. We regularly coordinate at both the field and Washington level on the most pressing challenges facing the Pacific Islands. This partnership has been expanding in recent years to include coordination in COVID-19 assistance, including vaccines, infrastructure development, renewable energy, climate, and good governance.

Through the Trilateral Infrastructure Partnership (TIP), we are partnering with Australia and Japan to finance the estimated \$30 million undersea cable to Palau that will provide reliable and secure connectivity. We are also partnering with Australia alongside Japan and New Zealand to increase Papua New Guinea's (PNG) electricity access from 13 to 70 percent by 2030 through the PNG Electrification Project. We are also working together through the Quad Infrastructure Coordination

Group to align our infrastructure programming to strengthen the infrastructure enabling environment in the region, as well as improve project bankability and mobilize investment. In the governance sector, we coordinate with Australia to provide election support across the Pacific Islands, especially important with upcoming elections in July in PNG.

Australia is also interested in enhancing our cooperation on climate, building on USAID's expertise in mobilizing climate finance in the Pacific through our Climate Ready activity. USAID has worked closely with Australia through the Quad Vaccine Experts Working Group to support COVID-19 efforts in PNG with funding, technical assistance and vaccines. Furthermore, USAID has expanded its footprint in the Indo-Pacific region, with our first-ever Senior Development Counselor for Australia having arrived in Canberra in August 2021 to assist in building out our development presence in the region.

Question. What is our engagement and coordination with New Zealand on development in the Pacific Islands?

Answer. New Zealand is one of USAID's strongest development partners in the Pacific region. To improve and enhance development outcomes and donor coordination, as part of the U.S. Government's Pacific Pledge, USAID is now present in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Palau.

USAID has also expanded its footprint in the Indo-Pacific region, with the notable addition of our first-ever Senior Development Counselor based in Australia. The incumbent serves as the primary point of contact for donor coordination with Australia's development structures in Canberra and we have proposed expanding the position to fill a similar role for New Zealand.

USAID also coordinates and engages with New Zealand through a number of multilateral modalities. This includes UN organizations and bodies as well as more ad hoc groups such as the Trilateral Pacific Security Dialogue.

Question. Is USAID regularly engaged in discussions about the Administration's proposed Indo-Pacific Economic Framework?

Answer. USAID is engaged with our interagency counterparts to identify opportunities for USAID programs to advance the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. IPEF is designed to address the economic challenges of the 21st century such as developing rules for the digital economy, ensuring secure and resilient supply chains, investing in clean energy infrastructure and the clean energy transition, increasing transparency, and fighting corruption. USAID will work with the interagency, other donors, and partners in the region to address these challenges.

Question. What role will USAID play in the implementation of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework?

Answer. USAID has Mission experts on the ground in current IPEF countries, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, with programs that address many of the issues under the pillars of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF). USAID's in-country experts collaborate with host country governments, civil society actors and the private sector to design and implement activities to advance the goals of the IPEF. We also have strong working relationships with regional institutions such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), with whom we provide world-class technical assistance, and have been exploring how to do more to bridge South and Southeast Asia connectivity through the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

Leveraging our teams on the ground across the region, USAID stands ready to utilize our development programs and partners as well as new tools to analyze and act upon data, leveraging our Inter-agency PRC Economic Influence Dashboard to target and to provide technical assistance to host governments, bilateral and regional institutions, and to assist with any outreach.

RESPONSES OF MS. SAMANTHA POWER TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. *The U.S.-Russia Investment Fund (TUSRIF):* I expect you are familiar with the family of Enterprise Funds that were created by USAID's Bureau for Europe and Eurasia (E&E) over the years to jump-start the emergence of democratic capitalism in the formerly communist countries of Europe and Eurasia and the follow-on Legacy Foundations that have emerged to operate as philanthropies afterwards.

As you know, there is an investment account belonging to *The U.S.-Russia Investment Fund (TUSRIF)* that holds around \$153 million. There has been a bureaucratic impasse for more than a decade that has effectively frozen this account. The follow-on foundation related to Russia, the *U.S. Russia Foundation (USRF)* has been operating for years, supporting groups, individuals and projects to promote the rule-of-law and democratic capitalism in Russia with an endowment that is now around \$150 million. I understand it spends about \$5 to 6 million per year on grants and programs. It also benefits from the earnings on the other \$150 million that belongs to the now-dormant TUSRIF. We can leave for another discussion an assessment of whether and how the USRF is able to do worthwhile work in support of rule-of-law in Russia these days.

But in this urgent moment, it would seem that the ‘frozen’ \$153 million in the TUSRIF account should be moved as soon as possible to support the coming reconstruction of Ukraine. The Subcommittee on State Department and USAID management would like to work with you to figure out how to make this happen, moving the funds to support the reconstruction of Ukraine. If you need a change in the law or would like to present a Congressional Notification that will make this happen, we would be pleased to collaborate with you.

What is your proposal for how to make this \$153 million available for the reconstruction of Ukraine?

Answer. After Russia’s further invasion of Ukraine, USAID immediately accelerated review of options to potentially utilize TUSRIF reflows to support Ukraine’s critical needs. USAID received a proposal from TUSRIF recommending the transfer of \$100 million of TUSRIF reflows to the Western Newly Independent States Enterprise Fund (WNISEF), and recommended that the remaining \$53 million go to the U.S.-Russia Foundation (USRF). USAID is exploring the feasibility of utilizing these funds to help address the massive needs created by Russia’s brutal invasion and destruction of Ukraine. We believe there is a unique opportunity to utilize TUSRIF reflows in a way that supports private sector development in Ukraine and Moldova, which should remain the priority for the use of these funds. We are also exploring the potential that a portion of these funds could also be utilized by USRF to support needs tied to Russia. USAID met with the leadership of TUSRIF, USRF, and WNISEF recently to discuss these organizations’ recent work, and USAID has recently received (at our request) more detailed information from both USRF and WNISEF on how they would utilize the funds. We look forward to working with the relevant committees of jurisdiction to discuss how best to utilize these funds.

Question. Humanitarian Crises: The world currently faces a number of humanitarian crises, many of which have been exacerbated by climate change and the economic disruptions COVID–19 pandemic. Conflicts in Ukraine, Yemen, Syria, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and the Sahel region of West Africa, just to name a few, have displaced millions of people and left many at risk of hunger and disease. UN humanitarian agencies, such as the World Food Program (WFP), UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and UN Population Fund (UNFPA) can play an essential role in providing lifesaving food and nutrition assistance, shelter, health care, and educational support to the world’s most vulnerable people.

