

**Statement of Ambassador Samantha Power
Nominee to be USAID Administrator
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
March 23, 2021**

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, Members of the Committee, it is a tremendous honor to appear before you today. Thank you, Senator Markey, for your kind introduction.

I am humbled by President Biden's trust in me, and by the opportunity to join such an indispensable Agency at this critical time.

I would like to begin by thanking my mother Vera Delaney, a doctor whom I have watched care for her patients during the darkest hours of this pandemic; my father Eddie Bourke, whose curiosity about the world helped spark my own; my husband Cass Sunstein, an American original; and my 11-year-old son Declan and 8-year-old daughter Rían, whose shared love of animals and nature remind me daily of our responsibility to our planet. Public service asks a lot of families, and I'm indescribably grateful for the support and generosity of mine.

I would also like to thank the members of this Committee. While bitter political winds blew, continued bipartisan support for the U.S. Agency for International Development has saved and improved millions of lives while enhancing US security and prosperity. I was fortunate to work with many of you when I last served. If confirmed, I will be eager to build on these relationships and forge new ones.

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I first saw USAID's impact in war-torn Bosnia, where I started my career in 1993 as a reporter. I saw USAID staff and partners deliver food to the vulnerable, while supporting mothers as they tried to locate their missing sons and husbands. Since then, wherever I travelled—whether to East Timor just after it became the world's newest nation; Darfur, in the midst of this century's first genocide; or west Africa, at the height of the Ebola epidemic—USAID was there—America was there—identifying needs and moving heaven and earth to meet them.

In my work—as a writer, professor, human rights advocate, national security staffer, and diplomat—I've seen how the investments the United States makes in other countries are investments in our own security. I've seen the inextricable linkages between political freedom and broad-based economic growth. I've seen that the most effective development is driven by those on the ground with local knowledge and expertise. And I've seen the power of individual dignity as a driver of world events. Even as China increasingly uses its financial leverage to sway other nations, citizens everywhere are insisting that they be able to exercise agency, provide for themselves, and exercise their fundamental rights.

If confirmed, I will work to strengthen the institution of USAID and invest in the capabilities of the Agency's dedicated 10,000 foreign service officers, civil servants, locally-employed staff, contractors, and other personnel. This means seeking out and amplifying their insights, learning about specific local needs, and adapting our programs. It means urgently addressing the issues relating to diversity, equity, inclusion, and advancement within USAID's workforce. And it means emphasizing what President Biden himself has stressed: Development is critical to

America's ability to tackle the toughest problems of our time—economic, humanitarian and geopolitical.

In consultation with you and others in Congress, I will aim to ensure that USAID enhances its longstanding leadership in food security, education, women's empowerment, and global health, while also addressing four interconnected and gargantuan challenges confronting the world at this moment:

- The COVID-19 pandemic: With decades of development gains shattered by COVID, imperiling progress on everything from food security to gender equality and access to education, USAID's support to partners will be vital for recovery, including by building more robust and durable health infrastructure for the future.
- Climate Change: With the surge in droughts, storms, food shortages, and climate-associated humanitarian emergencies, USAID can help countries become more resilient, while supporting their efforts to reduce carbon emissions.
- Conflict and state collapse: With more conflicts occurring today than at any point since the end of the Cold War, USAID assistance will continue to mitigate suffering, while working with US diplomats and our international partners to address the root causes of such crises.
- Democratic backsliding: With freedom declining around the world for the fifteenth year in a row, USAID's democracy, rights, anti-corruption, and governance programming must nimbly support democratic and civil society actors as they push back against creeping authoritarianism and seek to build lasting democratic institutions.

In tackling these and other challenges, I want to assure the Committee that I will work every day to expand burden-sharing in the international system. At the United Nations, working with my administration colleagues, I was able to help secure major commitments from other countries to care for refugees, respond to the Ebola epidemic, strengthen peacekeeping, and adopt the Sustainable Development Goals. US investments are catalysts that can be used to mobilize governments, international organizations, foundations, and businesses to help countries achieve their own development goals.

If I am confirmed to lead this great Agency, I will work tirelessly with Members on both sides of the aisle to ensure that taxpayer dollars are well spent. Guided by evidence, I will work with you to adapt or replace programs that are not delivering. I will be transparent and accessible – as together we chart a course that meets the needs of the current moment.

In 1979 my mother brought my younger brother and me to America from Ireland, blessing me with a life full of opportunity. As one who has been given so much by the United States, I would take it as an incomparable privilege to lead the world's premier development Agency in order to expand the opportunities available to others.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.