

Statement of Linda I. Etim
Assistant Administrator Nominee Bureau for Africa
United States Agency for International Development
Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
On October 1, 2015

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, Distinguished Members of the Committee:

It is an honor to appear before you today as the nominee to be the next Assistant Administrator for Africa at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

I want to express my appreciation for the trust and confidence President Obama has placed in me by nominating me for this important position and for the strong support of Secretary Kerry and Acting Administrator Lenhardt. I would also like to thank Earl Gast, the Africa Bureau's former Assistant Administrator who ably led the Bureau for three years. Most importantly, I would like to thank my family—my sister Ann Etim who is here today, as well as our parents and our other sister Jennifer Etim, who, although no longer with us, remain my rocks.

My nomination to this post is deeply personal. As the daughter of an immigrant who fled Nigeria for the United States during the Biafran war, I am intimately familiar with the pressures that a country's fragility places on its citizens. After more than a decade working on African issues, I've seen development improve people's lives and help countries grow. That is why I believe USAID's mission to end extreme poverty, promote democratic societies, and bolster security and prosperity for all is essential. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing my support for USAID's new model for sustainable development, one built on partnerships with governments, businesses, universities, and civil society, as well as with the new generation of African leaders, thinkers, entrepreneurs, and innovators, who are leading the transformation of their societies.

My professional life has been devoted to empowering Africa's people to fulfill the promise that resides in every corner of the continent. Throughout my career, I've had the honor to work on some of Africa's most pressing challenges. I spent the first years of my career working for the U.S. Government as a specialist in African security affairs. More recently, as the Director for East African Affairs and Sudan, South Sudan at the National Security Council, I coordinated U.S. policy on civilian-military affairs, governance, economic growth and humanitarian crises in the Horn of Africa. In that position, I saw firsthand the important role of development in Africa and was honored to be appointed Deputy Assistant Administrator for Africa at USAID. During the past three and a half years at USAID, I've stood side by side with the Agency's committed men and women, many of whom work in difficult environments, to tackle critical development challenges. After nearly 15 years working on African affairs I'm intimately familiar with the complex fabric that makes up sub-Saharan Africa's 49 countries.

If confirmed, in addition to focusing on the management of the Bureau, I will concentrate on three objectives for the Africa Bureau that I believe are critical to the sustainability, growth, and success of our development goals. First, I believe we need to continue to invest in Africa's greatest resource—its people—to further development, democracy, opportunity, rights and governance for this and future generations. Second, I will continue USAID's focus on

accelerating sustainable development through African-led partnerships. Third, I will ensure that our work is implemented effectively, that we evaluate the results, and that we apply those lessons learned going forward.

Although many of Africa's challenges may seem intractable, I see both the challenges and the remarkable progress, led by our African counterparts, as bright lights across the continent. Both Zambia and Nigeria held successful elections this past year. Nigeria's elections were historic, marking the first ever democratic transfer of power in Africa's most populous nation. With strong bipartisan support from Congress, our initiatives on the continent are bearing fruit. In fiscal year 2014, Feed the Future, the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative, helped nearly 2.5 million African farmers use improved technologies and management practices while spurring \$306 million in new agricultural sales on the continent. Recent data suggest that Feed the Future and other efforts contributed to a 9 percent reduction in stunting in Ethiopia between 2011 and 2014 and a 16 percent decrease in poverty in the rural areas of Uganda between 2009-2010 and 2012-2013. Through Power Africa, the United States is working with a range of partners to accelerate private-sector energy transactions, by leveraging the assistance, financing, commercial and diplomatic tools of the U.S. Government, as well as the tools and expertise of our bilateral and multilateral partners and the private sector with the aim of expanding access to electricity by 60 million new connections. Two years after Power Africa's launch, the U.S. Government's commitment of \$7 billion dollars has mobilized more than \$20 billion in private capital from more than 100 private sector partners.

As the fastest-growing continent, Africa's population in the coming decades will double, and many of its people will be under 18. We have a tremendous challenge but also an opportunity to harness the intelligence, creativity, and drive of these young Africans who will introduce disruptive technologies, ignite growth, and lead reforms throughout the region. They will need enhanced skills and access to capital, jobs, and innovations to help address tomorrow's development challenges. Partnerships are key to this engagement. For example, through the Global Development Alliance agreement with USAID, as part of Feed the Future, Partners in Food Solutions (PFS) transfers technology and knowledge to African processors. PFS is a non-profit organization formed by General Mills that harnesses the global technical expertise of General Mills, Cargill, Royal DSM, and Bühler. Since its inception, PFS has linked 765 volunteers to 119 food processors in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, and Zambia, impacting 829,000 smallholder farmers. We must also promote inclusive development that recognizes women as key drivers of economic growth. In order to end extreme poverty, feed the planet, and build vibrant economies, women and girls must gain access to capital, land, markets, training, and leadership opportunities. That is why I am so supportive of the President's Young African Leaders Initiative, which is investing in the next generation of leaders, who are eager and able to shape Africa's future.

We are building on the successes of the last generation and accounting for new realities, opportunities, and future challenges. With roughly half of the world's extreme poor residing in fragile and conflict affected states, we are remiss to discuss sustainable development gains without emphasizing the realities, needs, and capabilities of those societies in conflict and those trying to emerge from it. In fragile countries like South Sudan, we are assessing how best to help countries experiencing recurring cycles of conflict. South Sudan's peace agreement, signed in

late August, while tenuous and fragile, presents an opportunity to mitigate the impact of the conflict on the people of South Sudan and support strategies for sustainable security.

There is no denying Africa's importance to the United States, both for our moral imperative to help solve the biggest development challenges on the planet and because of its impact on the United States' own national security and economic growth. USAID is committed to collaborating with donors, private sector partners, and faith-based organizations to leverage our relative strengths and amplify the effect of U.S. investments in development. These efforts are already having an effect on our work in Africa, and if confirmed, I am eager to advance this new approach to doing business.

I know the road ahead isn't an easy one. Nowhere does development show more promise yet pose such challenge than it does today in sub-Saharan Africa.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with my talented colleagues at USAID, our partners throughout the U.S. government, the private sector, multilateral and nongovernmental organizations, and our counterparts in Africa to address critical development and humanitarian needs on the continent. I also look forward to continuing to deepen our relationship with Congress, whose long-time bipartisan commitment to the African people has provided the foundation for our programs and the springboard for our success.

In conclusion, I am honored to be considered for this position and to contribute to the goal of ending extreme poverty and promoting resilient, democratic societies while advancing security and prosperity for both Americans and Africans.

I am deeply committed to USAID's goals and the integrated role that it plays with the Department of State and the Department of Defense in advancing U.S. policy and national security objectives, and if confirmed, I will work diligently toward advancing these goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome any questions you might have.