How do these agencies interact with and enhance the U.S.’s own efforts to respond to humanitarian emergencies?

How do we ensure that these entities are adequately resourced and able to meet their expansive and critically important mandates?

Answer. The United States is the single largest donor of humanitarian assistance worldwide. Much of this assistance flows through United Nations (UN) humanitarian agencies to provide life-saving food and nutrition assistance, health programs, protection services, resilience-building activities, services for refugees, and other crucial programs that help vulnerable people. The work of UN agencies is critical to achieving U.S. humanitarian and foreign policy goals, including saving lives, stabilizing communities affected by emergencies, reducing disaster risk and vulnerability to future crises, and supporting early recovery. Robust funding for these agencies, available early in the fiscal year and responsive to humanitarian needs on the ground, is one important way Congress can help ensure adequate and effective resourcing for these agencies. At the same time, the U.S. Government acknowledges that it cannot address these issues alone, and continues to engage with other donors to encourage increased funding contributions to the UN humanitarian agencies.

Question. USAID Assistance to Colombia: What is your assessment of Colombia’s efforts to reduce coca cultivation and implement the 2016 peace accord?

How is USAID adjusting its programming to improve the effectiveness of those efforts?

Answer. The 2016 Peace Accord between Colombia and the FARC was a historic achievement and remains the country's best tool for advancing a durable, inclusive end to decades of conflict. The connection between implementing the Accord and reducing coca is best highlighted by the fact that 95 percent of Colombia's coca is found in the 170 municipalities prioritized for peace implementation. To achieve its promises, the Accord requires sustained budgetary, political, and institutional support, especially in the implementation of the Accord's Ethnic and gender provisions. Coca is antithetical to peace, and for this reason the U.S. and Colombia are focused on a holistic approach to fighting narcotics and bolstering rural prosperity that recognizes the importance of drug supply reduction, rural security, justice, economic development, and environmental protection, as announced (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/briefing-room/2021/10/25/the-white-house-releases-details-of-the-new-holistic-u-s-colombia-counter-narcotics-strategy/>) at the conclusion of the October 2021 High-level Dialogue.

PEACE ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION

USAID's support to peace implementation has been vital. Our assistance is closely aligned with the Accord's Rural Development, Transitional Justice, and Ethnic Inclusion chapters. With regard to the Rural Development Chapter, USAID has made implementation of Colombia's own Territorially-Focused Development Programs (PDETs) the centerpiece of our support under the firm belief that addressing the rural-urban divide is the best path for Colombia out of violent conflict. In support of the Ethnic chapter, we are implementing a \$60 million program to bolster ethnic inclusion. We have also made direct awards to Afro-Colombian and Indigenous organizations, allowing them to implement their own vision of development. On transitional justice, we have increased our assistance to help Colombia reconcile and move beyond past atrocities and establish consequences for transgressions committed on all sides during the state's conflict with the FARC. USAID assistance has helped accelerate cases in the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (or JEP) and better protect the brave witnesses who come forward to share their testimony.

USAID assistance for land titling, financial inclusion, expansion of the Colombian State, and rapid response community development projects directly supports the Rural Development chapter and is bringing tangible benefits to conflict-affected communities throughout rural Colombia. USAID's more nimble and flexible programs help pave the way for, and mobilize, much larger Colombian Government investments in the municipalities selected for peace resources.

NEW APPROACH ON COUNTER-NARCOTICS

As noted above, the U.S. and Colombia are piloting a counternarcotics strategy that integrates public security, supply reduction, economic development, and environmental protection. The strategy aims to expand state presence and licit economic opportunities while strengthening communities weakened by decades of conflict.

USAID programs complement much larger Colombian investments in support of licit crops and livelihoods, land formalization, local government strengthening, rule-of-law, human rights, and environmental protection efforts. We work in close coordination with these Colombian partners in the public and private sector, as well as with colleagues across the U.S. Government, especially State Department International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau (INL). Better sequencing and coordination defines this new partnership effort.

Another important adjustment under this new holistic approach is the addition of a strong focus on environmental protection and combating environmental crimes, many of which are perpetrated by the same illegal actors responsible for coca. Finally, together with Colombian and USG colleagues, we have defined new metrics of success beyond "hectares eradicated." As the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) announced (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/briefing-room/2022/05/04/ondcp-welcomes-new-holistic-u-s-colombia-counter-narcotics-metrics/>) recently, measures of citizen security, land titles, areas under environmental protection, in addition to coca metrics, will allow us to measure progress across the full range of this holistic effort.

USAID is fully integrated with larger U.S. Government programs with INL, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and the U.S. Department of Justice, coordinated at the Washington level by ONDCP. Together, these agencies are piloting this whole-of-government approach in three target municipalities where violence is extreme and integrated approaches can have tangible, measurable impact with a view toward replication over time with success building on success.

Question. USAID Assistance to Sudan: In October 2021, following the latest military takeover in Sudan, the Administration "paused" the delivery of \$700 million

in FY2021 ESF funds for the country. In early April, however, the State Department asserted that the United States “stands ready to resume paused assistance once a credible civilian-led government is in place.”

What is USAID’s position on redirecting the funds intended for Sudan to other global priorities?

If the funds are redirected, how does the Administration envision meeting its commitment to resume the paused assistance if Sudan returns to a democratic transition?

Answer. Following the October 25 military takeover, the Administration paused the delivery of \$700 million in FY 2021 ESF funds pending a review of programs that directly supported the government. Following that review, all assistance was redirected away from supporting the de facto government led by the military.

USAID and the State Department are currently engaging with Congress on the plans for the \$700 million and have come up with a plan that would obligate approximately \$280 million this fiscal year. This includes \$108 million for USAID that has already been notified to Congress; \$99 million for USAID that has yet to be notified for transition and stabilization programs (Office of Transition Initiatives), peace building in the peripheries, democracy, human rights and governance, and food security and resilience (which would bring the total to \$207 million for USAID); and \$73 million for the State Department, of which a portion for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor has been notified. These figures are not yet set, and the dialogue will continue; it is possible the amounts may change modestly depending on the outcome of those discussions. Through this funding, the United States Government aims to contribute to conditions under which Sudan could return to a democratic transition.

