

**Written Statement of Administrator Samantha Power,
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
before the
Committee on Foreign Relations
U.S. Senate
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Introduction

Thank you Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished Members of the Committee. I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss USAID's efforts to combat the impacts of food security and malnutrition around the world that are being exacerbated by Putin's unprovoked and unjustified war in Ukraine. Thanks to Congress's generous and bipartisan appropriation of additional resources in the Ukraine supplementals, President Biden was able to announce an additional \$2.76 billion in U.S. commitments to address global food insecurity at the most recent G7 Leaders' Summit in Germany. This announcement augments the \$2.8 billion the U.S. has already spent since Russia further invaded Ukraine in February, demonstrating U.S. leadership in confronting this crisis.

Before Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the food security situation for hundreds of millions of people around the globe was already extremely fragile. 768 million people were chronically hungry, and 193 million people were facing crisis levels of acute food insecurity. USAID teams around the globe have been responding to dramatically increased needs for well over a year, gathering information, engaging in humanitarian diplomacy, reorienting staff, programs and priorities to move expeditiously and at a scale that the Agency has never done before. This includes use of extraordinary tools, including the drawdown of the entirety of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust. Today, the combined effects of Russia's war in Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic, multiseason droughts, and other climate-related impacts are pushing the world into an unprecedented global food crisis. USAID is scaling up programs to save lives, stave off starvation, and meet the moment.

Russia's Further Invasion of Ukraine

President Putin's inhumane aggression against a sovereign neighbor has inflicted terror on the people of Ukraine, destroyed schools and hospitals, and triggered the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. Widespread damage to civilian infrastructure, particularly in the Donbas region, has left thousands of residents without access to basic services such as potable water, electricity or gas supplies. As a result, the UN World Food Program (WFP) estimates that one-third of Ukrainian households is food insecure which is liable to worsen throughout Ukraine during the harsh winter season, beginning in October.

To date, USAID has provided more than \$780 million in humanitarian assistance inside Ukraine, including \$302 million to WFP to provide Ukrainians with food distributions and cash transfers.

However, WFP and other USAID partners are only able to reliably provide relief to those in government-controlled areas. They are increasingly cut off from populations in parts of eastern Ukraine controlled by Russian forces, where humanitarian conditions deteriorate more and more each day. The U.S. continues to call on the Russian government to allow safe passage for civilians fleeing areas besieged by Russian forces and to allow the delivery of humanitarian supplies to people who desperately need them.

Global Food Security Impacts

Together, Russia and Ukraine produced roughly 30 percent of the world's wheat exports. In many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Putin's war has made a bad situation worse. Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caucasus are particularly reliant on Ukrainian wheat exports, and according to the Global Hunger Index, every second to third piece of bread in the Middle East was produced from Ukrainian wheat before the war. With supply-chain disruptions, rising food, fertilizer and fuel prices, estimates suggest that up to 40 million additional people could be pushed into poverty and food insecurity over the coming year. This comes on the heels of protracted conflict – particularly in the Sahel and Horn of Africa – restricting domestic production and cutting off supply lines, as well as the shortages brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

President Putin's forces are blocking Black Sea ports, leaving as many as 50 million tons of global food supplies trapped in temporary silos or on ships, thus preventing them from entering the global market. Russia is also the world's largest exporter of fertilizer, and Putin's export ban has contributed to a fourfold increase in global fertilizer prices compared to a year ago. While President Putin falsely claims that the global food crisis is a result of Western sanctions; however, it is his use of food as a weapon of war that has strangled food and agriculture production and driven up prices for food and fertilizer everywhere from Indiana to Indonesia.

USAID's Leadership in the Global Food Crisis

USAID recognizes that this crisis is global in nature and will require a long-term response. Our teams are working as quickly and responsibly as possible to scale-up immediate humanitarian assistance to countries in crisis while also helping countries to develop their agricultural sectors to be self-sufficient. USAID's response is centered along four lines of effort.

First, we are using data analysis to project the potential impacts of the crisis in countries with existing humanitarian emergencies to prevent even further deterioration in conditions. The impacts of the global food crisis extend beyond just the amount of food communities can eat. They affect people's health and nutrition and change the types of risks to violence that women and girls face.

Second, we are scaling up emergency food assistance in countries that have high levels of food insecurity, are vulnerable to price shocks, and are reliant on Russian or Ukrainian food imports. Since Russia's further invasion of Ukraine in February, the U.S. has provided \$2.8 billion to scale up emergency food security programming in countries impacted by the food crisis. In the

coming weeks, USAID will have programmed another \$2 billion in Ukraine supplemental funding for humanitarian needs, with a focus on emergency food assistance and related investments in the hardest hit places like Yemen, the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, Haiti, and Democratic Republic of Congo.

