

Statement of William Popp
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Uganda
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
May 16, 2023

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, Members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you as the President's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Uganda.

I would like to begin by thanking my family, particularly my wife of 24 years, Milena, and my daughter Alicia Pilar. I am grateful to them for joining me in the privilege, joys, and sacrifices of serving our nation overseas.

As a career member of the Foreign Service for more than 23 years, I have been honored to represent the United States in seven overseas assignments across Africa and the Western Hemisphere, including as the current U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala, as well as in Washington. In each duty, I have advanced U.S. interests, promoted our democratic values, and worked with host nations to achieve shared goals. If confirmed, I believe this experience will be valuable in leading our Mission, advancing bilateral goals with Uganda, and furthering our regional objectives.

Our relationship with Uganda has advanced important U.S. interests over the years, including working together through PEPFAR and other U.S. health programs to save millions of lives from HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and other health threats. We have likewise strengthened regional security and countered terrorism, including in Somalia. Uganda, with U.S. assistance, currently provides protection to more than 1.5 million refugees and asylum-seekers who have been forced to flee their home countries in East and Central Africa.

We have also faced challenges, including human rights violations and limited democratic space. These challenges impact not only Uganda but also the United States' interest in a freer, more prosperous, and secure region.

If confirmed, I will work steadfastly to advance U.S. interests and values and to pursue security, prosperity, good governance, and democracy with Ugandans.

First, we must protect our citizens' security. This includes cooperating to fight transnational criminal organizations, countering violent extremism, and strengthening border security. It also includes effectively preventing, detecting, and responding to health threats, addressing food insecurity, and supporting climate resilience.

Second, we must broaden prosperity for both countries through sustainable economic growth, mutually beneficial trade, and formal job creation. With one of the youngest populations in the world, generating opportunities for Ugandan youth and women is particularly vital. U.S. assistance is an important part of the solution, but so is working with the public and private sectors to create an enabling environment for businesses to thrive and support entrepreneurship. If confirmed, I will seek to create more opportunities that generate jobs, support U.S. businesses, and assist entrepreneurs.

Third, rule of law, transparency, good governance, and respect for human and labor rights for all, are essential for Ugandans to achieve the full potential of democracy. U.S. engagement can help build the capacity of public institutions to deliver services to the Ugandan people. Working with civil society, the private sector, youth leaders and innovators, we can foster prosperity, opportunity, and integrity. A more just and equitable Uganda will spur investment, stability, and development for all Ugandans. We must also continue to support the equal protection and non-discrimination of members of all minority groups.

In addition to pursuing these objectives, if confirmed, I will make protecting the thousands of U.S. citizens living and traveling in Uganda my highest priority. I will also lead the more than 600 U.S. and Ugandan professionals in the U.S. mission to advance our bilateral and regional agenda by creating a safe, equitable, and respectful workplace. And I will vigilantly safeguard

resources and maximize effectiveness across U.S. agencies to build a brighter future with Uganda. I also commit to working closely with you and the other members of the Senate, members of the House of Representatives, and your staffs.

Thank you for the honor to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.