Redirection of funds is being discussed with the interagency and Congressional committees.

Question. The crisis in Ethiopia: Ethiopia, in the midst of political strife and ethnic violence, is experiencing one of the worst famines to occur in a decade, with almost 350,000 Tigrayans at risk of starvation.

How has the Ethiopian Government’s refusal to verify the famine impeded the work of your agency to provide much needed aid to Ethiopians, and

How successful has USAID been in facilitating regular deliveries of humanitarian aid in recent weeks?

Answer. The crisis in northern Ethiopia remains one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. In Tigray alone, more than 90 percent of people need aid, while across Afar, Amhara and Tigray as many as 1 million people are projected to face famine-like conditions by June. We have seen some of the most significant obstruction of humanitarian assistance in the world in the northern Ethiopia crisis. It is this consistent lack of access that has also limited our ability to gather the evidence necessary to support an official famine declaration. However, we know from our partners that high levels of severe food insecurity persist, there are rising levels of acute malnutrition, and hunger-related deaths have occurred.

In recognition of the dire conditions on the ground, we and the humanitarian community are pushing hard to scale up assistance and prevent loss of life. There has been incremental progress in the easing of access restrictions, and USAID is cautiously optimistic regarding improvements to humanitarian access and the operation in northern Ethiopia as a whole since the March 24 humanitarian truce. Following nearly 4 months of road access blockages into Tigray, several humanitarian convoys—comprising more than 250 trucks and fuel tankers—arrived in Tigray by road as of early May. Although USAID is encouraged by recent Ethiopian Government commitments that would further increase the scale and frequency of trucks moving into Tigray, the current pace of movement is not enough to meet needs. Aid workers need significant, sustained, unconditional and unhindered humanitarian road access as well as electricity, telecommunications equipment, cash, and fuel to conduct their life-saving work in order to prevent this catastrophic situation from getting worse.

Question. Burma: The FY23 Burma foreign assistance request is \$109.1 million, which is 20 percent below the FY 2021 actual and consistent with the FY22 request.

With the human rights situation worsening in Burma due to the military coup, why did the Administration decrease the budget from FY21 actual by 20 percent?

How does this decrease impact USAID programs for FY23?

Answer. The U.S. stands with the people of Burma and as a result of the ongoing coup, resources that would have supported the government have been pivoted to expand work that supports the people. USAID continues to support the people of Burma and their aspirations for a democratic future, including local civil society actors fighting for civil and political rights in the face of military authoritarianism.

The FY 2023 request will enable support to strengthen civil society capabilities to guard democratic space and human rights, maintain an independent media, promote peace and reconciliation in conflict-affected regions, and improve health and food security. Given the current operating environment in Burma since the start of the ongoing military coup, the request focuses on strategic support to civil society actors and non-regime institutions and actors across all sectors.

Programs will continue to work to strengthen the ability of civil society to guard democratic space, foster food security, support independent media, and human rights. Further assistance will serve to maintain and improve the health of the people of Burma as their country recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic and addresses various impacts of the coup on the people of Burma.

RESPONSES OF MS. SAMANTHA POWER TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. As you know, I traveled to the Western Balkans last month with Senator Murphy and Senator Tillis. The region has already been struggling and every one of the countries faces massive outflows of youth who are leaving to pursue better economic opportunities—otherwise known as the brain drain. The Biden administration has not requested any additional funds for the Western Balkans region.

Given the mounting challenges we face in the region, what is the Administration's strategy to maintain peace and stability in the region? With additional funds, how could USAID increase our ability to support Bosnia and Herzegovina's pro-EU aspirations, tackle youth unemployment and counter its considerable corruption problem?

Answer. As you rightfully note, the Western Balkans have faced increasing pressure from the economic fallout of the pandemic, a lack of opportunities for young people to contribute to the economy or democratic change, protracted ethno-nationalist tension, endemic corruption, foreign malign actors, and now the regional ramifications of Russia's brutal war on Ukraine. The Biden administration's FY 2023 request of \$104M reflects a \$4 million increase for the sub-region from the FY 2021 enacted levels.

With generous bipartisan Congressional support, in cooperation with our European Union partners, USAID funds a range of bilateral and regional initiatives that work in concert to address these interrelated challenges. At the bilateral level, USAID's programming is designed to generate new economic opportunities, foster civic engagement, and address corruption by enhancing the transparency of government institutions while also arming citizens with the information and skills needed to push for change. In response to the pandemic, USAID has helped partner countries in the Western Balkans to obtain vaccines and medical equipment, institute hybrid learning, and enable enterprises to access financing and pivot to an increasingly digital economy. At the regional level, USAID is pursuing regional economic cooperation and constructive interaction between the countries of the region because it is critical for building the foundation for regional stability, peace, and prosperity through private sector development, natural resources management, supporting regional energy market integration, trade, and building connections across ethnic and political divides through peacebuilding and reconciliation programming.

The challenges discussed above are particularly acute in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). USAID assistance in BiH supports important anti-corruption, youth engagement, civil society, economic growth, and peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts to address the key obstacles that continue to hinder BiH's forward progress. At the core of USAID's strategy is the agency's work to mitigate and disrupt the corrupt networks, practices, and political patronage systems that reward polarization and division and impede BiH's path to EU accession. Your continued commitment to the Western Balkans will be critical to ensuring all of these initiatives deliver results to the people of the region and the American people.

Question. Corruption and its corrosive effects are the root of the forces driving these young people away from the region. Additionally, if Putin is stalled in Ukraine, he will look elsewhere to sow chaos and Putin's fingerprints of malign influence could be found throughout the Western Balkans.

What specific activities is USAID undertaking in the region to combat corruption and support good governance? How is the war in Ukraine and the sanctions against Russia impacting the Western Balkans, and what more should we be doing more to mitigate that impact?

Answer. Endemic corruption is indeed one of the fundamental challenges preventing the Western Balkans from making continued progress towards greater

Euro-Atlantic integration. Corruption also opens the door for foreign malign actors like the Kremlin, which seek to sow dysfunction, undermine sovereignty, and manipulate the countries of the region for their own purposes.