Third, we are using Feed the Future investments to reduce countries' dependence on fertilizer imports and provide more support to smallholder farmers, through drought tolerant seeds and improved storage for crops, to bolster farm productivity and minimize crop losses. At the G7 Leaders' Summit, President Biden announced the expansion of Feed the Future to eight new target countries: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zambia. USAID is investing \$760 million from Ukraine supplemental funding to bolster Feed the Future programs and combat the acute effects of high food, fuel, and fertilizer prices.

Fourth, we are partnering with other donors to increase funding to prevent a global food security crisis. It is important that this assistance be additive in nature, so that donors do not reduce funding from other crises to support this one. We are working with partners, allies, and the UN to engage emerging donors, such as Gulf countries and private foundations, to fill critical gaps. Securing greater support from Gulf donors was a priority for President Biden during his trip to the region. Earlier this week, I announced an additional \$200 million contribution to UNICEF to support treatment of severe wasting in the most food insecure countries. USAID is leveraging this contribution to get other private donors, such as the Eleanor Crook Foundation and the Children's Investment Fund, to announce significant contributions of their own. Together we have called upon the donor community to join us in doubling our donations by September.

World Food Program

WFP is one of USAID's most important partners in the response to global food insecurity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization focused on hunger and food security, and has the scale and capacity to deliver emergency food assistance and the ability to work with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience worldwide. The United States is consistently the largest donor to WFP by a considerable margin and plans to program \$5.5 billion through the organization in FY 2022, representing a 50 percent increase compared to the previous fiscal year. USAID enjoys a strong relationship with WFP and maintains constant communication with them at both headquarters and in the field to achieve our shared objective of saving lives in emergencies and using food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability and prosperity around the globe.

At the same time, the response to the global food security crisis requires a multisectoral effort. USAID is using supplemental resources to fund other UN agencies and NGOs who have the expertise to provide comprehensive programs on nutrition, protection, health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene assistance.

Horn of Africa

While the entire globe will continue to face the impacts of President Putin's actions, the most immediate needs are present in the Horn of Africa. The region is experiencing one of its worst droughts in four decades that has the potential to lead to famine. As many as 20 million people are at risk of starvation by the end of this year. The prolonged drought is also having dire nutritional impacts on children, putting them at a severe risk of malnutrition.

In April, the Biden-Harris Administration made the extraordinary decision to fully draw down on the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust (BEHT), providing an additional \$244 million to procure and transport U.S. commodities to bolster existing emergency food operations in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia.

Ahead of my trip to the Horn of Africa this week, I announced nearly \$1.3 billion in additional funding for the region, bringing USAID's contributions to the regional drought response to more than \$1.6 billion in FY 2022. This funding supports our partners, including WFP, UNICEF and non-governmental organizations, to deliver emergency food, nutrition, protection, health, and water, sanitation and hygiene assistance. For example, in Ethiopia, this funding will support urgent food assistance for more than 4 million people in drought-affected regions. In Somalia, this funding will provide life-saving emergency food assistance to over two million people each month.

USAID's long-term investments in the Horn of Africa are supplementing our emergency assistance in the region. In Ethiopia, USAID is supporting local agribusinesses to increase productivity to offset reliance on imports, expanding financing of fertilizer, as well as investments to increase availability and lower costs, and improving access to irrigation and agricultural inputs to diversify and expand crop and fodder production. Through Feed the Future, we are partnering with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the International Fertilizer Development Center and other partners, to develop a low-cost approach for rapidly developing more effective fertilizer recommendations. When piloted in Ethiopia, farmers were able to reduce fertilizer wastage by up to 80 percent and increase crop yields by up to 200 percent over a three year period. We are working to replicate these successes across the region.

Conclusion

Due to the overlapping crises of climate shocks, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ripple effects of the war in Ukraine, millions more across the world are at risk of being driven into starvation unless rapid action is taken. Thanks to the bipartisan support of Congress, USAID is investing billions of dollars to ensure families can feed their children, while ramping up our own domestic food and fertilizer production, protect the poorest households around the world by scaling up social safety nets, and unleash American technical expertise to spur the long-term agricultural productivity that essential to combatting hunger. I thank the Committee for its continuous support of our work, and I look forward to discussing with you in more detail.