

Statement of Paloma Adams-Allen
Nominee to be USAID Deputy Administrator for Management and Resources
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
July 20, 2021

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be Deputy Administrator for Management and Resources of the United States Agency for International Development.

I would like to thank the President and Administrator Power for their trust in me. I'm grateful for the opportunity to return to USAID, an Agency dear to my heart, at a moment when its leadership and development expertise are so urgently needed.

I am here before you today because of the love and support of so many -- my mother, Emilie Adams, a proud Minnesotan who instilled in me a deep sense of fairness and justice; my father, Llewelyn Adams, who I credit for my strong Jamaican work ethic; my husband, Travis Allen, still the best human I know; my daughters, Priya and Emilie, whose creativity and empathy inspire me every day; and a network of extended family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors spanning the globe. Thank you all.

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My international development and diplomacy experience started early, informed by the duality of my upbringing: summers spent in the relative wealth and safety of my mother's community in the United States, and the school year spent in the riotous beauty and vulnerability of my father's home country of Jamaica. It was in the jarring journey back and forth between these worlds that I settled on what I wanted to do with my life: pay forward the incredible privilege I have as an American, by working to fuel hope and opportunity in communities like the one that helped raise me.

This early decision informed my 20+ years working in the foreign assistance arena, primarily focused on Latin America and the Caribbean. During a decade in policy and programming roles at the Organization of American States, I saw the potential of multilateralism to calm tensions between neighboring countries and mobilize regional support for humanitarian crises like the 2010 Haiti earthquake. But it has been my experience in the federal government, serving in

leadership and management positions at USAID and now as head of the Inter-American Foundation, where I have been able to affect the change I dreamed of as a child. During a decade of public service, I have had the honor of investing in and learning from young people bravely building peace in El Salvador; small holder farmers in Colombia selling their coffee to global retailers; and proud grandmothers in Haiti financing micro and small businesses through their savings and loans associations.

Throughout my career, I have demonstrated an ability to successfully manage complex operations, effectively steward resources, create and lead diverse purpose-driven teams, and advance reforms designed to enhance the impact and sustainability of development investments. And I have done so in a bipartisan manner, recognizing and respecting Congress' role as an equal partner in US foreign assistance. If confirmed, I will draw upon this experience to effectively oversee USAID's management and resources needs.

As the U.S. government's lead global development agency, USAID needs to be nimble enough to respond to an ever-evolving set of geopolitical challenges and crises -- and to do so with the management and oversight commensurate with the responsibilities given to it by the American people through the Congress.

If confirmed, my top priority will be positioning USAID to further maximize its development impact, by (1) better aligning strategy and resources to deliver results; and (2) expanding the Agency's partner base to include more non-traditional U.S. implementing partners and local organizations, with strong in-country knowledge, expertise, and a commitment to sustainability.

In order to maximize our impact, we must support and invest in USAID's greatest strength and resource: its people. If confirmed, my focus will be on making sure the Agency has enough staff, equipped with the right tools, and bolstered by a supportive culture -- one that recognizes and responds to the outsized demands placed on USAID, and embraces the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

And finally, if confirmed, I will prioritize enhancing USAID's ability to rapidly respond and take advantage of emerging opportunities as conditions change on the ground. There are multiple layers to this goal, but perhaps most important is building on prior efforts to enhance the

Agency's procurement capabilities -- so that it programs resources in a faster, more responsive manner.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to your questions.