USAID is shoring up government institutions to prevent, identify, and prosecute corruption and supporting independent media and civil society to investigate and counter corruption. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), USAID helps prosecutors and judges tackle corruption and strengthens the organizational capacity of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council. And this year, a local media partner in BiH broke several stories about fraud, waste, and abuse related to the pandemic, resulting in an investigation by the Sarajevo Cantonal Prosecutor's Office and subsequent arrests. Grassroots civil society activists supported by USAID have also been successful in identifying and calling out corruption in their communities, resulting in legal and legislative actions to halt the illegal construction of environmentally damaging small-scale hydropower plants. In Albania and North Macedonia, USAID is designing new anti-corruption programs tailored to each context. In Kosovo, with USAID support, all public procurement activities, including auditing, are now managed digitally through an electronic procurement platform, enabling greater transparency and accountability in procurement processes. In the Western Balkans, USAID supports the active engagement of local communities, including marginalized groups, to ensure their voices are heard by their local governments. Similarly, USAID supports civil society organizations in their watchdog roles. Across the region, USAID fosters the financial viability and skills of independent media, including investigative journalism, to ensure citizens are informed about the forms corruption takes in their countries and across borders.

The world is only beginning to understand the impact of Russia's brutal war on Ukraine on the Western Balkans. The rise in energy and fertilizer prices instigated by the Kremlin is already impacting the agriculture sector in North Macedonia and Albania. In the immediate term, USAID is developing plans to boost food production and the resilience of the sector through investments in productivity and modernization, the continued implementation of food quality and safety standards, the improvement of vertical integration within value chains, and the advancement of marketing and export strategies. In addition, USAID supported a rapid assessment of the economic impact on the region and will be utilizing this analysis to ensure current and future programming are responsive to these shifts.

Putin's war reaffirms the need for development programs to address the Kremlin's longstanding methods to undermine and control, and increasingly threaten the region's stability. USAID will continually review and tailor our approach and programming to ensure the agency is responsive to the Kremlin's shifting tactics, including its shift from malign influence to full scale, unremitting, violent aggression.

RESPONSES OF MS. SAMANTHA POWER TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. The development assistance budget request for Fiscal Year 2023 states that, "programming in Bangladesh will include strengthening democratic governance, combating climate change, supporting Rohingya host communities, and investing in agriculture and food security." Can you provide details regarding what type of support will be provided specifically for the communities hosting the Rohingya?

Answer. Through bilateral assistance, USAID/Bangladesh has supported activities to help host communities bolster livestock and fisheries services, enhance water and sanitation, counter trafficking in persons and violent extremism, and improve natural resource management for host communities in Cox's Bazaar and Bandarban Districts. USAID also provides alternative livelihood opportunities, repairs and refurbishes cyclone shelters including over 200 in host and impacted communities, promotes agricultural mechanization, and strengthens agricultural value chains.

Since 2020, USAID has been partnering with three Bangladeshi NGOs in Cox's Bazar to mitigate depletion of natural resources and preserve biodiversity. During the period, the host community members have planted nearly 163,000 saplings on homesteads, institutional lands, and along public roadways. USAID's programming in Cox's Bazar District also includes two grants to local partners to support host community women and youth through activities to combat child marriage and provide livelihood support and training. Lastly, USAID supports conflict sensitivity training in Cox's Bazar host communities to reduce tensions with Rohingya refugees. Through a grant to the UN Development Program (UNDP), USAID also monitors overall political and violent extremism tendencies in Cox's Bazar. USAID is closely tracking the recent reports on increased violence in Cox's Bazar.

Question. The Fiscal Year 2023 budget request does not include details on funding needs for the Rohingya response in Bangladesh specifically. As the security situation in Cox's Bazaar continues to deteriorate with growing limitations on movement within the camps and to adjacent areas, and with restrictions on formal and community-led education initiatives as well as on income-generating opportunities, can you share what USAID's Fiscal Year 2023 funding needs for the Rohingya response are? How will the U.S. leverage its support as well as its broader relationship with Bangladesh to improve conditions in Cox's Bazaar?

Answer. Bangladesh: USAID will continue to prioritize lifesaving humanitarian interventions for Rohingya living in the Bangladesh refugee camps of Cox's Bazar, as well as support for the surrounding host communities. USAID will focus on its lead responsibility, in refugee scenarios, to provide food assistance and nutrition programming within camps, in close partnership with the Department of State's Bureau for Population, Migration, and Refugees (State/PRM). USAID will provide additional assistance within host communities, including protection services; economic growth; water, sanitation, and health (WASH) services; natural resource management; and disaster risk reduction efforts in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts.

USAID Deputy Administrator Isobel Coleman recently returned from a joint trip to Bangladesh with State/PRM, where they continued to push the Government of Bangladesh to expand education and livelihood opportunities for refugees in Cox's Bazar, as well as to increase freedom of movement. Opportunities in these spaces can start to address the security concerns presented by an idle population in the camps and place the Rohingya in a better position for either returns or resettlement as the response evolves. The United States also remains committed to finding durable solutions for Rohingya refugees, until such time, given the military coup d'état and related ongoing violence in Burma, that conditions become possible for voluntary, safe, dignified, and sustainable returns that are based on the informed consent of those who have been forcibly displaced. USAID will continue to work with the Department of State to explore opportunities to work with the international community to advocate for alternate solutions. Even with these concerns, USAID support for emergency food programming continues to provide the Rohingya refugee population with food vouchers, nutrition assistance, and disaster risk reduction programming.

The United States remains the largest bilateral donor to the Rohingya refugee response in Bangladesh, contributing nearly \$1.4 billion in humanitarian assistance since the influx of refugees began in August 2017. USAID remains committed to supporting the Rohingya population in Bangladesh in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. USAID continues to work closely with like-minded donors to address the needs of the Rohingya and to engage the Government of Bangladesh on these pressing issues.

Burma: USAID will continue to prioritize life-saving humanitarian assistance for displaced and conflict-affected people, including Rohingya, in Burma. More than 952,000 people remain displaced in Burma due to the country's humanitarian crisis, which includes nearly 606,000 people who have been displaced since the February 1, 2021, military coup d'état. Further, the military continues to target its attacks on civilians and public spaces and to escalate conflict with ethnic groups and other marginalized peoples while impeding humanitarian access to internally displaced persons in camps and communities in Rakhine where several hundred thousand Rohingya remain.

As the humanitarian crisis in Burma will likely continue to worsen into FY 2023 and continue to exacerbate the Rohingya crisis, USAID will prioritize emergency food, nutrition, shelter, health, WASH, and protection assistance in Sagaing, Magway, Tanintharyi Regions and Chin, Kachin, Rakhine, Shan, Kayah, and Mon states.

With Russia's war in Ukraine negatively impacting global supply chains and straining humanitarian resources, needs will continue to severely outpace resources for acutely food insecure, conflict-affected populations in Burma. USAID will require FY 2023 funding to procure, transport, and distribute food commodities and other supplies to affected communities throughout Burma. It is imperative that the United States and like-minded donors continue to provide funding for life-saving assistance and to protect hard-won development gains while there is still a window to do so.

Question. The Administration's Fiscal Year 2023 budget request recognizes deteriorating conditions and widespread violence in Haiti and the need for robust international assistance. However, nearly 1 year after the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, Haiti continues to experience a political power vacuum, its democratic processes have been paused, and corruption is rampant.

How will USAID ensure that our assistance to Haiti is having the intended effect of creating economic resilience, democratic stability, and citizen security in Haiti?

Answer. 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 health care 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 advance citizen-responsive government institutions.

Haiti is especially vulnerable to shocks and stresses—including hurricanes and tropical storms, droughts, floods, and earthquakes, socio-economic and political instability, and ongoing environmental degradation related to economic exploitation of natural resources. Since the assassination of Haiti President Jovenel Moïse, the Haiti Government has also struggled with the issue of Haitian gangs establishing de facto control of parts of Port-au-Prince and in other parts of the country. As a result, USAID's partners have faced many operational challenges, including the threat of kidnapping, road insecurity, and fuel shortages.

Within the democracy, rights, and governance program, we are continuing to implement a program to address the continued deteriorating situation in Haiti. Programming supports violence prevention, youth engagement and empowerment, increasing services to protect victims' legal and human rights as well as strengthening systems to end trafficking. At this time, USAID is conducting a rule of law assessment as well as a citizen security assessment to inform new programming in these areas.

To provide support for citizen security, USAID is designing a new activity that will coordinate closely with the State Department Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) to implement a Place-Based Strategy (PBS). The PBS consolidates USG development assistance and security sector assistance into select, high-risk municipalities to build police, municipal and community capacities to prevent violence, curb the recruitment of youth into gangs, and effectively respond to the consequences of gang violence. The PBS addresses widespread insecurity through a multi-sectoral approach that strengthens the capacity of the Haitian National Police while also addressing the underlying drivers of violence, providing licit alternatives to youth and an "off-ramp" to those wishing to leave the gangs, and accessible support services for victims of violence.

These programs and activities combined with other USG efforts will support Haiti to build a better future for Haitians.

Question. As we discussed, Representative Velazquez and I introduced a bill to create a resettlement pathway for climate displaced persons. The October 2021 White House Climate Migration Report recommended that the Executive branch work with Congress to create such a legal pathway. Can you commit to work with my office and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to make that happen?

Answer. I deeply value the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's support for USAID programs. I would refer you to the Department of State's Bureau of Populations, Refugees, and Migration for further information on legal pathways for climate displaced persons.

Question. Short of new legislative tools to address the fact that most climate displaced persons do not meet the traditional definition of "refugees," would you advocate in the interagency for the United States to do more to use existing immigration authorities such as humanitarian parole, temporary protected status, and extending educational opportunities for climate displaced persons?

Answer. USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance provides food assistance to refugees and displaced persons; however, I refer you to the Department of State and Department of Homeland Security for information on the use of immigration authorities to support climate displaced persons. I commit to engaging in interagency discussions on this issue, including by contributing information on USAID's humanitarian and development programs that may impact climate displaced persons.

Question. I am very supportive of the Administration's almost \$3 billion request to revitalize global democracy, including a more than 14 percent increase in funding for the East Asia and Pacific region. How will USAID use this increase in funding to push back against the authoritarian playbook of repression in the Indo-Pacific and make investments in people-to-people exchanges, democracy promotion, rule of law, and the protection of human rights?

Answer. The FY 2023 USAID request for the Indo-Pacific region, which totals \$1.3 billion across DA, ESF, and GHP–USAID accounts, supports the implementation of the 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS). Thematically, USAID’s contributions to advancing the U.S. vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific falls into three key objectives that align with the IPS pillars:

(1) Strengthening democratic institutions to support good governance and human rights, which falls under freedom and openness. For example, in Thailand, USAID, in partnership with Mars Petcare, a U.S. pet food company, is equipping workers in the seafood and fishing industry with digital tools that allow them to swiftly report abuse and exploitation. This innovative mobile technology, which enables reliable two-way communication with authorities beyond the normal cellular range, has empowered fishery workers to report violations like human trafficking and safety incidents.

(2) Fostering sustainable, inclusive, and transparent economic growth, which supports the connectivity and prosperity pillars. For example, USAID is deepening our long-standing partnership with and support to ASEAN. We will further enhance the ASEAN Single Window, a groundbreaking tool that is increasing trade efficiency by reducing costs, timelines, and paperwork barriers. In 2020, the exchange of electronic trade documents through the ASEAN Single Window boosted U.S. goods and services trade with ASEAN estimated at \$362.2 billion.

(3) Improving resilience to health and climate threats; which supports the resilience pillar. In India, for instance, U.S. assistance will advance India’s role as a key regional clean energy partner, building on previous successes, such as supporting India to revise its cross-border power trade guidelines to increase regional power trade, strengthening regional energy security and spurring investment in diverse energy sources.

USAID remains an active partner to Pacific Island countries on climate issues. In fact, USAID just launched two new projects to conserve biodiversity and strengthen the resilience of coastal fisheries and communities to the existential threats of worsening weather disasters and rising sea levels. We are also deepening partnerships with like-minded donors in the region, including Taiwan, to further support sustainable development in the Pacific Islands.

LETTER FROM SENATORS BILL HAGERTY AND JOHN BOOZMAN TO PRESIDENT BIDEN
REGARDING HIGH FERTILIZER PRICES, DATED MARCH 16, 2020

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 16, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to express our serious concern regarding record-high fertilizer prices impacting American farmers going into the spring planting season. Fertilizer is a primary input and major expense for producers across the country, and price increases will have a significant effect on farm profitability and the prices of food and consumer products.

Since January 2021, according to the most recent data from the United States Department of Agricultural Marketing Services, the prices of key fertilizer sources have substantially increased as follows: anhydrous ammonia (by 203%); Urea (by 141%); liquid nitrogen (162%); monoammonium phosphate (MAP) (by 74%); potash (by 125%); and farm diesel (by 95%).

Ongoing supply-chain bottlenecks and the rising cost of energy are among the factors sending fertilizer prices soaring, and disruptions stemming from Russia's invasion of Ukraine will only compound the problem. As a result, Americans will pay more at restaurants, grocery stores, and other places.

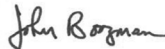
We are therefore urging your administration to review all available options to lower the cost of fertilizer, including but not limited to: eliminating the cross-border vaccine mandate for transporters of essential commerce; engaging stakeholders to prevent a Canadian Pacific Railway strike; urging the U.S. Department of Agriculture to use its existing authorities under the food supply chain and pandemic response resources to provide support for farmers facing financial difficulties; ensuring agricultural minerals like phosphate and potash are part of the Department of the Interior's critical mission; increasing U.S. gas production; and approving pending export permits at the Department of Energy for Liquefied Natural Gas.

Quickly undertaking such measures is the most immediate—and perhaps only—near-term opportunity to partially remedy the high costs of fertilizer impacting American farmers and ultimately American consumers. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

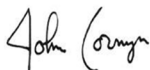
Sincerely,



Bill Hagerty
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



John Hoeven
United States Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



Cynthia M. Lummis
United States Senator



John Barrasso
United States Senator



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator



Ted Cruz
United States Senator




Thom Tillis
United States Senator



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator




Chuck Grassley
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



Tom Cotton
United States Senator



Roger Marshall
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator



Richard Burr
United States Senator



John Kennedy
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Tom Vilsak
Secretary of Agriculture

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary of Commerce

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary of the Interior

Ambassador Katherine Tai
U.S. Trade Representative

5/11/22, 1:06 PM

Sri Lanka's Organic Farming Experiment Went Catastrophically Wrong

ANALYSIS

In Sri Lanka, Organic Farming Went Catastrophically Wrong

A nationwide experiment is abandoned after producing only misery.

MARCH 5, 2022, 7:00 AM

By [Ted Nordhaus](#), the executive director of the Breakthrough Institute, and [Saloni Shah](#), a food and agriculture analyst at the Breakthrough Institute.

Faced with a deepening economic and humanitarian crisis, Sri Lanka called off an ill-conceived national experiment in organic agriculture this winter. Sri Lankan President [Gotabaya Rajapaksa](#) promised in his 2019 election campaign to [transition the country's farmers](#) to organic agriculture over a period of [10 years](#). Last April, Rajapaksa's government made good on that promise, imposing a nationwide ban on the importation and use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides and ordering the country's 2 million farmers to go organic.

The result was brutal and swift. Against claims that organic methods can produce comparable yields to conventional farming, domestic rice production fell 20 percent in just the first six months. Sri Lanka, long [self-sufficient](#) in rice production, has been forced to import [\\$450 million](#) worth of rice even as domestic prices for this staple of the national diet surged by around [50 percent](#). The ban also devastated the nation's tea crop, its primary export and source of [foreign exchange](#).

By November 2021, with tea production falling, the government partially lifted its fertilizer ban on key export crops, including tea, rubber, and coconut. Faced with angry protests, soaring inflation, and the collapse of Sri Lanka's currency, the government finally suspended the policy for several key crops—including tea, rubber, and coconut—last month, although it continues for some others. The government is also offering \$200 million to farmers as direct compensation and an additional \$149 million in price subsidies to rice farmers who incurred losses. That hardly made up for the damage and suffering the ban produced. Farmers have widely criticized the payments for being massively insufficient and excluding many farmers, most notably tea producers, who offer one of the main sources of employment in rural Sri Lanka. The drop in tea production alone is estimated to result in economic losses of \$425 million.

Human costs have been even greater. Prior to the pandemic's outbreak, the country had proudly achieved upper-middle-income status. Today, half a million people have sunk back into poverty. Soaring inflation and a rapidly depreciating currency have forced Sri Lankans to cut down on food and fuel purchases as prices surge. The country's economists have called on the government to default on its debt repayments to buy essential supplies for its people.

The farrago of magical thinking, technocratic hubris, ideological delusion, self-dealing, and sheer shortsightedness that produced the crisis in Sri Lanka implicates both the country's political leadership and advocates of so-called sustainable agriculture: the former for seizing on the organic agriculture pledge as a shortsighted measure to slash fertilizer subsidies and imports and the latter for suggesting that such a transformation of the nation's agricultural sector could ever possibly succeed.

A worker carries leaves at a tea plantation in Ratnapura, Sri Lanka, on July 31, 2021. ISHARA S. KODIKARA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Sri Lanka's journey through the organic looking glass

and toward calamity began in 2016, with the formation, at Rajapaksa's behest, of a new civil society movement called Viyathmaga. On its website, Viyathmaga describes its mission as harnessing the "nascent potential of the professionals, academics and entrepreneurs to effectively influence the moral and material development of Sri Lanka." Viyathmaga allowed Rajapaksa to rise to prominence as an election candidate and facilitated the creation of his election platform. As he prepared his presidential run, the movement produced the "Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour," a sprawling agenda for the nation that covered everything from national security to anticorruption to education policy, alongside the promise to transition the nation to fully organic agriculture within a decade.

Despite Viyathmaga's claims to technocratic expertise, most of Sri Lanka's leading agricultural experts were kept out of crafting the agricultural section of the platform, which included promises to phase out synthetic fertilizer, develop 2 million organic home gardens to help feed the country's population, and turn the country's forests and wetlands over to the production of biofertilizer.

Following his election as president, Rajapaksa appointed a number of Viyathmaga members to his cabinet, including as minister of agriculture. Sri Lanka's Ministry of Agriculture, in turn, created a series of committees to advise it on the implementation of the policy, again excluding most of the nation's agronomists and agricultural scientists and instead relying on representatives of the nation's small organic sector; academic advocates for alternative agriculture; and, notably, the head of a prominent medical association who had long promoted dubious claims about the relationship between agricultural chemicals and chronic kidney disease in the country's northern agricultural provinces.

Then, just a few months after Rajapaksa's election, COVID-19 arrived. The pandemic devastated the Sri Lankan tourist sector, which accounted for almost half of the nation's foreign exchange in 2019. By the early months of 2021, the government's budget and currency were in crisis, the lack of tourist dollars so depleting foreign reserves that Sri Lanka was unable to pay its debts to Chinese creditors following a binge of infrastructure development over the previous decade.

Enter Rajapaksa's organic pledge. From the early days of the Green Revolution in the 1960s, Sri Lanka has subsidized farmers to use synthetic fertilizer. The results in Sri Lanka, as across much of South Asia, were startling: Yields for rice and other crops more than doubled. Struck by severe food shortages as recently as the 1970s, the country became food secure while exports of tea and rubber became critical sources of exports and foreign reserves. Rising agricultural productivity allowed widespread urbanization, and much of the nation's labor force moved into the formal wage economy, culminating in Sri Lanka's achievement of official upper-middle-income status in 2020.

By 2020, the total cost of fertilizer imports and subsidies was close to \$500 million each year. With fertilizer prices rising, the tab was likely to increase further in 2021. Banning synthetic fertilizers seemingly allowed Rajapaksa to kill two birds with one stone: improving the nation's foreign exchange situation while also

cutting a massive expenditure on subsidies from the pandemic-hit public budget.

But when it comes to agricultural practices and yields, there is no free lunch. Agricultural inputs—chemicals, nutrients, land, labor, and irrigation—bear a critical relationship to agricultural output. From the moment the plan was announced, agronomists in Sri Lanka and around the world warned that agricultural yields would fall substantially. The government claimed it would increase the production of manure and other organic fertilizers in place of imported synthetic fertilizers. But there was no conceivable way the nation could produce enough fertilizer domestically to make up for the shortfall.

Having handed its agricultural policy over to organic true believers, many of them involved in businesses that would stand to benefit from the fertilizer ban, the false economy of banning imported fertilizer hurt the Sri Lankan people dearly. The loss of revenue from tea and other export crops dwarfed the reduction in currency outflows from banning imported fertilizer. The bottom line turned even more negative through the increased import of rice and other food stocks. And the budgetary savings from cutting subsidies were ultimately outweighed by the cost of compensating farmers and providing public subsidies for imported food.

5/11/22, 1:06 PM

Sri Lanka's Organic Farming Experiment Went Catastrophically Wrong

Workers are seen at a tea plantation in Ratnapura, Sri Lanka, on July 31, 2021. ISHARA S. KODIKARA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

A Sri Lankan farmer carries paddy on his head in a field on the outskirts of Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo, on Sept. 7, 2018. LAKRUWAN WANNARACHCHI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Farming is, at bottom, a fairly straightforward
thermodynamic enterprise. Nutrient and energy output in the
form of calories is determined by nutrient and energy input. For
most of recorded human history, the primary way humans

increased agricultural production was by adding land to the system, which expanded the amount of solar radiation and soil nutrients available for food production. Human populations were relatively small, under 1 billion people in total, and there was no shortage of arable land to expand onto. For this reason, the vast majority of anthropogenic changes in global land use and deforestation has been the result of agricultural extensification—the process of converting forests and prairie to cropland and pasture. Against popular notions that preindustrial agriculture existed in greater harmony with nature, three-quarters of total global deforestation occurred before the industrial revolution.

Even so, feeding ourselves required directing virtually all human labor to food production. As recently as 200 years ago, more than 90 percent of the global population labored in agriculture. The only way to bring additional energy and nutrients into the system to increase production was to let land lie fallow, rotate crops, use cover crops, or add manure from livestock that either shared the land with the crops or grazed nearby. In almost every case, these practices required additional land and put caps on yields.

Starting in the 19th century, the expansion of global trade allowed for the import of guano—mined from ancient deposits on bird-rich islands—and other nutrient-rich fertilizers from far-flung regions onto farms in Europe and the United States. This and a series of technological innovations—better machinery, irrigation, and seeds—allowed for higher yields and labor productivity on some farms, which in turn freed up labor and thereby launched the beginning of large-scale urbanization, one of global modernity's defining features.

But the truly transformative break came with the invention of the Haber-Bosch process by German scientists in the early 1900s, which uses high temperature, high pressure, and a chemical catalyst to pull nitrogen from the air and produce ammonia, the basis for synthetic fertilizers. Synthetic fertilizer remade global agriculture and, with it, human society. The widespread adoption of synthetic fertilizers in most countries has allowed a rapid increase in yields and allowed human labor to shift from

agriculture to sectors that offer higher incomes and a better quality of life.

The widespread application of synthetic fertilizers now allows global agriculture to feed nearly 8 billion people, of whom about 4 billion depend on the increased output that synthetic fertilizers allow for their sustenance. As a result, the modern food systems that have allowed global agriculture to feed Earth's population are far more energy intensive than past food systems, with synthetic fertilizers accounting for a significant source of the energy for crops.

As synthetic fertilizers became increasingly available globally after World War II and combined with other innovations, such as modern plant breeding and large-scale irrigation projects, a remarkable thing happened: Human populations more than doubled—but thanks to synthetic fertilizers and other modern technologies, agricultural output tripled on only 30 percent more land over the same period.

The benefits of synthetic fertilizers though go far beyond simply feeding people. It's no exaggeration to say that without synthetic fertilizers and other agricultural innovations, there is no urbanization, no industrialization, no global working or middle class, and no secondary education for most people. This is because fertilizer and other agricultural chemicals have substituted human labor, liberating enormous populations from needing to dedicate most of their lifetime labor to growing food.

A Sri Lankan farmer applies fertilizer at a vegetable farm in Horana South, Sri Lanka, on Oct. 25, 2017. LAKRUWAN WANNARACHCHI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Virtually the entirety of organic agriculture

production serves two populations at opposite ends of the global income distribution. At one end are the 700 million or so people globally who still live in extreme poverty. Sustainable agriculture proponents fancifully call the agriculture this population practices “agroecology.” But it is mostly just old-fashioned subsistence farming, where the world’s poorest eke out their survival from the soil.

They are the poorest farmers in the world, who dedicate most of their labor to growing enough food to feed themselves. They forego synthetic fertilizers and most other modern agricultural technologies not by choice but because they can’t afford them, caught in a poverty trap where they are unable to produce enough agricultural surplus to make a living selling food to other people; hence, they can’t afford fertilizer and other technologies that would allow them to raise yields and produce surplus.

At the other end of the spectrum are the world’s richest people, mostly in the West, for whom consuming organic food is a lifestyle choice tied up with notions about personal health and environmental benefits as well as romanticized ideas about agriculture and the natural world. Almost none of these consumers of organic foods grow the food themselves. Organic agriculture for these groups is a niche market—albeit, a lucrative one for many producers—accounting for less than 1 percent of global agricultural production.

As a niche within a larger, industrialized, agricultural system, organic farming works reasonably well. Producers typically see lower yields. But they can save money on fertilizer and other chemical inputs while selling to a niche market for privileged consumers willing to pay a premium for products labeled organic. Yields are lower—but not disastrously lower—because there are ample nutrients available to smuggle into the system via manure. As long as organic food remains niche, the relationship between lower yields and increased land use remains manageable.

The ongoing catastrophe in Sri Lanka, though, shows why extending organic agriculture to the vast middle of the global bell curve, attempting to feed large urban populations with entirely organic production, cannot possibly succeed. A sustained shift to organic production nationally in Sri Lanka would, by most estimates, slash yields of every major crop in the country, including drops of 35 percent for rice, 50 percent for tea, 50 percent for corn, and 30 percent for coconut. The economics of such a transition are not just daunting; they are impossible.

Importing fertilizer is expensive, but importing rice is far more costly. Sri Lanka, meanwhile, is the world's fourth largest tea exporter, with tea accounting for a lion's share of the country's agricultural exports, which in turn account for 70 percent of total export earnings.

There is no conceivable way that export sales to the higher value organic market could possibly make up for sharp falls in production. The entire global market for organic tea, for example, accounts for only about 0.5 percent of the global tea market. Sri Lanka's tea production alone is larger than the entire global organic tea market. Flooding the organic market with most or all of Sri Lanka's tea production, even after output fell by half due to lack of fertilizer, would almost certainly send global organic tea prices into a spiral.

The notion that Sri Lanka might ever replace synthetic fertilizers with domestically produced organic sources without catastrophic effects on its agricultural sector and environment is more

ludicrous still. Five to seven times more animal manure would be necessary to deliver the same amount of nitrogen to Sri Lankan farms as was delivered by synthetic fertilizers in 2019. Even accounting for the overapplication of synthetic fertilizers, which is clearly a problem, and other uncertainties, there is almost certainly not enough land in the small island nation to produce that much organic fertilizer. Any effort to produce that much manure would require a vast expansion of livestock holdings, with all the additional environmental damage that would entail.

Sustaining agriculture in Sri Lanka, for both domestic consumption and high-value export products, was always going to require importing energy and nutrients into the system, whether organic or synthetic. And synthetic fertilizers were always going to be the most economically and environmentally efficient way to do so.

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa (center) waves to supporters during a rally ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections, near Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo, on July 28, 2020. ISHARA S.KODIKARA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

While the proximate cause of Sri Lanka's

humanitarian crisis was a bungled attempt to manage its economic fallout from the global pandemic, at the bottom of the political problem was a math problem and at the bottom of the math problem was an ideological problem—or, more accurately, a global ideological movement that is innumerate and unscientific by design, promoting fuzzy and poorly specified claims about the possibilities of alternative food production methods and systems to obfuscate the relatively simple biophysical relationships that govern what goes in; what comes out; and the economic, social, and political outcomes that any agricultural system can produce, whether on a regional, national, or global scale.

Rajapaksa continues to insist that his policies have not failed. Even as Sri Lanka's agricultural production was collapsing, he traveled to the U.N. climate change summit in Glasgow, Scotland, late last year, where—when not dodging protests over his human rights record as Sri Lankan defense minister—he touted his nation's commitment to an agricultural revolution allegedly “in sync with nature.” Not long afterward, he fired two government officials within weeks of each other for publicly criticizing the increasingly dire food situation and fertilizer ban.

As farmers begin their spring harvest, the fertilizer ban has been lifted, but fertilizer subsidies have not been restored. Rajapaksa, meanwhile, has established yet another committee—this one to advise the government on how to increase organic fertilizer production in a further demonstration that he and his agricultural advisors continue to deny the basic biophysical realities that constrain agriculture production.

Much of the global sustainable agriculture movement, unfortunately, has proven no more accountable. As Sri Lankan crop yields have plummeted, exactly as most mainstream agricultural experts predicted they would, the fertilizer ban's

leading advocates have gone silent. Vandana Shiva, an Indian activist and ostensible face of anti-modern agrarianism in the global south, was a booster of the ban but turned mute as the ban's cruel consequences became clear. Food Tank, an advocacy group funded by the Rockefeller Foundation that promotes a phase-out of chemical fertilizers and subsidies in Sri Lanka, has had nothing to say now that its favored policies have taken a disastrous turn.

Soon enough, advocates will surely argue that the problem was not with the organic practices they touted but with the precipitous move to implement them in the midst of a crisis. But although the immediate ban on fertilizer use was surely ill conceived, there is literally no example of a major agriculture-producing nation successfully transitioning to fully organic or agroecological production. The European Union has, for instance, promised a full-scale transition to sustainable agriculture for decades. But while it has banned genetically modified crops and a variety of pesticides as well as has implemented policies to discourage the overuse of synthetic fertilizers, it still depends heavily on synthetic fertilizers to keep yields high, produce affordable, and food secure. It has also struggled with the disastrous effects of overfertilizing surface and ground water with manure from livestock production.

Boosters of organic agriculture also point to Cuba, which was forced to abandon synthetic fertilizer when its economy imploded following the Soviet Union's collapse. They fail to mention that the average Cuban lost an estimated 10 to 15 pounds of body weight in the years that followed. In 2011, Bhutan, another darling of the sustainability crowd, promised to go 100 percent organic by 2020. Today, many farmers in the Himalayan kingdom continue to depend on agrochemicals.

In Sri Lanka, as elsewhere, there is no shortage of problems associated with chemical-intensive and large-scale agriculture. But the solutions to these problems—be they innovations that allow farmers to deliver fertilizer more precisely to plants when they need it, bioengineered microbial soil treatments that fix nitrogen in the soil and reduce the need for both fertilizer and soil disruption, or genetically modified crops that require fewer

pesticides and herbicides—will be technological, giving farmers new tools instead of removing old ones that have been proven critical to their livelihoods. They will allow countries like Sri Lanka to mitigate the environmental impacts of agriculture without impoverishing farmers or destroying the economy. Proponents of organic agriculture, by contrast, committed to naturalistic fallacies and suspicious of modern agricultural science, can offer no plausible solutions. What they offer, as Sri Lanka's disaster has laid bare for all to see, is misery.

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